This course will look at the connection between new media and young people, who are often seen as their primary or natural users, e.g., as “digital natives.” (Children will be interpreted broadly as not adults, so we will be talking about teenagers as well as younger kids.) The seminar will consider new media historically, discussing emerging technologies of communication and representation from the 19th Century to the present day. It will take a critical view of discourses of both positive and negative effects of new media on young people, questioning the power often ascribed to media technologies, formats, and genres when they are unfamiliar novelties. It will seek out continuities over time that puncture contemporary concerns, which tend to assume dangerous situations never encountered previously. Readings will represent a variety of approaches to the subject including textual and discourse analysis, ethnography, and historiography.

Themes will include:
- moral/media panic
- new media as educational
- gendered cultures of leisure and play (boy/girl culture)
- "screen time" and media effects research

Media to be considered will include:
- sound/music
- movies and television
- video games
- social media