



**Childhood and Youth Studies 3370G (570)**  
**A RIGHT TO PLAY**  
**Fall/ Winter 2025-2026**

**Instructor:** H. Knight  
**Email:** hknight6@uwo.ca

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**Course Information**

**Calendar Description:**

The course uses historical and contemporary approaches toward issues around children, youth and leisure. The definitions of 'play' and 'leisure' are critically examined. The course explores the competing moral claims about what children and young people should be doing in terms of the tensions between care, protection, and social control.

**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.

## **CYS 3370F: A RIGHT TO PLAY**

**Winter 2026**

**Professor:** Dr. Hunter Knight

**Email:** [hknight6@uwo.ca](mailto:hknight6@uwo.ca)

**Mode of instruction:** Distance Studies/Online

### **Land Acknowledgement:**

Our campus at King's University is situated on the traditional lands of the Anishinaabek, Haudenosaunee, and Lūnaapéewak Nations, all of whom have longstanding relationships to the land of Southwestern Ontario and the City of London. The First Nations communities of our local area include Chippewas of the Thames First Nation, Oneida Nation of the Thames, and Munsee Delaware Nation. In our region, there are eleven First Nations communities, as well as a growing Indigenous urban population. King's University values the significant historical and contemporary contributions of local and regional First Nations, and all of the Original Peoples of the Turtle Island (also known as North America).

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### **CYS Learning Objectives:**

- **LO 1** – CYS students acquire a general knowledge of the key concepts, theoretical approaches and assumptions within the field of childhood and youth studies. They come to see children as competent social actors and understand the implications of this fact for children's participatory rights in a local, national and global contexts. Those who obtain an Honours Specialization (HSP) in CYS demonstrate the ability to assess issues and critique arguments about the politics of childhood, social justice for children, and children's rights and capabilities in various institutional contexts.
- **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 8** – CYS students make critical use of scholarly reviews and primary sources.
- **LO 9** – CYS students gain the ability to communicate accurate information and clear arguments orally and in writing.
- **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-Specific Learning Objectives:**

1. Explore the meanings of “play” and “leisure” and their deeper cultural foundations.
2. Recognize how dominant constructions of childhood (like innocence, a connection to nature, and distance from technology) inform beliefs about appropriate play/leisure for young people.
3. Understand how larger social structures and prejudices shape possibilities for what play can be, such as who is able to play, where, how, and in what way.
4. Improve skills in close reading, thinking critically, reading diverse academic texts, and expressing difficult ideas with care in speaking and writing.

### **Expectations and Course Policies:**

Students are expected to arrive in class having completed all required readings closely. Come prepared with points of excitement, moments of confusion, and connections to other readings and to your own lives. Please monitor your university email address carefully for announcements related to this course and ensure that you have Brightspace announcements turned on.

I will guide our classroom to be a place of mutual learning and respect and work to support your learning with me and with each other. I welcome students to reach out with questions or further conversations by appointment. These appointments may be virtual for ease of scheduling. For small matters, I am best reached by email. I respond to emails between 9-5 on weekdays, and I try my best to respond to all emails within two days (not including weekends).

*Access and Accommodation:* Access and accommodation are an ongoing part of any educational space, critical to how and what we learn, and something that needs to be negotiated by everyone in the course. Access needs to be regularly chosen and reflected on since it is never complete, and it is something that we will all work together on. For needs for this course that are particular to your interactions with me (including accommodations for assignments), feel free to approach me and/or Accessibility Services ([acsd@kings.uwo.ca](mailto:acsd@kings.uwo.ca)) as soon as possible. Please also approach me if there are any access or accommodation needs that you would like me to facilitate with the larger class.

*AI Usage Policy:* Intentional usage of artificial intelligence or language generation or translation applications by students to summarize readings or complete assigned 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. The use of Grammarly or similar applications is prohibited. Using plagiarism checkers to see if plagiarized text has been altered enough to avoid detection is itself a form of academic dishonesty. Students must compose text, choose words, construct logic 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.

*Marking and Lateness Policy:* 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.

*Quiz Lateness Policy:* All quizzes have a 48-hour grace period before late penalties will start to be applied. There is no need to notify me if you are taking advantage of this grace period—as long as the quiz is completed within 48 hours of its due date, no late penalties will apply.

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.

### **Course Materials:**

There are no required texts for this course. All readings are accessible via OWL Brightspace.

### **Course Evaluation:**

Requirements for all written assignments:

- Must be double-spaced, Times New Roman, 12-point font.
- Must follow APA formatting.
- Must be submitted via the "Assignments" tab on Brightspace, unless noted otherwise.

Further details for all assignments are available on OWL Brightspace. Final grades will be composed as follows:

- 20%: Participation, composed of 5 in-class journal responses (ongoing, weeks 2-9)
- 21%: 4 Bi-weekly quizzes worth 7% each, lowest score dropped (ongoing)
- 35%: Final Oral Exam (week 10) OR Final project (group-designed game), divided:
  - 10%: Game proposal (due week 7)
  - 25%: Final game (due week 11)
- 24%: Individual course portfolio (due week 12 or week 13)
- Optional extra credit: submission of notes for peers (worth 0.25% each, up to 4 maximum)

### **Course Readings and Schedule:**

*\*\*Readings are subject to change up to one week before they are assigned\*\**

*Week 1—January 7: Introductions*

- No assigned readings

*Week 2—January 14: What is play?*

- Mukherjee, U. (2023). When Leisure Studies Met Childhood Studies: Laying Grounds for Cross-Cultural and International Studies of Children's Leisure. In U. Mukherjee (Ed.), *Childhoods & Leisure* (pp. 1–31). Springer International Publishing. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-33789-5\\_1](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-33789-5_1)
- Souto-Manning, M. (2017). Is play a privilege or a right? And what's our responsibility? On the role of play for equity in early childhood education. *Early Child Development and Care*, 187(5–6), 785–787. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03004430.2016.1266588>

*Week 3—January 21: Play and innocence*

- Garlen, J. C., & Ramjewan, N. T. (2024). Introduction: Moving beyond childhood innocence. In J. C. Garlen & N. T. Ramjewan (Eds.), *Refusing the limits of contemporary childhood: Beyond innocence*. Lexington Books.
- Garlen, J. C. (2019). Interrogating innocence: "Childhood" as exclusionary social practice. *Childhood*, 26(1), 54–67. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0907568218811484>

**\*\*Bi-weekly quiz 1 (weeks 2-3) opens, due Friday, January 23 at 11:59 pm\*\***

*Week 4—January 28: Play, nature, and development*

- Nxumalo, F. (2019). Unsettling forest encounters. In *Decolonizing place in early childhood education* (pp. 54–71). Routledge.
- Johnston-Goodstar, K. (2020). Decolonizing youth development: Re-imagining youthwork for indigenous youth futures. *AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples*, 16(4), 378–386. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1177180120967998>

*Week 5—February 4: Barriers to play*

- Pinckney, H. P., Bryan, N., & Outley, C. (2021). Black PlayCrit: Examining the Disruption of Play for Black Male Youth. *American Journal of Play*, 13(2–3), 210–229.
- Goodley, D., & Runswick-Cole, K. (2010). Emancipating play: Dis/abled children, development and deconstruction. *Disability & Society*, 25(4), 499–512. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09687591003755914>

**\*\*Bi-weekly quiz 2 (weeks 4-5) opens, due Friday, February 6 at 11:59 pm\*\***

*Week 6—February 11: Violent play and dark play*

- Delaney, K. K. (2017). Playing at violence: Lock-down drills, 'bad guys' and the construction of 'acceptable' play in early childhood. *Early Child Development and Care*, 187(5–6), 878–895. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03004430.2016.1219853>
- Yoon, H. S. (2021). Stars, Rainbows, and Michael Myers: The Carnavalesque Intersection of Play and Horror in Kindergarteners' (Trade)marking and (Copy)writing. *Teachers College Record: The Voice of Scholarship in Education*, 123(3), 1–22. <https://doi.org/10.1177/016146812112300303>

**---No class February 18 for reading week---**

*Week 7—February 25: Racism and innocence in children's play* **\*\*Game proposals due at 11:59 pm\*\***

- MacNevin, M., & Berman, R. (2017). The Black baby doll doesn't fit the disconnect between early childhood diversity policy, early childhood educator practice, and children's play. *Early Child Development and Care*, 187(5–6), 827–839. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03004430.2016.1223065>
- Thomas, E. E. (2019). Lamentations of a Mockingjay: The Hunger Games' Rue and Racial Innocence in the Dark Fantastic. In *The Dark Fantastic* (pp. 35–64). New York University Press. <https://doi.org/10.18574/nyu/9781479864195.003.0005>

**\*\*Bi-weekly quiz 3 (weeks 6-7) opens, due Friday, February 27 at 11:59 pm**

*Week 8—March 4: Tensions around digital play*

- Severs, J. (2025, September 3). Is Jonathan Haidt right about smartphones? *Tes Magazine*. <https://www.tes.com/magazine/teaching-learning/general/jonathan-haidt-anxious-generation-right-about-smartphones>
- Schriever, V., Simon, S., & Donnison, S. (2020). Guardians of play: Early childhood teachers' perceptions and actions to protect children's play from digital technologies. *International Journal of Early Years Education*, 28(4), 351–365. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669760.2020.1850431>

*Week 9—March 11: Social control and anxieties about unstructured play*

- Akiyama, M. (2010). Silent Alarm: The Mosquito Youth Deterrent and the Politics of Frequency. *Canadian Journal of Communication*, 35(3), 455–471. <https://doi.org/10.22230/cjc.2010v35n3a2261>
- Watson, C., Stirling Cameron, E., Hickens, N., Pimentel, M., Hamilton-Hinch, B., & McIsaac, J.-L. D. (2024). Early Childhood leisure experiences of African Nova Scotian children: The privilege of risky outdoor play. *Leisure/Loisir*, 48(2), 211–229. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14927713.2023.2291023>

**\*\*Bi-weekly quiz 4 (weeks 9-10) opens, due Friday, March 13 at 11:59 pm**

*Week 10—March 18: \*\*Oral exams performed in class\*\**

- No assigned readings

*Week 11—March 25: \*\*Final games presented in class\*\**

- No assigned readings

*Week 12—April 1: \*\*Course portfolio presentations: Session 1\*\**

- No assigned readings

*Week 13—April 8: \*\*Course portfolio presentations: Session 2\*\**

- No assigned readings

**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](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/](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](mailto: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](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](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.