

# Youth Participation in Conflict & Peace

## CONF 695 001– Spring 2008

<u>Class Time:</u>	Thursday, 4:30 – 7:10
<u>Location:</u>	Arlington Campus, Truland Building, Room 666B
<u>Instructor:</u>	Patricia Maulden, Ph.D. 703.834.5666 <a href="mailto:pmaulden@gmu.edu">pmaulden@gmu.edu</a>
<u>Office Hours:</u>	By appointment

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### Course Description and Objectives

This course is designed to review the roles and experiences of children and youth as they directly participate in conflict and peace. In particular, the readings will focus on the categorization of young people, the socio-cultural and political roles they are assigned, and the socio-cultural and political roles they claim. The primary objectives of the course are: (1) to develop a better understanding of the generational dynamics of conflict and peace; and (2) to place these generational dynamics on the theoretical and practical map of conflict analysis and resolution.

#### During the course class participants will:

- ⊗ Gain a better understanding of child and youth development trajectories and the role of agency in the social actions of youth.
- ⊗ Examine generational power dynamics and the gendered aspects of child and youth participation in conflict and peace.
- ⊗ Explore youth gang activities, child/youth soldiering, constructing a typology of conflict participation.
- ⊗ Explore youth activism and the involvement of children and youth in peacebuilding or peacemaking projects.
- ⊗ Integrate course topics into the larger framework of conflict analysis and resolution theories and practices.

## Course Expectations

1. Consistent attendance. Barring exceptional circumstances, you will be expected to attend class on a regular basis.
2. Effective preparation. Class involves discussion and activities that depend on advance preparation.
3. Appropriate participation. Actively engage in the course in as many formats as you are able.
4. Course completion. In keeping with departmental policy, incomplete grades will be given only in cases of illness, either personal or in an immediate family member.

## Course Requirements

1. Attendance & Participation 20%  
Regular attendance and active participation in the class discussion is expected. Excessive absences may result in a failing grade. In the event of you have to be absent more than one of two class meetings, please consult the instructor.
2. Reflection Essay 25%  
Each student will choose a book written in the first person from a list that will be provided. The student will then write an **8 to 10 page** essay exploring how the narrative account altered understanding, emotional involvement in the subject, and perceptions or conceptualizations of both course topics as well as conflict analysis and resolution theory and practice. **Reflection essay book choice due February 14.**  
**Essay Due: March 20.**
3. Group Presentation 25%  
Small groups of students will be formed by the second week of class and will work together throughout the semester. Each group will choose one of the case study books that are listed in the readings section. The main purpose of the groups will be to explore issues raised in the book and how those issues ‘fit’ into the conflict analysis and resolution framework and how they compare to other course readings.  
**Group case study choices are due February 7.**  
Occasionally time will be set aside at the end of class for group meetings but the group will also have to meet outside of class, through email, and so on. **Groups will report progress on their presentation March 27.**  
Each member is expected to contribute substantially to the presentation materials as well as participate in the presentation and question and answer time following the presentation. The total presentation time is 30 minutes followed by 15 minutes of class discussion. **Group presentations are scheduled for April 17 & 24.**

#### 4. Research Paper

30%

This paper is an analytical study of a course topic chosen in consultation with the instructor.

**A brief proposal outlining the subject and the approach to the subject is due February 28.**

The paper should be 12 to 15 double spaced pages or about 4,000 words.

The paper should reflect graduate level research, analysis, and writing. Either Chicago, MLA, or APA citation styles are acceptable.

**Due: May 8.**

### University Resources and Assistance

- ⊖ If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 703.993.2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.
- ⊖ The Writing Center is available to all Mason students and offers online and individual consultations as well as workshops and mini-courses. Writers at all levels can benefit. Each Mason campus has a location. You can find them on the Arlington Campus in the Original Building, Room334C, by phone at 703 993-4491 or online at: <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>.
- ⊖ Academic integrity: You are responsible for knowing, understanding, and following Mason's Honor Code, found at <http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/#Anchor12>. Be sure that all work submitted is your own and that you use sources appropriately. I strongly recommend that you review requirements regarding use and citation of sources prior to submitting your final work.

### Readings

#### Required Books

The texts, listed below, are available at the GMU Arlington Bookstore or from online booksellers.

1. Briggs, Jimmie. 2005. *Innocents Lost: When Child Soldiers Go to War*. New York: Basic Books.
2. Hernandez, Arturo. 1998. *Peace in the Street: Breaking the Cycle of Gang Violence*. Washington, D.C.: Child Welfare League of America, Inc.

3. Honwana, Alcinda. 2006. *Child Soldiers in Africa*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
4. Kontos, Louis, David Brotherton, and Luis Barrios. 2003. *Gangs and Society: Alternative Perspectives*. New York: Colombia University Press.
5. Virgil, James. 2007. *The Projects: Gang and Non-Gang Families in East Los Angeles*. Austin, Texas: The University of Texas Press.
6. Yates, Miranda and James Youniss. 1999. *The Roots of Civic Identity: International Perspectives on Community Service and Activism in Youth*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

### Group Case Study Books

1. Bourgois, Philippe. 1995. *In Search of Respect: Selling Crack in El Barrio*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
2. Hall, Julia. 2001. *Canal Town Youth: Community Organization and the Development of Adolescent Identity*. New York: State University of New York Press.
3. Riaño-Alcalá, Pilar. 2006. *Dwellers of Memory: Youth and Violence in Medellín, Colombia*. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction Publishers.
4. Richards, Paul. 1996. *Fighting for the Rain Forest: War, Youth and Resources in Sierra Leone*. Oxford: James Currey.

### Reflection Essay Books

1. Beah, Ishmael. 2007. *A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
2. McDonnell, Faith J.H. and Grace Akallo. 2007. *Girl Soldier: A Story of Hope for Northern Uganda's Children*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Chosen Books.
3. Rodriguez, Luis J. 2005. *Always Running La Vida Loca: Gang Days in L.A.* New York: Touchstone.
4. Scott, Kody. 1993. *Monster: The Autobiography of an L.A. Gang Member*. New York: Grove Press.

### Articles

The articles may be found on the GMU Library page as E-Reserves unless otherwise noted.

- Achvarina, Vera and Simon F. Reich. 2006. No Place to Hide: Refugees, Displaced Persons and the Recruitment of Child Soldiers. *In International Security*. Volume 31, No. 1, pages 127-164. (E Journals)
- Argenti, Nicolas. 2002. Youth in Africa: A Major Resource for Change. *In Young Africa: Realising the Rights of Children and Youth*. Alex de Waal and Nicolas Argenti, eds. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, Inc.
- Brook, Judith S., David W. Brook, and Martin Whiteman. 2007. Growing up in a Violent Society: Longitudinal predictors of Violence in Colombian Adolescents. *In American Journal of Community Psychology*. Volume 40, No. 1-2, pages 82-95. (E Journals)
- Cairns, Ed. 1996. Chapter 5. Children and Peace. *In Children and Political Violence*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd.
- Comaroff, Jean and John Comaroff. 2005. Reflections on Youth: From the Past to the Postcolony. *In Makers and Breakers: Children & Youth in Postcolonial Africa*. Alcinda Honwana and Filip De Boeck, eds. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, Inc. (Class Handout)
- Florenz-Morris, Mauricio. 2007. Joining Guerrilla Groups in Colombia: Individual Motivations and Processes for Entering a Violent Organization. *In Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*. Volume 30, No. 7, pages 615-634. (E Journals)
- Fox, Mary-Jane. 2004. Girl Soldiers: Human Security and Gendered Insecurity. *In Security Dialogue*. Volume 35, No. 4, pages 465-479. (E Journals)
- James, Allison and Adrian L. James. 2004. Chapter 3. The Production and Reproduction of Childhood. *In Constructing Childhood: Theory, Policy and Social Practice*. New York: PALGRAVE MACMILLAN. (Class Handout)
- Miller, Jody and Norman A. White. 2004. Situational Effects of Gender Inequality on Girls' Participation in Violence. *In Girls; Violence: Myths and Realities*. Christine Alder and Anne Worrall, eds. New York: State University of New York Press.
- Rosen, David M. 2005. Chapter 5. The Politics of Age. *In Armies of the Young: Child Soldiers in War and Terrorism*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Sommers, Marc. 2006. *Fearing Africa's Young Men: The Case of Rwanda*. Social Development Paper No. 32, Conflict Prevention & Reconstruction. The World Bank. (Emailed PDF)
- Urdal, Henrik. 2006. A Clash of Generations? Youth Bulges and Political Violence. *In International Studies Quarterly*. Volume 50, No. 3, pages 607-629. (E Journals)

- Utas, Mats. 2005. Agency of Victims: Young Women in the Liberian Civil War. *In Makers and Breakers: Children & Youth in Postcolonial Africa*. Alcinda Honwana and Filip De Boeck, eds. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, Inc.
- Van Slyck, Michael R., Marilyn Stern, and Salman Elbedour. 2004. Adolescents' Beliefs About Their Conflict Behavior: Correlates, Consequences, and Cross-Cultural Issues. *In How Children Understand War and Peace: A Call for International Peace Education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc., Publishers. (Class handout)
- West, Harry G. 2004. Girls with Guns: Narrating the Experience of War of FRELIMO's 'Female Detachment.' *In Children and Youth on the Front Line: Ethnography, Armed Conflict, and Displacement*. Joy Boyden and Joanna de Berry, eds. New York: Berghahn Books.
- Wyness, Michael. 2006. Chapter 4. Childhood in Crisis: Social Disorder and Reconstruction. *In Childhood and Society: An Introduction to the Sociology of Childhood*. New York: PALGRAVE MACMILLAN. (Class handout)

## Class Agenda

### Part I. Course Themes & Concepts

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| <p>Week 1 – January 24</p> <p>Discuss syllabus</p> <p>Introduce main themes</p> <p>Begin exploration of developmental trajectories</p> <p>Distribute articles for next week</p>  | <p>Course Overview</p>                   |
| <p>Week 2 – January 31</p> <p>Explore constructions of childhood</p> <p>Examine childhood as a political category</p> <p>Discuss agency, age, and power</p> <p><u>Readings:</u></p> <p>James</p> <p>Comaroff</p> <p>Wyness</p> <p>Van Slyck et al.</p> | <p>Childhood &amp; Human Development</p> |

Week 3 – February 7                      Youth & Gender

Examine gendered implications  
Discuss adolescence and political violence

Readings:

Sommers  
Brook  
Urdal  
Fox

Group case study choices due.

Part II. Gangs

Week 4 – February 14                      Social & Political Conceptualizations

Explore social theory and street gang typology  
Discuss multiple marginality and identity  
Explore gang life

Readings:

Kontos Chapters 1-5  
Vigil Chapters 1-6

Reflection essay book choice due.

Week 5 – February 21                      Membership & Agency

Examine gendered aspects of gang membership  
Explore membership as outgrown of agency  
Discuss the role of the family

Readings:

Kontos Chapters 6-10  
Vigil Chapters 7-9

Group project time.

Week 6 – February 28                      Intervention & Peacemaking

Explore responses to gang membership  
Consider peacemaking approaches

Readings:

Hernandez (all)  
Vigil Chapters 11-12

Brief proposal outlining subject/approach to research paper topic due.

### Part III. Child Soldiers

Week 7 – March 6                      Guest Speaker

Week 8 – March 13                     Spring Break

Week 9 – March 20                     Gender & Agency

Explore historical/social contexts

Examine child soldier recruitment

Discuss gender and child/youth soldiering

Readings:

Honwana Chapters 2-4

West

Utas

Reflection essay due.

Week 10 – March 27                    Politics & Motivation

Discuss country case studies

Explore political implications of underage soldiers

Examine individual motivations and agency

Readings:

Briggs Chapters 1-3

Florenz-Morris

Rosen

Group project progress report.

Week 11 – April 3                      Intervention & Peacemaking

Discuss country case studies

Explore DDR programs

Look to the future

Readings:

Briggs Chapters 4-5

Honwana Chapters 5-6

Group project time.

### Part IV. Youth Activism

Week 12 – April 10                     Constructing Civic Identity

Discuss aspects of civic involvement

Examine agency and civic identity

Readings:

Yates & Youniss Introduction to Chapter 6

Week 13 – April 17                      Social & Political Implications

Examine socialization to citizenship  
Discuss political education through activism

Readings:

Yates & Youniss Chapters 7 to Conclusion.

Group Presentations.

Part V. Integration

Week 14 – April 24                      Gender & Agency

Place child/youth gender and agency within CAR framework

Readings:

Achvarina & Reich

Miller

Group Presentations.

Week 15 – May 1                      Hope & Potential

Discuss youth as agents of change

Explore youth as peacemakers

Course evaluations

Readings:

Argenti

Cairns

Research paper due May 8.