



CYS 2252F

(570)

Fall 2026

War Zone Childhoods

Instructor Information:

Professor:	Dr. Laszlo Sarkany	Office #:	N/A
Email:	lsarkan@uwo.ca	Ext:	4513

Office Hours: TBA

Course description from academic timetable:

This course examines various attempts by children to actively organize themselves as one response to the horrific conditions created by war and its related consequences in their communities. We further examine how children come to understand their childhoods under such conditions as well as the adult discourses that attempt to define and address war zone conditions.

Course Description:

The aim of this course is to introduce students to the ways in which the experience of children in war has been approached by scholars, practitioners, and, most importantly, by children themselves. The course will begin by considering the impacts of war on children, and childhood and also on the historical foundations of children's rights. Next, the discussion will focus on ontological and epistemological issues surrounding children in war, namely what wartime childhoods are being studied, and how children and childhood has been conceptualized in contemporary scholarship. During the third part of the course, contemporary thematic issues and topics will be considered, such as children in the war in Ukraine, children born of war, child soldiers, and the long-term effects of war. During the latter part of the course emphasis will be placed on resilience, reconciliation, advocacy and agency – or how children cope with the effects of war, and how they are able to meaningfully impact their condition.

Course Component	Percentage of Grade	Due Date:
Participation	10%	On-going
Book review	20%	October 7 th
Essay proposal	10%	October 28 th
Class essay*	25%	November 25 th
Final exam	35%	December, 2026

Grading standards:

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

Course grades will be determined by the following criteria:

I) IN-CLASS PARTICIPATION

You are expected to participate during each of the lectures and meetings by asking question and providing unique and multifaceted insight into the readings. Students will be able to ask questions of the presenters or the instructor:

- Verbally, in person
- By posting questions and comments on the discussion forum created each week during the term. The discussion forum will be available on **Brighspace**.

Overall, participation should reflect awareness of the main arguments in the readings and should be informed. **Please note that the frequency of participation will not be considered as having the same value as the quality of participation.**

Discussions regarding wartime childhoods may lend themselves to multi-faceted discussions involving a variety of view points and opinions, which may – or may not – be shared by all. Therefore, students are asked that they conduct themselves in such a way that they show the utmost respect to other who may – or may not – share their views. The key here is to respect each others’ opinions and perspectives. Any student uttering any negative or derogatory comments towards the views of others will first be asked to change their behaviour, or will be asked to take a few-minute break from the discussion.

II) BOOK REVIEW

You will be responsible to write a book review on one (1) of the five (5) books listed in a document you will find under 'Resources' on OWL. It will be worth 20% of your final grade in this course. In the review you will be asked to summarize the main arguments in *the book of your choice*, and then spend at least half of the length of the essay analyzing the main arguments presented in the book. **The book review needs to be 6 double-spaced pages long.** More specific instruction on how to write a book review and what to include – and not to include – will be provided in class, well ahead of the due date.

III) ESSAY PROPOSAL

In preparation for the class essay, students will be asked to submit a 750-word essay proposal. Students should incorporate in the written proposal the comments, advice and suggestions received from their colleagues and the course instructor.

The components of the proposal will be as follows. **(You MUST use the format outlined below.):**

Section I – '*Research Question(s)*' – maximum three questions should be posed, and they should all closely relate to the central topic of the essay.

Section II – '*Introduction*' – no longer than 250 words – which must include a clearly identifiable thesis statement.

Section III – Listing of all of the subsections of the essay, entitled 'Section 1 – Section 'n'. Under each subsection, there needs to be a sentence or two describing the themes/topics/arguments/cases discussed.

Section IV – '*Conclusion*', which will include a brief summary of the arguments.

IV) MAJOR RESEARCH ESSAY

You will be responsible for writing a **class essay** worth 25 % of the final mark. The essay will be due on the last day of classes during the fall term. **The essay should be 10 double spaced pages long**, on a topic agreed to by the student and the instructor no later than November 1st.

*****Please note that if you are not able to submit the class essay on time, I will ask for formal documentation noting the reasons for the missed deadline.**

*****Students are highly encouraged to write the class essay on a topic discussed either during their seminar presentations, or while commenting on a seminar presentation.**

- i) Formatting should be as follows: Size 12, Times New Roman font, with 1" – 1.25" margins. I will accept Chicago style, the Modern Languages Association (MLA) style, and the American Psychological Association (APA) style formatting of footnotes, endnotes, in-text referencing, bibliography, etc.
- ii) In regards to the sources used for the essays, please note the following order:
 - a. Books
 - b. Journal articles
 - c. Policy papers
 - d. Discussions in the media with wide readership – approximately 500,000 readers and above
- iii) You are asked to consult and cite at least 10– 12 **academic** sources.
- i) With respect to the topic of the essay, it will be your responsibility to contact me about your topic. If you choose not to do so, I reserve the right to directly criticize the topic of the essay, which will most certainly have an impact on the mark you achieve in the course.

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. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com <http://www.turnitin.com>

****** Each assignment/paper is due on the date noted. Late assignments will be accepted up to 48 hours after the deadline, without penalty. Assignments that are three to five days late will receive a corresponding late penalty of 10% if handed in between 48 – 72 hours (up to 3 days late), 20% if handed in 72 – 96 hours (up to 4 days late), and 30% if the assignment was handed in between 96 – 120 hours late (or up to 5 days late). Assignments will not be accepted beyond the five-day, or 120-hour mark. Extensions, however, may be granted in instances where illness, personal or family emergency, or mental health issues are a factor, though waiting until after the deadline to see an academic counsellor will increase the possibility that you will receive zero.***

As a final note, students are strongly encouraged to take advantage of the instructor's office hours to discuss course readings and lectures, or exam performance.

DEPARTMENT POLICY ON ABSENCE AND LATE ASSIGNMENTS:

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.

DEPARTMENT POLICY ON THE USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE TO COMPLETE ASSIGNMENTS:

Within this course, use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools (such as ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, co-pilot, translation tools, and grammar-checking tools) is not permitted for written work submitted for evaluation. Unauthorized use of AI will be subject to academic discipline.

Required textbooks:

Denov, & Akesson, B. (2017). *Children affected by armed conflict: theory, method, and practice*. Columbia University Press. [Anticipated cost: \$ 37 USD]

*****The rest of the readings assigned are accessible on-line in the appropriate journals on on-line sources, which are further available electronically through UWO library web page.*****

WEEKLY READINGS

WEEK 1: September 9th – Introduction to the course, and to the overall topics: what do we mean by ‘wartime’ and ‘childhood’

Huynh, K., D'Costa, B., & Lee-Koo, K. (2015). *Children and Global Conflict*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. doi:10.1017/CBO9781139854573, Introduction and chapter 1

Beier, J. M., & Tabak, J. (Eds.). (2021). *Childhoods in peace and conflict*. Springer International Publishing AG: Introduction

WEEK 2: September 16th – Historical foundations

Lenzer, Gertrud, 'Images toward the Emancipation of Children in Modern Western Culture', in Jonathan Todres, and Shani M. King (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Children's Rights Law*, Oxford Handbooks (2020; online edn, Oxford Academic, 7 May 2020), <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780190097608.013.2>,

WEEK 3: September 23rd – Ontological and methodological foundations

Denov and Akesson, Introduction, chapters 1 and 2

WEEK 4: September 30th – NATIONAL RECONCILIATION DAY – NO CLASS

WEEK 5: October 7th - Children's Rights and Childhood

Bochenek, Michael G. "Children's Rights as Human Rights." *Ethics & International Affairs*, vol. 29, no. 4, 2015, pp. 473-488. (Available on the OWL page of the course)

Lee-Koo, Katrina. "The Universal Declaration of Human Rights at 70: Children's Rights." *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 73, no. 4, 2019, pp. 326-330. (Available on the OWL page of the course.)

***** October 10th – 18th – FALL STUDY BREAK – NO INSTRUCTION *****

WEEK 6: October 21st – The war in Ukraine

Beier, J. M., & Tabak, J. (Eds.). (2021). *Childhoods in peace and conflict*. Springer International Publishing AG. Chapters 8 and 10

WEEK 7: October 28th – Child soldiers

Beier, J. M., & Tabak, J. (Eds.). (2021). *Childhoods in peace and conflict*. Springer International Publishing AG: chapters 2 and 3

Denov and Akesson, chapter 5

Huynh, K., D'Costa, B., & Lee-Koo, K. (2015). *Children and Global Conflict*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. doi:10.1017/CBO9781139854573, chapter 5

WEEK 8 – November 4th – ‘Skiddies’, cyberspace, and child soldiering

READINGS: TBA

WEEK 9: November 11th – ‘Children born of war’, and the long-term impact of war

Lee, S., Glaesmer, H., & Stelzl-Marx, B. (Eds.). (2021). *Children Born of War: Past, Present and Future* (1st ed.). Routledge. <https://doi-org.proxy1.lib.uwo.ca/10.4324/9780429199851>, chapters 1 and 2

Ramirez, D., & Haas, S. A. (2021). The Long Arm of Conflict: How Timing Shapes the Impact of Childhood Exposure to War. *Demography*, 58(3), 951–974. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/48687155>

WEEK 10: November 18th – An unexplained and not understood phenomenon: resignation syndrome

READINGS: TBA

WEEK 11: November 25th – Remembering, collective memory and resilience

TakA eva. (2018). Building a Culture of Peace and Collective Memory in Post-conflict Bosnia and Herzegovina: Sarajevo’s Museum of War Childhood. *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism*, 18(1), 3–18. <https://doi.org/10.1111/sena.12265>

Beier, J. M., & Tabak, J. (Eds.). (2021). *Childhoods in peace and conflict*. Springer International Publishing AG: chapter 9.

WEEK 12 December 2nd – Advocacy, Agency and Voice

Huynh, K., D'Costa, B., & Lee-Koo, K. (2015). *Children and Global Conflict*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. doi:10.1017/CBO9781139854573, chapters 2 and 9

Kirby, Perpetua, and Rebecca Webb, 'Taking Part, Joining in, and Being Heard? Ethnographic Explorations of Children's Participation', in Jonathan Todres, and Shani M. King (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Children's Rights Law*, Oxford Handbooks (2020; online edn, Oxford Academic, 7 May 2020), <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780190097608.013.24>,

Huynh, K., D'Costa, B., & Lee-, Koo, K. (2015). Children and peace building: Propagating peace. In *Children and Global Conflict* (pp. 185-211). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. doi:10.1017/CBO9781139854573.008, chapter 7

WEEK 13 – December 9th – EXAM REVIEW

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POLICY STATEMENT REGARDING ABSENCE FROM CLASS, AND MISSED ASSIGNMENTS

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
2026-27**

1. Academic Accommodations (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](#).

2. Academic Consideration for Student Absences

Students must be approved to write a makeup exam or for an extension of the assignment deadline. If you need to miss an exam or the deadline for the assignment, please follow these instructions.

There are two ways to seek academic consideration:

(i) Academic consideration based on medical or compassionate grounds

If a student is unable to meet a course requirement due to substantial but temporary extenuating circumstances (medical or compassionate grounds), they should contact the Academic Advising Office. As a rule, documentation is required for academic consideration.

For academic consideration requests on medical grounds, the Student Medical Certificate (SMC) is the appropriate documentation. The SMC is available at <https://registrar.uwo.ca/academics/pdfs/student-medical-certificate.pdf>

- King's students: The Academic Advising Office website is located in DLH 104. The Academic Advising website is <https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/academics/academic-advising>.
- If your home faculty is Huron or at Western, please submit your documentation to your faculty's academic counselling office.
- Requests must be made as soon as possible and no later than 48 hours after the missed assessment.

You may submit requests for academic consideration through the **Student Absence Portal**, linked on this website: <https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/academics/academic-advising/academic-consideration-requests-and-student-absence-portal>

(ii) Academic consideration through an undocumented absence

Students are permitted one academic consideration request without supporting documentation per term per half-course (0.5) weight.

- Note that instructors may designate one assessment per half-course weight as requiring formal supporting documentation. Please refer to the course outline to confirm this assessment.
- If instructors have built flexibility into their assessments, this flexibility will already address consideration needs. (For example, if students need to submit X of Y assignments, this flexibility already provides consideration.)
- Undocumented absences can not be used as the basis for academic consideration for December or April exams.

For further information on the academic consideration policy, please see https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_consideration_Sep24.pdf

c) Absences from Final Exams

If you miss the Final Exam, **contact your Academic Advising Office** 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 (i.e., you are scheduled to write 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](#)).

d) Religious Accommodations

Students should consult the University’s list of recognized religious holidays, and should give notice in writing to the instructor and their 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.

3. Support Services

Accessibility, Counselling and Student Development at King’s University College:
<https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/student-supports-and-services/accessibility-services>

Students experiencing emotional or mental health distress can access services at King’s University College: <https://kings.uwo.ca/campus-life/student-supports/>

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

Western’s Mental Health Services site provides a complete list of options on how to obtain help: <https://www.uwo.ca/health/mental-health/index.html>

Academic Support Services at King's University College: <https://kings.uwo.ca/academics/academic-supports/>

4. Statement on Gender-Based Sexual Violence

King's and Western are committed to reducing incidents of gender-based sexual violence (GBSV) and providing compassionate support to anyone who is going through or has gone through these traumatic events. If you are experiencing or have experienced GBSV (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at the following website: [Mental Health and Wellness at King's](#).

You can reach supports at King's 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 (health@uwo.ca) or by calling 519-661-3568. Additional support services can be found <https://www.uwo.ca/health/gbsv/support/index.html>

5. 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://kings.uwo.ca/sites/2025/assets/files/campus/Kings_Code_of_Student_Conduct.pdf

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.

6. 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 https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_offences.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 to check which tools, including generative AI (ChatGPT, translation tools, grammar-checking tools) are permitted in each course.** Note that although some courses may permit the use of such tools, it does not mean use of such tools 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.

7. 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.

8. 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.

9. 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.