

# Men and Gender Politics

Studies in Women and Gender – SWAG422

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Class Time: Thursdays, 2:00-4:30

“In the course of history, men come to see that  
iron necessity is neither iron nor necessary.”  
—Friedrich Nietzsche

“All the world’s a stage, and all the men and women merely players.  
They have their exits and their entrances;  
And one man in his time plays many parts.”  
—William Shakespeare  
*As You Like It*

“The tragedy of machismo is that a man is never quite man enough.”  
—Germaine Greer

This course surveys the literature on the social construction of masculinities and the diverse relationships men have with feminism. Feminist analysis drew a distinction between sex and gender, enabling women to understand themselves as the latter. While *sex* is often understood as static and unchanging, acknowledging women as a *gender* let them know that their lives are not guided by biological imperatives, but rather, by social traditions. This course discusses men as a gender as well.

Feminist ideologies and activism have elicited a number of responses from the “other” gender, from anger and refusal to active participation, and everything in between. In this course, we will predominantly rely on feminist and sociological lenses in our discussion of men and masculinities. It will be important to remember in this course that when we talk about men and masculinity, we are not necessarily talking about biological males. Rather, we are talking about social men. Thus, a course on masculinity does not necessitate studying only biological males.

The main thrust of the course will be to survey men’s various responses to the feminist movement. We will primarily concentrate on the pro-feminist perspective and what it means, dealing with some of the prominent academics who typify this position. However, a prominent finding in the literature on men and masculinities is that the majority of men do not consider themselves implicated by feminism one way or another. As such, a great deal of this course will concentrate on how feminism and sociology can be used to make sense of the behavior of these men as well.

## Required Texts

Coltrane, Scott (1997) *Family Man* (Oxford UP)  
Gutmann, Matthew (2007) *Fixing Men* (University of California Press)  
McCaughey, Martha (2008) *The Caveman Mystique* (Routledge)  
Messner, Michael (2000) *Politics of Masculinities* (Alta Mira)  
Messerschmidt, James (1999) *Nine Lives* (Westview)  
Pascoe, CJ (2007) *“Dude, You’re a Fag”* (University of California Press)  
Rubin, Henry (2003) *Self-Made Men* (Vanderbilt UP)

\*\* There is also a required course packet available for purchase at Brillig Books on Elliewood Ave. \*\*

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

### **Attendance and Active Participation**

**20%**

This course will be both a lecture format for about half of each class, and a seminar. As such, each class period necessitates your presence and participation. Contingent upon the size of the class, we may have discussion leaders during some of the classes to allow students to lead a discussion for part of the class. Participation grades will be given after each class out of four points (0 – not in attendance, 1 – unsatisfactory [present, but silent or otherwise seemingly disinterested], 2 – satisfactory, 3 – good, and 4 – excellent). Because this class only meets one day a week, attendance is extremely important. Missing one class will mean missing a great deal of material. Absences from class will be excused for medical or family emergencies so long as you contact me in advance (unless that is not possible). Because there are only 14 classes, if you miss 3 classes, you will automatically receive a zero for attendance and participation. Missing this many classes will not allow you the benefit of the class or the discussions we have.

### **Class Memos**

**20%**

Beginning the second week of class, you will be required to hand in 1 ½ – 2 page memos for 5 of the 13 remaining weeks. These will be graded on the same scale as participation (zeros will be awarded for memos you are unable to turn in at the end of the semester). The goals of the memos are as follows. (1) What is the author trying to illustrate or argue? Briefly summarize the main point(s) and supporting evidence. (2) What did you think of the ideas and issues raised? For example, you might point out strengths and weaknesses of the research, identify other questions you would like to ask, or discuss how the reading sheds light on your own observations of social life. Memos for the current week's readings will only be accepted on the week of the readings. Thus, if you turn in a memo on the readings for week 2 (January 22<sup>nd</sup>), it must be submitted in class on January 22<sup>nd</sup>.

### **Papers**

**60%**

You will write three 6-8 page papers over the course of the semester. Each paper will be worth 20% of the final grade in the course. Paper assignments will ask you to develop a thoughtful and persuasive argument based on both course readings and several outside readings. Papers are due at the beginning of class on the due dates listed below. **Please bring them printed and stapled to class.** For each of the papers, I will provide a couple questions to guide your research. For the first two papers, I would like you to take one of the questions I supply. For the last, you may use one of the questions I provide or you may propose your own question. If you propose your own topic for the final paper, it must be approved by me at least one week prior to its due date.

First Paper:	Due Thursday, February 12 <sup>th</sup>	20%
Second Paper:	Due Thursday, March 26 <sup>th</sup>	20%
Third Paper:	Due Thursday, May 7 <sup>th</sup>	20%

## **COURSE POLICIES**

### **Credit/No-Credit Option**

The course may be taken on a credit/no-credit basis. However, to receive credit for the course, you must do work that would earn you a final grade of C- or better if you were taking the course on a graded basis.

### **Late Assignments**

Unexcused late memos will not be accepted. Unexcused late papers will be marked down by 2/3 of a letter grade for every day they are late, including weekend days. For example, an A paper that is one day late will receive a B+.

### **Office Hours and Email**

I do not have an office this semester, but I will be holding office hours each Thursday prior to our scheduled class time. However, if this is a time that does not work for you, please speak with me after class or email to setup an appointment that works well for you. Written assignments can sometimes be challenging, and I would encourage you to think through your arguments and outline them. I am happy to discuss your outlines and thoughts prior to you sitting down and writing. In my experience, students that meet with me to discuss their papers benefit from our meetings. I am also happy to have discussions about your work over email, though it may take me some time to respond. So, please ensure that you are giving me and yourself enough time for you to complete an assignment.

## **COURSE OUTLINE AND SCHEDULE**

Books listed on the course schedule will be designated with **(B)**, course packet readings with **(CP)**, and toolkit readings (under "materials" on our toolkit site) with **(TK)**

### **Week 1 (1/15). Introduction to the Study of Men and Masculinities**

No Readings – Introduction to the field and the course and discussion

### **Part 1: Theorizing Masculinities**

#### **Week 2 (1/22). Why Study Men? Why Now?**

Readings – Kimmel, Michael. 1987. "The Contemporary 'Crisis' of Masculinity in Historical Perspective" in *The Making of Masculinities* **(CP)**  
– Segal, Lynne. 1993. "Changing Men: Masculinities in Context" **(CP)**  
– Whitehead, Stephen M. and Frank J. Barrett. 2001. "The Sociology of Masculinity" in *The Masculinities Reader* **(CP)**

#### **Week 3 (1/29). Theoretical Issues**

Readings – Kimmel, Michael. 1994. "Masculinity as Homophobia: Fear, Shame, and Silence in the Construction of Gender Identity" **(CP)**  
– Connell, RW. 1995. "The Science of Masculinity" and "The Social Organization of Masculinity" in *Masculinities* **(CP)**  
– Petersen, Alan. 2003. "Research on Men and Masculinities: Some Implications of Recent Theory for Future Work" **(CP)**

#### **Week 4 (2/5). Biological Arguments**

- Readings – McCaughey, Martha. 2008. *The Caveman Mystique* (B)  
– Lorber, Judith. 1993. "Believing is Seeing: Biology as Ideology" (CP)  
– Kimmel, Michael. 2005. "An Unnatural History of Rape" in *The Gender of Desire* (CP)

#### **Week 5 (2/12). Cross-Cultural Comparisons**

- Readings – Guttman, Matthew. 2007. *Fixing Men* (Chapters 1-5 and 8) (B)  
– Gilmore, David. 1990. "The Manhood Puzzle" in *Manhood in the Making: Cultural Concepts of Masculinity* (CP)

### **Part 2: Sociological Lenses and Issues**

#### **Week 6 (2/19). Historical Constructivism**

- Readings – Ehrenreich, Barbara. 1983. "Breadwinners and Losers" and "Backlash" in *The Hearts of Men* (CP)  
– Segal, Lynne. 1990. "Competing Masculinities (I): Manliness – The Masculine Ideal" in *Slow Motion* (CP)  
– Kimmel, Michael. 1990. "Invisible Masculinity" (CP)  
– Kimmel, Michael. 2006. "Introduction: Toward a history of manhood in America," chapter 1 in *Manhood in America: A Cultural History* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition) (CP)

#### **Week 7 (2/26). Social Construction**

- Readings – Rubin, Henry. 2003. *Self-Made Men* (Chapters 1, 3, 4, 5) (B)  
– Garfinkel, Harold. 1967. "Passing and the Managed Achievement of Sex Status in an Intersexed Person" (CP)

#### **Spring Recess: 2/28 – 3/8**

#### **Week 8 (3/12). Masculinities and Gender Politics**

- Readings – Messner, Michael. 1997. *Politics of Masculinities* (B)  
– Kimmel, Michael. 1987. "Men's Responses to Feminism at the Turn of the Century" (CP)  
– Clatterbaugh, Kenneth. 1998. "What is Problematic about Masculinities?" (CP)

### **Part 3: Performing Masculinities**

#### **Week 9 (3/19). Education**

- Readings – Pascoe, CJ. 2007. *Dude, You're a Fag* (B)  
– Connell, RW. 1996. "Teaching the Boys: New Research on Masculinity, and Gender Strategies for Schools" (CP)  
– Ferguson, Ann Arnett. 2001. "Naughty by Nature" in *Bad Boys: Public Schools in the Making of Black Masculinities* (CP)

#### **Week 10 (3/26). The Family**

- Readings – Coletrane, Scott. 1997. *Family Man* (Chapters 1, 2, 3, 7, 8) (B)  
– Marsiglio, William and Pleck, Joseph H. 2004. "Fatherhood and Masculinities" in *The Handbook of Studies on Men and Masculinities* (CP)  
– Bridges, Tristan. 2006. Book Review of *Promises I Can Keep: Why Poor Women put Motherhood before Marriage*, by Kathryn Edin and Maria Kefalas (CP)

### **Week 11 (4/2). The Workplace**

- Readings – Leidner, Robin. 1991. "Serving Hamburgers and Selling Insurance: Gender, Work, and Identity in Interactive Service Jobs" (CP)
- Williams, Christine. 1992. "Hidden Advantages for Men in the 'Female' Professions" (CP)
  - Messerschmidt, James. 1995. "Managing to Kill: Masculinities and the Space Shuttle Challenger Explosion" (CP)
  - Yancey Martin, Patricia. 2003. "'Said and Done' Versus 'Saying and Doing': Gendering Practices, Practicing Gender at Work" (CP)

### **Week 12 (4/9). Masculinities and Sexualities**

- Readings – Connell, RW. 1992. "A Very Straight Gay: Masculinity, Homosexual Experience, and the Dynamics of Gender" (CP)
- Hearn, Jeff. 1992. "The Personal, the Political, the Theoretical: The Case of Men's Sexualities and Sexual Violences" (CP)
  - Kimmel, Michael. 1992. "Sexual Balkanization: Gender and Sexuality as the New Ethnicities" (CP)
  - Linneman, Thomas. 2000. "Risk and Masculinity in the Everyday Lives of Gay Men" in *Gay Masculinities* (CP)
  - Ward, Jane. 2000. "Queer Sexism: Rethinking Gay Men and Masculinity" in *Gay Masculinities* (CP)

### **Week 13 (4/16). Violence and the Body**

- Readings – Messerschmidt, James. 1999. *Nine Lives* (B)
- Bordo, Susan. 1999. "In Hiding and On Display" in *The Male Body* (CP)
  - Bridges, Tristan. (forthcoming, 2009). "Male Bodybuilders and Gender Capital" (TK)

### **Part 4: Conclusion**

#### **Week 14 (4/23). Everyday Sexism and the Reproduction of Inequality**

- Readings – Bird, Sharon. 1996. "Welcome to the Men's Club: Homosociality and the Maintenance of Hegemonic Masculinity" (CP)
- Faludi, Susan. 2000. "Girls Have all the Power: What's Troubling Troubled Boys" in *Stiffed: The Betrayal of the American Man* (CP)
  - Connell, RW. 2000. "The Politics of Change in Masculinity" and "Arms and the Man: The Question of Peace" in *The Men and the Boys* (CP)
  - Kimmel, Michael. 2008. "Just Guys" in *Guyland: The Perilous World Where Boys become Men* (CP)



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