

Department: Psychology

Course No. : 3402W

Title: Child Development in Sociopolitical Context

Credits: 3

Contact Person: John Rickards

Content Area: CA 4 INTL

WQ: W

CA 4 International: YES

Catalog Copy: PSYC 3402W. Child Development in Sociopolitical Context Either semester. Three credits. Prerequisite: PSYC 1100, PSYC 1101 or 1103, AND PSYC 2400 or instructor consent; ENGL 1010 or 1011 or 3800.

Social, political, economic, and geographic influences on child development from a global perspective. Topics include children orphaned by AIDS or affected by war, child labor, and child trafficking.

Course Justification:

a. Reasons for adding this course: By nature of their age, education, and nationality, college students in the U.S. have a critical role to play in the future of the world's most vulnerable children. These same students, however, often have limited knowledge about specific regional issues affecting children or strategies for social or political activism. The proposed course uses developmental psychology as a

framework for increasing students' awareness of global issues and allowing students to appreciate and practice their role as global citizens. At the same time, the content of the course will help students better understand how the development of all children is shaped by contextual factors, and ideally draw from this knowledge in working with individuals from diverse backgrounds in whatever career they choose (e.g., as a teacher or social worker in CT).

b) This course is appropriate at the 200 level (in the current numbering system; 3000 in the new system) because students will be expected to already have some foundational knowledge about psychology and child development, and to be able to critically apply this knowledge to a new area (international child human rights issues). In addition, the writing instruction of this course will focus on teaching students how to use social science and epidemiological research and statistics in both research and persuasive writing. To do well at this form of writing, students will need to have already completed foundational writing courses (i.e., 100 or 1000 level courses).

c) At present, there are few social science courses, and no Psychology courses, that meet the International Requirement of GEOC Group 4: Multiculturalism and Diversity. There is also a shortage in W course within the Psychology Department, as well as in the larger CLAS. Thus, this course will fill existing voids in the department. The proposed course also fits with the goals set forth by the Provost's Developing Global Citizens Task Force. The content and requirements of the course will enhance global citizenship by promoting students' awareness of international issues, challenging students to think critically about the influence of sociopolitical factors on individual development and ethical complexities in world issues (e.g., child labor in response to family poverty), and providing a hands-on opportunity for learning about strategies for social activism.

d) No effect on other departments is expected. This course was selected for a Provost GEOC award which included faculty members from departments most likely to have overlap (HDFS, Sociology). Faculty representatives from these divisions were enthusiastic about the course and not concerned with potential overlap with existing courses in these departments.

e & f) There is no overlap with existing psychology courses. There may be minimal overlap with two courses in HDFS ("Parent-Child Relations in Cross-Cultural Perspective," and "Child Welfare, Law, and Social Policy,"). However, Dr. Jane Goldman, an HDFS faculty and member of the GEOC committee, did not feel the course would have any negative effect on that department and thought the course would be a beneficial addition to current offerings.

g) No effect on regional campus

Gen Ed Justification:

a) This course involves examination of various social, political, economic, and geographic influences on child development in countries outside the United States. In particular, we will examine how these contextual factors influence the “normative” tasks of childhood using developmental psychopathology and international human rights as guiding frameworks. Goals of the course are for students to: 1) acquire a more global and contextualized perspective on child development; 2) gain familiarity with contemporary international child and human rights issues; 3) practice articulating ideas about complex ethical issues in both written and oral form; 3) improve writing skills for the purpose of research and social and political advocacy.

b) Students will be expected to read assigned readings for each week and participate in class activities and discussions. Grades will be based on the following assignments:

20% - Reaction Paper (3-5 pages)

40% - Research Paper (12-15 pages, with required revisions revision)

30% - Activism Projects (letter + flyer) (2-3 pages, with required revisions)

10% - Final Exam/Portfolio

Specific details about each of these assignments can be found in the syllabus.

c) Instruction will involve readings, videos, and class lecture/discussions focusing on 6 primary topics: Children orphaned by AIDS, children in war zones, children as soldiers, child labor, “street” children, and child trafficking and sexual exploitation. Initial classes will focus on the two frameworks that will guide exploration of these six topics: children's human rights (e.g., Convention of the Rights of the Child) and developmental psychopathology. In addition, because this is a w course, instruction in writing (didactic instruction, peer review, in class revision activities) will be part of course instruction. Writing instruction will specifically address how to use social science and epidemiological studies in research writing and persuasive writing (i.e., writings meant for social or political activism purposes).

How Course Meets Goals of Gen Ed.:

In keeping with general education goals, it is expected that students will: i) acquire intellectual breadth and awareness of their era through exposure to international health and human rights issues which they may have limited familiarity; ii) improve critical judgment through discussions of how context shapes development internationally and within our own country; iii) deepen appreciation for the diversity of human experience by understanding the varied environments in which many children live; and iv) develop moral sensitivity by learning about the experiences of children growing up in dangerous or suboptimal conditions.

CA4 Criteria:

This course meets the requirements of GEOC Group 4: Multiculturalism and Diversity/ International. The course content focuses entirely on the experiences of children growing up in various countries outside the United States, and particularly children made vulnerable by economic, social and political factors. Through discussion, class activities, and written assignments, it is expected that students will: a) develop an understanding of and sensitivity to issues involving human rights; b) develop an awareness of the dynamics of social, political, and/or economic power that shape child development; and c) draw similarities between the experiences of children in different countries and within the United States. Although this course focuses on international issues, the content of the course will help students better understand how the development of all children is shaped by contextual factors, and ideally draw from this knowledge in working with individuals from diverse backgrounds in whatever career they choose (e.g., as a teacher or social worker in CT).

W Criteria:

This course is designed as a W course.

1. Writing assignments for this course have been designed to enhance students knowledge of a specific issue related to child development in sociopolitical context and to improve writing skills for research and persuasive writing. Grades will be based on the following assignments:

20% - Reaction Paper

40% - Research Paper

30% - Activism Projects (letter + flyer) 10% - Final Exam/Portfolio

Brief descriptions of these assignments are provided below (longer descriptions are in the preliminary syllabus)

Reaction paper (20%). The reaction paper is a 3-5 page response to a personal narrative (i.e., a book, documentary, etc) that highlights an issue related to child development in sociopolitical context. The reaction paper should include the following:

- 1) Brief description of what you read/viewed
- 2) Example of how this issue would impact 1-2 aspects of normative child development
- 3) Critique of format/content (What surprised or moved you the most? What are the strengths and weaknesses in how this personal account was presented? Are there parts that you think should have been done differently? Do you see similar issues face American children?)

Research Paper (40%). The research paper should review a specific issue relevant to child development in sociopolitical context. In selecting a topic for this paper, you can focus on a topic discussed in class by going into further detail, focus on an issue covered in class in a different geographical region (child miners in Bolivia, children as soldiers in Columbia), or focus on a different issue (e.g., girl rights in Afghanistan; effect of landmines in Cambodia or Vietnam on children, impact of inheritance rights on girls and women). You also may choose to write about a relevant issue in the United States (e.g., child farmworkers, child right violations in the juvenile justice system). The paper should be written in APA style, with appropriate citations and references included, and be approximately 12-15 pages (double spaced). Within this paper, you should be sure to address the following four areas:

1) What is the nature of the issue? (e.g., scope of children affected in the region, political or social factors that contribute to problem, etc)? (approximately 5-7 pages)

2) What specific aspects of child development are most likely to be impacted? (approximately 2-4 pages)

3) Which of the rights included in the Convention on the Rights of the Child are most jeopardized by this issue? (approximately 2 pages)

4) Are there programs, organizations, or governmental agencies addressing this issue? If so, what seems most beneficial for children's development? If not, what might be beneficial? (approximately 2-4 pages)

The research paper assignment will be divided into 3 parts with different due dates:

1. Topic Selection: 1-2 paragraphs about the selected topic, plus 5 "facts" about the scope or nature of the issue with citations (e.g., how many people are affected) DUE: (5%). You will get feedback on this topic from me.

2. Initial draft: Preliminary draft of paper. You will get feedback on this draft from me. It is expected that this feedback will be incorporated into the final paper. DUE: (10%)

3. Final paper: DUE: (25%) Final papers will be graded on breadth and accuracy of content, and analysis of the literature, as well as clarity, organization and quality of expression

Activism Writings (30%). One goal of this class is for students to learn how to use information obtained through research or anecdotal stories for the sake of written documents aimed at social or political advocacy. In order to meet this goal, you are required to write a 1-2 page letter to a representative and create a 1 page flyer aimed at informing college populations about the issue you have selected for your research paper. You should use the Topic Selection assignment of the research paper (described above) as a basis for information included in this letter and flyer. In class, we will talk more about these writing assignments and I will provide examples. There will be an opportunity for in-class, anonymous peer review and revision before the final copy is handed in. The first draft of the letter and flyer are due on _____(10%). The final copies are due on _____ (20%).

Writing instruction in the course will be done through didactic instruction, individual meeting for revisions on research paper (with written commentary), peer review of activism writings (with written commentary), and in-class assignments on persuasive writing. Opportunities for revision will come from feedback from the faculty (on research paper) and feedback from faculty and peers (on activism writing). The syllabus will inform students that they must pass the "W" component of the course in order to pass the course.

Resources: YES

Supplementary Information:

Psychology 3402W Child Development in Sociopolitical Context Spring 2009

Professor: Stephanie Milan, Ph.D.

Class meeting time:

Office: Bous 174; 486-5101

Office hours:

Course Description:

This course involves examination of various social, political, economic, and geographic influences on child development in countries outside the United States. In particular, we will examine how these contextual factors influence the “normative” tasks of childhood using developmental psychopathology and international human rights as guiding frameworks. Instruction will involve readings, videos, and class lecture/discussions focusing on 6 primary topics: Children orphaned by AIDS, children in war zones, children as soldiers, child labor, “street” children and child trafficking and sexual exploitation. Goals of the course are for students to: 1) acquire a more global and contextualized perspective on child

development; 2) gain familiarity with contemporary international child and human rights issues; 3) practice articulating ideas about complex ethical issues in both written and oral form; 3) improve writing skills for the purpose of research and social and political advocacy.

Required Text: (this will be a collection of readings by topic TBD)

Course requirements:

Students are responsible for completing all reading assignments in the syllabus prior to the start of each class and are expected to actively participate in class discussions and activities. Barring extenuating circumstances approved prior to due dates or a medical note, all papers must be handed in on the assigned due date. A grade will be deducted for each day the paper is late.

This is a writing intensive course, which means: a) there are substantial writing requirements, b) that writing instruction will be part of the material covered in the course; and c) you will be given opportunities for feedback and revision of your written work. As in all W courses, you must pass the writing assignments in order to pass the course by university policy. While it is anticipated that students will discuss their work with each other, and that class discussion will stimulate ideas, all written work must be completely and exclusively your own. Any evidence of plagiarism or academic misconduct will be reported to the office of the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and will be considered grounds for failure in the course and/or disciplinary action. The course is run in accordance with the rules of the University of Connecticut and College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. The university code on academic misconduct can be accessed at <<http://vm.uconn.edu/~dosa8/code2.html>> ,

Grades will be based on the following assignments:

20% - Reaction Paper

40% - Research Paper

30% - Activism Projects (letter + flyer) 10% - Final Exam/Portfolio

Students are encouraged to pick one topic and regional area to focus on across all written assignments.

Reaction paper (20%). The reaction paper is a 3-5 page response to a personal narrative (i.e., a book, documentary, etc) that highlights an issue related to child development in sociopolitical context. I will hand out a list of possible books, articles, or documentaries to help you find suitable options; however, your selection does not have to come from this list. I am available to help students make an appropriate selection given their interests. The reaction paper should include the following:

- 1) Brief description of what you read/viewed

- 2) Example of how this issue would impact 1-2 aspects of normative child development

- 3) Critique of format/content (What surprised or moved you the most? What are the strengths and weaknesses in how this personal account was presented? Are there parts that you think should have been done differently? Do you see similar issues face American children?)

Research Paper (40%). The research paper should review a specific issue relevant to child development in sociopolitical context. In selecting a topic for this paper, you can focus on a topic discussed in class by going into further detail, focus on an issue covered in class in a different geographical region (child miners in Bolivia, children as soldiers in Columbia), or focus on a different issue (e.g., girl rights in Afghanistan; effect of landmines in Cambodia or Vietnam on children, impact of inheritance rights on girls and women). You also may choose to write about a relevant issue in the United States (e.g., child farmworkers, child right violations in the juvenile justice system). The paper should be written in APA style, with appropriate citations and references included, and be approximately 12-15 pages (double spaced). Within this paper, you should be sure to address the following four areas:

- 1) What is the nature of the issue? (e.g., scope of children affected in the region, political or social factors that contribute to problem, etc)? (approximately 5-7 pages)

- 2) What specific aspects of child development are most likely to be impacted? (approximately 2-4 pages)

- 3) Which of the rights included in the Convention on the Rights of the Child are most jeopardized by this issue? (approximately 2 pages)

4) Are there programs, organizations, or governmental agencies addressing this issue? If so, what seems most beneficial for children's development? If not, what might be beneficial? (approximately 2-4 pages)

The research paper assignment will be divided into 3 parts with different due dates:

1. Topic Selection: 1-2 paragraphs about the selected topic, plus 5 "facts" about the scope or nature of the issue with citations (e.g., how many people are affected) DUE: (5%). You will get feedback on this topic from me.

2. Initial draft: Preliminary draft of paper. You will get feedback on this draft from me. It is expected that this feedback will be incorporated into the final paper. DUE: (10%)

3. Final paper: DUE: (25%) Final papers will be graded on breadth and accuracy of content, and analysis of the literature, as well as clarity, organization and quality of expression

Activism Writings (30%). One goal of this class is for students to learn how to use information obtained through research or anecdotal stories for the sake of written documents aimed at social or political advocacy. In order to meet this goal, you are required to write a 1-2 page letter to a representative and create a 1 page flyer aimed at informing college populations about the issue you have selected for your research paper. You should use the Topic Selection assignment of the research paper (described above) as a basis for information included in this letter and flyer. In class, we will talk more about these writing assignments and I will provide examples. There will be an opportunity for in-class, anonymous peer review and revision before the final copy is handed in. The first draft of the letter and flyer are due on _____ (10%). The final copies are due on _____ (20%). After you hand in the final draft, I will make _____ copies of your flyer for you. As part of the final exam/portfolio, you are expected to hand out this flyer to students and obtain signatures on a petition that will accompany your letter to a selected representative. This assignment differs from those in most classes, so we will talk more about it in class. You may choose to work alone on this assignment or with 1 other student (you will both receive the same grade and will be expected to get twice as many signatures).

Portfolio/Final exam (10%). University regulations require a final exam during finals week for all undergraduate courses. On the day of the final exam, you must bring a portfolio of your work this semester. This should include a copy of your final paper, a copy of your letter and flyer, and a copy of

your signed petitions (you don't have to include reaction papers). For the final exam, you will be asked to respond to 2-3 short essay questions about your work this semester.

Preliminary Schedule: (readings to be added)

Week 1 (1/21-1/27): Children's human rights; Tasks of normative development from the view of child psychology

Week 2: (1/28-2/3) Children orphaned by AIDS

Week 3: (2/4-2/10) Children in war zones

Week 4: (2/11-2/17) Children as soldiers; Instruction for beginning research

Due: Reaction paper

Week 5: (2/18-2/24) Children as refugees from war

Due: Topic Selection Paper

Week 6: (2/25-3/3) Writing instruction for activism project (e.g., using research/facts for persuasive purposes; letter writing; finding a representative)

Week 7: (3/3-3/9) Peer review of letter/flyer in class

Due: Draft of Letter & Flyer

SPRING BREAK (3/10-3/16)

Week 9: (3/17-3/23) Child labor

Due: Final copy of Letter & Flyer

Week 10: (3/24-3/30) Child labor

Week 11: (3/31-4/6) “Street” children

Due: First draft of paper

Week 12: (4/7-4/13) Class instruction on paper revisions (addressing common issues)

Individual meetings for feedback

Week 13: (4/14-4/20) Children in the sex trade

Week 14: (4/21-4/27) Strategies and programs towards change (guest lecture)

Week 15: (4/28-5/4) Strategies and programs towards change; Recap of common themes

5/____ Final Exam (Portfolio due)

(END OF SYLLABUS)