

SOC 410 Men and Masculinities
Course Syllabus/Syllabus of Record

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3 credits; Prerequisites: SOC 151 and one additional course in the social sciences or psychology

Course Description

Explores constructs of masculinity within the context of U.S. culture using a sociological lens. Examines the notion that there are multiple masculinities that intersect with a range of areas including race, ethnicity, class, sexuality and gender identity. Evaluates the influence of social contexts and roles on behavioral expectations for men and boys. Analyzes implications for society and individual men.

Course Overview

This course is an exploration of the ways society constructs the meaning of masculinity and resulting experience of boys and men within the context of U.S. culture. We draw from a range of sources beginning with a grounding in sociological analysis and incorporate such disciplines as religion, art, theatre, literature, psychology, history, criminology and anthropology. The course relies on the sociological lens to understand how society comes to form expectations about who boys and men are and what males do with their lives and their relationships. Our intention is to critically examine the notion of maleness, the meaning of masculinity, and how these get played out, represented, and experienced within the context of time and situation.

The course is also about examining the notion that masculinity itself is plural – that there are multiple masculinities that intersect with a range of areas including race, ethnicity, class, sexuality and gender identity. We explore ways that such factors as marriage, family, work or war influence how both men and women experience and form expectations about men and boys. And we examine such roles as father, son, brother, friend and lover as these adapt and change over time and situations. The course is also designed to invite female and male students who have an applied interest in both understanding the complexity of the subject and considering implications for positive changes in areas where males struggle.

Course Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- A. Critically discuss the concept and experience of masculinities.

- B. Articulate the range of ways masculinities are presented, researched, and theorized with attention to a sociological analysis.
- C. Demonstrate an understanding of the expressions of the masculine in the context of culture.
- D. Describe visions of maleness and masculinities that can be pursued by individuals, and in personal and professional relationships.
- E. Employ reflective thinking and engage in group interaction on the topic of masculinity.

Course Books

Canada, Geoffrey. (2010). *Fist, Stick, Knife, Gun*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Miller, Arthur. (1964). *Death of a Salesman*. NY: Viking Press.

Reeser, Todd W. (2010). *Masculinities in Theory*. West Sussex, Great Britain: Wiley-Blackwell.

Additional readings: Additional articles will be required and available electronically.

Assignments and Criteria for Course Grade

Participation – 10% of grade/20 points – Show up, Speak up: Students are expected to actively participate in class discussions. This relies on students reading the assignments, drawing from lecture, film, and on what other students have to say. Students who actively participate in general discussions, come to class prepared with some thinking they've done on the readings and class material, will get 15 of the 20 points possible for participation. Students who contribute substantially to class discussions, present ideas based on insights gained from readings, make connections between readings and other course materials will gain the full 20 points.

Weekly reflections: 10 pts each, 120 total: Prepare a one-to-two page, typed, double space, reflection on the readings for the week. Reflections may make connections to other course materials and experiences, films, lectures, etc. These are "informal" writings, and can include your personal thoughts and feelings, but must include concrete references to readings and related course materials. Grades are based on:

- (1) use of course readings and class discussions, lecture, and related materials
- (2) insight in providing a synthesis of the materials (ability to make connections)
- (3) evidence of thoughtful analysis and reflection
- (4) quality of writing

Personal connection – 40 points: This 5-6 page paper is about your journey through the world of men and masculinity. It can be written in whatever form fits best for your writing style and interest – an essay, a poem, short story, photo-narrative or other form. The paper can be personal in terms of your experience over your life or some aspect of

your life, or it can be based on observation, what you have witnessed or thought about related to men/masculinities. It can also be a combination of these. This paper is less about using references or writing in a purely academic style and more about making the personal connection but also should reflect some of the topics covered in class. Grades will be based on:

- (1) Evidence of personal reflection relevant to the subject matter of the course
- (2) Evidence of relating to the course material/readings/films, etc.
- (3) Quality of writing

Outside experiences: 20 points each (40 total): During the semester there will be events on campus – a play, speakers at the 6:00 series or other forums, which will have particular relevance to the course. I will share information about relevant events with you - and also ask that you let me know of events that may be particularly valuable for students to attend. I ask that you plan to attend two of these outside events, write a short – two-page reflection on the subject matter of the event and its relevance to any aspect of the material we are covering in class. These short papers are due a week after the event. The papers should incorporate:

- (1) A brief overview of the event – subject matter or theme
- (2) An analytical discussion of some aspect of subject matter or theme as relates to the course – this means drawing on course theory and ideas, providing insight about the topic or theme of the event, and make a connection to its relevance to men's lives

Grades for this assignment will be based on:

- (1) Quality of the brief overview
- (2) Critical discussion/analysis
- (3) Quality of writing

Course Paper/Project – 80 pts total (70 points project, 10 points class presentation): Students will develop a research or some other project that reflects an aspect of the course topic, men and masculinities, displays an ability to think critically, examines a particular aspect of the course topic with depth and insight, and uses outside sources of various types. The project is open to being something that reflects the student's personal or professional interest while providing a sociological analysis of the subject. The project can be presented in the form of a critical essay, performance piece, art, music, poetry or other form. In whatever form you select, the critical analysis of the subject needs to be present. Thus, a creative piece – fiction, art, or the like, would be accompanied by an 8-10 page paper providing critical analysis. Regardless of how you approach this assignment the project must display the student's use of course materials, critical thinking and application about the materials, and draw on outside sources. See the description of the course paper expectations at the end of this syllabus.

Course Grades

Grades are based on a 300 point scale from the assignments above. Letter grades will be assigned based on the following:

271-300 points	A
241-270 points	B
211-240 points	C
181-210 points	D
Below 181 points	F

Attendance Policy

The University expects all students to attend class. Individual faculty members may define attendance standards appropriate to each course and the consequences of not meeting those standards, within the following guidelines:

1. Each policy must be distributed in writing during the first week of the course. Normally, it is expected that the information dealing with class attendance standards will be distributed with the course syllabus.
2. Each policy must define some limited level of allowable absence.
3. Each policy must recognize students' need to miss class because of illness, personal emergency, or active military duty.
4. Each policy must not penalize students who add the class during the specified university drop/add period and must allow those students to make up work missed before adding the class.

Late Work/Missed Exams

Please note: Individual faculty members may tailor late work and missed exam policies to their own courses.

All written work must be turned in on the day that it is due. Exceptions will only be given under special circumstances and such an arrangement must be approved by the professor **prior** to the due date of the assignment. The professor reserves the right to determine whether or not an extension will be granted without penalty. In the event of an emergency and/or family crisis, you must contact me ***no later than the first class meeting*** following the missed assignment. You will be required to provide written documentation of your emergency or family crisis and the professor reserves the right to determine whether or not an extension will be granted without penalty.

Make-up exams are not intended to accommodate those students who merely wish to postpone taking the exam. The University recognizes only a few excuses for missing exams, including religious holidays, University-approved travel, family crisis, and illness. If you have a University recognized excused absence but cannot provide written documentation, you will receive a 0 on the missed exam. Make-up exams will be given in the format to be determined by the instructor. ***The instructor reserves the right to***

refuse to administer a make-up exam. Only one make-up exam will be granted per student during the semester.

Academic honesty

Students are expected to maintain the highest standards of honesty and integrity, including that all work submitted is your work. Plagiarism is the act of copying another person's work without acknowledging the source or submitting work that is not your own. This is against university policy and principles of scholarship. Papers must be written in your own words. If you paraphrase or quote from any source (including material downloaded from the Internet), that paraphrase or quote must be acknowledged and cited with page numbers included. Exact quotes need to be placed in quotation marks. Students are expected to use APA or MLA style for in-text citations and reference lists. Plagiarism will be grounds for receiving an F on your paper and possibly an F for the course, depending on the severity of the offense.

Learning environment

An important aspect of this class is that we are creating a learning community. I trust that together we will share a dialogue about the topic of the course, using materials from the readings, lectures, films to inform our thinking and what we share, but also drawing from our own observations and life experience. Since this course particularly is one where we attempt to cross disciplines – the voices of all of us, from our various academic perspectives, is critical to a successful class.

As you share and think about the class, consider ways to present your ideas with respect for others, understanding differences in our individual experiences and approaches to academic work. Also, be aware of classroom dynamics; if things aren't going well, help to make them better, participate actively, challenge yourself in becoming a scholar and a contributor to the discourse on men and masculinities.

Support

I feel strongly that my role as professor is to support your learning. Please let me know if you are struggling with any aspect of the course material, assignments or interactions. Stop by my office to chat, share ideas, or ask questions.

Bibliography and Related Sources:

- Bird, S. (1996). "Welcome to the Men's Club: Homosexuality and the Maintenance of Hegemonic Masculinity." *Gender & Society* 10:120-132.
- Bordo, S. (2000). *The Male Body: A New Look at Men in Public and in Private*. New York, NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux
- Canada, G. (2010). *Fist, Stick, Knife, Gun: A Personal History of Violence*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- Canada, G. (2000). *Reaching Up For Manhood: Transforming the Lives of Boys in America*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

- Chia, M. & Abrams, D. (1996). *The Multi-orgasmic Man: How any Man can Experience Multiple Orgasms and Dramatically Enhance his Sexual Relationship*. San Francisco, CA: Harper
- Dekeseredy, W.S., and M. D. Schwartz. (2005). "Masculinities and Interpersonal Violence." Pp. 351-366 in *Handbook of Studies on Men & Masculinities*, edited by MS Kimmel, J. Hearn, and RW Connell. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Eng, D. (2001). *Racial Castration: Managing Masculinity in Asian America*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Grazian, David. (2007). "The Girl Hunt: Urban Nightlife and the Performance of Masculinity." *Symbolic Interaction* 30:221-243.
- Greene, M. (2014). *Remaking Manhood: The Modern Masculinity Movement: Stories from the Front Lines of Change*. New York: Think Play Partners.
- Halbertstom, J. (1998). *Female Masculinity*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Katz, J. (2006). *The Macho Paradox: Why Some Men Hurt Women and How All Men Can Help*. Naperville, IL: Sourcebooks, Inc.
- Kimmel, M. S. (2011). *Manhood in America: A Cultural History*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Kimmel, M. S. (2008). *Guyland: The Perilous World Where Boys Become Men*. New York: Harper.
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- Mahalik, J. R., Addis, M. E., Kilmartin, C., and O'Neil, J. M. (2013). Complexities and Challenges when Teaching the Psychology of Men: Four Experienced Professors Discuss their Pedagogical Process. *Psychology of Men and Masculinity* 14, 3: 248-255.
- McLaren, A. (2007). *Impotence: A Cultural History*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Messner, M. (1990). "When Bodies are Weapons: Masculinity and Violence in Sport." *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 25:203-218.
- Neal, M. A. (2006). *New Black Man*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Nelson, J. B. (1988). *The Intimate Connection: Male Sexuality, Masculine Spirituality*. Nashville, TN: Presbyterian Publishing Corporation.
- O'Neil, J. M. (2013). Gender-role Conflict Research Thirty-years Later: An Evidence-based Diagnostic Schema. *Journal of Counseling and Development* 91, 4: 490-498.
- Pascoe, C. J. (2011). *"Dude, You're a Fag:" Masculinity and Sexuality in High School*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

- Real, T. (1998). *I Don't Want to Talk About It: Overcoming the Secret Legacy of Male Depression*. New York, NY: Scribner.
- Ridgeway, C. L. and Smith-Lovin, L. (1999). "The Gender System and Interaction." *Annual Review of Sociology* 25:191-216.
- Risman, B. (2004). "Gender as a Social Structure: Theory Wrestling with Activism." *Gender & Society* 18:429-450.
- Schlit, K. (2011). *Just One of the Guys? Transgender Men and the Persistence of Gender Inequality*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Schrock, D and Schwalbe, M. (2009). "Men, Masculinity, and Manhood Acts." *Annual Review of Sociology* 35:277-295.
- Smiler, A. (2012). *Challenging Casanova: Beyond the Stereotype of the Promiscuous Young Male*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Vaccaro, C., Schrock, D., and McCabe, J. (2011). "Managing Emotional Manhood: Fighting and Fostering Fear in Mixed Martial Arts." *Social Psychology Quarterly* 74: 414-437
- Watson, E., and Shaw, M. E. (2011). *Performing American Masculinities: The 21st Century Man in Popular Culture*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Wexler, D. B. (2009). *Men in Therapy: New Approaches for Effective Treatment*. New York, NY: Norton.

There are a number of articles and books on men/masculinity available at the library. The best on-line source for a men's studies bibliography is <http://mensbiblio.xyonline.net/>; additional sources for other men's studies related material can be found at the following: www.mensstudies.org.

Tentative Schedule of Topics and Assignments SOC 410: Men and Masculinities

Week 1

Introductions, overview and some initial thinking about the idea of men, boys, guys...
Question: What's feminine? What's masculine? -- The meaning of gender in everyday life
Film: Stand by me.

Week 2

Topic: Locating masculinity: The setting, the time, and place of male-ness

Readings

Burroughs: *Tarzan* – first 1/3 of book

Reeser: *Masculinities in Theory* – Introduction, pp 1-16

Handout: Brannon: *Why men become men, and other theories* (handout) &

Heasley/Sappington: *Men changing the male role*.

Films/video:

Tarzan – the cartoon – on imaging masculinity and Tarzan – cartooning masculinity

Thompson: *Raising Cain* – on psychology of masculinity/ part 1
20/20 program: “Gentle boys”

Week 3

Masculinities in context – the process of becoming...

Readings:

Burroughs – *Tarzan* – 2nd third of book

Reeser: Masculinities in Theory – Chapter 1: Theorizing Masculinity – pp 17-54

E-reserve:

Kimmel: “Birth of the Self-Made Man” – from Kimmel, M. *Manhood in America*

Films/video:

Thompson: *Raising Cain* – on psychology/ part 2

Week 4

Masculinities in relation-fathers and sons, mothers and sons...

Readings:

Tarzan: Finish

Reeser: Chapter 2: Social masculinity in triangulation – pp 55-71

Miller: *Death of a Salesman* (first half- or so)

E-reserve:

Coltrane, Scott: “Fathering: Paradoxes, contradictions and dilemmas”

Video: - *A father’s journey – (tentative title)*

Week 5

Masculinities in relation...men’s relationship with self, friends...

Readings:

Miller: *Death of a Salesman* (finish)

e-reserve:

Crane and Crane-Seeber: “The four boxes of gendered sexuality: good girl/bad girl and tough guy/sweet guy

NY Times: “The Man Date” (e-reserve)

Messner – “Becoming 100% straight” (e-reserve)

Film: *Five friends*

Week 6

The sexuality of masculinity

Readings:

Reeser: Chapter 3: Sexing masculinity

E-reserve:

Frankel – “Hands off! The taboo surrounding males first ejaculation”

McLaren – Introduction to *Impotence: A sexual history*

Herd: “Semen transactions in Sambia culture” – e-reserve

Film: *Finding our way*

Week 7

Reeser: Chapter 4: Theorizing the male body

Poem: “Male nipples” (handout)

Cooper and Baker - “The sensual man”

Johnson – “Phenomenology of the black body”

Friedman – “The demon rod” from: *A mind of its own: a cultural history of the penis*

Pollack: “The unkindest cut” Salon

Updike: “The disposable rocket”

Speaker: Dr. Christian Vacarro – on Cage Fighting

Week 8

Focus: Contextualized masculinities

Reading:

Reeser: Chapter 5: Masculinity in disguise

Canada: *Fist, Stick, Knife, Gun* (first ½ of book)

Wood: “A swift knife marks a special day for a village’s boys” - NYTimes

Film: *Tentative: Restrepo: One Platoon, One Valley, One Year*

Week 9

Focus: Queering masculinities

Readings:

Reeser: Chapter 6: Non-male masculinities

Canada: *Fist, Stick, Knife, Gun* (2nd ½ of book)

e-mail attachment:

Heasley: “Crossing the borders of gendered sexualities”

Halberstam: “An introduction to female masculinity”

Week 10

Focus: *The race of masculinity*

Readings:

Reeser: Chapter 7: *Masculinity and racialized subjectivities*

e-mail attachments:

Schaef: "Fitting in: the white male system and other systems in our culture"

hooks: "Reconstructing black masculinity"

Film: Hip Hop OR Tough Guise

Week 11

Focus: Masculinity's challenges

Readings:

Reeser: Chapter 8: Masculinity and the Nation

e-mail attachments

Beneke: from *Men on Rape* – Introduction and chapter 1 (e-reserve)

Borger: "Sacrificing the kids" (Mormon sect accused on abandoning 1000 teen boys) – Salon

Kupers: *Pornography and masculinity*

Karmasiewicz: "The campus crusade for guys" (Salon) – e-reserve

Elliott: "Where boys grow up to be Jihadis" (NY Times) – e-reserve

Film: Brod: Asking for it: The ethics and erotics of sexual consent

Week 12

Organized (and re-organizing) masculinities

Readings:

Reeser: Chapter 9: Interracial masculinities

e-mail attachment:

Anderson – "Openly gay athletes: contesting hegemonic masculinity in a homophobic environment

Herold: "Straight jacket of my homophobia"

Additional readings to be assigned.

Week 13

Contested masculinities

No assigned readings

Film: Tuesdays with Morrie

Project presentations Part I

Week 14

Project presentations Part II

Week 15 – Class meets 2:45-4:45 during exam week

Visioning New masculinities – turn in one page “vision”

Final papers due at the beginning of class, attendance is required.

Project presentations Part III

Guidelines for writing papers for Men and Masculinities

The writing assignments are intended to help you reflect your critical thinking about the course material. Your writing will ideally include reference to and use of (1) core theories and concepts, (2) the language of the course, (3) the ideas presented in course material – readings, lecture, film, discussions.

A good paper will:

- Make clear that you have read all the assigned readings and have thought about and can use the ideas, concepts and theories from lecture, discussions, films, readings
- Display an ability to make connections between/among the readings and class materials; generally, pay more attention to *using* the ideas, concepts, theories you’ve read or heard in class rather than just repeating them
- Provide insight about your own thinking based on your analysis. Recall that analysis is about critical thinking based on theory and research; it is different from “opinion” which is a position a person might take based on a “feeling” they have (consider how an *opinion* about the weather is very different from an analysis about, for instance, climate change).
- Be well written, reflecting a quality of presentation both in quality of writing as well as appearance. (Note that simple things, like stapling your paper, using dark/black ink, cover sheet, title that represents the topic or focus of your paper are appropriate/

Overall the papers should display a sophisticated understanding of the material, rather than a “report” about what you read or observed. Every paper is about what you *think* about what you read, displaying your ability to use course material to pursue your analysis.

Use appropriate citations, use APA Guidelines for formatting the papers.

Use the language of the course. Use the ideas of the course. You don't need to agree with any particular writer or presentation, concept or theory, but you do need to display that you *know* and understand the material and that you can use it to develop your own analysis.

Finally, avoid writing your paper at the last minute. The paper needs to be an informed, intelligent, and insightful discussion of the topics generated from the course materials. Be certain to cite your references appropriately. In general, avoid writing a paper that is anything less than an intelligent discussion of the readings and related course materials.

Course Project for Men and Masculinities

The final project is an opportunity for you to share your own critical and creative thinking and insight on the topic of men and masculinities. As a synthesis course, the intention has been to explore the subject from a range of angles. This project invites you to continue this process through your own academic discipline or interest – whether it is the arts, literature, personal essay, social sciences, or another field. Below are some points to consider in doing your project.

Consider your interest

This paper/project is intended to be yours. Consider a topic that will help you grow intellectually, emotional, or spiritually in critically examining the topic of men and masculinities. You might consider what you can explore and write about, for instance, that will help you as you become a teacher, physician, counselor, manager, artist, parent, or intimate partner. You might consider a topic or focus that will help you personally as you pursue life in a world of men and boys, or that will help you explore the meaning of masculinity on a purely intellectual basis – from cross-cultural or historical perspectives.

Go for depth

Whatever direction your project takes, pursue a depth of understanding the topic. This requires that you draw on theories and concepts covered in class; it means drawing on analysis developed by other authorities who study the topic. Do a literature search in your own discipline, gathering information from experts. Avoid “opinion” and pursue *analysis and interpretation*.

Go for understanding self

Bring yourself into your project. What does it mean to you to study what you are studying, why are you pursuing this topic? What are you learning? What is left undone, what more would you want to know? How can you use the information in your life? Consider these questions as you develop the focus of your final paper/project.

Write well

Write well. Edit your paper or whatever form your final project takes. If you are writing a paper on a topic – for instance, a personal narrative on your gendered journey as a male, or a focused paper on men, sports and homophobia, use APA, ALA or ASA style. Check with me if you haven't done this before. If you are doing a project that is unusual or about which you are not certain in terms of it meeting the course requirements, talk with me ahead of time to make certain it will fit in with course expectations. Even if doing a project, you will still need to write a paper (perhaps shorter than the academic or personal journey paper), that provides background and analysis of how the project “fits” with the course and your interests, and shows use of course concepts, readings, themes and ideas.

Presentation and Submission of Final Paper/Project

The final paper/project is due at the scheduled final exam (required attendance) *but be prepared to present the topic through some form of representation either the week before or at the scheduled final exam period.* Your presentation to the class will take place in a 8-10 minute timeslot during final weeks of class. The presentation may include but is not limited to a reading of poignant aspects of your paper, a performance of some theme or reading that you have used, music you have drawn from, or art that you want to bring to our attention.