

Massachusetts Institute of Technology  
Program in Science, Technology, & Society

presents

SPECIAL SEMINAR

JENNIFER LIGHT

NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

"Simulating adulthood: Junior republics and the invention of modern youth"

Between 1895 and 1945, more than a million American youth held elected offices, ran businesses, and built facilities in "miniature" and "mimic" cities, states, and nations. During a period of vigorous campaigns against young peoples' presence in the nation's labor force and its streets these curious communities supplied opportunities for youth to play analogous, even amplified roles in age-restricted worlds. These "junior republics" catalyzed national conversations about the educational and socialization potentials of simulation that resonate with contemporary talk about virtual experience. They have broader historical significance as well. This project argues that junior republics' (1) appropriation of activities including vocational education, youth congresses, and junior policing, and (2) spread to institutions including schools, settlements, and boys clubs reveal how simulation played a central role in the emergence of modern childhood and adolescence in the United States. Inside junior republics and beyond, young people were excluded from the worlds of adults and immersed in imitations of and rehearsals for adulthood instead.

**Monday**  
**25 February 2013**  
**4 PM**  
**E51-095**

*Reception at 3:30*

