

SOCY 57- Debating the Transition to Adulthood

Professor: Casey Stockstill, PhD

Class Meetings: 10A; x-hour not used

Office Hours: 1:30-2:15 on Tuesdays; 301E Blunt Alumni Center

When does a person reach adulthood? Age 18? Age 40? Never? Is adulthood reached when your frontal lobe matures, when you have a child, or simply when you feel mature? Is there one standard of adulthood that some people are less able to meet? We will discuss competing scholarly perspectives on what adulthood means and learn how the transition to adulthood has changed since the 1960s. We will analyze how race, social class, and gender affect adulthood. Students will formulate their own ideas about adulthoods through informal writings, OpEds, and news critiques.

Learning Outcomes

After this course you will be able to:

- Compare competing scholarly perspectives on adulthood
- Critique social problems with an intersectional lens
- Write with concision while drawing on scholarly research

Communication

Please first check the syllabus for logistical information. If you need further help, contact me. I always enjoy discussing course content with you. Please try to attend office hours if possible, otherwise contact me for an appointment. I will aim to respond to your emails within 48 business hours (M-F, 9am-5pm).

Writing Assignments

One learning outcome is to practice your writing. I've chosen to guide you through this by creating shorter assignments that ask you to apply course concepts and come up with your own new ideas. We will repeat assignment types, because learning happens through practice. There are three writing assignment types:

News Critiques: In News Critiques, you will find a newspaper article published in the last two years on a topic that relates to adulthood. You will write an intersectional critique of the article. You will write two of these (800-1,000 words each).

OpEds: In OpEds, you will take a strong stance and propose a policy or program related to adulthoods. You can go wherever your ideas take you (for example, proposing a dystopian-ish program like Hunger Games), as long as you support your ideas with evidence. You will write two of these (800-1,000 words each).

Class Participation

Participation is important in this class, which includes attending class, contributing to discussions, and bringing in connections to readings and other knowledge. Students get two "freebies" and may miss class two times, for any reason, with no grade penalty.

Daily Quizzes

I give daily quizzes for two reasons. (1) To help you stay on top of the readings. When the whole class has done the reading, we are able to have a richer discussion. (2) To allow me to address any misunderstandings students may have.

Each quiz covers readings due that day. The quiz is given on paper and is open note and open book. The quiz must be taken during the first 15 minutes of class, and it must be taken in class. Quizzes will have 1-5 questions, usually open-ended. I will drop your two lowest quiz scores.

Required Books

Silva, Jennifer. 2015. *Coming Up Short: Working-Class Adulthood in an Age of Uncertainty*. Oxford University Press.

Jack, Anthony Abraham. 2019. *The Privileged Poor: How Elite Colleges Are Failing Disadvantaged Students*. Harvard University Press.

Grading

Item	% of total grade
News Critique #1	10
News Critique #2	10
OpEd #1	10
OpEd #2	10
Revise one previous draft	10
Reading Quizzes	40
Class Participation	10
<i>Total</i>	100

You may request a regrade on writing assignment grades up to one week after they are returned. Please note that a regrade may result in a higher, similar, or lower grade. I will accept late work up to 72 hours past the deadline. However, I'll deduct 10% from your final grade on the assignment for each 24 hours that the assignment is late. I do not "bump" or "round" final grades. Final grades will be assigned using the following point distribution:

- 94.0-100% = A
- 90.0-93.99% = A-
- 87.0-89.99% = B+
- 84.0-86.99% = B
- 80.0-83.99% = B-
- 77.0-79.00% = C+
- 74.0-76.99% = C
- 70.0-73.99% = C-
- 60.0-69.00% = D
- 60% or below = E

Topics & Due Date Overview

Week	Day	Topic	Due Dates (Tuesdays at midnight)
1	Day 1	Foundational Thoughts - Age	
2	Day 2	Foundational Thoughts - Intersectionality	

	Day 3	Adulthood as Mindset	
3	Day 4	Adulthood as a Set of Markers	News Critique #1
	Day 5	Education	
4	Day 6	Education	OpEd #1
	Day 7	Education	
5	Day 8	Financial Independence	
	Day 9	Debt	
6	Day 10	Marriage	News Critique #2
	Day 11	Marriage	
7	Day 12	Having Children	
	Day 13	Having Children	
8	Day 14	Working Class Adulthood	OpEd #2
	Day 15	Working Class Adulthood	
9	Day 16	Peer Review Workshops	
	Day 17	Adulthood in History	
10	Day 18	Adulthood in the Media	Submit Revision

Required Readings Week 1

Foundational Thoughts: Age – Thursday, June 26

Laz, Cheryl. 1998. "Act Your Age." *Sociological Forum* 13(1):85–113.

Burton, Linda. 2007. "Childhood Adultification in Economically Disadvantaged Families: A Conceptual Model." *Family Relations* 56(4):329–45.

Week 2

Foundational Thoughts: Intersectionality - Tuesday, July 1

Carbado, Devon W., Kimberlé Crenshaw, Vickie M. , Mays and Barbara Tomlinson. 2013.

"Intersectionality: Mapping the Movements of a Theory." *Du Bois Review: Social Science Research on Race*, 10(2), 303-312.

King, Deborah. 1988. "Multiple Jeopardy, Multiple Consciousness: The Context of Black Feminist Ideology," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 14 (1): 88-111.

Adulthood as a Mindset - Thursday, July 3

Arnett, Jeffrey Jensen. 2000. "Emerging Adulthood: A Theory of Development from the Late Teens through the Twenties." *American Psychologist* 55(5):469–80.

Syed, Moin and Lauren L. Mitchell. 2013. "Race, Ethnicity, and Emerging Adulthood: Retrospect and Prospects." *Emerging Adulthood* 1(2):83–95.

Cote, James E. 2014. "The Dangerous Myth of Emerging Adulthood: An Evidence-Based Critique of a Flawed Developmental Theory." *Applied Developmental Science* 18(4):177–88.

Week 3

Adulthood as a Set of Markers - Tuesday, July 8

Furstenberg Jr, Frank F., Sheela Kennedy, Vonnie C. McLoyd, Rubén G. Rumbaut, and Richard A. Settersten Jr. 2004. "Growing up Is Harder to Do." *Contexts* 3(3):33–41.

Nelson, L. J., Padilla-Walker, L. M., Carroll, J. S., Madsen, S. D., Barry, C. M., & Badger, S. (2007). "If you want me to treat you like an adult, start acting like one!" Comparing the criteria that emerging adults and their parents have for adulthood. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 21(4), 665.

Education – Thursday, July 10

Hamilton, Laura, and Elizabeth A. Armstrong. 2014. "The (Mis)Education of Monica and Karen." *Contexts*. 11(4):22-27.

Week 4

Education - Tuesday, July 15

Jack, Anthony Abraham. 2019. *The Privileged Poor: How Elite Colleges Are Failing Disadvantaged Students*. Harvard University Press. Pages 1-131.

Education - Thursday, July 17

Jack, Anthony Abraham. 2019. *The Privileged Poor: How Elite Colleges Are Failing Disadvantaged Students*. Harvard University Press. Pages 132-224.

Week 5

Financial Independence - Tuesday, July 22

van Stee, Elena G. 2025. "Performing Independence: Cultural Contradictions of Intergenerational Financial Transfers in Young Adulthood." Working Paper.

Schnaiberg, Allan and Sheldon Goldenberg. 1989. "From Empty Nest to Crowded Nest: The Dynamics of Incompletely-Launched Young Adults." *Social Problems*, 36(3): 251–269.

Stephanie L. Canizales. 2023. "Work Primacy and the Social Incorporation of Unaccompanied, Undocumented Latinx Youth in the United States." *Social Forces*. 101(3):1372–1395.

Debt - Thursday, July 24

Houle, Jason. N. 2014. "A Generation Indebted: Young Adult Debt across Three Cohorts." *Social Problems* 61(3):448–465.

Halpern-Meehin, Sarah, Kathryn Edin, Laura Tach, and Jennifer Sykes. 2015. Chapter 5: "Debt—I Am Hoping to Eliminate That Word!" *It's Not Like I'm Poor: How Working Families Make Ends Meet in a Post-Welfare World*.

Week 6

Marriage I - Tuesday, July 29

- Fallon, Katherine and Casey Stockstill. 2018. "The Condensed Courtship Clock: How Elite Women Manage Self-Development and Marriage Ideals." *Socius: Sociological Research for a Dynamic World*.
- Hamilton, Laura T. and Armstrong, Elizabeth A. 2021. "Parents, Partners, and Professions: Reproduction and Mobility in a Cohort of College Women." *American Journal of Sociology* 171(1): 102-151.

Marriage II - Thursday, July 31

- Kefalas, M. J., F. F. Furstenberg, P. J. Carr, and L. Napolitano. 2011. "'Marriage Is More than Being Together': The Meaning of Marriage for Young Adults." *Journal of Family Issues* 32(7):845-75.
- Allison, Rachel. 2023. "Why wait?": Early marriage among Southern college students." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 85:923-940.

Week 7

Children I - Tuesday, August 5

- Selections from Edin, Kathryn and Maria Kefalas. 2005. *Promises I Can Keep*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Conwell, Jordan and Catherine Doren. 2021. "Maternal Education, Family Formation, and Child Development: The Continuing Significance of Race." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 83:563-583.

Children II- Thursday, August 7

- England, P., Caudillo, M. L., Littlejohn, K., Bass, B. C., & Reed, J. 2016. "Why Do Young, Unmarried Women Who Do Not Want to Get Pregnant Contracept Inconsistently? Mixed-Method Evidence for the Role of Efficacy." *Socius*, 2.
- Blackstone, Amy. 2014. "Childless...or Childfree?" *Contexts* (13)4: 68-70.

Week 8

Working-Class Adulthood - Tuesday, August 12

- Silva, Jennifer. 2015. *Coming Up Short: Working-Class Adulthood in an Age of Uncertainty*. Oxford University Press. Introduction through Chapter 4

Working-Class Adulthood - Thursday, August 14

- Silva, Jennifer. 2015. *Coming Up Short: Working-Class Adulthood in an Age of Uncertainty*. Oxford University Press. Chapter 4 through the Research Methods Appendix.

Week 9

Peer Review Workshop - Tuesday, August 19

No reading.

Adulthood in History - Thursday, August 21

Mintz, Stephen. 2004. Huck's Raft. Chapter 7.

Modell, John. 1989. *Into One's Own: From Youth to Adulthood in the United States, 1920-1975*. Berkeley: University of California Press. Selections.

Week 10

Adulthood on Film - Tuesday, August 26

No reading—documentary screened in class

Revised Draft due

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Academic Honor Principle

As a Dartmouth student, you must follow the [the Academic Honor Principle](#).

Students with Disabilities/Medical Issues 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.

Religious Observances

Dartmouth has a deep commitment to support students' religious observances and diverse faith practices. 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 meet with me as soon as possible—before the end of the second week of the term at the latest—to discuss appropriate course adjustments.