

SOCY 31 Youth and Society

Winter Quarter 2025

Tuesdays & Thursdays 2:25-4:15 (2A) in Irving 80

Professor Janice McCabe

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Office hours: Mondays 2-3pm & Wednesdays 11-12pm in Blunt 301A, or by appointment (Office hours are open, meaning that I don't take appointments; please stop in. I view office hours as a time for us to not only go over course material and larger course aims, but also an opportunity to talk about sociology, my research, your academic interests, how this course relates to larger issues, etc.)

Course Description:

This course is about childhood and youth in everyday life. Throughout the term, we will focus on 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 historically and in contemporary society? 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? How do they change with the move to college? Where do parents fit into children's lives? What role does the corporate construction of childhood (through toys, games, books, music, television, movies, etc.) play in children's lives? Throughout this course, we will think critically about childhood and children's influence on society.

Learning Objectives:

By the end of this course, students will:

1. Recognize and explain how sociologists conceptualize and study children and childhood.
2. Describe and compare key theories and concepts related to the sociological study of childhood.
3. Apply these theories and concepts to peer cultures of the five age groups examined in this course in order to analyze children's behavior and interactions.
4. Develop the skills necessary to read and understand scholarly articles, books, and book chapters on the sociology of childhood.
5. Think critically about childhood and children's influence on society.

Course Requirements and Evaluation:

READINGS: The following required books are available online through our campus library.

- (1) William A. Corsaro. 2003. *"We're Friends, Right?": Inside Kids' Culture*. Washington, D.C.: Joseph Henry Press. ISBN: 0309087295 – [Ebsco link](#).
- (2) Amy Schalet. 2011. *Not Under My Roof: Parents, Teens, and the Culture of Sex*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. ISBN: 0226736199 - [Ebsco link](#).

Other readings are available on our Canvas site.

Another useful resource (not required reading) is *The Sociology of Childhood* by William A. Corsaro (any edition), published by Pine Forge Press.

As you complete the readings, I encourage you to consult the “Reading Guide for Academic Work” posted on Canvas. This contains a list of questions to answer as you read sociological work, and it will help you make the most out of the time you spend reading.

PARTICIPATION: Your attendance and active participation are crucial to this seminar. Active class participation has many dimensions, including enthusiastic and intellectually rigorous discussion (talking and listening), coming to class prepared by having completed the readings, work on in-class assignments, weekly reflection journal posts, and regular class attendance. Please note that regularly attending class is necessary but not sufficient for an A in class participation.

To supplement our in-class discussions, I set up reflection journals on Canvas. At the end of every week (by Sunday at 11:59pm), you will post a 250-500 word reflection to Canvas. These reflections should each be responses to a prompt, provided the week before. Although these are reflections, you should use examples from class discussions, activities, lectures, and readings to support your points. Writing these reflections will help you more deeply engage with the course, track your personal learning and growth. They will also help me to get to know each of you and to adjust the course in order to make it the best learning experience for the class as a whole. To receive credit, each reflection should (a) be reflective, not merely a summary of course content, (b) respond to this week’s prompt, (c) use examples from course content – this can be from class discussions, activities, lectures, or readings, (d) be the appropriate length (250-500 words) and submitted on time (posted to Canvas by Sunday night at 11:59pm).

EXAMS: Two in-person exams are required. Lectures, films, video clips, discussions, in-class assignments, activities, and readings will be covered on the exams. You may study together; in fact, I encourage it. However, exams should be completed independently; you should not discuss the exam or your answers with classmates or anyone else while completing it or use any AI tools.

PAPER: Students will write one paper that focuses on how status impacts the social groups of students at your high school. In other words, you will be applying insights from the course to your own sociological examination of aspects of your high school experience. This paper is based on Chapter 3 “Fitting in, Standing Out and Keeping Up” in Murray Milner’s *Freaks, Geeks and Cool Kids*. You must demonstrate understanding and application of material from “Fitting in, Standing Out and Keeping Up” to your own experiences. You will refer to his data and conclusions, comparing and contrasting to your own experiences. More specific guidelines are included in the paper assignment handout.

Percentage of Final Grade		Final Course Grade	
Class Participation	15%	A = 94.0-100	C+ = 77.0-79.99
Midterm Exam	30%	A- = 90.0-93.99	C = 74.0-76.99
Final Exam	30%	B+ = 87.0-89.99	C- = 70.0-73.99
Paper	25%	B = 84.0-86.99	D = 60.0-69.99
		B- = 80.0-83.99	E < 60.0

Course Guidelines and Policies:

Honor Principle: Assignments will be conducted in accord with the principles of academic honor detailed in the Dartmouth Organization, Regulations and Courses. I encourage you to discuss ideas from class with your classmates. However, unless otherwise noted, the paper and exams should be completed independently, and all work turned in should be your own. Your paper should include citations to ideas and direct quotes from course readings as well as outside sources. ChatGPT and other AI tools are treated similarly to other resources you use and should be cited, noting which one you used and how you used it, including the prompt(s) you used and the date(s). I also encourage you to critically think about any ways you use AI to generate writing (1) as these tools use existing sources without citation; therefore, using them puts you at risk of plagiarism and (2) so you do not cheat yourself from academic growth and learning; writing is thinking and takes work and revision to formulate and articulate an argument. If you have questions about what is permissible, I urge you to consult the [academic honor principle](#), the [statement on sources and citations](#), and talk with me.

Religious Observances: Some students may wish to take part in religious observances that occur during this academic term. If you have a religious observance that conflicts with your participation in the course, please contact me as soon as possible—before the end of the second week of the term at the latest—to discuss appropriate course adjustments.

Student Mental Health and Wellness: The academic environment is challenging, our terms are intensive, and classes are not the only demanding part of your life. There are a number of resources available to you on campus to support your wellness, including: the [Counseling Center](#) which allows you to book triage appointments online, the [Student Wellness Center](#) which offers wellness check-ins, and your [undergraduate dean](#). The student-led [Dartmouth Student Mental Health Union](#) and their peer support program may be helpful if you would like to speak to a trained fellow student support listener. If you need immediate assistance, please contact the counselor on-call at (603) 646-9442 at any time. I encourage you to use these resources, to communicate with me, and to take care of yourself throughout the term.

Student Accessibility and Accommodations: Students requesting disability-related accommodations and services for this course are required to register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS; [Apply for Services webpage](#); student.accessibility.services@dartmouth.edu; 1-603-646-9900) and to request that an accommodation email be sent to me in advance of the need for an accommodation. Then, students should schedule a follow-up meeting with me to determine relevant details such as what role SAS or its [Testing Center](#) may play in accommodation implementation. This process works best for everyone when completed as early in the quarter as possible. If students have questions about whether they are eligible for

accommodations or have concerns about the implementation of their accommodations, they should contact the SAS office. All inquiries and discussions will remain confidential.

Socioeconomic Differences and Financial Difficulty: Our community is composed of students from a variety of financial backgrounds. Socioeconomic diversity can be invisible, and you may be experiencing financial difficulties related to the cost of textbooks, materials, or other necessities for our class of which I am not aware.

If you encounter financial challenges related to this class, there may be sources of support for you. If you feel comfortable sharing your experience with me, you may. You may also consider meeting with a financial aid officer to discuss options, reaching out to the First-Generation Office if you are a first-generation student, browsing the [Funding Resources](#) page, or, for unexpected expenses, applying to the Barrier Removal Fund through the Financial Aid tile in [DartHub](#).

Letters of Recommendation: I get many requests for letters, and I have a handout describing the materials I need at least two weeks prior to your deadline. If you expect to need a letter from me after the term ends, please let me know while you're still in the class so that I can have more detailed notes to write a stronger letter on your behalf. I enjoy writing letters for students who have stood out in some way, and I take writing these letters quite seriously.

Late Submissions: The submission of assignments is expected on the indicated "due date" during that day's class meeting (unless otherwise stated). Requests for extensions should be made prior to the due date. Please note that grades on non-approved late submissions will be penalized. Any work turned in more than 10 minutes after it is due is considered late and the grade will be reduced by one step (for example, from a B to a B-). The grade will be reduced by an additional step for each day it is late.

Grade Disputes: Any student who wishes to dispute a grade earned on any assignment, paper, or exam may do so by submitting a written memo detailing specifically why the assignment should receive a different grade. The memo should explain how the assignment met the requirements or how the answer as written (and not based on what could be inferred from what was written) addressed the question. The memo should be submitted within one week of receiving the grade. Your graded assignment and rubric should also be attached.

Classroom Etiquette: Disruptions to class negatively affect everyone's ability to learn. If you must arrive late or leave early, please notify the instructor in advance and sit by the door to minimize disruptions. It is inappropriate to use cell phones or use laptops for activities outside of taking notes (such as texting or online shopping).

Class Schedule:

Readings from the Corsaro and Shalet books are marked by the author's last name and the chapters for that day. Other readings are available on Canvas.

DATE	TOPIC AND READINGS
1/7 1/9	<u><i>Introduction to Course and to the History of Childhood</i></u> <i>No Readings</i> Corsaro, Introduction & Chapter 1 Pamela Druckerman, "French Children Don't Throw Food" and "Let Him Live His Life"
1/14 1/16	<u><i>Studying Children and Childhood: Theoretical Approaches</i></u> Corsaro, Chapter 2-3 Corsaro, Chapter 4-5
1/21 1/23	<u><i>Preschool Children</i></u> Corsaro, Chapters 6-7 Bernice Pescosolido et al., "Culture and Conflict" Casey Stockstill, "The 'Stuff' of Class: How Property Access..."
1/28 1/30	<u><i>Preadolescents/Elementary School Students</i></u> Malcolm Gladwell, "Do Parents Matter?" <i>The New Yorker</i> Shannon Malone Gonzalez, "Black Girls and the Talk? Policing, Parenting..." <i>No Readings</i>
2/4	MIDTERM EXAM
2/6	<u><i>Early Adolescents/Middle School Students</i></u> Margaret Hagerman, "'That's So Racist!': Interacting with Peers and Siblings" Matthew Rafalow, Chapter 2 from <i>Digital Divisions</i>
2/11 2/13 2/18	<u><i>Adolescents/High School Students</i></u> Murray Milner, "Fitting in, Standing Out and Keeping Up" Hyeyoung Kwon, "Inclusion Work: Children of Immigrants..." Niobe Way, "Boys' Friendships During Adolescence: Intimacy, Desire, and Loss" Schalet, Chapters 1-3 Schalet, Chapters 4-8 and conclusion (finish the book)

DATE	TOPIC AND READINGS
2/20 2/25	<u>Late Adolescents and College Students</u> MEET IN RAUNER LIBRARY – Activity on Dartmouth College Culture (first half of the alphabet 2/20; second half 2/25 & no class the other day) Janet Reitman, “Confessions of an Ivy League Frat Boy: Inside Dartmouth’s Hazing Abuses” Michael Moffatt, Chapter 2 from <i>Coming of Age in New Jersey</i>
2/26	PAPER DUE (on Canvas by 11:59pm on Wednesday, February 26)
2/27	Janice McCabe, Chapter 3 from <i>Connecting in College</i>
3/4	Jennifer Hirsch and Shamus Khan, Chapter 7 and Conclusion from <i>Sexual Citizens</i>
3/6	<u>The Future of Childhood</u> Corsaro, Chp 8 TBD readings
3/12	FINAL EXAM 8:00AM on Wednesday, March 12