

BROCK UNIVERSITY - DEPARTMENT OF CHILD AND YOUTH STUDIES
CHYS 3P28 - POLICIES OF CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH:
THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

INSTRUCTOR: Associate Professor Richard C. Mitchell, Ph.D.

COURSE INTRODUCTION:

For many decades, Canadians saw themselves as a nation that promotes and protects the human rights of all minorities, and as a result, many have become interested in the human rights of children and young people. The Canadian government ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) on behalf of all citizens in December 1991, but how legally binding is this treaty on professionals working and researching with children and young people? While Canada has historically enjoyed an international reputation as a human rights champion, increasingly this profile is being called into question where the social, civil and political rights of many of its children and young people are concerned.

Students will develop a clear appreciation of how the “principles and provisions” of the CRC may be adopted within their own professional voluntary, and/or research practices, answer common questions and clarify ongoing misconceptions regarding rights-based approaches within Canadian and international child and youth settings. Moreover, by reviewing dominant social constructions of ‘childhood’ and ‘youth’, a greater understanding of how to apply the treaty as an ethical framework to promote fuller, active citizenship for children and young people will be achieved. On successful completion of this course, students will also demonstrate a preliminary understanding of contemporary issues faced by teachers, social workers, researchers, corrections and youth justice practitioners, legislators, policy- and decision-makers, child and youth counselors, and other adults wishing to respect and apply the human rights of young people.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES IN ACCORDANCE WITH ONTARIO’S
UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE LEVEL EXPECTATIONS (or UDLEs):**

1. To introduce and familiarize students with *accurate knowledge* of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (or CRC) for application in professional and voluntary settings in Canada, or beyond our borders
2. To think critically about designations such as ‘childhood’, ‘youth’ and ‘adolescence’ in order to understand how human rights intersect with ages and stages, poverty, gender, ethnicity, ability and sexuality
3. To appreciate how transdisciplinary thinking promotes greater understanding of how these human rights may be applied in relationships with children and young people in professional and voluntary settings

COURSE EVALUATION:

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| 1) <u>ONLINE SEMINAR PARTICIPATION</u> | 20% |
| 2) <u>MID-TERM READINGS EXAM</u> | 40% |
| 3) <u>UNCRC SUMMARY</u> | 20% |
| 4) <u>COMPARISON OF CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS</u> | 20% |