

**Youth & Conflict - Fall 2014**  
**CONF 399 Section 003 / CONF 695 Section 002**

Class Time: Thursday 10:30 am – 1:10 pm

Location: Innovation Hall 316

Instructor: Patricia Maulden, Ph.D.  
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Office Hours: By appointment

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## Course Description & Objectives

Welcome! This course explores aspects of youth in terms of categorization, context, dynamics at the local, regional, and global levels, and interactions with violence and peace. Youth can be much more than just a distinct life phase or political category as the readings will attest. Throughout the semester we will challenge the boundaries of how we understand the considerations and constraints of the transition to adulthood. 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 dynamics on the theoretical and practical map of conflict analysis and resolution.

As this course is designed for a combination of undergraduate and graduate students assignments will reflect appropriate expectations for each group. In class discussions, however, both student groups will be expected to engage in interactions as part of a unified community of scholars exploring the nexus of youth, conflict, and peace.

### 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.
2. Effective preparation. You are expected to come to class having read all of the week's reading assignments. The class is set up in a seminar format and involves discussion and activities that depend on advance preparation.
3. Classroom etiquette. Please come to class on time and prepared. Cell phones should not be visible during class discussion. You may use computers/tablets only to take notes and when you do it is with the understanding that no email or other internet activities will occur unless forming part of the in-class work that day.
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. Class assignments that are submitted late will be penalized. If a student has a documented emergency, special arrangements may be made with the instructor.
5. Paper format. Papers should be typed, double-spaced, have 1" margins, and Times New Roman 12-point font. The pages should be numbered and stapled together. Make sure that your name, course number, and paper title is on the first page. Edit your papers carefully as spelling and grammatical errors will lower your overall score. Chicago or Harvard citation styles are preferred.

## Course Materials

### Required Texts

Anderson, Elijah. 1999. *Code of the Street: Decency, Violence, and the Moral Life of the Inner City*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.

Honwana, Alcinda. 2013. *Youth and Revolution in Tunisia*. London: Zed Books.

Rosen, David M. 2005. *Armies of the Young: Child Soldiers in War and Terrorism*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

Taft, Jessica K. 2011. *Rebel Girls: Youth Activism and Social Change Across the Americas*. New York: New York University Press.

Vigil, James Diego. 2007. *The Projects: Gang and Non-Gang Families in East Los Angeles*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

### Required Articles (Available on Blackboard)

Courville, Sasha and Nicola Piper. 2004. Harnessing Hope Through NGO Activism. In *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 592(39-61).

Damon, William. 2004. What Is Positive Youth Development? In *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 591(13-24).

King, Nathaniel. 2007. Conflict as Integration: Youth Aspiration to Personhood in the Teleology of Sierra Leone's 'Senseless War.' *In Current African Issues* No. 36. Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, Uppsala University.

Utas, Mats. 2005. Victimcy, Girlfriending, Soldiering: Tactic Agency in a Young Woman's Social Navigation of the Liberian War Zone. *In Anthropological Quarterly*, Vol. 78(403-430).

## Academic Policies & Information

### ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

All George Mason University students have agreed to abide by the letter and the spirit of the Honor Code. You can find a copy of the Honor Code at [academicintegrity.gmu.edu](http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu). All violations of the Honor Code will be reported to the Honor Committee for review. The principle of academic integrity is taken very seriously and violations are treated gravely. With specific regards to plagiarism, three fundamental and rather simple principles to follow at all times are that: (1) all work submitted be your own; (2) when using the work or ideas of others, including fellow students, give full credit through accurate citations; and (3) if you are uncertain about the ground rules on a particular assignment, ask for clarification. If you have questions about when the contributions of others to your work must be acknowledged and appropriate ways to cite those contributions, please talk with the professor.

S-CAR requires that all written work submitted in partial fulfillment of course or degree requirements must be available in electronic form so that it can be compared with 4 electronic databases, as well as submitted to commercial services to which the School subscribes. Faculty may at any time submit a student's work without prior permission from the student. Individual instructors may require that written work be submitted in electronic as well as printed form. S-CAR's policy on plagiarism is supplementary to the George Mason University Honor Code; it is not intended to replace or substitute for it. Another aspect of academic integrity is the free play of ideas. Vigorous discussion and debate are encouraged in this course, with the expectation that all aspects of the class will be conducted with civility and respect for differing ideas, perspectives, and traditions. When in doubt, please ask for guidance and clarification.

### GMU E-MAIL ACCOUNTS

Students must use their Mason email accounts—either the existing “MEMO” system or a new “MASONLIVE” account to receive important University information, including messages related to this class. See <http://masonlive.gmu.edu> for more information. It will not be possible to contact you through another email account, and you should check your email for important course, S-CAR, and Mason information.

### OFFICE OF DISABILITY SERVICES

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the ODS. <http://ods.gmu.edu>

### OTHER USEFUL CAMPUS RESOURCES

- Writing Center: <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu> – Robinson Hall A114 (703.993.1200)
- Counseling and Psychological Services: <http://caps.gmu.edu/> (703.993.2380)
- University Library: “Ask a Librarian” <http://library.gmu.edu/mudge/IM/IMRef.html>; Mary Oberlies is S-CAR's liaison librarian and can be contacted at [moberlie@gmu.edu](mailto:moberlie@gmu.edu).

## UNIVERSITY POLICIES

The University Catalog, <http://catalog.gmu.edu> is the central resource for university policies affecting student, faculty, and staff conduct in university academic affairs. Other policies are available at <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu>. All members of the university community are responsible for knowing and following established policies.

S-CAR hosts a variety of activities during the semester, such as films, talks, seminars, and social events. You are encouraged to attend these and to offer reflections on them in class and/or on our Blackboard site.

## Assignments

### Participation 20%

You are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the readings and to engage in working group activities. Active participation based on thoughtful consideration of the reading materials is expected. If you do not attend you cannot participate.

### Essay Assignments 60%

Each of the 4 short essay assignments is worth 15% of your course grade. Essay prompts will be distributed throughout the semester as indicated in the Assignments section. The finished essay is due the following week.

### Final Video Assignment 20%

In lieu of a paper, each student will upload a 15 to 20 minutes video to the class YouTube channel. A prompt will be handed out with instructions and the assignment will be discussed throughout the semester. **The video needs to be uploaded by Friday, December 12.**

## Course Agenda

### Part I. Conceptualizing Youth in Context

August 28	Introduction to course concepts
September 4	Damon Article; King Article; Utas Article
September 11	Anderson Introduction through Chapter 4
September 18	Anderson Chapter 5 through Conclusion <b>Essay 1 Prompt Handed Out</b>

### Part II. Gang Life in Los Angeles

September 25	Vigil Chapters 1 through 4 <b>Essay 1 Due</b>
October 2	Vigil Chapters 5 through 8
October 9	Vigil Chapters 9 through 12 <b>Essay 2 Prompt Handed Out</b>

Part III. Youth in War & Peace

October 16 Rosen Chapters 1 & 2  
**Essay 2 Due**

October 23 Rosen Chapters 4 & 5  
**Essay 3 Prompt Handed Out**

Part IV. Youth Activism

October 30 Taft Introduction through Chapter 3  
**Essay 3 Due**

November 06 Taft Chapters 4 through 6

November 13 Taft Chapters 7 & 8; Courville & Piper Article

November 20 Honwana Book  
**Essay 4 Prompt Handed Out**

November 23 **No Class**

Part V. Integration

December 4 Review concepts, theories, frameworks  
Continue course synthesis  
Course Evaluations  
**Essay 4 Due**

**Final Video Assignment – Due Friday, December 12**

Points Accumulated	Letter Grade
94-100	A
90-93	A-
87-89	B+
84-86	B
80-83	B-
77-79	C+
74-76	C
70-73	C-
60-69	D
0-59	F