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LIT 6856
Fall 2012
W E1-3

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Childhood Studies

What is/was/will be children's or childhood studies? What are the pros and cons of such a rubric? Is this enterprise just getting started, or winding down, or both, or neither? Those questions front and center, this course focuses on issues of field, disciplinarity, methodology, professionalization, and institutionalization. We'll consider children's or childhood studies in relation to fields like history, anthropology, and cultural studies, with special attention to (comparative) children's literature and to philosophy. We will also interact with graduate students involved in the first and groundbreaking PhD program in childhood studies at Rutgers-Camden.

We'll have two overall concerns: what kind of work has been done in the name of children's studies and its analogs, and also, what are the pros and cons of various rubrics, approaches, forms of institutionalization, etc.?

Texts

Robin Bernstein, *Racial Innocence* (NYUP, 2011)
Alison Gopnik, *The Philosophical Baby* (Picador, 2009)
Anne Higonnet, *Pictures of Innocence* (Thames and Hudson, 1998)
Henry Jenkins, ed., *The Children's Culture Reader* (NYU, 1998)
Emer O'Sullivan, *Comparative Children's Literature* (Routledge, 2005)
Sara L. Schwebel, *Child-Sized History: Fictions of the Past in U. S. Classrooms*
(Vanderbilt UP 2011)
Gayatri Spivak, *Death of a Discipline* (Columbia UP, 2003)
John Wall, *Ethics in Light of Childhood* (Georgetown UP, 2010)
Shelby Anne Wolf and Shirley Brice Heath, *The Braid of Literature* (Harvard UP, 1992)

One applied philosophy of/and kid lit title of your choice: Jacob M. Held, ed., *Dr. Seuss and Philosophy: Oh, the Things You Can Think!* Or perhaps Baggett and Klein, eds., *Harry Potter and Philosophy: If Aristotle Ran Hogwarts*, or Dunn, Michaud, and Irwin, eds., *The Hunger Games and Philosophy: A Critique of Pure Treason?* Other titles will work if they deal with philosophy and childhood or children's culture.

And selections from e-reserves, under my name and LIT 6856 (section 09CE). Anything listed on the reading schedule and not on this list of texts is included in e-reserves.

Assignments and Evaluation

Rutgers Partner Profile. Write analytical overview of your Rutgers-Camden research partner's major areas of research and proposed dissertation project (goals, data, methodologies, goals, current status). What sorts of expertise and credentialing did your

partner bring to the Camden program, and how is the major project fashioned with respect to such? What challenges are particular to this project? What sorts of professional identity might it perform/enable? 5-10 d-s pp. I imagine length will vary.

Field–Discipline Exercise. Analyze and/or theorize what childhood studies does or might look like in relation to an established field, body of knowledge, or disciplinary formation: for example, childhood studies and postcolonial studies; childhood studies and narrative medicine; childhood studies and film studies; childhood studies and criminology. 7-10 d-s pp.

Seminar essay. Your long project should be concerned with some aspect of childhood studies, micro or macro. While the paper does not have to deal primarily with theoretical or methodological issues, it should address at some level the status or function of childhood studies. If appropriate, it can build on the Field-Discipline Exercise. 15-20 d-s pp.

Regular attendance and active participation are essential; come prepared and plan to miss no more than 1 class. Absences beyond such may affect your course grade.

Partner profile:	20%
Field-Discipline Exercise:	30%
Seminar essay:	50%

Academic Honesty

All students are required to abide by the Academic Honesty Guidelines that have been accepted by the University. Exhibiting honesty in academic pursuits and reporting violations of the Academic Honesty Guidelines will encourage others to act with integrity. Violations of the Academic Honesty Guidelines shall result in judicial action and a student being subject to the sanctions in paragraph XIV of the Student Conduct Code. The conduct set forth hereinafter constitutes a violation of the Academic Honesty Guidelines (University of Florida Rule 6C1_4.017). For more information about academic honesty, including definitions of plagiarism and collusion, see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/academic.php>.

Students with Disabilities

The Disability Resource Center in the Dean of Students Office provides students and faculty with information and support regarding accommodations for students with disabilities in the classroom. Staff at the Disability Resource Center will assist any student who registers as having a disability. Official documentation of a disability is required to determine eligibility for appropriate classroom accommodations. For more information about Student Disability Services, see: <http://www.ufl.edu/disability/>

Harassment

It is the policy of The University of Florida to provide an educational and working environment for its students, faculty and staff that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment. In accordance with federal and state law, the University prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex, including sexual harassment. Sex discrimination and sexual harassment will not be tolerated, and individuals who engage in such conduct will be subject to disciplinary action. The University encourages students, faculty, staff and visitors to promptly report sex discrimination and sexual harassment. For more, see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/> and <http://www.hr.ufl.edu/eo/harassment.htm>

Schedule

August

- 22 Introductions.
- 29 **Some Histories of Childhood.** Morrison, "Introduction: Medieval Children's Literature"; Benzaquen, "Childhood, Identity, and Human Science in the Enlightenment"; Ryan, "How New is the 'New' Social Study of Childhood?"; Mead and Benedict, Chs. 1 and 2 from *Childhood in Contemporary Culture*; Ariès, "From Immodesty to Innocence" (in Jenkins, *The Children's Culture Reader*); Grew, "On Seeking Global History's Inner Child."

September

- 5 Higonnet, *Pictures of Innocence*.
- Recommended: Jenkins, *The Children's Culture Reader*, Part I.
- 12 **Children's Culture.** Jenkins, *The Children's Culture Reader*, Introduction, and Part II.
- 19 **Childhood Studies Marathon!** Lenzer, "Children's Studies"; Travisano, "Of Dialectic and Divided Consciousness"; Flynn, "The Intersection..."; Coats, "Keepin' It Plural"; Galbraith, "Hear My Cry"; Griswold, "The Future of the Profession"; Kidd, "Children's Culture..." and "The Case Against Childhood Studies"; Gubar, "The Case for Childhood Studies"; Honeyman, intro to *Consuming Agency* (handout) and "A Childhood Studies Primer."
- 26 **Are We Not Childhood Studies?** Kearney, "Coalescing: The Development of Girl Studies"; Leslie, "Preclusion: Experi-Mental"; Mao, "Introduction: Talking About Beauty"; Lesnik-Oberstein, "On Having an Own Child"; Hines, "Playing

with Children"; Mickenberg, "American Studies and Childhood Studies"; Levander, "Introduction."

October

- 3 **Children's Literature as Childhood Studies.** Wolf and Heath, *The Braid of Literature*. Rutgers-Camden partner profile due.
- 10 Schwebel, *Child-Sized History*.
- 17 Spivak, *Death of a Discipline*; O'Sullivan, *Comparative Children's Literature*.
- 24 Bernstein, *Racial Innocence*.
- 31 In-class guest, Jerry Phillips. Honeyman, "Trick or Treat."

November

- 7 **Philosophy of/for Childhood.** Gopnik, *The Philosophical Baby*. Field-Discipline Exercise due.
- 14 Discussion of your chosen "applied" philosophical texts.
- 21 No class.
- 28 Wall, *Ethics in Light of Childhood*.

December

- 5 Reports on seminar projects.

Seminar essay due December 12