



**Childhood and Youth Studies 3365G (570)
CHILDHOOD, EDUCATION POLICY AND LAW
Fall/ Winter 2025-2026**

Instructor: K. Briggs
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Course Information

Calendar Description:

An introduction to the primary debates, experiences, policies, and law confronting childhood and youth within educational institutions and programs in Canada.

Prerequisite(s): Any course in Childhood and Youth Studies at the 2200-level.

Extra Information: 3 hours.

Course Weight: 0.50

Breadth: Category A

Subject Code: CYS

Notice: Unless you have either the requisites for this course (fulfilment of pre-requisites, no anti-requisite conflicts), or special permission from your Dean to enrol in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.



CYS3365G (570)
Childhood, Education Policy
Winter 2026

Instructor: Dr. Kym Briggs
Mode of Instruction: In-person
Office Hours: Office hours can be found on Brightspace.

Course and Faculty Contact:

For Course Information (Day, Time and Location), please go to student.uwo.ca, login, select Academics then Winter 2026. For Faculty Contact information, please see the class OWL.

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Course Overview:

This course intends to introduce students to the interconnected nature of children's experiences, how these experiences influence childhood, and the governing educational and legal policies that have an impact on childhood. This course will begin with the child at the centre and will extend to the many influencing factors affecting childhood in the present Canadian context.

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this course, students will:

- Examine the role of the child in their learning, education, and multiple learning contexts and institutions interacting in the lives of children.
- Articulate and differentiate the intentions of education policy and law in children's lives in the present Canadian context.
- Combine, compare, and contrast knowledge of influencing factors that contribute to childhood such as: individuality, wellbeing, family, learning, education, community, law, and advocacy.
- Build a foundation of knowledge that examines the interrelationship between childhood, institutional educational policy, and law.

- Research and analyze learnings, theories, and concepts to examine real-world issues for children and families.
- Demonstrate enhanced analytical skills as well as oral and written communication.

This course also contributes to CYS Program Learning Outcomes 3, 4, 6, 8, and 10:

- **LO 3** – CYS students gain a working knowledge of case law, statutory law, public policy, and institutional features of childhood and youth in the past and the present. They critically reflect on the significance of various norms, rules, and practices for young people. They consider these structures in terms of power relationships between children, parents, and professionals, as well as those between racial, ethnic, migrant, gender, class, and national groups.
- **LO 4** – CYS students apply analytic tools within childhood studies, and defend their ideas and arguments in oral and written forms. HSP students conduct research in childhood studies. Apply and defend ideas and arguments in speech and writing and in communication with others.
- **LO 6** – CYS students come to appreciate that the way we position children and youth as persons shapes our policy positions and the research questions. HSP students develop the ability to place children's and youths' own experiences and perceptions at the center of research methods and policy/legal debate.
- techniques to frame questions, evaluate arguments and concepts and propose solutions.
- **LO 8** – CYS Students make critical use of scholarly reviews and primary sources.
- **LO 10** – CYS Students respect the limits to their own knowledge. They appreciate how uncertainty, ambiguity, and limits to knowledge might influence analyses and interpretations.

Course Materials:

All required readings are detailed by lecture/topic in the course outline below.

- Digital readings will be made available in OWL for free . There is no required textbook.

Evaluation:

A note on AI: Intentional use of artificial intelligence or language generation or translation applications by students to summarize readings or complete assignment work for this course must be approved by the instructor and noted by the student in the submitted work itself. This mandate does not refer to aspects of AI programming embedded into applications such as Word, Chrome, etc. It applies to all intentional usage of AI as a 'co-reader' or 'co-writer'. Students must do their own reading and writing to construct their own voices as democratic citizens. They are not allowed to write text and feed it into a computer application to improve it or translate it. Asking an application to compose text and then changing words before submitting it as your own constitutes plagiarism. Use of Grammarly or similar applications is prohibited. Using plagiarism checkers to see if plagiarized text has been altered enough to avoid detection itself is a form of academic dishonesty. Students must compose text, choose words, construct logical flow, structure sentences and paragraphs using their own minds and in response to what they read, hear, and experience. When you borrow words or ideas from another person or from a machine, this must be placed in quotation marks and properly cited.

Assignment	Weight	Due Date
#1 - Participation	10%	Ongoing – Personal write-up due April 2, 2026
#2 - Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action Plan	15%	February 13, 2026
#3 - Group Presentation	25%	March 13, 20, or 27, 2026
#4 - Critical Reflections – Weeks # 3,4,5,7,8	10% each – total 50%	March 27, 2026

Assignment #1 – Participation

Ongoing – Personal Write-up Due April 2, 2026

Weight: 10%

Participation in this course is evaluated as a single overall grade. This approach recognizes that meaningful engagement can vary from week to week. It allows students to demonstrate their contributions over the entire term, rather than being penalized for occasional absences or less active weeks. Participation will be assessed using the Western rubric (page 11 of this syllabus) and assigned at the end of term. You will grade yourself. You will submit a short self-assessment after the course to reflect on your participation, using specific examples to support your evaluation. Your participation grade will reflect the quality and consistency of your contributions to class discussions, group activities, and collaborative learning.

High-quality participation demonstrates:

- Evidence of having read and engaged with assigned materials before class
- Thoughtful, relevant contributions to discussions
- Active listening and respectful interaction with peers
- Engagement in group work and in-class exercises

Assignment #2 - Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action Plan

Due: February 13, 2026 at 11:55pm

Mark:15%

Based on the Calls to Action outlined in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada report, students will develop a plan for how they could see themselves implementing a Call to Action (or component of a Call to Action). The plan should include goal(s), objectives, action steps, and measurable outcomes. The plan should be approximately 2 pages in length. The plan should be typed, double-spaced, 12 font size, and with any reference material properly cited (APA format). Students are expected to use language accurately and sensitively and are encouraged to write in an active tense.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. (2015). Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action. Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Assignment #3 – Presentation

Due: March 13, 20, or 27

Mark: 25%

Students will work in groups of 2 or 3. This presentation assignment aims to critically analyze current education policy or reform initiatives and their implications for children and youth. Through the presentation, students should demonstrate their understanding of the policy's

rationale, potential benefits, potential drawbacks, and its impact on educational equity and access.

The presentation should be approximately 20 minutes, plus 10 minutes of class engagement, for a total of approximately 30 minutes.

Assignment Instructions:

1. Policy Selection:
 - Each group will select an education policy or reform initiative in Ontario.
 - The policy should be sufficiently complex to analyze and have implications for children and youth in educational settings.
 - This website will help you pick a topic. [Education in Ontario: policy and program direction | ontario.ca](https://www.education.gov.on.ca/en/programs/policy/index.html)
2. Research and Analysis:
 - Conduct research to understand and provide information on the chosen policy's background, context, and implications. Why was the policy implemented or viewed as necessary? What is the common discourse surrounding and impacting the topic?
 - Analyze and critique the policy in depth, considering its rationale, potential benefits, drawbacks, and impact on educational equity and access.
 - Use evidence from scholarly sources, government reports, studies, and real-world examples to support your analysis.
3. Presentation:
 - Prepare a structured presentation to communicate your research and analysis effectively to the class.
4. Debrief/Class engagement:
 - Prepare discussion questions, learning activities, or some form of creative class engagement strategy to engage the class in your presentation

Assignment #4 - Critical Reflections:

Due: March 27, 2026 at 11:55pm

Mark: 10% each – total 50%

You will complete weekly critical reflections on content from weeks 3,4,5,6,8 - you will complete 5 reflections total), focusing on a particular point of interest from the readings, lectures, presentations, or discussions. This is a personal critical narrative that will allow you to reflect on your own experience with your positionality and your education. Each reflection should be approximately 2 pages double-spaced. Each reflection is worth 10%, for a total of 50% of your overall grade. *All reflections are due in one Word document.*

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1

January 9 – Introduction

Readings:

Cunliffe, A. (2004). On Becoming a Critically Reflexive Practitioner. *Journal of Management Education*, 28(4), 407-426.

Lee-Nichols, M. (2014). A Teaching Story: It Begins with Muffins for Moms: How Racist Practices Casually Creep into Classrooms. In *Six Lenses for Anti-Oppressive Education: Partial Stories, Improbable Conversations*, (2nd ed., p. 263-272). New York, NY: Peter Lang.

Week 2

January 16 - Anti-oppressive education and critical reflexivity

Readings:

Delpit, L. (2006). The Silenced Dialogue: Power and Pedagogy in Educating Other People's Children. In *Other People's Children: Cultural Conflict in the Classroom*, (p.22-57).

Kumashiro, K. (2002). *Troubling Education: Queer Activism and Antioppressive Pedagogy*. RoutledgeFalmer. (Pages 1-29).

Week 3

January 23 – Community well-being, poverty, social class, and education

**Complete reflection*

Readings:

Cloutier-Bordeleau, M. (2015). Considering Poverty: Reconstructing the Discourse of Socio-economic Status in Our Schools. In *Our Schools, Our Selves* 24(2). Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

Cuthrell, K., Stapleton, J., & Ledford, C. (2009). Examining the culture of poverty: Promising Practices. *Preventing School Failure: Alternative Education for Children and Youth*, 54(2), 104-110).

Gorski, P. (2013). Chapter 2: Imagining Equitable Classrooms and Schools for Low-Income Youth. In *Reaching and Teaching Students in Poverty: Strategies for Erasing the Opportunity Gap* (p. 14-34). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

The Colour of Poverty. (2007). The Racialization of Poverty. PovertyFactSheets-aug07.pdf (learningandviolence.net)

Week 4

January 30 – Mental Health and Education

**Complete reflection*

Readings:

Mental Health Commission of Canada. Family Caregivers Advisory Committee, issuing body.
(2013). School-based mental health in Canada: a final report. Mental Health Commission of Canada.

Policy 169: Policy/Program Memorandum 169 | Education in Ontario: policy and program direction | ontario.ca

Thames Valley District School Board Mental Health and Addictions Strategic Plan (2026-2029):
TVDSB-Mental-Health--Addictions-Strategic-Plan-2025-2026-.pdf

Week 5

February 6 – Colonization and education

**Complete reflection*

Readings:

Obomsawin, O. (2013). Hi-Ho Mistahey! Canada: National Film Board of Canada.
https://www.nfb.ca/film/hi-ho_mistahey_en/

Reimer, K (2010). What Other Canadian Kids Have: The Fight for a New School in Attawapiskat. *Native Studies Review*, 19(1).

St. Denis, V. (2011). Silencing Aboriginal Curricular Content and Perspectives Through Multiculturalism: "There are Other Children Here."

White, J., & Beavon, D. (2009). Chapter 1: Aboriginal Education: Current Crisis, Future Alternatives. Toronto, Ontario, Canada: Thompson Educational Pub.

Week 6

February 13 – Queering education

Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action Plan due

**Complete reflection*

Readings:

DePalma, R., Atkinson, E. (2006). The Sound of Silence. Talking About Sexual Orientation and Schooling. *Sex Education* 6(4), p. 333-349.

Pyne, J. (2014) Gender Independent Kids: A Paradigm Shift in Approaches to gender non-confirming children. *Canadian Journal of Human Sexuality*. 23(1),(p.1-18).

Rands, K. (2009). Considering Transgender People in Education: A Gender-Complex Approach. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 60(4), 419-431.

Sears, J. Chapter 1: Teaching Queerly. In *Queering Elementary Education*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield. (p. 3-14)

Stonefish, T. & Lafreniere, K. (2015). Embracing Diversity: The Dual Role of Gay Straight Alliances, *Canadian Journal of Education*. 38(4). p 1-27.

Week 7

February 20 – Reading Week – No Class

Week 8

February 27 – Race, culture and education

**Complete reflection*

Readings:

McIntosh, P. (1990). White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack. *Independent School*, 90(2).

Milner, R. & Laughter, J. (2015). Good Intentions are Not Enough: Preparing Teachers to Centre Race and Poverty. *Urban review*, 47, 341-363.

Solomon, P., Portelli, J., Daniel, B-J., Campbell, A. (2005). The Discourse of Denial: How White Teacher Candidates Construct Race, Racism, and 'White Privilege'. In *Race, Ethnicity and Education*, 8(2), 147-169.

St. Denis, V., & Schick, C. (2003). What Makes Anti-Racist Pedagogy in Teacher Education Difficult? Three Popular Ideological Assumptions. *Alberta Journal of Educational Research*, 49(1).

Week 9

March 6 *Presentations*

Week 10

March 13 – *Presentations*

Week 11

March 20 – *Presentations*

Week 12

March 27 – Closure and self-care while working in a professional practice

Reflections due x5

Week 13

April 3 – Good Friday – No class

Participation Reflection Due April 2nd, 2026

University-Wide Grade Descriptors:

The table below outlines University-wide grade descriptors.

Letter grade	Number grade	Description
A+	90-100	One could scarcely expect better from a student at this level
A	80-89	Superior work which is clearly above average
B	70-79	Good work, meeting all requirements, and eminently satisfactory
C	60-69	Competent work, meeting requirements
D	50-59	Fair work, minimally acceptable
F	below 50	Fail

Policy for Late Submissions

Penalties for late papers or projects may be avoided if extensions are requested in advance. Otherwise, a two-mark deduction will be taken for each of the first five days it is late (including weekends). After 5-days without communication, a zero will be assigned.

Students are expected to schedule appointments and other responsibilities around class time. To be excused from participatory requirements (attendance or homework, etc.) due to temporary illness or an unavoidable scheduling conflict, contact the instructor directly via email as soon as you are aware of the problem. Ordinary problems of this nature do not require documentation or communication with the Dean's Office; they will be dealt with by the course instructor.

If a student experiences a disruption in their ability to study or participate in the course for more than one week, or if there is a personal loss or trauma of a serious nature, they may request more extensive accommodations, counselling, and other forms of help. The best way to do this is to contact the instructor and/or the Academic Dean's Office.

KING'S UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
GENERAL COURSE POLICIES
2025-2026

1. Academic Accommodations, Consideration for Absences

Academic Accommodation (Accessibility)

Accessibility Services works to ensure that academic programs are accessible to all students, and supports students who may have a condition related to, but not limited to, vision, hearing, mobility, different ways of learning, mental health, chronic illnesses, chronic pain, autism spectrum disorder, ADD/ADHD, and temporary conditions (beyond short-term academic consideration). Accessibility Services provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive assessment. The accommodation policy can be found here [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#). Information on Accessibility Services at King's can be found [here](#).

Academic Consideration for Student Absence

If a student is unable to meet a course requirement due to substantial but temporary extenuating circumstances (medical or compassionate), they should follow the procedures below.

In some cases, where instructors have built flexibility into their assessments, this flexibility will already address consideration needs.

Requests for academic consideration should be directed to the Academic Advising Office of your faculty/college of registration. Requests must be made as soon as possible and no later than 48 hours after the missed assessment.

Friday Make-Up Exams may only be written with the instructor's consent.

As a rule, documentation is required for academic consideration. For academic consideration requests on medical grounds, the Student Medical Certificate is available at [https://www.kings.uwo.ca/kings/assets/File/currentStudents/courses_enrollment/exams and tests/SMC-Feb-2025.pdf](https://www.kings.uwo.ca/kings/assets/File/currentStudents/courses_enrollment/exams_and_tests/SMC-Feb-2025.pdf).

Students are permitted one academic consideration request without supporting documentation per term per course.

Instructors may designate one assessment per half-course weight as requiring formal supporting documentation. Please refer to the course outline for each course.

For further information, please see:

https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_consideration_Sep24.pdf

Absences from Final Examinations

If you miss the Final Exam, contact the Academic Advising Office of your faculty/college of registration as soon as you are able to do so. They will assess your eligibility to write the Special Examination (the name given by the University to a makeup Final Exam).

You may also be eligible to write the Special Exam if you are in a “Multiple Exam Situation” (e.g., more than 2 exams in 23-hour period, or more than 3 exams in a 47-hour period).

If a student fails to write a scheduled Special Examination, the date of the next Special Examination (if granted) normally will be the scheduled date for the final exam the next time this course is offered. The maximum course load for that term will be reduced by the credit of the course(s) for which the final examination has been deferred. See the Academic Calendar for details (under Special Examinations).

Religious Accommodation

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give notice in writing to the instructor and Academic Advising Office if a course requirement will be affected by a religious holiday/observance. Notice must be given as early as possible, and no later than two weeks prior to an examination, and one week prior to a midterm test date. It is the responsibility of such students to inform themselves concerning the work done in classes from which they are absent and to take appropriate action.

2. Support Services

Accessibility, Counselling and Student Development at King's University College:
<https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/student-services/>

Students experiencing emotional or mental health distress can access services at King's University

College: <http://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/campus-services/student-supportservices/personal-counselling/>

Good2talk is a good online and phone 24/7 resource for students and is available in English, Mandarin, and French: <https://good2talk.ca>, 1-866-925-5454

MentalHealth@Western provides a complete list of options about how to obtain help:
https://www.uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/

Academic Support Services at King's University College:
<https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/academic-resources/>

GBSV Support:

King's is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced sexual or gender-based violence (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at:
<https://www.kings.uwo.ca/about-kings/safe-campus/gender-and-sexual-violence/>

You can reach someone supports at Kings by emailing Care@kings.uwo.ca or calling 519-930-4640 to reach a social worker who can offer help.

You can also reach Western's Gender-Based Violence & Survivor Support Case Manager by email or by calling 519-661-3568.

Further supports can be found on this website: <https://www.kings.uwo.ca/about-kings/safecampus/gender-and-sexual-violence/>

See also https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html

University Students' Council offers many valuable support services for students, including the health insurance plan: <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

3. Statement on Use of Electronic Devices

Use of Electronic Devices: Unless explicitly stated otherwise, you are not allowed to have a cell phone, or any other electronic device, with you during tests or examinations. Unauthorized possession of such a device during a test or examination constitutes an academic offence.

Use of Laptops, Tablets, and Smartphones in the Classroom: King's University College at Western University acknowledges the integration of new technologies and learning methods into the curriculum. The use of electronic devices such as laptop computers, tablets, or smartphones can contribute to student engagement and effective learning. At the same time, King's recognizes that instructors and students share jointly the responsibility to establish and maintain a respectful classroom environment conducive to learning.

The use of electronic devices by students during lectures, seminars, labs, etc., shall be for matters related to the course at hand only. Students found to be using electronic devices for purposes not directly related to the class may be subject to sanctions under the Student Code of Conduct; see <https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/student-affairs/code-of-student-conduct1/>

Inappropriate use of electronics (e.g., laptops, tablets, smartphones) during lectures, seminars, labs, etc., creates a significant disruption. As a consequence, instructors may choose to limit the use of electronic devices in these settings. In addition, in order to provide a safe classroom environment, students attending in-person class sessions are strongly advised to operate laptops with batteries rather than power cords.

4. Statement on Academic Offences

King's is committed to academic integrity. Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, is posted at

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

It is expected that students will submit work that is truly their own, completed without external assistance (human or artificial) except as explicitly permitted by the course instructor. Check with you instructor on what tools, including generative AI (ChatGPT, translation tools, grammarchecking tools) are permitted in the course. Because a tool is permitted in one course, that does not mean it is permitted in other courses.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system; see <https://elearningtoolkit.uwo.ca/tools/Originality Reports - TurnItIn.html>.

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

5. Copyright of Course Material

Lectures and course materials, including PowerPoint presentations, tests, outlines, and similar materials are protected by copyright. Faculty members are the exclusive owner of copyright in those materials they create. Students may take notes and make copies for their own use. Students may not allow others to reproduce or distribute lecture notes and course materials publicly (whether or not a fee is charged) without the express written consent of a faculty member. Unauthorized sharing of class content is subject to academic discipline.

Similarly, students own copyright in their own original papers and exam essays. If a faculty member wishes to post a student's answers or papers on the course website, they should ask for the student's written permission.

6. Use of Recordings

Participants in this course are not permitted to record the sessions, except where recording is an approved accommodation and/or the participant has the prior written permission of the instructor. Unauthorized recording and/or sharing of class content is subject to academic discipline.

7. Policy on Attendance

Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class or laboratory periods in any course, will be reported to the Dean of the Faculty offering the course, after due warning has been given. On the recommendation of the department concerned, and with the permission of the Dean of that Faculty, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination in the course.