



San Antonio messenger boys, 1913 (Credit: Lewis Hine, National Child Labor Committee, Library of Congress)

## Childhood in America: A History of Love and Fear

### Course Description and Objectives

Most Americans today view childhood and adolescence in contradictory ways. On the one hand, they appear as universal categories of experience: stages of the life course that have always existed in much the same way for people regardless of social or cultural differences. In this view, children are “innocents” in need of love and protection from adult realities and responsibilities. At other times, however, children and especially adolescents have stoked adult fears about crime and moral decline. In this seminar-style class, we will explore these currents through the intense attention given to children by parents, teachers, scientific experts, social reformers, commercial advertisers, and policymakers in the past century.

Among the questions we will explore: What sorts of institutions – such as schools, playgrounds, or juvenile courts – have adults constructed and for what purposes? What types of cultures have young people themselves created, and how were they rooted in the larger social conflicts of their particular historical moments? How have experts from the fields of developmental psychology, psychiatry, sociology, social work, education, and anthropology shaped conventional wisdom and public policy affecting children and youth? How have race, ethnicity, gender, class, and other categories of identity shaped the experiences of children and youth?

This course will expose students to the growing sub-field of the history of children and youth, and secondarily to the *interdisciplinary* study of this topic. Students will learn to analyze this topic from the perspectives of history and other related disciplines; give short oral presentations; and, synthesize information in written and mixed-media works.

### Course Basics

HIST 4366  
Mondays & Wednesdays  
2:00-3:15pm  
Classroom Hall 206

#### Instructor:

Dr. Bill Bush  
Office: STEC 311R  
210.784.2200  
[wbush@tamusa.edu](mailto:wbush@tamusa.edu)

**Office hours:** By appointment

#### Course website:

<http://tamusa.blackboard.com/>

### Readings

Miroslava Chávez-Garcia, *States of Delinquency: Race and Science in the Making of California's Juvenile Justice System* (California, 2012)

Max Felker-Kantor, *DARE to Say No: Policing and the War on Drugs in Schools* (North Carolina, 2024)

[Books on course reserve](#)

Select short readings and multimedia materials on Blackboard

## Course Learning Outcomes

At the end of this course, the student will be able to:

1. Identify the major events and problems in the history of childhood and youth
2. Evaluate relevant primary and secondary sources
3. Analyze scholarly research and arguments concerning this topic
4. Gain a deeper understanding of the lives of American children and youth in this period.



## Graded Work

Participation & Attendance:	10%
Weekly Journal:	15%
Class Presentation:	15%
Projects/Papers (2):	40%
Final Essay:	20%

## Grade Scale

A:	90%-up
B:	80-89%
C:	70-79%
D:	60-69%
F:	0-59%

## Course Requirements

### Class Participation & Attendance – 10%

Attendance and tardiness will be recorded. Be on time and ready to participate each day. Several of our classes will be devoted to group activities and discussions. I expect class discussion will be lively, respectful, substantive, and that you will have put in the necessary time to read and understand the assigned reading ahead of time. Your P&A grade includes any in-class writing or group work. Prepared, thoughtful participation will earn the highest score.

### Weekly Journal – 15%

Each week, students will submit a written journal entry based on prompts given in class. Entries should reflect a critical engagement with the week's assigned materials and class discussions. A good entry will show that you've thought about the issues raised in any particular week. How did these issues expand or complicate your understanding of the history of American children, childhood, and youth?

### Class Presentation – 15%

Students will work in pairs or teams to lead one class discussion based on assigned reading during the semester. The team will present a summary of the reading using a prepared slideshow and will write open-ended questions intended to provoke thoughtful and interesting discussion.

### Projects / Papers (2) – 40%

Where indicated on the syllabus, students will create two mixed-media projects \*or\* write a traditional paper on a topic of your choice relating to the course themes. Specific guidelines will appear on a separate assignment handout. Due dates are March 4 and April 29.

### Final Exam – 20%

The in-class final exam will be written, open-book and open-note, with essay and short answer sections. Students will receive essay questions in advance of the exam and will be permitted to prepare a written outline for use during the exam period.

## Schedule

#	Date	Topic / Reading	Due in Class
0	Wed 1/21	Introductions & Course Overview	
1	Mon 1/26	Protected Childhood VIEW: <a href="#">National Child Labor Committee Collection</a> (Library of Congress)	<b>Sign-up for discussion days</b>
2	Wed 1/28	The Child Savers and the Discovery of Adolescence	<b>Journal 1</b>
3	Mon 2/2	GUEST SPEAKER: European History candidate Handout States of Delinquency Project	
4	Wed 2/4	The Teenage Brain WATCH: <a href="#">"Inside the Teenage Brain"</a> (2002) LISTEN: <i>Caught</i> podcast, ep 5: <a href="#">"The Teenage Brain is Like a Sports Car"</a> (2018)	<b>Journal 2</b>
5	Mon 2/9	Measuring Age and Intelligence in the Progressive Era READ: Barragan & Blanton, <a href="#">"The World of Education Among Ethnic Mexicans;"</a> and, Chamberlain, <a href="#">"Intelligence Testing, Mental Age, and the Question of Capacity in the United States"</a>	<b>Discussion 1</b>
6	Wed 2/11	The Invention of Juvenile Justice READ: Bush, <a href="#">"Juvenile Delinquency in San Antonio, 1877-1945"</a>	<b>Journal 3</b>
7	Mon 2/16	"A Coming Generation More Vicious Than the Last": Flaming Youth and Wild Boys in the 1920's and 30's	
8	Wed 2/18	READ: <i>States of Delinquency</i> , Intro + Chap 1	<b>Discussion 2 Journal 4</b>
9	Mon 2/23	READ: <i>States of Delinquency</i> , Chaps 2-3	<b>Discussion 3</b>
10	Wed 2/25	READ: <i>States of Delinquency</i> , Chap 4-5	<b>Discussion 4 Journal 5</b>
11	Mon 3/2	READ: <i>States of Delinquency</i> , Chap 6 + Epilogue	<b>Discussion 5</b>
12	Wed 3/4	The Teen Age: Kids and World War II	<b>DUE: States of Delinquency Project</b>
	3/9 & 3/11	<i>NO CLASS – Spring Break</i>	
13	Mon 3/16	Children and Civil Rights in Postwar America Handout School Discipline Project	

14	Wed 3/18	Children and Civil Rights: Case Studies READ: Rueda, <a href="#">“The Rebels With a Very Good Cause: Juvenile Delinquency in War Relocation Centers, 1942-45;”</a> and Padilla-Rodríguez, <a href="#">“‘Los Hijos Son La Riqueza Del Pobre’: Mexican Child Migration, 1937-1960”</a>	<b>Discussion 6</b> <b>Journal 6</b>
15	Mon 3/23	The Juvenile Delinquency Panic of the 1950’s READ: <a href="#">“The Orphan”</a> (1954)	
16	Wed 3/25	“We Want to be Free”: Children’s Rights Revolutions READ: “San Antonio School Walkouts Demands” (1968-69)	<b>Journal 7</b>
17	Mon 3/30	The War on Drugs and the Coming of the School-to-Prison Pipeline	
18	Wed 4/1	READ: Intro + Chap 1, <i>DARE to Say No</i>	<b>Discussion 7</b> <b>Journal 8</b>
19	Mon 4/6	READ: Chap 2-3, <i>DARE to Say No</i>	<b>Discussion 8</b>
20	Wed 4/8	The Super-Predator Panic READ: <a href="#">“The Willie Bosket Case”</a> (2014) LISTEN: <i>Caught</i> podcast, ep 3: <a href="#">“He Really Wants to Shoot Someone”</a> (2018)	<b>Journal 9</b>
21	Mon 4/13	READ: Chap 4-5, <i>DARE to Say No</i>	<b>Discussion 9</b>
22	Wed 4/15	The Super-Predator Myth READ: Kupchik, <a href="#">“Teaching to the Rules”</a>	<b>Journal 10</b>
23	Mon 4/20	READ: Chap 6 + Epilogue, <i>DARE to Say No</i> , and “The City That Kicked Cops Out of Schools”	<b>Discussion 10</b>
24	Wed 4/22	FILM: “The Pushouts” (2018)	
25	Mon 4/27	DISCUSSION: “The Pushouts” READ: “Grace”	<b>Discussion 11</b> <b>Journal 11</b>
26	Wed 4/29	Class Symposium: School Discipline Project	<b>DUE: School Discipline project</b>
27	Mon 5/4	Review for Final Exam / Return Journals	

**FINAL EXAM**  
**Monday, May 11, 2:00-3:50pm**

## Class Policies & Resources

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**Civility Code:** This course explores topics filled with controversy and thus it is inevitable that we will discuss issues about which there is disagreement, maybe even strong disagreement. That's great! Voice those disagreements openly and thoughtfully. But be sure to do so in a respectful way, in the tone and content of your comments. Per the A&M-SA Student Code of Conduct, students should never engage in name-calling, personal insults (open or veiled), bullying, hate speech, or inappropriate profanity.

**Technology Policy:** You are responsible for ensuring access to course content, including browser compatibility and Internet connectivity. Any issues with these can't be used as an excuse for late or incomplete work. Please contact the university's ITS for any tech support needs.

**Academic Dishonesty:** Students at Texas A&M University-San Antonio are expected to adhere to the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity. Academic Dishonesty for which a student is subject to penalty includes cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, multiple submission, misrepresentation of academic records, facilitating academic dishonesty, unfair advantage, violating known safety requirements and ethical misconduct. All students are responsible for being familiar with the Academic Dishonesty Policy which may be found in the A&M-San Antonio Student Handbook: (<http://www.tamusa.edu/studentengagementsuccess>).

**"I don't like the idea that I'm not in control of my life" – Neo, *The Matrix* (1999)**

### **Chat GPT / AI Policy:**

**The use of AI is not allowed in this class.**

Each time you use AI, the software draws from the published work of others - without their consent, without citing or compensating them - and produces a seemingly polished piece of writing. Moreover, this piece of writing is full of **made-up evidence and falsified citations**. The skills required of a student of history include reading critically; assessing a scholar's use of evidence; making connections between primary and secondary sources; and constructing your own arguments using all these skills. AI takes from people who have waded through these intellectual trenches, who have **done the work**. It does not itself have these skills.



Even worse, every time you use AI to write or to construct analysis, you are losing the ability to do this yourself. Writing and critical thinking are not easy skills to develop. They can make you uncomfortable and uneasy. They are time-consuming and inconvenient. But they help you develop your voice as a writer, as a thinker, and as a human being living in our modern world. The rise of AI begs a hard question: How much are we willing to pay for convenience? Are we willing to give up our ability to think for ourselves? I'm not, and I hope you're not either.

Students are not authorized to use any AI software in this course, and I will not use it either. It is dishonest and a form of plagiarism. **You will not receive any credit for work that uses AI.**

*(Special thanks to Dr. Philis Barragan Goetz for sharing her original draft of this policy statement)*



**Late Work / Make-Up Policy:** Extensions on graded work will be given for only the most severe medical or family emergencies, and only with official documentation explaining your request. Late work will be assigned a one-letter grade penalty per day and will not be accepted after the third day.

**Academic Accommodations for Persons with Disabilities:** Texas A&M University-San Antonio is committed to providing all students with reasonable access to learning opportunities and accommodations in accordance with The Americans with Disabilities Act, as amended, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. If you experience barriers to your education due to a disability or think you may have a disability, please contact Disability Support Services in the Central Academic Building, Suite 210, or at (210) 784-1335 or visit our [website](#) or email us at [dss@tamusa.edu](mailto:dss@tamusa.edu). Disabilities may include, but are not limited to, attentional, learning, mental health, sensory, physical, or chronic health conditions. All students are encouraged to discuss their disability-related needs with Disability Support Services and their instructors as soon as possible.

**Academic Learning Center:** The Academic Learning Center provides free course-based tutoring to all currently enrolled students at Texas A&M University-San Antonio. Students wishing to work with a tutor can make appointments through the Brainfuse online tutoring platform. Brainfuse can be accessed in the Tools section of Blackboard. You can contact the Academic Learning Center by emailing [tutoring@tamusa.edu](mailto:tutoring@tamusa.edu), calling (210) 784-1307, or visiting the Central Academic Building, room 202.

**Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center:** The Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center supports graduate and undergraduate students in all three colleges as well as faculty and staff. Tutors work with students to develop reading skills, prepare oral presentations, and plan, draft, and revise their written assignments. Our language tutors support students enrolled in Spanish courses and students composing in Spanish for any assignment. Our digital studio tutors support students working on digital projects such as e-portfolios, class presentations, or other digital multimedia projects. Students can schedule appointments through JagWire under the Student Services tab. Click on "Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center" to make your appointment. The Center offers face-to-face, synchronous online, and asynchronous digital appointments. More information about what services we offer, how to make an appointment, and how to access your appointment can be found on our website at <https://www.tamusa.edu/academics>.