This course examines how children interact with the law, including what rights children can claim from their parents and society. We will debate what control parents should have over their children’s lives in terms of education, medical care, religion, and discipline. We also will explore the limits of the law’s ability to protect children. Topics include abuse and neglect, child labor, bullying, trying children as adults, whether children can sue their parents for support, and state drug and alcohol testing of welfare recipients and pregnant women.

We will read a combination of primary source materials such as cases and statutes as well as articles and chapters from books. The class will be highly interactive and discussion-based around questions that require students to apply the readings. We will hear guest speakers and students will have opportunity to visit local Bloomington services for children, including CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates), the Youth Shelter, and Susie’s Place, which provides state-of-the-art facilities for forensic interviewing of child victims.

V220 is a non-negotiable prerequisite.
Each student will take a midterm, a final, and write three two-page papers, two of which must be revised.