



**SYA 4930-01**  
**Childhood in Society: Preschool to College Peer Cultures**  
**Fall 2008**

HCB 210  
Tuesdays and Thursdays 9:30-10:45

Sociology 4930, Section 04255  
Florida State University

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| <i>Office:</i>       | 431 Bellamy Building  |
| <i>Office Hours:</i> | Tuesday 11:00-12:00, Thursday 1:00-2:00, and by appointment |
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***Course Description:***

This course is about childhood and youth in everyday life. This course explores central themes and features of children's preschool, preadolescent, adolescent, and college peer cultures. We will discuss research methods for studying childhood and consider the importance of family and peer experiences for children's social development. Among the questions we may explore are: What does it mean to be a child or adolescent in everyday life? How are experiences throughout childhood both different and similar for boys and girls? How do socioeconomic class, race, ethnicity, and sexuality shape children's experiences? What does it mean to be "popular" in elementary school? How do kids' lives change with the move to high school? Where do parents fit into children's lives? How does the media influence children's experiences? What role does culture (through toys, games, books, music, television, movies, etc.) play in children's lives? Although this course focuses primarily on childhood in the United States and other Western societies, we will also examine many of these topics from a multi-cultural or global perspective. Throughout the course students will be encouraged to examine critically their own experiences and beliefs regarding these issues.

***Course Goals and Objectives:***

1. To demonstrate how sociologists conceptualize and study children and childhood.
2. To remember key theories and concepts related to the sociology study of childhood.
3. To know how to use key concepts and theories of the sociology of childhood to describe and understand children's behavior and interactions.
4. To be able to apply these theories and concepts to peer cultures of the five age groups examined in this course.
5. To build the knowledge and develop the skills necessary to read and understand scholarly articles and book chapters on the sociology of childhood.
6. To learn how to work effectively in a group setting to accomplish goals.
7. To think critically about childhood and children's influence on society.

## ***Course Requirements:***

### READINGS:

- (1) William A. Corsaro. 2003. *"We're Friends, Right?": Inside Kids' Culture*. Washington, D.C.: Joseph Henry Press. Available at the Indiana University bookstore and the TIS bookstore.
- (2) Readings available on our course Blackboard site, in the "Course Library"

Being prepared for class will enhance your learning experience and allow you to ask questions about the material during discussions of the assigned topic. I suggest you make your reading time productive by: 1) writing down a brief summary of what you've read; 2) jotting down things you don't understand so you can re-read that part of the text, discuss it during office hours, or ask me to clarify it in class. If you have any questions regarding these readings (e.g., some articles include statistics with which you may be unfamiliar), please meet with me. Please let me know immediately if you have difficulty purchasing the book. I expect all students to complete all readings assigned for the course *before* the class meeting for which they are listed.

Students are required to check the course Blackboard site weekly for messages from the professor. In addition, selected handouts and related materials will be available for downloading.

EXAMS: Two exams (**Thursday, October 16** and **Wednesday, December 10**) are required and are each worth 35% of your grade in this course. Lectures, films, discussion, presentations, team-based learning activities and readings will be covered on the exams. The format of the exam will consist of a combination of multiple choice, completion, and/or short essays.

TEAM-BASED LEARNING ACTIVITIES: We will be using Team-Based Learning (TBL) in this course. TBL is being used very successfully by professors at FSU and at many other universities. TBL's student-centered approach fosters active learning by class participants. TBL is structured to avoid many of the complaints students typically have about groups. This approach is outlined at: <http://www.teambasedlearning.org/>.

A key objective of this course is to generate critical thought on the topics discussed in class and brought up in the readings. To assist in accomplishing this goal, to ensure that you keep up with the readings, and to foster student-centered learning, there will be SIX series of team-based learning activities given throughout the semester. Each of these six series of activities will consist of three parts: (a) an individual quiz, (b) a team quiz, and (c) a critical thinking exercise. These activities will be based on the assigned readings for that week. You will complete the individual quiz on your own and the team quiz and the critical thinking exercise with the members of your team. Teams will be assigned at the beginning of the semester. You will have an opportunity to rate your team members at the end of the semester and the average of these ratings will make up 50% of each person's grade for team quizzes and critical thinking exercises, as was decided collectively by the class in the critical thinking exercise on 9/2. Each of the three components of TBL will be worth 10% of your course grade. **Your lowest grade on each component will be dropped.** TBL activities collectively comprise 30% of your course grade.

Students arriving late or leaving early will not be given additional time to complete the activities. If you are absent for TBL activities, you receive no credit, but may use this as your one TBL grade that will be dropped. If you are absent for TBL activities due an excused absence (see the

section below), you may complete an alternative assignment. If you choose to complete the alternative assignment, you must turn it in and provide documentation to Dr. McCabe within one week after your absence (e.g. if you miss class on Tues., Sept. 9 due to an excused absence, you must turn in your alternative assignment and documentation for your absence by the beginning of class on Tues., Sept. 16). The alternative assignment consists of a 3-4 page paper that discusses one of the assigned readings for that week and one additional reading. You must use Sociological Abstracts (available from: <http://www.lib.fsu.edu/find/databases?dbletter=S>) to find a scholarly journal article on a topic related to an assigned reading for that week. In addition to reading the assigned readings for that week, you will read the additional article, take notes on the article, and write a 3-4 page paper that summarizes each of the readings (i.e., the assigned reading that you chose from that week and the additional article that you found using Sociological Abstracts) and discusses at least three links between them. These links can be similarities or differences between the evidence that the authors use to make their argument, similarities or differences in the theories that the authors use, or similarities or differences in the arguments that the authors make. The paper must be 3-4 pages, double-spaced, using Times New Roman 12-point font. Before you turn in the paper, make sure that the paper (1) has been proofread and gone over using spell check, (2) has your name on it, (3) has a title, (4) has page numbers, and (5) has been stapled. In addition, include a copy of your supplemental article with your paper with your name written at the top of the first page of the article. If the paper does not meet these requirements, it will not be accepted and will not receive credit.

**ATTENDANCE:** I expect all students to attend class, be on time, and not leave class early. Attendance is crucial to your success in the course, on the exams, and in the team-based learning activities. If you do miss a class, you still are responsible for the material covered and all announcements made in class. If you do not plan on attending regularly, you should not take this class.

### ***Grading:***

| <b>Percentage of Final Grade</b> |     | <b>Final Course Grade</b> |                |
|----------------------------------|-----|---------------------------|----------------|
| Exam #1 (Oct. 16)                | 35% | A = 93.0-100              | C = 73.0-76.9  |
| Exam #2 (Dec. 10)                | 35% | A- = 90.0-92.9            | C- = 70.0-72.9 |
| Team-Based Learning              | 30% | B+ = 87.0-89.9            | D+ = 67.0-69.9 |
| - individual quizzes = 10%       |     | B = 83.0-86.9             | D = 63.0-66.9  |
| - team quizzes = 10%             |     | B- = 80.0-82.9            | D- = 60.0-62.9 |
| - critical thinking exercises    |     | C+ = 77.0-79.9            | F < 60.0       |
| = 10%                            |     | A = 93.0-100              | C = 73.0-76.9  |

Grades will be posted on Blackboard (<http://campus.fsu.edu>).

### ***Course Guidelines and Policies:***

**INCOMPLETE GRADES:** Missing work or uncompleted assignments are insufficient reasons for a grade of Incomplete (I). An Incomplete grade will not be given except under extenuating circumstances at the instructor's discretion. Note that College of Social Science guidelines require that students seeking an "I" must be passing the course.

**OFFICE HOURS AND ASSISTANCE:** I encourage you to come by my office during the scheduled office hours to discuss *any* questions, concerns, or ideas related to the class or to your performance in the class. If you cannot make office hours, please let me know and we can make an appointment to talk.

**CLASS DISCUSSIONS:** In this class, we will speak frankly about a variety of issues relating to childhood, including gender variations, sexuality, race and the media. These can often be emotional topics about which many people hold strong beliefs and values. One of the goals of this course is to challenge you to think deeply, critically, and sociologically about these issues, not to change your mind. All points of view are welcome in this class, but comments made must be respectful of others in the class.

**ACADEMIC HONOR POLICY:** Students are expected to abide by the Academic Honor Policy of the Florida State University, including the statement on Values and Moral Standards published in The Florida State University General Bulletin. The Academic Honor Policy outlines the University's expectations for students' academic work, the procedures for resolving alleged violations of these expectations, and the rights and responsibilities of students and faculty throughout the process. Please see the following website for a complete explanation of the Academic Honor Policy: <http://www.fsu.edu/~dof/honorpolicy.htm>

**ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:** Students in the course will be held to the highest standards of academic integrity. Any form of academic dishonesty will result in a "zero" for that particular assignment or an "F" for the course, at the instructor's discretion. Any student who plagiarizes, cheats on exams, or otherwise behaves in a dishonest way may be reported to the university administration for further disciplinary action as specified in the Academic Honor Policy. Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated.

**RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS:** Students will be allowed to miss class due to observance of religious holidays but they are still responsible for all materials assigned outside and covered in class on the day(s) missed. You must talk with your instructor in advance of missing a class for religious holiday observance reasons.

**EXCUSED ABSENCES:** The following and only the following absences are eligible to be excused: 1) Religious holidays recognized by FSU; 2) Student is representing FSU at official functions, such as intercollegiate debating and varsity sports events; 3) Verified *emergency* or illness *requiring* treatment by a physician. Medical illnesses are serious in nature and require continued treatment by medical professionals and/or surgical or other treatments. Colds, the flu, fatigue, routine appointments, and stress do not qualify as medical illnesses. If you have a chronic illness that could affect your attendance, it is imperative that you alert Dr. McCabe during the first week of classes. Documentation for an absence to be excused is required. Provide one copy of the explanatory document to Dr. McCabe by the next class meeting and keep a copy for your own records. While one is not penalized for the absence when it is excused, s/he remains responsible for all content missed, including assignments, announcements, knowledge, or skills that were covered in the missed class(es).

**MAKE-UP EXAMS: Make-up exams will not be given, except in the most unusual (and documented) circumstance.** If you cannot take the exam, you must contact me *prior* to the exam and, with my permission, may take the exam at a later date. Failure to do so will mean that you will not be able to take a make-up exam. Should an emergency come up the day an exam is scheduled, students must contact me *before* the class period and, *with my permission*, may take the exam at a later date. Any unexcused absence on an exam day will result in a zero for the exam with no opportunity for a make-up.

**COPYRIGHT STATEMENT:** Some of the materials in this course are possibly copyrighted. They are intended for use only by students registered and enrolled in this course and only for instructional activities associated with and for the duration of the course. They may not be retained in another medium or disseminated further. They are provided in compliance with the provisions of the Teach Act.

**AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT:** Students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should: (1) register with and provide documentation to the Student Disability Resource Center; (2) bring a letter to the instructor indicating the need for accommodation and what type. This should be done during the first week of class. For more information about services available to FSU students with disabilities, contact:

Student Disability Resource Center, 108 Student Services Bldg., Florida State University  
Tallahassee, FL 32306-4167, (850)644-9566 (voice), (850)644-8504 (TDD)  
E-mail: [SDRC@admin.fsu.edu](mailto:SDRC@admin.fsu.edu), Website: <http://www.fsu.edu/~staffair/dean/StudentDisability/>

**CLASSROOM COURTESY:** Classroom courtesy is necessary to ensure that all students have the opportunity to learn without distractions. This means **no** cell phones, text messaging, talking during lectures (unless recognized by the professor or discussion leader), reading newspapers, ipods, internet, etc., are allowed during class. If you must have a cell phone to receive emergency calls about children or other family members, keep it on vibrate. Entering and leaving is distracting to your instructor and other students. Therefore, you need to be on time for class and stay until the end. If you must enter late or leave early, please inform me before class begins and take the seat nearest an exit and enter or leave as quietly as possible. Please make sure the door does not 'bang' as you enter or leave. Repeated disruption of class may lead to penalties that reduce your grade ranging from a lowered grade, to dismissal, to failing the course.

**STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY:** Students must take responsibility for their learning and for their grades. Students are to prepare for class, engage in class assignments and discussions, and initiate talks with the instructor about questions and problems regarding the class. Please note that my notes will not be made available to students and you are responsible for keeping good notes, even for days that you miss class.

## ***Class Schedule:***

**Note:** This is a tentative schedule. How quickly we go through this material will depend on the class. As a result, the topics discussed in class might not perfectly correspond to the reading schedule below. You will be expected to have done the reading **by the beginning of that week's class** (for example, you should read the Introduction and Chapters 1-3 of the Corsaro book before class on Tuesday, September 2nd).

| <b>DATE</b>    |        | <b>TOPIC AND READINGS</b>   |
|----------------|--------|---|
| 8/26<br>8/28   | T<br>R | <u>Week 1: Introduction to Course and to the History of Childhood</u><br>No Readings  |
| 9/2<br>9/4     | T<br>R | <u>Week 2: Studying Children and Childhood: Theoretical Approaches</u><br><b>Corsaro</b> , Introduction & Chapters 1, 2 & 3   |
| 9/9<br>9/11    | T<br>R | <u>Week 3: Preschool Children</u><br><b>Corsaro</b> , Chapters 5, 6 & 7<br>Kathryn Shattuck, "For Youngsters, Leaps and Boundaries" (newspaper article)   |
| 9/16<br>9/18   | T<br>R | <u>Week 4: Preschool Children (cont.)</u><br>Karin Martin, "Becoming a Gendered Body: Practices of Preschools"<br>Debra Van Ausdale and Joe R. Feagin, "Play Groups and Racial-Ethnic Matters (Chp 3)"  |
| 9/23<br>9/25   | T<br>R | <u>Week 5: Preschool Children (cont.)</u><br>Henry A. Giroux, "Are Disney Movies Good for Your Kids?"<br>Bernice A. Pescosolido, Elizabeth Grauerholz and Melissa A. Milkie, "Culture and Conflict: The Portrayal of Blacks in U.S. Children's Picture Books Through the Mid- and Late-Twentieth Century" |
| 9/30<br>10/2   | T<br>R | <u>Week 6: Preadolescents/Elementary School Students</u><br>Barrie Thorne, "Creating a Sense of 'Opposite Sides' (Chp. 5)"<br>Gary Alan Fine, "Moral Socialization: Peer Concerns (Chp. 4)"<br>Ann Arnett Ferguson, "Naughty by Nature (Chp 4)"   |
| 10/7<br>10/9   | T<br>R | <u>Week 7: Preadolescents/Elementary School Students (cont.)</u><br>Malcolm Gladwell, "Do Parents Matter?"<br>Dawn H. Currie, Deirdre M. Kelly and Shawna Pomerantz, "'The Power to Squash People': Understanding Girls' Relational Aggression."  |
| 10/14<br>10/16 | T<br>R | <u>Week 8: Midterm Exam</u><br>No Readings<br><b>EXAM 1</b>   |

| DATE  |   | TOPIC AND READINGS  |
|-------|---|---|
| 10/21 | T | <u>Week 9: Early Adolescents/Middle School Students</u><br>Donna Eder, “Tough Guys, Wimps, and Weenies (Chp. 5)” and “Learning to Smile Through the Pain (Chp. 7)”<br>Sara Shandler, “Media-Fed Images”<br>William Pollack, “Pumping and Crunching: Body Image and the Media”<br>Anna Quindlen, “Happy Birthday, Barbie Dear...” (newspaper article)<br>“As G.I. Joe Bulks Up...” (newspaper article) |
| 10/23 | R |   |
| 10/28 | T | <u>Week 10: Early Adolescents/Middle School Students (cont.)</u><br>Laura Fingerson, “Boys’ Responses”<br>Janice McCabe, “Who are the Experts? Medicalization in Teen Magazine Advice Columns”  |
| 10/30 | R |   |
| 11/4  | T | <u>Week 11: Adolescents/High School Students</u><br>Barbara Risman and Pepper Schwartz, “After the Sexual Revolution: Gender Politics in Teen Dating.”<br>C. J. Pascoe, “Dude You’re a Fag: Adolescent Male Homophobia”   |
| 11/6  | R |   |
| 11/11 | T | <u>Week 12: Adolescents/High School Students</u><br><b>NO CLASS – VETERANS’ DAY</b>   |
| 11/16 | R | Nilda Flores-Gonzalez, “Finding a Safe Niche (Chp. 6)”  |
| 11/18 | T | <u>Week 13: Late Adolescents and College Students</u><br>“Who Exactly is a Grown-up?” (newspaper article)<br>Michael Moffatt, “ ‘What College is REALLY Like’ (Chp. 2)”<br>William A. Smith, Walter R. Allen & Lynette L. Danley, “ ‘Assume the Position, You Fit the Description: Psychosocial Experiences and Racial Battle Fatigue Among African American Male College Students”                   |
| 11/20 | R |   |
| 11/25 | T | <u>Week 14: Late Adolescents and College Students (cont.)</u><br>Kathleen Bogle, “The Campus as a Sexual Arena (Chp. 5)”<br>Richard Whitmire, “A Tough Time to Be a Girl: Gender Imbalance on Campuses”   |
| 11/27 | R | <b>NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING DAY</b>  |
| 12/2  | T | <u>Week 15: The Future of Childhood</u><br><b>Corsaro</b> , Chp 8<br>Lindsey Tanner, “Large Study Finds that When Children Become Teens, They Quickly Turn into Couch Potatoes” (newspaper article)<br>Russell Shorto, “No Babies?”   |
| 12/4  | R |   |
| 12/10 | W | <b>FINAL EXAM</b> (Wednesday, December 10, 7:30am-9:30am in HCB 210)  |

**Bibliography (Articles on Blackboard “Course Library”)  
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Professor Janice McCabe**

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