ETHNOPEDIATRICS

|  |
| --- |
|  |

COURSE SYLLABUS

Instructors: Claudia Valeggia & Melanie Martin Location: WTS A74

[claudia.valeggia@yale.edu](mailto:claudia.valeggia@yale.edu) Times: Th 9.25-11.15

[melanie.martin@yale.edu](mailto:melanie.martin@yale.edu) Website: Canvas

TF: TBA Office Hours: Upon request

**COURSE DESCRIPTION & LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Babies in some hunter-gatherer populations never crawl and only start walking when they are 18 months old and older. Babies in Western, industrialized populations are encouraged to crawl and walk at much earlier ages. In most populations, babies sleep with their mothers for several years, while in the US, it is expected that they sleep through the night in a crib as early as possible. In some cultures, children under the age of 10 contribute substantially to childcare and household or labor production. In others, early childhood is highly structured by education, training, and other monitored activities. How do all these ways of raising children affect their development?

Ethnopediatrics combines evolutionary and cross-cultural perspectives to examine the full range of child rearing practices across time and place. Throughout this course, we will critically evaluate child development in biocultural perspective, while considering the following questions: Are there any universal patterns of child rearing? Can, or should, evolutionary and cross-cultural perspectives inform modern family practices or institutional policies in the U.S.? *In this course you will:*

* Identify evolutionary, ecological, and cultural/historical factors that contribute to variation in development and parenting at distinct stages of infancy and childhood
* Lead one class discussion summarizing readings on a specified topic
* Conduct a group ethnographic research project exploring local variation in child-rearing practices
* Write a blog post about your project to submit to *NEOS* (an online publication of the Anthropology & Children and Youth Research Interest Group)

**Course requirements:**

1. Essay: “*Babies*” reaction summary (5%). In a 2-page essay, discuss your observations of universals and cross-cultural variation in infant care practices and development in the documentary “Babies”. Discuss how the differences and similarities you observed in the movie compare to the conclusions reached by Werner (1972)
2. Individual class presentations (20%): You will work with a partner to lead a 45-minute class activity based on the readings for one class. Activities can take many forms. You must submit a description of your planned activity to the instructors by the Tuesday preceding your assigned class.
3. Individual questions and comments on readings (15%): You must submit one question or comment per assigned reading per week. Questions will be submitted online, and are due by 5 pm the day before class.
4. Take home exam (20%): This will consist of 2 or 3 essay questions aimed at summarizing the most important points in ethnopediatrics.
5. Research project and blog post (40%): You will work in groups of five to conduct original research on a specific child-rearing practice of your choosing. Detailed guidelines for the project will be posted and discussed in class. In brief, each person in your group will have to interview at least five adults (your choice of whom to interview) about what they consider to be “good” practice. You will then write a paper on your findings in terms of the resulting consensus (or lack) of among subjects. Your introduction and discussion should contextualize the research aims and findings in terms of evolutionary origins and cultural variation in this specific practice. There will be three partial deadlines for the project, designed to help you organize your work and produce a better final product.
   1. Description of research topic and proposed methodology (10 out of 100 pts) DUE 2/16
   2. Interview results and annotated outline of final paper (40 out of 100 pts) DUE 4/6
   3. Final paper and blog post. The blog post will be submitted to the [Anthropology of Children and Youth Interest Group’s NEOS online publication](http://acyig.americananthro.org/neos/) (50 out of 100 pts) DUE 5/5

**Required readings**:

1. Small, M. (1999) *Our babies, ourselves.* New York: Anchor Books.
2. LeVine, R and New, R (eds) (2008) *Anthropology and Child Development: A Cross-cultural Reader.*  Oxford: Blackwell.
3. In addition to the chapters from the books above, we will discuss selected papers and chapters from other books (e.g. Meehan & Crittenden’s *Childhood*), which will be posted on the course canvas website.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**  
Please read the Yale College statement on academic dishonesty [HERE.](http://catalog.yale.edu/handbook-instructors-undergraduates-yale-college/teaching/academic-dishonesty/)

Please, read the Yale College statement on plagiarism [HERE](http://writing.yalecollege.yale.edu/advice-students/using-sources/understanding-and-avoiding-plagiarism). Also, please use the link on that page to reach the relevant sections of the Undergraduate Regulations, if you are not familiar with these, and use the link to the Yale College Writing Center’s website to get information about citing sources.