

What Are Children For? Fall 2004

Faculty:

Nancy Koppelman, Lab II 2255, telephone: 867-6383, koppelmn@evergreen.edu;
office hours: Mondays, 3:30-4:30

Glenn Landram, Seminar II, D4106, telephone: 867-5434, landramg@evergreen.edu;
office hours: Tuesdays, 10:00-11:00

Core Connector:

JoAnne Jackson, LIB. 1402, (360) 867-6657; joannej@evergreen.edu

Our Program Website:

<http://academic.evergreen.edu/curricular/whatarechildrenfor>

Special Expenses: Up to \$40 per quarter for class trips and performances.

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Every generation of new parents shares a common concern: adjusting the routines of daily life to the needs of children, and preparing children for the future that awaits them. Every generation addresses this concern differently. Modes of discipline, for example, that were normal in 1600 are virtually unheard of today. The assumption that education is a human right was unknown to our forebears. How do ideas about children, practices of child rearing, and conventions of education, change over time? Is there a “right” way to think about children? Is education best thought of as an institutionalized, systematized mode of engagement with children, or is it possible, anymore, to think of helping children grow in other ways?

This two-quarter first-year program will concentrate on the history, philosophy, literature, and sociology of childhood and education, mostly in the United States. Until roughly 200 years ago, most children were necessary: They contributed labor to the maintenance of the family home, dressed in the fashion of adults, and were expected to reproduce the circumstances of their birth. The American Revolution disrupted virtually all social hierarchies, including those within the family. Inspired by Locke and Rousseau, educated people began to view childhood as a stage in life that was qualitatively unique. The relationship between children and adults changed, and came to be characterized by the notion that, in the best circumstances, children will be largely protected from the world they will eventually inherit.

During fall quarter, we will learn about the many ways that children have been viewed by adults from the 16th century forward, and examine how the meaning of childhood was transformed during the flowering of the range of philosophical ideas, literary forms, and material

practices associated with the Enlightenment. We will study the changing meanings of innocence and sin, labor and leisure, usefulness and sacredness, and how those meanings figured in the way children were seen and treated. In the context of that broad history, we'll concentrate our work on three distinct but interrelated themes: economic aspects of children and childhood; raising children (or "parenting"); and what it's like to be a child. Guest speakers will include professionals and private citizens from the local community who have a special interest in children. We'll employ our developing understanding in examinations of our own childhoods, reflecting on memories, favorite objects, role models, and important rites of passage.

During winter quarter, the program will concentrate on the history and philosophy of education. The American system of public schooling was invented in the 19th century to democratize and homogenize a diverse, unpredictable, and often unruly population. The educational system rests its legitimacy on an articulation of the relationship between knowledge and success. How has it done so? How has it been challenged? Writing will focus on term projects: groups of students will create charter schools, present proposals to a student-composed "school board," and share their work with a local school board. Guest speakers will include professionals in all phases of education.

Students are strongly encouraged to take the program for both quarters. Glenn and Nancy have planned the program as an integrated whole. We hope you'll join us for the full 20 weeks.

Briefly put, our ambitions for the program are:

to understand more fully the history, sociology, philosophy, and economics of children and childhood, especially in the United States;

to understand more fully the perpetual challenge of raising children into adulthood;

to understand more fully how education and theories of child development figure in how adults understand children;

to understand more fully what it is like to be a child;

to develop our abilities to examine our own childhoods, and to respond critically and compassionately to stories of others' childhood experiences;

to develop our abilities as readers of humanistic and social scientific works, as writers, and as discussants; that is, to become more effective participants in a community dedicated to humanistic enquiry;

to develop our abilities to employ quantitative reasoning skills in our assessments of all of the topics raised above; and

to enjoy our common pursuit of these goals.

Weekly Schedule

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
a.m. Faculty Seminar (faculty only)	10-11 Glenn's Office Hour, SEM II, D4106 11:00-1:00 Seminar		9:00-11:00 Text or Writing Workshop
Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
1:30-3:30 All-Program Meeting,	2:00-3:30 Lecture or Workshop		12:30-2:30 Seminar,
3:30-4:30 Nancy's Office Hour, LAB II, 2255	3:30-4:30 All-program TEA		3:00-4:00 Final All- Program Meeting

IN-CLASS ACTIVITIES

Seminars

Like good writers, good seminar discussion participants are not born, but are made. How this happens is a bit of a mystery, for few of us were taught deliberately in high school or college how to engage in serious discussion about important ideas and texts. Although we will not offer a set of lessons to develop this crucial skill, once our seminars convene, we will share some general hopes and expectations for seminar discussions. Students will spend fall quarter with one seminar leader. During winter quarter, we will switch things around and very likely bring some new students into the program.

Seminars will focus closely on program texts. The texts vary among history, sociology, fiction, and memoir. Seminars will be devoted to both learning how to read well, and learning how to engage in serious, productive, and lively discussions that stretch our knowledge and imaginations, and that encourage all participants to engage. Our books, in order, are:

Steven Mintz, *Huck's Raft: A History of American Childhood*

Mark Twain, *Pudd'nhead Wilson*

Viviana Zelizer, *Pricing the Priceless Child: The Changing Social Value of Children*

Susan Linn, *Consuming Kids: The Hostile Takeover of Childhood*

J. D. Salinger, *Nine Stories*

Jenny Lauren, *Homesick: A Memoir of Family, Food, and Finding Hope*

Frank McCourt, *Angela's Ashes*

Lectures

On Monday and Tuesday afternoons, one of the faculty will give a lecture, both faculty will give brief lectures to kick off an all-class discussion, or we will hear from a guest lecturer. Lectures will be participatory. “Participating” in a lecture means listening carefully, taking useful notes, paying attention to questions or comments that arise in your mind during the lecture, writing those questions or comments down, and then sharing them during the question and answer period following the lecture. Some lectures will be largely informational; others will be in the form of arguments. Pay attention to this distinction.

We are fortunate to enjoy visits from six guest lecturers. Some of these have traveled a distance to come here; some have been co-sponsored with other programs or offices of the college. Guest lecturers will focus on answering our program’s question: “What Are Children For?” There will be ample time for questions following all lectures.

Workshops

Each week, the whole program will participate in two workshops. Some will be devoted to developing writing skills, and others will be devoted to interpreting the texts of the week and working on critical thinking skills. These textual or conceptual workshops have become a characteristic teaching and learning strategy at Evergreen. The program will divide into small groups to work systematically through a set of questions and intellectual exercises, with the help of a guided worksheet, to arrive at greater understanding of the texts. These workshops require active participation, and are just as important to your learning as lectures and seminars.

Program Tea

Each Tuesday afternoon after our writing workshop, we will have an informal Tea. Faculty will provide black tea each week, and paper cups and snacks during the first week. After the first week, you are encouraged to bring your own cup and snacks. This is a time for casual milling about and conversation. During some of our Tuesday Teas, we will be joined by JoAnne Jackson, our Core Connector, who will help continue your orientation to Evergreen.

WRITING

Seminar Papers

Everyone is required to bring a Seminar Paper to each seminar. Seminar Papers will kick things off; they will be the basis of our discussions. Faculty may call on students to read these papers aloud, or, preferably, students may initiate discussions by voluntarily reading what they wrote.

Seminar Papers are not formal, polished essays. Seminar papers are informal. Informal doesn’t mean sloppy, casual, or shallow. Think of these papers as thought-pieces, forays into questions you wish to pursue with colleagues, or ideas you’d like to try out in discussion. They may have arguments, hypotheses, questions, or observations. We do not wish to prescribe a

form, but rather to invite you to do some of your best inquiry in these semi-weekly papers and to share that thinking with your colleagues in seminar. These papers give you a chance to seize on issues, passages, or problems in the text at hand, and articulate your thoughts or questions in order to inspire discussion. You will not hand in these papers; keep them in a portfolio which faculty will review periodically during the quarter.

Portfolios

Maintain a portfolio which should include your seminar papers, your assigned papers, your rewritten papers, responses to your colleagues' papers, colleagues' responses to your papers, your mid-term exam, and any other academic work you choose to include: in other words, ***ALL*** the writing you do in connection to the program. These portfolios will be reviewed by your faculty at a midquarter conference and collected at the end of the quarter prior to your evaluation conference. The portfolio should be user-friendly: a loose-leaf notebook, or a **GOOD** folder that holds paper securely.

Evaluations

At the end of the quarter, you will be required to write a self-evaluation and an evaluation of your seminar leader before your credit is posted. You will be required to submit your self-evaluation for inclusion in your formal transcript. Your self-evaluation ought to represent your very best work of the quarter and speak honestly about your learning experiences. We will conduct an evaluation writing workshop at the end of the quarter to help you reflect on your work and write your evaluations.

Credit Equivalencies

Over the course of the two quarters, 32 quarter hours of credit will be awarded in Expository Writing, Research, Quantitative Reasoning and Methods, American History, Sociology of Childhood, Philosophy of Childhood, and Education. Specific credit equivalencies will be named at the end of each quarter and can be tailored to individual student needs, if necessary.

EXPECTATIONS and PROGRAM COVENANT

A few years ago, Evergreen adopted six expectations of Evergreen graduates. They are quite general and apply to all students at the college. In this program, we have additional expectations. We assume everyone will meet these expectations to the letter. Note that they refer to participation, work habits, and punctuality. These are matters of form. They constitute the *bare minimum* requirements for credit in the program. Successful study of the program's content depends on making a commitment to abide by these matters of form.

These expectations constitute the substance of our program covenant. During the first week of the quarter, you will be asked to sign a document stating that you've read these expectations and agree to work in the manner described here.

We recognize that this is a demanding program, particularly given the other significant responsibilities many of you have. Please voice whatever problems or concerns you have early

in the year so that we may deal with them constructively.

Classes

- X Everyone will arrive on time and stay until class is over.
- X If you miss a class, contact another student to get assignments or handouts, and to get filled in on what happened in class. Then, if you still have questions, come to one of the program faculty for clarification. We meet only ten weeks, and for only 12 hours per week. Only one absence is permitted. **Be sure to contact your seminar leader prior to your absence.**
- X Students who have not completed the day's assignment should not attend, and will forfeit their one allowable absence.
- X Everyone is expected to participate fully in all class activities. This will include reading aloud in class, both from your own writing and from the course's texts, participating in all workshops, and coming to class fully prepared to discuss our work in seminar.

Papers

- X Each student will write semiweekly seminar papers, four assigned papers, three rewritten papers, a final reflection paper, a self-evaluation, and a faculty evaluation. Your ability to do well on these papers depends on your diligent preparation and participation in class, as a reader, writer, and discussant. Lack of participation and attendance in class translates into lack of preparedness for the program's work, and constitutes neglect of that work.
- X You must always hand in your work on the due date. It's better to hand in a paper you can't stand than to hand in nothing. **Late papers will not be accepted.**
- X Read and carefully follow all directions. Reading well is prerequisite to doing well in the program.
- X Full credit will be awarded for full participation ONLY. Reduced credit will occur if:
 - you are consistently late for class.
 - you do not write all seminar papers, assigned papers, rewrites, and evaluations.
 - you are absent more than once.
 - you do not come to class prepared.

Fun

In this class, you are a member of a community of learners. This is an unusual opportunity. If you give yourself fully to the work, you will have an education that will last your life. You will also have a lot of fun. Nothing quite compares with doing this particular kind of work with other people like you. Let's work hard and enjoy it.

Special Responsibilities of Faculty

- (1) Give prompt and careful responses to student work.
- (2) Be available for individual conferences with students.
- (3) Prepare final evaluations of students in a timely manner at the end of each quarter.

Academic Honesty

The work you submit must reflect your own ideas. When you are incorporating the views of others, be those published authors or your seminar colleagues, acknowledge your sources. While much of the work in this program will be collaborative and the ensuing ideas will reflect the contributions of more than one person, get into the habit of acknowledging the people and ideas that have influenced you. There will be many times when you will be asked to take an individual position—in an essay or in a seminar discussion—and you must assert your own distinctive interpretation and judgments. The final work you submit must reflect your own judgment and analysis while also recognizing the contributions of people who have influenced your learning.

Failure to make acknowledgments of others' contributions or to present the work of others as your own is plagiarism. Any student who plagiarizes material will face strict sanctions, which can include leaving the program or the College. Raise any questions and concerns you may have about citing sources or about a particular instance with the faculty.

Human Subjects Review

If your writing involves interviewing, videotaping, or otherwise treats another person as an object of inquiry, it is important to comply with the Human Subjects Review Policy of the College. Packets can be obtained from the Academic Deans. This policy requires that you gain informed consent from any subject you are interviewing. You must complete the Human Subjects Review form and obtain the approval of a faculty member and the academic dean **before** you conduct any interviews. If you have questions, talk with a faculty member.

Resolving Conflicts

Academic and personal conflicts are common and to be expected in academic communities. The Social Contract lays out expectations about how we should deal with such conflicts:

Evergreen can thrive only if members respect the rights of others while enjoying their own rights.... All [members of the community] must share alike in prizing academic and interpersonal honesty, in responsibly obtaining and in providing full and accurate information, and in resolving their differences through due process and with a strong will to collaboration. (WAC 174-120-020)

We expect all members of the program to abide by these principles of honest and face-to-face resolution of conflicts. If you do not feel successful in resolving a conflict, bring your concerns to the attention, first, of your seminar leader. If the individual faculty member cannot resolve the problem, he or she will bring it to the attention of the faculty team and they will take

steps to resolve the problem. Any conflicts that cannot be resolved by your own efforts or the efforts of your faculty will be referred to our program's Academic Dean. You should not skip steps in this process.