

Researching Young People [10 credits]

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Dates & Venue: 14th and 15th May 2018, Room 427, Muirhead Tower

Module Description

Social researchers in a number of disciplines have inquired into the lives of young people, producing representations of youth and young people of interest to governments, the media, parents, and professional groups, as well as young people themselves. Youth is a site of theoretical debate, social control and repeated moral panic, and the production of representations through research has often shaped perceptions and treatment of young people, though not always to their benefit. Young people typically lack the power of adult subjects to participate in the production of social research or contest the findings and use of research about them. As such, researching the lives of young people involves specific methodological and ethical considerations.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this module, students will be able to:

- critically discuss social research interest in youth and young people, identifying and describing the main disciplinary traditions of research into the lives of young people, in terms of: i) age-specific institutions and social spaces and the particular nature of young people's participation in those spaces
- Social policy that affects and defines youth, including national and global policy discourses; ii) transition from childhood and to adulthood, as conditioned by social structural conditions; iii) Power-relations to peer and adult subjects, including researchers, taking account of the intersections of youth with other identity categories.
- take account of the ethical issues associated in engaging young people in social research within research design strategies and practices. Ethical issues will include the legal, policy and practical aspects of accessing and working with young people, and issues of the participation and representation of a relatively powerless group in research.
- discuss the application of established social research methods in research with young people, such as the use of participatory and action research approaches, interviews, ethnography, visual methods, online and social media spaces, and cohort studies.

Key Texts

To be announced in class.

Course Assessment

A 2,500 word critical evaluation of a piece of published account of a social research project that has a substantial focus on the participation of young people.