

Youth, Power and Privilege

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PHL 377

MWF 10:50-12:00

Spring 2014

The interests, perspectives and choices of youth and children have been marginalized or downright ignored by the law, the education system, and virtually every other public and private institution. Youth are treated as inferior by common social practices, including the way we structure families and family decision-making, as well as our public spheres. College-aged young people have some of the privileges of full adulthood, but in many ways are still subordinate to older adults. Nonetheless, the literature on youth rights and liberation, especially in law, education, sociology, history, and philosophy is rapidly expanding. This class takes a philosophical approach to understanding the subordinate status of young people and the potential that lies in their liberation.

Week One: The Early Youth Liberation Movement		
3/31	Readings: 1. “We Do Not Recognize Their Right to Control Us,” and “Youth Liberation Program,” by Youth Liberation of Ann Arbor, in <i>The Children’s Rights Movement: Overcoming the Oppression of Young People</i> . 2. “One Kid’s Own Bill of Rights,” from Ann Lander’s column, in <i>The Children’s Rights Movement: Overcoming the Oppression of Young People</i> . 3. “Oppression by the Schools,” in <i>The Oppression of Youth</i> , by Ted Clark. 4. “Unschooling – a Learn as You Go Experiment,” by John Holt, in <i>The Christian Science Monitor</i> . https://issuu.com/patfarenga/docs/unschooling-article-in-cs-monitor-1983/1?e=2062221/1890990	Writing Prompt: 1. Explore contemporary youth organizing online. Search for youth power organizations working to address adultism and other social injustices that young people confront. Examine their mission statements and the work they do. Then, in an essay, compare and contrast the contemporary movement with the movement of the 70s. 2. Write your own manifesto or bill of rights on the liberation/rights of young people.
4/2		
4/4		
Week Two: Youth Liberation and Other Liberation Movements		
4/7	Readings: 1. “Revisioning Women and Social Change: Where are the Children?” by Barrie Thorne. 2. “Dismantling the School to Prison Pipeline.” http://www.naacpldf.org/files/publications/Dismantling_the_School_to_Prison_Pipeline.pdf 3. “The Color of Discipline: Sources of Racial and Gender Disproportionality in School Punishment.” http://www.indiana.edu/~safeschl/cod.pdf 4. TBA	Writing Prompt: 1. The oppression of young people cannot be understood apart from the oppression of other groups, and youth liberation gains a lot of momentum and insight from other liberation movements. Choose another oppressed group and write about the connections and disconnections between the oppression of the group you choose, and the oppression of youth.
4/9		
4/11		
Week Three: Youth, Children, and Sexuality		
4/14	Readings: 1. “Childhood and Sexuality: Adult Constructions and Silenced Children,” by Kerry H. Robinson.	Writing Prompt: 1. Define <i>sexuality</i> . What should we teach kids about sexuality and at
4/16		
4/18		

	2. "Introduction," chs. 10 and 11, and "Afterword for the American Edition," in <i>Thou Shalt Not Be Aware: Society's Betrayal of the Child</i> , by Alice Miller. 3. <i>A Kid's First Book About Sex</i> , by Joani Blank.	what ages, and how? 2. Define <i>sexuality</i> . Explain and defend your definition.
Week Four: Children's Rights Part I		
4/21 (No Class)	Readings: 1. "The Promise of Rights for Children: Best Interests and Evolving Capacities," by Christina M. Bellon, in <i>Children as Equals: Exploring the Rights of the Child</i> . 2. "The Rights of Parents," in <i>What's Wrong with Children's Rights</i> , by Martin Guggenheim.	Writing Prompt: 1. What rights do children have and why? What rights do parents have and why? Do children's rights conflict with parent's rights? Explain your answer.
4/23		
4/25		
Week Five: Children's Right Part II		
4/28	Readings: 1. "Introduction," chs. 1, and 2, and one additional chapter of your choice, in <i>Hidden in Plain Sight: The Tragedy of Children's Rights from Ben Franklin to Lionel Tate</i> , by Barbara Woodhouse.	Writing Prompt: 1. In chapter 2, Woodhouse lays out 5 "fundamental human rights values," and examines them from a child-centered perspective. Choose one or two additional human rights values, values that Woodhouse does <i>not</i> include among these 5, and examine it/them from a child-centered perspective.
4/30		
5/2		
Week Six: The Moral Status of Children		
5/5	Readings: 1. <i>Moral Status and Human Life: The Case for Children's Superiority</i> , by James Dwyer.	Writing Prompt: 1. Is Dwyer correct that children are morally superior to grown-ups? Explain your answer.
5/7		
5/9		
Review		
5/12	Review	
5/16, 8-11am	Final Exam Period/Play-sentations	

Assignments

All written assignments must be typed in a plain font, double-spaced, stapled (no paper clips!), and submitted as a hard copy. Please number your pages and include a title. All material derived from outside sources must be cited. Quotations or near quotations that are not cited will be considered plagiarism and a violation of the honor code. Any thorough and consistent citation format will be accepted. Assignments that are not turned in (in hard copy) at the beginning of class on the day they are due will be penalized 10 points for every day after that that they are late. Specific details about assignments will be distributed.

1. Papers – (50%)

There are several writing prompts listed on the syllabus. You will write two papers in response to them, one short paper (2-3 pages – 20%) and one long paper (5-7 pages – 30%). Your two papers must be about prompts from two different weeks (they cannot both be written the same week). Your papers are due at the beginning of class on the Friday of the week in which the prompt is listed on the syllabus. For example, if you choose to respond to the prompt from Week 4, about Guggenheim and Bellon, your response would be due at the beginning of class on Friday, 4/25. If you'd prefer to write on something not listed on the syllabus, please speak to me about this.

2. Discussion Fridays (10%)

Every Friday will be devoted to student-led discussions, based on the week's readings. You will sign up for a Friday to lead the class discussion. The Monday after the discussion you lead, you will submit a write-up about your discussion.

3. Final Exercise: Make a Toy for Children (30%)

In this course you will design and create a new toy for children. You will also write a short paper about the toy you create. You will share your creation with your classmates during our final exam period.

4. Participation (10%)

Participation in each class is crucial to your growth in this course. You are expected to come to class having read the readings for each week thoroughly, ready to engage with your classmates in thinking carefully about a number of very important topics, and eager to take on additional class challenges and exercises. This is a discussion-based course, which means that your participation in discussions is essential. Please turn off your phone when you arrive in this classroom; this will help ensure that everyone is fully present.

Additional Information

Amy's Contact Info

amyglaser@gmail.com (I DO NOT check my elon.edu email. Please do not email me there!)

Office Hours

My office hours are Monday and Wednesday from 12:10-1:00pm, unless otherwise noted. I am also available by appointment. My office is in the philosophy suite in Spence Pavilion.

Honor Code

Students are expected to comply with the Elon Academic Honor Code, which can be found in the Elon Student Handbook: <http://www.elon.edu/e-web/students/handbook/>. Suspected violations of the honor code will be reported to the Office of Judicial Affairs. Any violation may result in a failing grade for the course. Violations specifically covered by academic honor code policies include: plagiarism, cheating, lying, stealing and the facilitation of another's dishonesty. Multiple violations will normally result in a student's temporary suspension from the University.

Writing Center

I strongly encourage you to visit the Writing Center this semester for assistance with your papers for this course. The Center's trained staff can assist you in every stage of the process, and your papers will almost certainly be stronger with their input. The main Writing Center is in Belk Library. For more info, contact Dr. Paula Rosinski, at prosinski@elon.edu or X5842. <http://www.elon.edu/writingcenter>.

Special Needs

Please speak to me (or email) if you have any special needs or concerns regarding your participation in this class. If you are a student with a documented disability, please register with Disabilities Services in the Duke Building, Room 108 (278-6500) for assistance in developing a plan to address your academic needs. I want to ensure that everyone in this course feels comfortable participating and has the support required to do well and to get the most out of the assignments and the material covered. http://www.elon.edu/e-web/academics/support/disabilities_services.xhtml