

Course Description ANTH 540  
Professor Sahar Sadjadi

### Topics in Anthropology of Childhood

Who is a child? What roles do children play in the making of human cultures? How has modern childhood been shaped by the reorganization of children's relation to labor, sexuality and schooling, and how have children been governed under colonial rule? How has the medical profession conceptualized the child's body and treated children who are ill, disabled and those whose bodies diverge from sex/gender norms? This seminar addresses these questions by drawing on anthropological and historical literature and an interdisciplinary range of theoretical texts on childhood. We will focus on the themes of personhood, agency, vulnerability and innocence in the contemporary political contestations over child migration, residential schools for indigenous children, climate change and children during pandemics. We will examine the figure of the vulnerable child in gender and racial politics, the relation between children's vulnerability and agency and the implications of protective interventions by the state, humanitarian agencies and medical professionals for socially marginalized children. This course considers the relation of children to time and futurity and engages with the longstanding debate within Childhood Studies on whether to theorize the child as *being* or *becoming*.

Topics in Anthropology of Childhood is a discussion-based seminar. It requires students' active participation and a final research paper.



Still from *Where is the Friend's House* (1987) by Abbas Kiarostami