

PP 405: ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT AND THE TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD
SPRING 2010
MONDAYS 3:00-5:40

Prof. Ariel Kalil
a-kalil@uchicago.edu
773-834-2090
Office Hours: by appointment
Harris School #110

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Adulthood no longer begins when adolescence ends. A lengthy period before adulthood, often spanning the twenties and even extending into the thirties, is now devoted to further education, job exploration, experimentation in romantic relationships, and personal development. Pathways into and through adulthood have become much less linear and predictable, and these changes carry tremendous social and cultural significance, especially as institutions and policies aimed at supporting young adults have not kept pace with these changes. The “transition to adulthood” takes place in an economic landscape characterized by a widening gap between rich and poor. Cohabitation and prolonged residence with parents characterizes the life choice of many young adults. The “premature” transition of adolescent parenthood characterizes others’. How are young people’s family experiences related to the paths they take in early adulthood? How do teenage childbearers navigate the “transition to adulthood?” What role does employment play in youth’s subsequent development? Who are the winners and losers at this critical life transition? What role can public policy play? This seminar will explore these and other related questions through readings and discussion of empirical research drawn primarily from developmental psychology, sociology, demography, and economics.

READINGS

Each week you will be required to complete several readings from original empirical articles and/or books. You should be able to retrieve all of the journal articles through the library’s electronic collections or via websites that I will direct you to.

On the Frontiers of Adulthood, edited by Richard Settersten, Frank Furstenberg, and Ruben Rumbaut (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005 (paperback published April, 2008)

Hollowing Out The Middle: The Rural Brain Drain and What It Means for America, by Patrick Carr and Maria Kefalas. (Beacon Press, 2009 [hardcover only]).

Promises I Can Keep: Why Poor Women Put Motherhood Before Marriage, by Kathryn Edin and Maria Kefalas (University of California Press, 2007).

Growing up With a Single Parent: What Hurts, What Helps by Sara McLanahan and Gary Sandefur. (Harvard University Press, 1994).

REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

Each week, we will discuss the readings, seminar style. To facilitate discussion, all participants must prepare a weekly memo on the readings (described further below) as well as three thought questions

for the discussion based on the readings and any other relevant material. Each student will also serve as a discussion leader once throughout the quarter beginning in Week 4. Discussion leaders should draw on the assigned readings for that week as well as outside material if you choose (consult with me first).

One-third of your final grade will be based on the quality and timeliness of your weekly memos, your performance as a discussion leader, and the quality of your contributions in class. One third of your grade will be based on a take-home essay exam (Assigned May 10th and due May 17th); the remaining third will be based on the paper/class presentation (also described below). There is no final exam.

Weekly Memos, Thought Questions, Exam, and Paper Details

MEMOS: Your weekly memo should be e-mailed **to me and to everyone in the course** by Sunday evening at 7:00 pm. It should be approximately 3-4 double-spaced pages long and cover the following:

(a) *What is the single most important empirical claim/s in each reading (or collection of readings)?* This should not be a summary of the readings. Instead it is your judgment of which findings have the greatest significance and why. Aim to tie the readings together in this section of the memo. If you do not feel any significant contribution is made, say why.

(b) *Do you see any reason to doubt the validity of any of the claims made in the readings?* If so, briefly give your reasons. For example, do you take issue with any of the studies' hypotheses, data quality/analysis, or interpretations? Do the readings arrive at conflicting conclusions and does this cast doubt on any one of them? If yes, why do you think this is so?

(c) *In what way do you think the findings from the readings bear on public policy?*

THOUGHT QUESTIONS: Generate 1-2 thought questions for the class to discuss, and be prepared to facilitate the discussion of your questions.

PAPER/PRESENTATION: During **weeks 7, 8, and 9**, seminar members will present a review of the current state of theory and research on a topic relevant to adolescent development and the transition to adulthood. The topic can be similar to or different from the ones discussed in class. Your proposed topic must be submitted to me for approval by Week 4 (April 19th)(via e-mail). The assignment involves three parts: (a) writing a concise review and evaluation of the current work in this area (approx. 4-5 single-spaced pages); (b) designing a research project that will move our understanding of the topic area forward in a substantial way (approximately 3-4 single-spaced pages); and (c) making a brief presentation (using power point) to the class on your review and research proposal (approx. 30 minutes). A 15-minute Q and A period with the class will follow. A "critical articles" bibliography should also be distributed to the entire class at the time of the presentation. Students will be expected to discuss with the instructor in advance to clarify the topic in more detail, get assistance in choosing material to review and, if necessary, to clarify questions on designing the research project. Presentations will occur during **weeks 7, 8, and 9**. Reserve your day via e-mail; I will divide the presentations up evenly over the 3 days we have available.

EXAM. A take-home essay exam will be given out on May 10th and must be returned by May 17th before class. Students will answer 4-5 thought questions based on the material presented in the first 2/3 of the class.

WEEK 1: March 29
Introduction to the Course

WEEK 2: April 5
DEFINING AND CONSTRUCTING THE TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD

On the Frontiers of Adulthood, Chapter 1
On the Frontier of Adulthood: Emerging Themes and New Directions

On the Frontiers of Adulthood, Chapter 6
Generation Gaps in Attitudes and Values from the 1970's to the 1990's

On the Frontiers of Adulthood, Chapter 7
Subjective Age Identity and the Transition to Adulthood: When Do Adolescents Become Adults?

Settersten, Richard A. Jr., Frank F. Furstenberg, Jr., Sheela Kennedy, Vonnie C. McLoyd, Rubén G. Rumbaut (2004). Growing Up Is Harder to Do . *Contexts*, vol 3, no. 3 (On Chalk).

Becoming Adult: Meanings and Markers for Young Americans (2006, March). Richard A. Settersten, Jr. (On Chalk).

Giuliano, P. & Spilimbergo, A. (2009). *Growing up in a recession: Beliefs and the macro-economy*. National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper 15321. Available on-line at: <http://www.nber.org/papers/w15321>

Week 3: April 12
PARENTAL AND FAMILY STRUCTURE INFLUENCES

Growing up with a single parent: What hurts, what helps. (Chapter 1: Why we care about single parenthood; Chapter 3: Which outcomes are most affected; Chapter 6: The role of parenting).

DeLeire, T. & Kalil, A. (2002). Good things come in 3's: Multigenerational coresidence and adolescent adjustment. *Demography*, 39, 393-413.

Swartz, T. (2008). Family capital and the invisible transfer of privilege: Intergenerational support and social class in early adulthood. *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development*, 119, 11-24.

WEEK 4: APRIL 19
EDUCATION, ATTAINMENT, AND EARLY EMPLOYMENT

Jacob, B. & Wilder, T. (2010, January). *Educational expectations and attainment*. National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper 15683. Available on-line at: <http://www.nber.org/papers/w15683>

Caspi, A., Wright, B. Moffit, T., & Silva, P. (1998). Early failure in the labor market: Childhood and adolescent predictors of unemployment in the transition to adulthood. *American Sociological Review*, 63, 424-451.

Blurring the Boundary: Changes in the Transition from College Participation to Adulthood. Maria D. Fitzpatrick and Sarah E. Turner. (2006, May). Available on-line at:
<http://www.transad.pop.upenn.edu/resources/growup.html>

On the Frontiers of Adulthood, Chapter 9
Off to a Good Start? Postsecondary Education and Early Adult Life

On the Frontiers of Adulthood, Chapter 11
Is It Getting Harder to Get Ahead? Economic Attainment in Early Adulthood for Two Cohorts

WEEK 5: APRIL 26

TRANSITIONS TO ADULTHOOD IN URBAN AND RURAL CONTEXTS

Subjective Perceptions of Adulthood among Urban Youth: Are Demographic Transitions Still Relevant? (2003). Janel Benson and Frank Furstenberg, Jr. Available on-line at:
<http://www.transad.pop.upenn.edu/resources/aspirations.html>

Elder, G. H., Eccles, J., Ardelt, M., & Lord, S. (1995). Inner city parents under economic pressure: Perspectives on the strategies of parenting. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 57, 771-784.

Hollowing Out The Middle: The Rural Brain Drain and What It Means for America, by Patrick Carr and Maria Kefalas.

WEEK 6: MAY 3

EARLY CHILDBEARING

On the Frontiers of Adulthood, Chapter 4
Historical Roots of Family Diversity: Marital and Childbearing Trajectories of American Women

Oxford, M. et al (2005). Life course heterogeneity in the transition from adolescence to adulthood among adolescent mothers. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 15, 479-504.

Furstenberg, F., Kefalas, M. & Napolitano, L. (2005). *Marriage is more than being together: The meaning of marriage among young adults in the United States* (September 2005). Available on-line at: <http://www.transad.pop.upenn.edu/downloads/kefalasmarrigenorms.pdf>

Promises I Can Keep: Why Poor Women Put Motherhood Before Marriage, by Kathryn Edin and Maria Kefalas (University of California Press, 2007).

Week 7: May 10 (Take Home Exam Questions Distributed)

THE ROLE OF RACE, SOCIAL CLASS, AND ETHNICITY IN THE TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD

On the Frontiers of Adulthood, Chapter 2

The Transition to Adulthood during the Twentieth Century: Race, Nativity, and Gender

On the Frontiers of Adulthood, Chapter 14

The Ever-Winding Path: Ethnic and Racial Diversity in the Transition to Adulthood

Furstenberg, F. (2008). The intersections of social class and the transition to adulthood. *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development* 119, 1-10.

Staff, J. & Mortimer, J. (2008). Social class background and the school-to-work transition. *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development*, 119, 55-69.

Pattillo- McCoy, M. (2000). Negotiating adolescence in a black middle class neighborhood. In Sheldon Danziger & Ann Lin (Eds). *Coping with Poverty: the Social Contexts of Neighborhood, Work, and Family in the African American Community* (pp. 77-101). Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. (to be distributed to the class via e-mail).

***** Student presentations today

Week 8: May 17 (Take Home Exam Due)
HEALTH AND PROBLEM BEHAVIOR

Kaestner, R. (2009, April). Adolescent cognitive and non-cognitive correlates of adult health. National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper 14924. Available on-line at: <http://www.nber.org/papers/w14924>.

McCarthy, B. & Casey, T. (2008). Love, sex, and crime: Adolescent romantic relationships and offending. *American Sociological Review*, 73, 944-969.

On the Frontiers of Adulthood, Chapter 13

Early Adult Transitions and Their Relation to Well-Being and Substance Use

Park, MJ et al (2006). The health status of young adults in the United States. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 39, 3, 305-317.

Hayford, S. & Furstenberg, F. (2008). Delayed adulthood, delayed desistance? Trends in the age distribution of problem behaviors. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 2, 285-304.

***** Student presentations today

Week 9: May 24:
PUBLIC POLICY AND INTERVENTIONS

On the Frontiers of Adulthood, Chapter 16

Social Policy and the Transition to Adulthood: Toward Stronger Institutions and Individual Capacities

Deming, D. & Dynarski, S. (2009, September). *Into college, out of poverty? Policies to increase the post-secondary attainment of the poor*. National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper 15387. Available on-line at: <http://www.nber.org/papers/w15387>.

Kemple, J. (2008, June). *Career Academies: Impacts on Students' Initial Transitions to Post-Secondary Education and Employment*. New York: Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation. Available at: <http://www.mdrc.org/publications/482/full.pdf>

Matus-Grossman et al. (2002). *Opening Doors: Students' Perspectives on Juggling Work, Family, and College (Executive Summary)*: New York: Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation. Available at: <http://www.mdrc.org/publications/260/execsum.pdf>

***** Student presentations today

Week 10: May 31
Memorial Day: No class