

Critical Book Review: Youth and Society
Due Tuesday, June 27, 2017 by 11:00pm ET

You will need to write a 2,000- to 2,500-word critical book review of one of the following books (a brief summary of each is provided below):

Elizabeth A. Armstrong & Laura T. Hamilton. 2013. *Paying for the Party: How College Maintains Inequality*. Harvard University Press.

Michael Kimmel. 2008. *Guyland: The Perilous World Where Boys Become Men*. Harper Collins.

Amy T. Schalet. 2009. *Not Under My Roof: Parents, Teens, and the Culture of Sex*. University of Chicago Press.

Each of these books is an excellent reading on youth and society, each with its own particular topic. Choose whichever book seems most interesting to you, as you will need to evaluate this book based on what we have discussed and read throughout the course. Unfortunately, I **will not** allow you to choose a book that is not listed here. You will need to let me know via email by May 29 which book you plan to read and critically review. Though this assignment is not due until the end of the course, you should begin to read and review the book throughout the semester. You must submit your final paper to the Critical Book Review Dropbox on D2L by **11:00pm ET on Tuesday, June 27**. The Dropbox will open one week prior and early submissions will be accepted.

Brief Summaries (found on Amazon.com)

Paying for the Party: How College Maintains Inequality

Two young women, dormitory mates, embark on their education at a big state university. Five years later, one is earning a good salary at a prestigious accounting firm. With no loans to repay, she lives in a fashionable apartment with her fiancé. The other woman, saddled with burdensome debt and a low GPA, is still struggling to finish her degree in tourism. In an era of skyrocketing tuition and mounting concern over whether college is “worth it,” *Paying for the Party* is an indispensable contribution to the dialogue assessing the state of American higher education. A powerful exposé of unmet obligations and misplaced priorities, it explains in vivid detail why so many leave college with so little to show for it.

Drawing on findings from a five-year interview study, Elizabeth Armstrong and Laura Hamilton bring us to the campus of “MU,” a flagship Midwestern public university, where we follow a group of women drawn into a culture of status seeking and sororities. Mapping different pathways available to MU students, the authors demonstrate that the most well-resourced and seductive route is a “party pathway” anchored in the Greek system and facilitated by the administration. This pathway exerts influence over the academic and social experiences of all students, and while it benefits the affluent and well-connected, Armstrong and Hamilton make it clear how seriously it disadvantages the majority.

Eye-opening and provocative, *Paying for the Party* reveals how outcomes can differ so dramatically for those whom universities enroll.

Guyland: The Perilous World Where Boys Become Men

The passage from adolescence to adulthood was once clear. Today, growing up has become

more complex and confusing, as young men drift casually through college and beyond—hanging out, partying, playing with tech toys, watching sports. But beneath the appearance of a simple extended boyhood, a more dangerous social world has developed, far away from the traditional signposts and cultural signals that once helped boys navigate their way to manhood—a territory Michael Kimmel has identified as "Guyland."

In mapping the troubling social world where men are now made, Kimmel offers a view into the minds and times of America's sons, brothers, and boyfriends, and he works toward redefining what it means to be a man today—and tomorrow. Only by understanding this world and this life stage can we enable young men to chart their own paths, stay true to themselves, and emerge safely from Guyland as responsible and fully formed male adults.

Not Under My Roof: Parents, Teens, and the Culture of Sex

For American parents, teenage sex is something to be feared and forbidden: most would never consider allowing their children to have sex at home, and sex is a frequent source of family conflict. In the Netherlands, where teenage pregnancies are far less frequent than in the United States, parents aim above all for family cohesiveness, often permitting young couples to sleep together and providing them with contraceptives. Drawing on extensive interviews with parents and teens, "Not Under My Roof" offers an unprecedented, intimate account of the different ways that girls and boys in both countries negotiate love, lust, and growing up. Tracing the roots of the parents' divergent attitudes, Amy Schalet reveals how they grow out of their respective conceptions of the self, relationships, gender, autonomy, and authority. She provides a probing analysis of the way family culture shapes not just sex but also alcohol consumption and parent-teen relationships. Avoiding caricatures of permissive Europeans and puritanical Americans, Schalet shows that the Dutch require self-control from teens and parents, while Americans guide their children toward autonomous adulthood at the expense of the family bond.

Guidelines:

The critical book review undertakes an analysis of a text, and is not an opinion piece based solely on the reader's personal reaction to the book. In this type of analysis, the book is reviewed in a descriptive, summative way, but is also evaluated in terms of the merits of the author's central arguments, claims, and evidence. After reading your critical book review, your readers should not only have a general sense of what the book is about (to help them decide if they should read it), but also a sense of the quality of the book (to help them decide if it is worth their while to read it). In short, the critical book review should tell someone about the book and the author in question and not about the person writing the review: it should be more objective than subjective, and more about the book than about the opinions of the person reviewing it.

Suggested Structure of the critical book review (2,000 to 2,500 words):

1. Introduction (1-3 paragraphs)
 - Provide a brief description of the book, and a brief statement about your assessment of the book: does it achieve its objectives?
2. Summary of the book (400-600 words)
 - Provide the reader with the information necessary to gain a good sense of the book, and enough additional information to understand your analysis of it. Be concise, which may require that you edit several drafts to make it so.
3. Analysis of the book (800-1,000 words)
 - How appropriate and convincing is the evidence provided for the argument or theme?

- How complete is the argument? Has the author neglected important counter-positions? This is an issue of scholarship, and good scholarship completely represents the body of work in a field. To be scholarly, you should conduct a literature review yourself to make informed decisions on this matter.
4. Evaluation of the book (400-600 words)
 - Give a brief summary of all the weaknesses and strengths you have found in the book. No book is perfect, but on balance, does it accomplish its goals?
 - Does the book reach its audience? Is it suitable for other audiences?
 5. Conclusion (1-3 paragraphs)
 - From the point of view of what you know of the debates and issues in the Youth and Society field, does the book have additional shortcomings or strengths, and should it have expanded its purpose, evidence, and argument?

Evaluation:	Excellent	Good	Acceptable	Needs Work	Severely Lacking	Points
Style, organization, & structure	14-15	12-13	10-11	8-9	7 or less	
Writing (spelling, grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, citations, references, etc.)	14-15	12-13	10-11	8-9	7 or less	
Inclusion of relevant course material	27-30	24-26	21-23	18-20	17 or less	
Originality & insight	27-30	24-26	21-23	18-20	17 or less	
Thesis & argument development	27-30	24-26	21-23	18-20	17 or less	
Total	120					