

**Youth & Conflict - Fall 2012**  
**CONF 399 Section 006 / CONF 695 Section 006**

Class Time: Tuesday/Thursday, 10:30 – 11:45 am

Location: Thompson Hall L004

Instructor: Patricia Maulden, Ph.D.  
Northeast Module II, Room 106  
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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, written assignments will reflect appropriate expectations for each groups. 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. Each **Tuesday** 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. Turn off cell phones, pagers, beepers, etc. Remain in class unless you have an emergency. Allow others and yourself to learn by refraining from side conversations, passing notes, playing video games, instant messaging, reading e-mail, browsing websites, etc.
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 (399 & 695)

Gordon, Hava Rachel. 2010. *We Fight to Win: Inequality and the Politics of Youth Activism*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

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

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

### Required Text (695) / Supplemental (399)

McEvoy-Levy, Siobhán, ed. 2006. *Troublemakers or Peacemakers?: Youth and Post-Accord Peace Building*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame.

### Required Articles/Chapters (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).

Galtung, Johan 2006. Theoretical Challenges of Peace Building with and for Youth, pages 259-279. In *Troublemakers or Peacemakers?: Youth and Post-Accord Peace Building*, Siobhán McEvoy-Levy, ed. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame.

Kemper Yvonne. 2005. *Youth in War-to-Peace Transitions: Approaches of International Organizations*. Berghof Research Center for Conflict Management. <http://www.berghof-center.org>.

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.

Ness, Cindy D. 2004. Why Girls Fight: Female Youth Violence in the Inner City. In *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 595(32-48).

Schwartz, Stephanie. 2010. Youth and Post-Conflict Reconstruction: An Analytical Framework, pages 1-32. In *Youth and Post-Conflict Reconstruction: Agents of Change*. Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press.

Sommers, Marc. 2006. *Fearing Africa's Young Men: The Case of Rwanda*. The World Bank, Social Development Papers, Conflict Prevention & Reconstruction, Paper No. 32.

Utas, Mats. 2008. The West Side Boys: Military Navigation in the Sierra Leone Civil War. In *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 46(478-511).

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).

### Supplemental Readings (Available on Blackboard)

Durham, Deborah. 2000. Youth and the Social Imagination in Africa: Introduction to Parts 1 and 2. In *Anthropological Quarterly*, Vol. 73(113-120).

Urdal, Henrik. 2006. A Clash of Generations? Youth Bulges and Political Violence. In *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 50(607-629).

## Academic Policies & Information

### Academic Integrity

George Mason University has an Honor Code with guidelines regarding academic integrity and which is designed, "to promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University community" ([www.gmu.edu/catalog/policies](http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/policies)). The Honor Code lays out strict penalties for cheating and plagiarism.

Plagiarism is a serious offense, and all written work for this course should include proper citations in a standard citation format (MLA, APA, etc.). *If you are unsure about how to cite a direct quotation or concept from course or outside readings, then ask for help.* "I wasn't sure how to cite

a source, so I left out the reference,” is not an acceptable defense for plagiarism. Copies of common style manuals are available at the GMU library reference desk or online at <http://library.duke.edu/research/citing/workscited/>.

For individual class assignments, you may discuss your ideas with others or ask for feedback; however, you are responsible for making certain that there is no question that the work you hand in is your own. You may not submit papers or presentations from other courses to fulfill assignments for this class.

"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. 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 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."

## Student Resources

### GMU Writing Center

“The Writing Center seeks to foster a writing climate on campus and beyond by offering free writing support to George Mason students, faculty, staff and alumni. No matter what your writing abilities are, writing specialists can help you develop the skills you need to become a successful writer. Free services include: One-on-one 45 minute sessions with a writing specialist; online writing lab; one-on-one sessions with an ESL specialist; workshops on such topics as documenting sources, grammar and punctuation; writing handouts on a variety of subjects; a library of handbooks and writing manuals; [and an] online chat with a tutor about papers submitted to the Online Writing Lab” (<http://writingcenter.gmu.edu>).

### Disability Support Services

Any student with documented learning disabilities or other conditions that may affect academic performance should: 1) make sure this documentation is on file with the Office of Disability Support Services (993-2474) to determine the possible accommodations you might need; and 2) contact her or his instructor to discuss reasonable accommodations.

“George Mason University is committed to providing appropriate services and accommodations that allow self-identified students with disabilities to access programs and activities at the university as

stated in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

To achieve this goal, the university maintains and supports the Disability Resource Center Office, which is responsible for assuring that students receive the services and accommodations to which they are entitled. The professional staff of the Disability Resource Center Office coordinate services for students with disabilities, determine reasonable services and accommodations on the basis of disability, and act as a liaison between students and faculty/administration on concerns relating to services and accommodations” (<http://www.gmu.edu/departments/advising/dss.html>).

### Library Services

The S-CAR library liaison is Gretchen Reynolds ([greynol3@gmu.edu](mailto:greynol3@gmu.edu)). Do not hesitate to contact her with specific questions about holdings and research in these areas or whom to contact for materials still in the Fenwick Library on the Fairfax Campus.

## Assignments

### Participation 10%

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 essay assignments is worth 15% of your course grade. Essay prompts will be distributed throughout the semester as indicated in the Assignments section. They are due the following week.

### Final Essay 30%

A prompt will be handed out for the final as indicated in the Assignments Section. **The final is due via email Monday, December 17 by 5:00 pm.**

## Course Agenda

### Part I. Conceptualizing Youth

August 28 & 30	Damon Article; Schwartz Chapter
September 4 & 6	Galtung Chapter; King Article,
September 11 & 13	Utas (2005) Article; Ness Article
September 18 & 20	Utas (2008) Article; Sommers Article <b>Essay 1 Prompt Handed Out</b>

## **Part II. Gang Life in Los Angeles**

- September 25 & 27      Vigil Chapters 1-4  
***Essay 1 Due***
- October 2 & 4      Vigil Chapters 5-8
- \*October 11      Vigil Chapters 9-12  
***Essay 2 Prompt Handed Out***

## **Part III. Youth in War & Peace**

- October 16 & 18      Rosen Chapters 1 & 2  
***Essay 2 Due***
- October 30 &  
November 1      Rosen Chapters 3 & 4
- November 6 & 8      Rosen Chapter 5; Kemper Article  
***Essay 3 Prompt Handed Out***

## **Part IV. Youth Activism**

- November 13 & 15      Gordon Introduction, Chapters 1, 2; Courville & Piper Article  
***Essay 3 Due***
- \*November 20      Gordon Chapters 3, 4
- November 27 & 29      Gordon Chapters 5, 6  
***Essay 4 Prompt Handed Out***

## **Part V. Integration**

- December 4 & 6      Review concepts, theories, frameworks  
Continue course synthesis  
Course Evaluations  
***Essay 4 Due***
- Final Essay Prompt Handed Out***

**Final Essay due Monday, December 17 by 5:00 pm**  
**Email to pmaulden@gmu.edu**

## Grading Scale

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