

# **LAW 250: Children and Law**

Spring 2021

Dr. Hayden Henderson

**Course Meeting Times:** Wednesday, 3:30-6:50 PM

**Room:** Mudd Hall MHP B7B

**Instructor Office:** Musick Law Building Room 416

**Office Hours:** Email for availability

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**Teaching Assistant:** Kiersten Ahrns

**Instructor Office:** Musick Law Building Room 416

**Office Hours:** Email for availability

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**Course Description:** Welcome to Children and Law. I hope this will be an interesting and informative learning experience for you.

This course will provide a basic introduction to issues regarding children and the law. We will focus on many legal issues and controversies that at their heart are multidisciplinary concerns. Topics of focus will be discussed and presented from psychological, sociological, philosophical and criminological perspectives. This course will examine topics such as children's suggestibility, decision-making, and risk and resiliency all as they apply to legal settings. Popular domestic and international case examples will be critically examined. Themes of the course will be framed through the interaction of the child, the parent, and the state. At the end of this course, students will be familiar with the legal system, and have an understanding of how to appraise and conduct developmental research with an application to legal settings.

To increase your understanding of legal arguments and empirical research, readings will consist of primary sources. As such, only excerpts of a book (Children and the Law, 6<sup>th</sup> edition) will be assigned to accompany lectures. Students will also read a non-fiction book titled 'No Matter How Loud I Shout', which will be discussed in class and contribute significantly to your participant grade.

In addition, this course will help you hone your critical thinking skills. An emphasis will be placed on class participation, in-and-out of class writing, and preparing research papers. It is expected that you will have read the required material prior to lecture so that you can actively participate in any discussion or assignment during the class meeting. Class participation is an important element to this class and will be included in your final grade.

## **Learning Objectives**

- 1) For students to gain an appreciation of multidisciplinary perspectives on children's rights and role within the legal system.
- 2) For students to obtain a working knowledge of international and domestic case law as it pertains to children.
- 3) For students to understand and analyze the role of the parent, the child, and the state as it pertains to the legal system.

**Prerequisite(s):** None

**Required Texts:**

1. Children and the Law in a Nutshell, 6<sup>th</sup> Edition, by Douglas Abrams, Susan Mangold, and Sarah Ramsey
2. No Matter How Loud I Shout: A Year in the Life of Juvenile Court by Edward Humes
3. Excerpts from selected readings.

**Poll Everywhere:** We will be using the app 'Poll Everywhere' throughout the term. Please set up an account – it can be via the app on your phone or on your laptop.

**Structure of the Course:** While material presented in class will be highly related to the required readings, it will not entirely overlap. For exams, you will be responsible for all material covered in lecture as well as information from your required readings. There will be an opportunity to ask review questions prior to the exam, **but NO exam outline provided prior to exams.**

**Grades:**

**Exams: 50%**

Examinations will measure students' mastery of material covered in the course readings and class lectures using a multiple choice and short answer format. There will be two examinations. No make-up exams will be given unless (a) you have a valid reason for not being able to take the exam on its originally scheduled date and time, AND (b) you make arrangements with me to take the make-up exam at least 12 hours before the exam's originally scheduled date and time. The grade for a missed exam will be 0.

**Written Research Paper: 35%**

To encourage you to adopt an active and creative research perspective on children and law, you will be required to write two research papers throughout the course. Your instructor will provide a selection of paper topics at the beginning of the course. The paper will be an APA-style paper including an introduction section, main argument and discussion (including about 5-7 references, minimum, to original source material). The first paper will be due in the middle of the course and will provide feedback that will be useful for the final paper due at the end of term.

1. I encourage you to begin as soon as possible. If you have questions, comments, or concerns, please use time during the semester to meet with me regularly about your proposal.

2. You must submit your chosen research questions (from a list provided) to me formally before completing your paper.

3. You must turn both papers in on time. For every 24-hour period that a paper is turned in late, I will reduce the grade on the assignment by an entire letter grade.

**Participation: 15%**

To pass this course, you will need to participate. You must read all assigned readings prior to each class meeting and come prepared to discuss and challenge the content covered. Arriving to class on time and paying attention (e.g., no texting, Facebook, etc.) will be included in participation. However, simple attendance is not your entire participation grade; participation involves active engagement in class. If at any time during the semester I feel the class is not adequately prepared or engaged **I reserve the right to assess participation through “pop” quizzes** that may be given during any class period.

**Grading:**

Midterm	25%
Final	25%
Research Project	
First Paper	10%
Final Paper	25%
Participation	15%
Total Grade	100%

**Portable Electronic Devices and Learning:** Portable electronic devices, such as cell phones, laptops, or tablets, are not allowed in the classroom for any purpose but active note taking. Recording of lectures using devices is forbidden. Gchatting, browsing tumblr, posting on instagram, texting, emailing, facebooking, snapchatting, pinning on Pinterest, and other uses of portable electronic devices unrelated to learning are not appropriate during class time. Further, they are distracting to both the instructor and those around you. Please be respectful of the students around you and the learning process by not using electronic devices to distract yourselves or others. To facilitate this, I will make all lectures slides available for download, so you do not feel pressured to copy the information down verbatim that I relay during class. Thank you for your attention!

**Students with disabilities:** Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP). A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. I encourage any student with disabilities to contact the DSP office to receive appropriate accommodations. DSP is located at 3601 Watt Way Grace Ford Salvatori Hall, Room 120 and is open 8:30am-5:00pm M-F; phone: 213-740-0776; website: [www.usc.edu/disability](http://www.usc.edu/disability). If you have questions, come talk to me!

**Academic honesty & plagiarism:** USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment.

General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one’s own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another’s work as one’s own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. Scampus, the Student

Guidebook, contains the Student Conduct Code in Section 11.00, while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A: <http://scampus.usc.edu/1100-behavior-violating-university-standardsand-appropriate-sanctions/>. Students will be referred to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards for further review, should there be any suspicion of academic dishonesty. Further, students who engage in academic misconduct will receive a failing grade for the course. The Review process can be found at: <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/>.

**Writing Center:** The writing center is committed to helping students focus on the process of critical thinking, drafting, and revision that leads to clearly expressed ideas, coherent argument, and persuasive reasoning. Students may visit the Writing Center by making an appointment. For additional information or assistance, please visit <http://dornsife.usc.edu/writing-center/>.

**Counseling Services:** Students sometimes experience significant confusion and distress when trying to manage school, work, relationships, and family responsibilities. USC provides free and confidential consultations to help students deal with academic stress, relationship problems, family/roommate conflicts, personal growth, crisis events (e.g. rape, divorce, assault) and other mental health issues (e.g., anxiety, depression, suicidal ideation). Counseling Services is located at the Engemann Student Health Center and can be called at (213) 740-7711. For more information, please visit <https://engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling/>.

**Final Caveat:** This syllabus is provided for your information and may change as necessary. You are responsible for learning all the material contained in this syllabus as well as any modifications that are made during class time. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns about the syllabus or course requirements, please approach me. I'm here to help!

## Term Schedule

Week	Topic	Textbook Reading
Week 1, Jan 20	<b>Introduction to Children and the Law: Multidisciplinary Perspectives</b>	<b>Children and the Law in a Nutshell, Chapter 1 (pp. 1-46)</b>
Week 2, Jan 27	<b>Child Abuse and Neglect</b>  <b>Introduction to Physical Abuse Versus Discipline</b>  <b>Introduction to Neglect and Other Forms of Maltreatment</b>	<b>Children and the Law in a Nutshell, pp. 108-127</b>
Week 3, Feb 3	<b>Child Sexual Abuse</b>	<b>Children and the Law in a Nutshell, Chapter 5 (pp. 195-251)</b>

Week 4, Feb 10	<b>Domestic and Intimate Partner Violence</b>	
Week 5, Feb 17	<b>Children's Memory and Suggestibility</b>	
Week 6, Feb 24	<b>Forensic Interviewing of Children</b> <b>*Professor Tom Lyon Guest Speaking*</b>	
Week 7, March 3	<b>Child Interviewing Lab – Forensic Interviewing</b> Practical session on conducting a forensic interview  <b>*1st Essay Topic Due*</b>	
Week 8, March 10	<b>MIDTERM</b>	
Week 9, March 17	<b>Children's Court Testimony</b>  <b>Children and Jurors</b>  <b>*First paper due*</b>	<b>Children and the Law in a Nutshell, Chapter 5, Section C (pp. 223-235)</b>
Week 10, March 24	<b>Psychology of Adolescence</b>  <b>Juvenile Offenders: Introduction</b>	<b>Children and the law in a nutshell, Chapter 10 (pp. 457-479)</b>
Week 11, March 31	<b>Juvenile Justice System Origins, Problems, Effects</b>  <b>Sentencing Juvenile Offenders</b>	<b>Children and the Law in a Nutshell, Chapter 10 (pp. 491-512; 556-558)</b>
April 7	<b>Wellness Day</b>	

<p>Week 12, April 14</p>	<p><b>Children as Decision Makers: Divorce, Custody, Medical Decisions and International Perspectives</b></p>	<p><b>Children and the law in a nutshell, chapter 7 (pp. 317-346)</b></p>
<p>Week 13, April 21</p>	<p><b>Immigration Law and Children Guest Panel: USC Law student Carson Scott, Steven Shafer, managing attorney for the unaccompanied minors program for released youth at Esperanza Immigrant Rights project, and Mickey Donovan, managing attorney at Immigrant Defenders Law Center</b></p> <p><b>*Second essay topic due*</b></p>	
<p>Week 14, April 28</p>	<p><b>Discussion on ‘No Matter How Loud I Shout’ Discussion Board live April 26-May 2</b></p> <p><b>Work on Final Essays with Peer Review Partners Send essay to partner BY April 29th Send back peer review BY MAY 2nd</b></p>	
<p><b>TBD</b></p>	<p><b>NON-CUMULATIVE FINAL EXAM</b></p> <p><b>*Final Essay Due*</b></p>	