

Black Childhoods

Course Description: African-American Childhood is an upper-level seminar designed to introduce students to the literature on childhood and youth through the lens of African-American children's history. The class will demonstrate the relationship that race, gender and age have in shaping children's experiences. Readings will focus on institutions serving African-American children, their participation in civil rights struggles, and the representation of African-American children in popular culture. The class will also consider children as political actors in major moments of African-American history. Class assignments will include two long research papers, presentations on course texts and a field trip. Students will strengthen their expository writing, as well as their primary and secondary research skills.

Course Goals and Objectives:

1. Students will learn how to use primary source documents, interdisciplinary sources and secondary sources to understand and analyze history.
2. Students will debate the constructions and representations of black children from slavery to freedom
3. Students will connect historical struggles and activism to contemporary debates due to a sophisticated historical knowledge of U.S. racial, social, and political history.

Course Requirements:

Two Research Papers: Students will write **two major research papers** throughout the semester. *Students must discuss their paper topics with the professor no later than two months before the paper is due.*

Discussion Leadership: In pairs, students will be responsible for leading students in book discussions.

Grade Breakdown:

Paper I: 30%

Paper II: 40%

Participation (Active Engagement and Regular Attendance): 30%

Course Materials:

KING, WILMA *African American Childhoods: Historical Perspectives from Slavery to Civil Rights*

BALDWIN, JAMES *The Evidence of Things Not Seen*

BERNSTEIN, RACHEL *Racial Innocence*

DELMONT, MATTHEW *Nicest Kids in Town*

SIMMONS, LaKISHA *Crescent City Girls*