Laura Lee Downs

Social protection and social class in twentieth century France - G46.1510

This course approaches the gradual construction of social welfare institutions in France from the point of view of child welfare, particularly children of the popular classes. Much has been written on the force of pro-natalist and familialist politics in shaping the construction of a family-based welfare politics in early-twentieth century France, but little is known about the host of policies that, from 1874 onward, targeted working-class children as a population in need of material and spiritual/educational sustenance. We will be looking at private and public initiatives, and concentrate particular attention on a range of semi-public institutions that arose at the confluence of public and private: colonies de vacances, neighbourhood social centres, patronages, gouttes de lait, medical dispensaries, cliniques de neuropsychiatrie infantile, maisons d’éducation surveillée, garderies, écoles maternelles, etc. In order to grasp the specificity of developments in France, we will place the French case in broader comparative context. Here, we will rely in particular on comparison with the very different evolution of such welfare policies in Great Britain over the period 1875-1970.

Each week features a common reading plus an array of articles or selections from books that different members of the seminar will read and present at each session. One or more members of the seminar will thus preside over each session, presenting the readings and a series of questions to launch the day’s discussion. At the end of the half-semester, each member will write a substantial paper (15-20 pp) exploring in depth one or more of the questions raised by the literature under consideration. The bibliographie indicative, which I will distribute at the first session, should serve as a point of departure for this paper.

Sept 5 La république à l’épreuve du social

Berghahn, 2006, entire

*Suggested:*


childhood, 1870-1914


*Suggested:*


Karen Offen, “Depopulation, Nationalism and Feminism in Fin-de-Siècle France”, *American Historical Review*, 89, (1984), 648-76


Sept 17-19 The evolution of popular practices around childrearing: l’Assistance publique, la mise-en-nourrice et la loi Roussel (1874)


*Suggested:*


Catherine Rollet-Echalier, *La Politique à l’égard de la petite enfance sous la IIIe République*, Paris, 1990, selection to be announced

Sept 24-26 Sauver la graine : Colonies de vacances and the politics of child health and welfare, 1880-1960


« ‘In order to reunite the National Family in the folds of the tri-colour flag’ : Gender and the social politics of working-class childhood on the extreme right. The case of the Croix de feu, 1930-39”

*Suggested:*

“What’s feminist theory got to do with it? Municipal socialism and the politics of childhood: Suresnes, 1919-1945”
Oct 1-3 Aux origins de l’Etat-providence en France

*Suggested:*

Timothy Smith, *Creating the Welfare State in France*, Montreal, 2003, selection to be announced


**Oct 8-10 L’enfance inadaptée, family/familialist politics and the problem of juvenile delinquency**


*Suggested:*


Michel Chauvière, *Enfance inadaptée. L’héritage de Vichy Paris*, 1980, selection to be announced

Cyril Burt, *The Delinquent Child, London*, 1925, selection to be announced

**Oct 15-17 The redefinition of childhood at the confluence of psychiatry, medicine and**
education: A Franco-British comparison

Erica Burman, *Deconstructing social psychology*, Routledge, 1994, entire


*Suggested:*


Melanie Klein, « The development of a child », in Klein, *Love, Guilt and Reparation and Other Works 1921-1945*


Oct 22-24 Milieu social ou milieu familial? Evacuation and the evolution of theories and practices around childrearing among the popular classes in France and Britain, 1939-45


Geoffrey Field, « Perspectives on the Working-Class Family in Wartime Britain, 1939-1945 », *International Labor and Working-Class History* 38, Fall 1990

*Suggested:*

Dorothy Burlingham & Anna Freud, *Infants without Families. The case for and against*
residential nurseries, London, 1944, selection to be announced
