COMM 457: Youth and Media
Units: 4
Summer 2020, Session 2
ONLINE

Instructor: Laurel Felt, PhD; [www.laurelfelt.org](http://www.laurelfelt.org)
Virtual Office Hours: By appointment
Contact Info: felt@usc.edu | 847.528.1350

Annenberg Virtual Commons: [http://vc.uscannenberg.org/annenberg-it](http://vc.uscannenberg.org/annenberg-it)
Annenberg IT Help Desk: ASC 234 | asctech@usc.edu | (213) 740-3901

Course Description
What do we mean we use the word “youth”? How does this explicitly map onto ages/stages of child development? How does this implicitly conjure specific characteristics in terms of class, race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, sexuality, ability, etc? What or who do our research and ideas leave out?

What do we mean we use the word “media”? Which types of content and technologies does this imply? Who make these media and who engage with these media? Considering media’s evolution over time and users’ diverse forms of engagement, to what extent can we separate media by “type” and/or group them together? What or who do our products and ideas leave out?

What happens when youth engage with media? What’s “good” for kids, what’s “bad” for kids, and what are the criteria that determine “it depends”?

In this course, we will explore how young people engage with various media, focusing in particular on: advertising/marketing; episodic and long-form narratives (aka TV and movies); toys, digital games, and coding; “edtech”; and social media. You will be asked to reflect upon societal beliefs and assumptions about child development and the nature of technological transformation, as well as upon your own personal experiences. Through regular discussion with peers and guest speakers from the wide world of children’s media production around diverse “texts” from academia, journalism, industry, and users, you will learn to articulate and defend positions about youth and media – as well as conceptualize your own properties. The insights that you will gain in this class into youth and media are intended to serve you in your professional and personal lives in the years to come.
Learning Objectives

• To describe key concepts, theories, and debates about youth and media, and provide specific examples and case studies that illustrate those broader ideas.
• To critically evaluate the validity of claims about media’s effects upon youth and youth’s effects upon media/society.
• To identify and interpret relevant research about topics in youth and media.
• To articulate and defend a written position regarding youth and media on a topic of personal interest, grounded in empirical research evidence.
• To describe both developmentally appropriate and normative media use for youth at various ages/stages, in general and within the context of COVID-19.
• To gain first-hand knowledge of relevant “artifacts” — that is, actual children’s media properties.
• To synthesize diverse professionals’ perspectives in order to better understand how and why various forms of children’s media are produced.
• To experiment with simultaneously honoring creativity, industry norms and guidelines, developmental appropriateness, ethical best practices, market demands, and feasibility in order to conceptualize original media properties.
• To apply diverse ways of knowing, humility, and respect to discussions about youth and media.
• To deepen appreciation for every stakeholder in this “universe,” including (but not limited to) youth, parents, researchers, and children’s media makers.

Course Notes
1. Grading
   a. This course is graded A/B/C/D/F. Grades will be assigned as follows:

A/A- = outstanding, thoughtful, and enthusiastic work
B+/B = above average work, demonstrating good insight into assignment
B-/C+ = needs improvement on ideas, argument and follow through
C and below = fulfilling the bare minimum and showing little understanding of the material

   \[
   \begin{align*}
   A &= 100-94 & C &= 76-74 \\
   A- &= 93-90 & C- &= 73-70 \\
   B+ &= 89-87 & D+ &= 69-67 \\
   B &= 86-84 & D &= 66-64 \\
   B- &= 83-80 & D- &= 63-60 \\
   C+ &= 79-77 & F &= 59-0
   \end{align*}
   \]
2. **Blackboard**
   a. Blackboard will function as this course’s resource “hub.”
   b. The instructor will post readings to Blackboard, post Announcements to Blackboard, and send those Announcements as emails via Blackboard.
   c. Students will submit assignments to Blackboard via Turnitin.

3. **Zoom**
   a. This course will meet via Zoom.
   b. I expect everyone to show up on time, prepared to keep their video on and their mute off. That means that you’re attired presentably and the background noise in your environment is minimal.
   c. Here is the meeting information:
      
      https://uscannenberg.zoom.us/j/91541412699?pwd=TXJqcTV6Y1QrMkhpU0JkQ0dLRGxyUT09

      Meeting ID: 915 4141 2699
      Password: SENT SEPARATELY

      One tap mobile
      +16699009128,,91541412699# US (San Jose)
      +13462487799,,91541412699# US (Houston)

      Dial by your location
      +1 669 900 9128 US (San Jose)
      +1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)
      +1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)
      +1 301 715 8592 US (Germantown)
      +1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)
      +1 646 558 8656 US (New York)
      Meeting ID: 915 4141 2699
      Find your local number: https://uscannenberg.zoom.us/u/ab3ka4nuFM

**Technological Proficiency and Hardware/Software Requirements**

This class requires a moderate level of technological proficiency. The instructor believes in all students’ capacity to learn and grow, and values the resources that USC provides so that students may enrich their technological proficiency. Some of these resources include: Annenberg Virtual Commons, Annenberg IT Help Desk, USC Information & Technology Services (http://itservices.usc.edu/), USC Libraries (http://www.usc.edu/libraries/), Lynda.com. Peers’ assistance is priceless. The instructor will happily meet with you one-on-one. Regardless of one’s technological proficiency pre-COMM 457, all students can succeed.

Zoom is required software. It is free to download. Zoom is the mechanism by which we meet.
Microsoft Powerpoint (free to all USC students) or GoogleSlides (always free from GoogleDrive) are required software in order to create at least one slide deck.

TikTok, YouTube Kids, and Zigazoo are required apps in order to watch at least one video on each platform. If downloading any app presents a hardship, let me know.

**Required Readings**

- Every article, video, and book chapter in the syllabus. These have all been hyperlinked, you can independently Google them and find them online, and they are available as pdfs on Blackboard.
- There are no required textbooks.

**Assignment Submission Policy**

1. **Written work (e.g., papers, slide decks, guest speaker questions, etc)**
   a. Post to Blackboard via Turnitin link by 11:59 pm on the due date
   b. *If you experience difficulties with Blackboard, then email the assignment to the instructor by 11:59 pm on the due date*

2. **Spoken work (e.g., discussion leadership, presentations, etc)**
   a. Share in class on the due date

**Additional Policies**

1. **Late and unfinished assignments**
   a. Any material turned in late will be reduced one letter grade per calendar day late.
   b. Students must complete all assignments in order to receive course credit.

2. **Grading questions**
   a. After receiving a grade, students must wait for 24 hours before addressing the instructor. Please use this time to think through the strength of your case.
   b. If you have determined that your grade merits further review, then submit your complaint/rationale **in writing within the next week** (7 days). Again, complaints or requests for reconsideration of a grade will not be considered unless they are submitted in written form and delivered after 1 day but before 8 days have elapsed.
   c. A complaint constitutes an argument, and will be evaluated by the standards of acceptable argumentation as presented in class readings and lectures.
## Grading Breakdown, Description and Assessment of Assignments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASSIGNMENT</th>
<th>PTS</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>CRITERIA</th>
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</table>
| Weekly Project & Presentation (Research Paper or Creative Production) | 500 (5 x 100) | 50 | **Research Paper:** 3-4-page research brief on a topic related to the week's focus that consider texts from within + beyond the syllabus  
**Creative Production:** 20-slide exploration of an original media property related to the week's focus that you conceptualize  
[Must do each type of project at least once. Will drop the lowest score and replace with the average of remaining four.] |
| Discussion Leadership                          | 100 (2 x 50) | 10 | Masterful grasp on the readings and screening(s) assigned to your class session. Specifically, ability to articulate:  
- Each text's main argument(s)  
- Evidence that each text used to support the big idea(s)  
- Method(s) that each text used to conduct the study  
- Whether you agree or disagree with each text's argument(s) and why  
- What you learned from the reading  
- Ability to call on peers and ask these and other questions of them |
| Guest Speaker Questions                        | 50        | 5  | At least 2 questions for each guest speaker. One question must ask this expert about their perspective on the topic of the day/week. The other question may be anything – a question about the speaker's bio, a request for a fun fact or favorite X, advice, etc.  
*Must be posted to Discussion Board before their visit* |
| “Outside” Perspective                          | 50        | 5  | 1-2 page write-up of EITHER:  
- a scholarly study that does not appear on the syllabus  
- an interview with a children's media professional who is not a COMM 457 guest speaker  
- an interview with a parent/caregiver about their opinions and practices regarding their child (aged 0-22)’s use of media  
- an interview with and/or observation of a child (aged 3-18) around media and play  
*Can be submitted at any point during the semester* |
| Final Project Proposal (Research Paper or Creative Production) | 50        | 5  | **Research Paper:** 1-page proposal that explains your topic, research purpose and questions, and methods  
**Creative Production:** 1-page overview of your original media property, including its purpose, intended audience, and developmental appropriateness |
| Final Project & Presentation (Research Paper or Creative Production) | 150 | 15 | **Research Paper:** 8-10 page position paper that reviews research on a youth and media-related topic in order to form an argument + 3-5 minute overview (live-action or VoiceThread)  
**Creative Production:** 30-slide exploration of your original media property + 3-5 minute video pitch (live-action or VoiceThread) |
| Participation                                   | 100       | 10 | I expect you to come to class on time, prepared to ask questions, discuss the assigned readings, and make insightful and substantive contributions in every class. You should be able to respond to |
questions about the assigned readings and offer opinions and insights into the topics addressed. Participation will be graded based on your demonstrated level of preparation, involvement, and contribution to class discussions.

Poor attendance will adversely affect your participation grade. If you have a good attendance record but don’t actively participate in class discussions, you can’t expect to get a good participation grade (in other words, participation grade is not based solely on attendance).

If you are late, rude (such as texting or checking your mobile phones), or disrupt others, your participation points will be deducted. Bear in mind that your participation grade begins at zero (0) and that you will be accumulating points through your engagement in class discussions.

<p>| TOTAL | 1000 | 100 |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week: Topic</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Lens</th>
<th>Readings Due</th>
<th>In-Class Screening</th>
<th>Work Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>July 3</td>
<td>NO CLASS</td>
<td><strong>FOURTH OF JULY</strong> (observed)</td>
<td></td>
<td>5 Things I Love, 5 Things I Don’t Rotating Discussion Leadership : Zeenya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 2: Advertising, Commercializing Childhood, and Selling “Youth Culture”</strong></td>
<td>July 6</td>
<td>Infancy &amp; Early Childhood</td>
<td><em>1-2:15 = screening</em></td>
<td>Campaign for a Commercial-free Childhood. (2019). <strong>Commercial-ism is the missing link.</strong> Panelists: Dr. Susan Linn, Josh Golin.</td>
<td>5 Things I Love, 5 Things I Don’t Rotating Discussion Leadership : Zeenya</td>
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<td></td>
<td><em>2:15-3:15 = discuss texts</em></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td><em>3:15-3:50 = Dr. Jarrod Walcker, Strategic Insights Manager, SuperAwesome</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td>March 8</td>
<td></td>
<td><em>1-2:15 = screening</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td>March 8</td>
<td></td>
<td><em>2:15-3:15 = discuss texts</em></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>March 8</td>
<td></td>
<td><em>3:15-3:50 = Robb Callender, Youth Insights professional, Kantar Consulting &amp; TRU</em></td>
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*Note: Rotating Discussion Leadership: Zeenya*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Reading/Media</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1:30–2 = revise</td>
<td></td>
<td>Weekly Project &amp; Presentation</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2-3:50 = present</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Deep Dive &amp; Design Lab</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Infancy &amp; Early Childhood</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>3:20-3:50 pm = Kristen McGregor, Showrunner/Producer/Writer/Director</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Weekly Project &amp; Presentation</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Middle Childhood &amp; Adolescence</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Deep Dive &amp; Design Lab</strong></td>
<td>RESOURCE: Netflix Global Animators contact list.</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>OPTIONAL:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Weekly Project &amp; Presentation</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Week 3: Television – Broadcast and Streaming</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Author(s)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3:15-3:50</td>
<td>present</td>
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### Week 4: Toys, Digital Games, and Coding

**July 20**

- 1:30 = screening
- 1:30-2:30 = discuss texts
- 2:45-3:15 = Eleanor Oliver Edmonds, Copywriter, Barbie
- 3:20-3:50 = Azhelle Wade, The Toy Coach

**Infancy & Early Childhood**


**July 22**

- 1:45 = screening
- 1:45-3:15 = discuss texts
- 3:15-3:50 = Kim Wilson, Producer and former Creative Head of Children’s and Youth Programming, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation

**Middle Childhood & Adolescence**


**July 24**

**Deep Dive & Design Lab**

- OPTIONAL:

**Deep Dive & Design Lab**

- OPTIONAL:

**Deep Dive & Design Lab**

- OPTIONAL:
### Week 5: Screens for/with/around Learning and Communicating

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Presentations/Assignments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Time Schedule:**

- **Monday:**
  - **1:2:15 = Lab time,** optional one-on-one meetings
  - **2:15-2:45 = get feedback from peers**
  - **2:45-3:50 = present**

- **Tuesday:**
  - **1:1-30 = screening**
  - **1:30-3 = discuss texts**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Social Media, and Activism</strong></th>
<th><strong>3:15-3:30 pm</strong></th>
<th><strong>Mascarenhas, N. (2020).</strong> <a href="https://techc%CF%81unch.com">Zigazoo launches to be a ‘TikTok’ for kids, surpasses 100,000 uploads and downloads</a></th>
<th><strong>YouTubeKids video of your choice</strong></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>= Josh Golin, Executive Director, Campaign for a Commercial-free Childhood</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>August 5</strong></td>
<td><strong>Middle Childhood &amp; Adolescence</strong></td>
<td><strong>Herrman, J. (2020).</strong> <a href="https://thenewyorktimes.com">TikTok is shaping politics. But how?</a></td>
<td><strong>Rotating Discussion Leadership : Kyler</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:30-3 = discuss texts</td>
<td></td>
<td>Bennett, J. (2020). <a href="https://thenewyorktimes.com">These teen girls are fighting for a more just future</a>.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:2:15 = Lab time, optional one-on-one meetings</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2:15-2:45 = get feedback from peers</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2:45-3:50 = present</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 7</strong></td>
<td><strong>August 10</strong></td>
<td><strong>Synthesis &amp; Reflection</strong></td>
<td><strong>Final Presentation</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>August 11</strong></td>
<td><strong>NO CLASS</strong></td>
<td><strong>LAST DAY OF SUMMER SEMESTER</strong></td>
<td><strong>Final Project</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Conduct

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in SCampus in Section 11, Behavior Violating University Standards https://scampus.usc.edu/1100-behavior-violating-university-standards-and-appropriate-sanctions/. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct, http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct/.

Discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment are not tolerated by the university. You are encouraged to report any incidents to the Office of Equity and Diversity http://equity.usc.edu/ or to the Department of Public Safety http://capsnet.usc.edu/department/department-public-safety/online-forms/contact-us. This is important for the safety whole USC community. Another member of the university community – such as a friend, classmate, advisor, or faculty member – can help initiate the report, or can initiate the report on behalf of another person. The Center for Women and Men http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/cwm/ provides 24/7 confidential support, and the sexual assault resource center webpage sarc@usc.edu describes reporting options and other resources.

Support Systems

A number of USC’s schools provide support for students who need help with scholarly writing. Check with your advisor or program staff to find out more.

NOTE: USC Dornsife Writing Center, http://dornsife.usc.edu/writingcenter/, Taper Hall of the Humanities Room 216, is an excellent resource.

Students whose primary language is not English should check with the American Language Institute http://dornsife.usc.edu/ali, which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international graduate students. NOTE: Please inform the instructor as soon as possible if English is not your primary language and you believe you may require special accommodations.

The Office of Disability Services and Programs http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations. NOTE: Any student requesting academic accommodation based on a disability is required to register with The Office of Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to your instructor (or TA) as early in the semester as possible. The phone number for DSP is 213-740-0776.