COURSE DESCRIPTION

This online course is an adapted readings-based seminar covering concepts of masculinity in the United States. The readings in this course cover cultural as well as identity elements of what being a “man” means (and how that definition has changed over time and contexts). The readings cover historical as well as contemporary understandings of masculinity. We begin the readings with an historical overview of “American manhood” reaching back to the founding of the American colonies, and then focus in with readings concentrating on modern (roughly the turn of the 20th Century) constructs and depictions of masculinity in popular media and culture, and finally a brief overview of intersections of race, class and sexuality in contemporary issues of masculinity and masculine identity.

Questions for the Course

What is masculinity? Who determines this definition? How has that definition come to be understood in U.S. society? What components comprise this definition? Are there multiple definitions? How do these definitions differ over time, across races, through sexuality? What are the ways that men conceptualize these definitions, and how might that shape their identities and sense of self? How does an understanding of masculinity (or masculinities) provide insight into sociological, political, and cultural aspects of U.S. society? Is there a distinction between masculinity and manhood?

Course Objectives

- To understand how the gender of masculinity has been constructed in U.S. society and culture.
- To understand how that construction has developed over time.
- To understand how masculinity shapes organizations, groups, institutions, and individual lives.

Required Texts


Also required reading: A number of articles to supplement the texts, included on the D2L site, as well as links to media available online and to videos I have produced.

COURSE FORMAT

You are to engage in productive, generative discussion with your fellow students and me about the week's readings, movies, and linked media. Discussion forums open at 12:30 AM on the date of the class and will remain open until the end of the course.

Certainly in this course, you will be asked to develop and to propose opinions about the readings, their application or relevance to the educational endeavor or educational processes, and about what you value as an educator. I feel it is important to keep in mind a few qualities about opinions and opinionating. First, opinions are not all equal; indeed, if that were the case, we would never have such concepts as “best practices” or “truth.” There are criteria from which we can judge the value of opinions.

Often we are tempted to draw from our own experience to form our opinion. It is important to realize, though, that personal experience is only one component of good opinion; other criteria include scholarship, theory and practice. Opinions can be wrong, if they are based upon inadequate information, theory or practice. Opinions do not have to be agreed upon in consensus; dissensus can also be productive. In any event, though, opinions must be supported by evidence, and in this course opinions will be assessed and evaluated by that evidence. Finally, simple response opinions (such as, “I like it” or “I disagree”) without support are insufficient.

One of my goals for this course is to have this virtual classroom be a place where each of us may speak freely and share insights, critiques, evaluations and opinions. I will express opinions about matters discussed in class, but you have no obligation to agree with me. No doubt at times the concepts we discuss will seem personal and powerful; respect for each other’s processing and understanding of the concepts we cover will, of course, be fundamental.

ASSIGNMENTS

All assignments must be delivered on or before their due date. Assignments are to be uploaded to the D2L course page and/or dropbox.

For all students:

Participation. Lively and vigorous intellectual discussion is important both to your own understanding of the techniques and theories of this course and to those of your colleagues. I will evaluate your participation in class as part of your final grade. The criteria I will use to evaluate your class participation will be: attendance (in this case, logging into the D2L for each class session, within one week of that week’s discussion forum opening); quality of participation (e.g., consideration of the assigned readings, synthesis of those readings into analytic viewpoints); respect for others’ views; and consideration of others in the course (including but not limited to monopolizing the conversations). You should participate in the class having read the assigned material and with at least two questions for class discussion.

Final Paper. You are required to write a final analysis paper that brings together themes and issues from the course. This paper should be 15 to 20 pages in length. In this paper, I expect you to develop and to defend an original thesis that comes from the readings and class discussions. You are not required to do any outside reading or research for this paper, although you are certainly free to incorporate additional sources. Your references should be scholarly; Wikipedia is not acceptable. Do
note cite sources you have not read. Please indicate on the cover page what citation system you are using; choose one appropriate for your discipline.

In this paper, you should engage the substance of the arguments raised in the readings in theoretically sophisticated ways. Your thesis must in some way respond to at least one of the questions of the course (see that section above). I provide several writing on the D2L course page, in order to ensure your understanding of the expectations of academic writing and to assist you in improving your academic writing; do read and follow them.

**Additional assignment for graduate students:**

**Book Review.** Graduate students will be required to read and review a book dealing with masculinity. My hope is that you will be able to suggest a title that is relevant to your research and/or your program of study. I have posted two lists of books that would be acceptable (if we do not cover it in this course). All books for this assignment are subject to my approval, which you should seek by September 26, at the latest. The written review of your approved book should be five to seven pages in length. I provide multiple examples of published academic book reviews, along with a short piece on how to write effective book reviews, on the D2L course page.

**Assignment Values**

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<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Undergrad</th>
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<td>Participation</td>
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<td>80 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Paper</td>
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<td>70 points</td>
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<td>Book Review</td>
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**Evaluation Criteria**

Written expression is perhaps the core demonstrable skill for advanced academic performance. As indicated elsewhere in this syllabus, I will provide several writing guides to assist students in their academic writing.

Assignments earning an "A" grade will be of excellent quality, reflecting critical thinking, a soundness of analysis, clarity of expression, creative and/or clear development of ideas, mastery of course material, and accurate formatting, referencing and style. They will be free of errors in syntax, grammar, and format. An "A-" grade might result from minor deductions in any of these areas. Assignments earning a "B" grade will be of good quality, reflecting a solid grasp of the course material and clear, well-organized writing style. They might contain some errors in syntax, grammar, or format, but will not be seriously flawed. A "B-" grade might result from more significant reductions in these areas.

Assignments earning a "C" grade will be of marginally acceptable quality, reflecting familiarity with course material. They might contain weaknesses in organization and errors in syntax, grammar, or format. A "C-" grade might result from more severe weaknesses.

Plagiarism or other forms of academic misconduct (including but not limited to cheating, fabrication and misrepresentation of facts to a faculty member) of any kind will not be tolerated and will be handled under the terms outlined in the Graduate Student Catalog. Plagiarism will result in at minimum a failing grade and at maximum expulsion.

I do not intend to give incompletes in this course.
A NOTE FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
If you require any accommodation or services, please inform me and contact Disability Support Services, Woody B150, 453-5738 (TTY (453-3436).

Your receipt of this syllabus and continued enrollment in the course signifies your understanding and acceptance of all policies and timelines outlined.

COURSE ORGANIZATION

August 22
Introduction to Course
Syllabus and Writing Guides distributed
Book Review information distributed

August 29
Online readings

September 5
Rotundo, American Manhood, Introduction – Chapter 5
Online readings

September 12
Rotundo, American Manhood, Chapters 6-epilogue
Online readings

September 19
Bordo, The Male Body, pp. 3 – 228
Online readings

September 26
Bordo, The Male Body, pp. 229-332
Online readings

October 3
Online readings

October 10
Pascoe, Dude, You’re a Fag
Online readings

October 17
Online readings

October 24
Moss, The Media and the Models of Masculinity
Online readings

October 31
Online readings

November 7
Online readings
November 14
Kimmel, Guyland
Online readings

November 21
Online readings

November 29
Thanksgiving Break. No Class

December 5
Book Reviews due by 5:00 PM, uploaded on the D2L page for the course

December 5
Final Papers due by 5:00 PM, uploaded on the D2L page for the course