



CHILDHOOD & YOUTH STUDIES 3370F (570)
A Right to Play
Fall/Winter 2026 - 2027

Instructor: Dr. Hunter Knight
Email: hknight6@uwo.ca

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.

Antirequisite(s):

Extra Information: 3 hours

Course Weight: 0.50

Breadth: Category A

Subject Code: CYS

Notice: Unless you have either the requisites for this course, 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

Fall 2026

Professor: Dr. Hunter Knight

Email: hknight6@uwo.ca

Mode of instruction: In-person

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).

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) 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:

- 10%: Participation, composed of 5 in-class journal responses (ongoing, weeks 2-8)
- 24%: 3 quizzes worth 8% each (ongoing)
- 35%: Final Oral Exam (week 9) OR Final project (group-designed game), divided:
 - 10%: Game proposal (due week 6)
 - 25%: Final game (due week 10)
- 31%: Individual course portfolio (due week 11 or week 12)
- 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—September 14: Introductions

- No assigned readings

Week 2—September 21: 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
- 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—September 28: 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, October 2 at 11:59 pm****

Week 4—October 5: 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>

---No class October 12 for reading week---

Week 5—October 19: 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, October 23 at 11:59 pm****

Week 6—October 26: Violent play and forbidden play ****Game proposals due at 11:59 pm****

- 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 Kindergarten’s (Trade)marking and (Copy)writing. *Teachers College Record: The Voice of Scholarship in Education*, 123(3), 1–22. <https://doi.org/10.1177/016146812112300303>

Week 7—November 2: Racism and innocence in children’s play

- 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>

Week 8—November 9: Children using technology for play & leisure

- 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>
- Lai, G. (2025, December 12). 7 Australian Teens React to the Country's Social Media Ban. *Teen Vogue*. <https://www.teenvogue.com/story/australian-teens-react-social-media-ban>
- Moore, M., Coulter, N., Bendo, D., & Goodwin de Faria, C. (2026, June 12). Why social media bans don't work and what youth say will increase online safety. *The Toronto Star*. https://www.thestar.com/opinion/contributors/why-social-media-bans-dont-work-and-what-youth-say-will-increase-online-safety/article_b866290a-a8aa-4417-9091-04ab5b1cb52c.html

****Bi-weekly quiz 3 (weeks 6-8) opens, due Friday, November 13 at 11:59 pm**

Week 9—November 16: ****Oral exams performed in class****

- No assigned readings

Week 10—November 23: ****Final games presented in class****

- No assigned readings

Week 11—November 30: ****Course portfolio presentations: Session 1****

- No assigned readings

Week 12—December 7: ****Course portfolio presentations: Session 2****

- No assigned readings

**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.