The category of “girl” increasingly finds itself at the center of many debates—from conversations on education and entrepreneurial success to those on sexualization, low self-esteem and violence. However, what is often unexamined in these conversations is the question of who is a girl. What assumptions of race, class, sexuality, ability and nationality underlie this category of girl? Which girls are invisibilized within dominant representations of girlhood? As part of this introductory course to Girlhood Studies, we will grapple with these questions to think about construction of the category of “girl” within various sites, including popular media and development discourses. We will analyze how the meanings associated with girlhood come to symbolize various anxieties as well as possibilities. We will also engage with the various responses to these constructions, looking at ideas of “girl power”, agency and citizenship. Through an investigation of the experiences of girls within schools, homes, malls and juvenile detention, we will look at how girls negotiate with the various structures of power that they encounter in their daily lives.

While most of our texts will be located in the context of the US, we will also widen our lens in an effort to think about how the category of girl has been constructed within development discourses through an examination of the “third world girl”.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

This course aims to equip students to

- Identify some of the key debates of girlhood studies, including sexualization, agency, at-risk etc.
- Critically analyze the construction of girlhood- who is a girl? how is the category of girl analyzed at the intersections of race, sexuality, nationality, ability?
Closely read academic and popular culture texts to critically reflect on the representations of girlhood and the ideologies and assumptions that underlie these representations.

Critically think about the different structures of power within which girls are located and how they negotiate with these structures at various sites in their lives.

Readings

WEEK 1
Jan 7 - Jan 13
Introductions
What is Girlhood Studies?

WEEK 2
Jan 14 - Jan 20
Who is a Girl?

WEEK 3
Jan 21 - Jan 27
Where are the Girls?
WEEK 4
Jan 28 - Feb 3

Representation of Girls

Watch Mean Girls (dir. Mark Waters) (assigned on Secured Media Library)


WEEK 5
Feb 4 - Feb 10

The Sexualization Debates


WEEK 6
Feb 11 - Feb 17

Girls Make Media


WEEK 7
Feb 18 - 24

Complicating Agency


**WEEK 8**

Feb 25- Mar 3

When Girls Resist


**WEEK 9**

Mar 4- Mar 10

Girlhood and Citizenship


**WEEK 10**

Mar 11- Mar 17

SPRING BREAK!

**WEEK 11**

Mar 18- Mar 24

Mapping Black Girlhood


**WEEK 12**

Mar 25-31

Mapping Black Girlhood


**WEEK 13**

Apr 1- Apr 7

The Girl in International Development

Watch “Girl Rising” (dir. Richard Robbins)


**WEEK 14**

Apr 8- Apr 14

Queering Girlhoods


**WEEK 15**
Apr 15- Apr 21

Girlhood and Incarceration
