CPsy 1904: International and Cross-Cultural Studies of Childhood
SAMPLE SYLLABUS

Instructor: Sample Instructor, Room XXXB Child Development

Office hours: By appointment.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course falls under the “Global Perspectives” Theme of courses in Liberal Arts. In particular, it seeks to introduce students to the very wide variety of experiences that comprise human childhood across a wide variety of geographical, economic, and cultural circumstances. Students will learn about the basic paths and purposes of childhood in human societies ranging from modern European societies, traditional African and South Asian, Japanese and Indonesian societies, through technologically primitive societies in New Guinea. The course seeks to develop an appreciation of the variety of human childhoods, and how the changes that humans themselves make in their economic and political structures, can affect this at both familial and societal levels. Through reading, discussion, and written reflection, the course seeks to help students examine what it means to develop as a human being, to think about the practical and ethical issues humans face in guiding children’s development, and to learn how these issues are resolved in different communities around the world. Students should be helped by these processes to gain perspective on how their own lives have developed, and how they believe the lives of children should be constituted and guided in the United States and in different parts of the world.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

There are three major kinds of structured assignment on the readings.

1. LOGS. In a typical week, there will be two assigned readings. For one of these readings, you will be asked to make a log of the main points of one of the readings. This log-summary should pick out about 15-20 main points that capture what you think are the most important or interesting points for each article; each
point should be able to be stated in a sentence or very short paragraph. The grades of these logs will comprise 10% of the total class grade.

2. **WRITTEN PAPERS.** This type of assignment will occur *every other week*, to be called a **WRITING WEEK**. In a writing week, you will have a question (or choice of questions) about one of the readings, and you will write an answer to the question. The answer to the question will typically be a reflection on some of the facts and issues that the paper brings up. It will be about 3-4 double-spaced typewritten pages long, meaning about 850-1000 words. Grading will ordinarily be in the range A to B; a C or below means there were serious problems with the paper which may need attention. Organization and skill in writing will comprise some of the grade; but insightful summary and reflection as called for by the question will constitute the majority of the grade for the paper. The grades on papers will comprise 50% of your overall grade.

3. **EXPLANATION:** This type of assignment will occur every other week, to be called an **EXPLANATION WEEK**. On these weeks, the class will be divided into two groups. Each group will read a different article, and will write for that article the main things to be communicated to the other group. When we have class, each group will be responsible for explaining the main points of their article to the other article. Everyone in a group should share the effort of communicating the study; I’ll track this. This is an unusual type of assignment, but I have tried it in other classes and it seems to work. Oral explanation will comprise 20% of your grade. I won’t grade the preparatory logs you make, but I will ask you to turn them in.

4. **DISCUSSION.** *Attendance and open discussion:* Students are expected to be prepared to attend class, listen and reflect on the discussions of other students, and contribute their own thoughts and ideas, on the issues raised by the readings and their own reflections on the central issues of the course. The instructor will also suggest ideas sometimes for discussions. Students’ attendance and discussion will comprise 20% of the final grade. (N.B.: Attendance without discussion will result in a C grade for this 20% of the course).
Cheating. University policy requires that I tell you that cheating is unacceptable. Since we do not have exams, the main problem that could arise is plagiarism in writing the short papers.

Work. The university holds that a student should expect to do three hours of work outside of class for every credit, to earn an “average grade”, and I am obliged to communicate this university opinion to you.

Accommodations. If a student needs accommodations for a health-related or other problem, she should speak to the instructor and relevant accommodations will be made.

READING SCHEDULE

Week 1: EXPLAIN


Week 2: WRITE


Week 3: EXPLAIN


Week 4: WRITE


Week 5: EXPLAIN


Week 6: WRITE


You will also be sent various articles from newspapers about India.

**Week 7: EXPLAIN**


**Week 8: WRITE**


**Week 9: EXPLAIN**


**Week 10: WRITE**


**Week 11: WRITE**


**Week 12: LOG AND CLASS DISCUSSION (Thanksgiving)**


**Week 13: WRITE**


**Week 14: LOG AND DISCUSSION**
M. Maratsos (In press). Two senses of relativism.