

CONTESTED MASCULINITIES

Sociology 295-01
Spring 2002

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Office Hours: MWF 2:15-4:05 and by appointment

Class meets MWF
from 1:15 to 2:05
in Carnegie 314

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

Among the many social phenomena that we tend to take for granted, masculinity occupies an important, fascinating and disturbing place. We have definite images of what men are like – both positive and negative – and these images seem to be closely related to masculinity. Masculinity, in turn, appears to be utterly basic to what it means to be a man in the United States. Men just are masculine...or are they?

This course is designed to help us stop taking masculinity for granted by considering certain ways in which it is socially constructed. Indeed, when we examine masculinity through a sociological lens, we learn three things that are completely counterintuitive. First, there is not a single “masculinity,” but rather there are multiple “masculinities” (e.g., sexuality-based, class-based, race-based, religious). Second, men are better understood as “doing” masculinities than as “being” masculine. Third, masculinities are not once-and-for-all secure, and men are not “simply masculine;” rather, masculinities can be understood (to quote the course listing) as “problematic, fragile, negotiated and constantly under construction.”

We’ll begin the semester by approaching the idea of multiple masculinities through the concept of hegemonic (heterosexual, white, able-bodied, middle- to upper-class) and non-hegemonic (other) masculinities. We’ll then proceed with a social-historical study of manhood in the United States since its inception, in order to focus on some of the ways in which (and moments during which) masculinities are most fragile and problematic. Following the history section, we will explore certain key ways in which men (and women) sustain and recreate masculinities in the face of their fragility, particularly sports, violence, war and the military, and various social movements. Finally, we will spend some time learning about how men in the pro-feminist men’s movement make sense of their masculinities, and what, if anything, that might suggest about the future.

II. COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of this semester, I intend for you to:

- Better grasp the social construction of masculinity/masculinities
- Deepen your understanding of the gendered nature of both U.S. history and contemporary social patterns, as well as the interaction between gender and other group-based identities
- Take advantage of the opportunity to improve your analytic and writing skills afforded by the various assignments
- Have a more sophisticated understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the pro-feminist men’s movement
- Be able to apply the course concepts and perspectives to your own life, regardless of your gender(s)

III. COURSE READINGS

The following books are available in the College Bookstore and on reserve in Burling Library:

Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History*
 Messner, *Politics of Masculinities: Men in Movements*
 Schacht and Ewing, *Feminism and Men: Reconstructing Gender Relations*

A coursepack is under development. For the beginning of the semester (and potentially throughout the semester), we will rely on handouts. Please note that all handouts will be provided at the class before they are due to be read. If you miss a class, please obtain readings for the next class from me as soon as possible.

Please do the reading ahead of time. You will find that it significantly aids in your ability to understand the lecture, and will also enable you to participate more fully in the discussions.

IV. COURSE REQUIREMENTS/COMPONENTS OF COURSE GRADE

A. Exams: There will be two exams, a mid-term and a final, both take-home. These exams will cover lectures, reading material, videos and any other material provided during the course of the semester to date. (The final exam will be comprehensive.) **Each exam will count for 25% of your final grade, for a total of 50%.**

B. Journal entries: A course such as this one necessarily entails emotional responses; some of the material may touch you on a very personal level. In order to give you space for your personal responses while leaving class time free to talk about the issues on an academic level, I am asking that you keep a course journal. The journal may include your personal responses to the material at any level that you feel comfortable entrusting them to paper; it may also include any thoughts you have about the material that you do not share in class. At five points during the semester, I will ask you to turn in your journal. More information will be provided about this course requirement early in the semester. **Each journal collection will count for two percent of your final grade, for a total of 10%.**

C. Major paper: You will be asked to write a major paper (10-15 pages) on some topic in the area of the social construction of masculinity. A list of specific topic ideas will be handed out early in the semester; other ideas are welcome, provided they are discussed with the instructor first. A paper proposal must be handed in to me no later than February 15, 2002. Parameters for the paper, and for the paper proposal, will be handed out with the list of topic ideas. **Your major paper will count for 30% of your final grade.**

D: Attendance and participation: Regular classroom attendance is expected. Irregular or casual attendance has a negative impact on student comprehension and performance. **If you miss a class session, it is your responsibility to contact me and/or other students in order to make up lost work. Attendance and participation in discussion (and other class activities where relevant) will count for 10% of your final grade.**

Please be aware that there will be no extra credit work in this course.

V. GRADING AND LATE ASSIGNMENTS

The grading distribution will be as follows:

A = 94 and up
 A- = 90-93
 B+ = 87-89
 B = 84-86
 B- = 80-83
 C+ = 76-79
 C = 70-75

D = 60-69

F = 59 and below

Please be aware that you will be graded in part on the quality of your writing, including the correct use of grammar. You are strongly encouraged to make appointments with staff at the Writing Lab to discuss rough drafts of papers, and to make use of a dictionary and thesaurus in order to write in the clearest and most compelling way possible. I will be handing out a sheet on criteria by which your papers will be graded.

In general, late work will be penalized a grade fraction for every class meeting that it is late (e.g., A- to B+, C to D). Should a situation arise during the semester in which an assignment is late for personal or medical reasons beyond your control, I will not penalize the grade at all. You only need to give me a note from a doctor or other individual in a position of authority who can testify to the circumstances behind your being late on the work. **This latter point does not hold for the final exam. I am not authorized to allow you to turn in the final exam at a time any later than that indicated at the end of this syllabus without permission from the Registrar, nor am I authorized to grant incompletes without permission from the Registrar.**

VI. CHEATING

As your *Student Handbook* indicates, you may not incorporate either the ideas or the assistance of others into your written work without direct and explicit acknowledgment. To do otherwise, **including use of the Writing Lab without acknowledgment**, constitutes cheating. I encourage you to use the Writing Lab, to discuss with others ideas raised in class or in assignments that you find interesting, and to make appropriate use of quotations in your writing. In order to keep these behaviors acceptable, you will simply need to either add a note of acknowledgment in your writing assignment or use the proper American Sociological Association citation style when you wish to quote other material. (I will hand out ASA reference style guidelines shortly.)

VII. COURSE SCHEDULE WITH READING ASSIGNMENTS

Section I:	Hegemonic Masculinities and Other Masculinities
Monday, 1/21:	Introduction to Course: Who Are We? and What Are Contested Masculinities?
Wednesday, 1/23:	Men as Gendered Beings <u>Read:</u> 1) Kimmel and Messner, "Introduction: Men's Lives" (handout) 2) Kimmel, "Inequality and Difference" (handout)
Friday, 1/25:	Hegemonic Masculinities <u>Read:</u> 1) Connell, "The Social Organization of Masculinity" (handout)
Monday, 1/28:	Male Bodies and Hegemonic/Non-Hegemonic Masculinities <u>Read:</u> 1) Hasbrook and Harris, "Wrestling With Gender" (handout/coursepack) 2) Wienke, "Negotiating the Male Body" (handout/coursepack)
Wednesday, 1/30:	Straight Gays? Sexuality and (Non) Hegemonic Masculinities <u>Read:</u> 1) Connell, "A Very Straight Gay" (handout/coursepack) 2) Kurtz, "Butterflies Under Cover" (handout/coursepack)
Friday, 2/1:	Beauty and the Buff: Gay Masculinities in the Age of AIDS

- Read:
 1) Nardi, "Anything for a Sis, Mary" (handout/coursepack)
 2) Halkitis, "Masculinity in the Age of AIDS" (handout/coursepack)
- Monday, 2/4: **Men on the Outs: Working-Class and Poverty-Class Masculinities**
Read:
 1) Fine et al, "(In)Secure Times" (handout/coursepack)
 2) Nonn, "Hitting Bottom" (handout)
- Wednesday, 2/6: **Cool Pose as African-American Non-Hegemonic Masculinity**
Read:
 1) Majors et al, "Cool Pose" (handout/coursepack)
 2) Langley, "Cool Pose: An Africentric Analysis" (handout/coursepack)
- Friday, 2/8: **Bargaining With Hegemony: Chinese Americans and Jews**
Read:
 1) Chen, "Lives at the Center of the Periphery, Lives at the Periphery of the Center" (handout/coursepack)
 2) Martel, "From *Mensch* to Macho?" (handout/coursepack)
- Monday, 2/11: **Male Bodies Revisited: Puerto Rican Crack Dealers and Physically Disabled Men**
Read:
 1) Bourgois, "In Search of Masculinity" (handout/coursepack)
 2) Gerschick and Miller, "Coming to Terms" (handout/coursepack)
- First journal installment due today**
- Section II: Masculinities in Historical Context: Gender Anxiety and Backlash(es)**
- Wednesday, 2/13: **The Birth of the Self-Made Man**
Read:
 1) Kimmel, Manhood in America (MIA), Preface, Introduction and Chapter 1
- Friday, 2/15: **Born to Run**
Read:
 1) Kimmel, MIA, Chapter 2
- Proposal for major paper due today**
- Monday, 2/18: **Men at Work at the Turn of the Century**
Read:
 1) Kimmel, MIA, Chapter 3
- Wednesday, 2/20: **Masculinity and Recreation at the Turn of the Century**
Read:
 1) Kimmel, MIA, Chapter 4
- Friday, 2/22: Socializing the New Man at the Turn of the Century
Read:
 1) Kimmel, MIA, Chapter 5
- Second journal installment due today**
- Monday, 2/25: **Masculinity Between the Wars**
Read:
 1) Kimmel, MIA, Chapter 6

Wednesday, 2/27: **Masculinity, 1950s-style**

Read:

1) Kimmel, MIA, Chapter 7

Friday, 3/1: **The Masculine Mystique**

Read:

1) Kimmel, MIA, Chapter 8

Monday, 3/4: **The Contemporary Crisis of Masculinity and Beyond**

Read:

1) Kimmel, MIA, Chapter 9 and Epilogue

Section III: Sustaining and Recreating Masculinities

Wednesday, 3/6: **Male Bodies III: Sports and Masculinities**

Read:

1) Whitson, "Sport in the Social Construction of Masculinity" (handout/coursepack)

(2) Laberge and Albert, "Conceptions of Masculinity and Gender Transgressions in Sport Among Adolescent Boys" (handout/coursepack)

Friday, 3/8: **Spikes and Snowboards: Masculinities in Volleyball and Snowboarding**

Read:

1) Harvey, "The Construction of Masculinity Among Male Collegiate Volleyball Players" (handout/coursepack)

2) Anderson, "Snowboarding: The Construction of Gender in an Emerging Sport" (handout/coursepack)

Monday, 3/11: **The Gender of Violence**

Read:

1) Kimmel, "Clarence, William, Iron Mike, Tailhook, Senator Packwood, Spur Posse, Magic...and Us" (handout/coursepack)

2) Kimmel, "The Gender of Violence" (handout/coursepack)

Wednesday, 3/13: **Becoming "Real Men"**

Read:

1) Messerschmidt, "Becoming 'Real Men'" (handout/coursepack)

The midterm exam will be handed out today. It is due in class on Friday, 3/15

Friday, 3/15: **Midterm exam due in class**

No readings. Activity TBA.

Saturday, 3/16-Sunday, 3/31: **Spring break. Enjoy!**

Monday, 4/1: **The Power of Masculinity: Domestic Violence**

Read:

1) Anderson and Umberson, "Gendering Violence" (handout/coursepack)

2) Sabo et al, "Domestic Violence and Televised Athletic Events" (handout/coursepack)

Third journal installment due today

Wednesday, 4/3: **Arms and the Man: Masculinities and War**

Read:

1) Morgan, "Theater of War" (handout/coursepack)

2) Connell, "Arms and the Man" (handout/coursepack)

- 3) Gibson, "Introduction: Post-Vietnam Blues" (handout/coursepack)
- Friday, 4/5: **The Last Bastion of Masculinity: Military Academies**
Read:
 1) Kimmel, "Saving the Males" (handout/coursepack)
 2) Addeleston and Stirratt, "The Last Bastion of Masculinity" (handout/coursepack)
- Monday, 4/8: **Movie: Tough Guise**
No readings for today. The movie we will be watching is an hour and 25 minutes long; thus, we will need to meet early today. Class will meet from 12:40 to 2:05. We will discuss the movie on April 10.
- Wednesday, 4/10: **Tough Guise**
No readings for today; we will discuss Tough Guise.
- Friday, 4/12: **Men in Movements**
Read:
 1) Messner, Politics of Masculinities (POM), Preface and Chapter 1
- Monday, 4/15: **Essentialist Retreats**
Read:
 1) Messner, POM, Chapter 2
- Wednesday, 4/17: **The Limits of the "Male Sex Role"**
Read:
 1) Messner, POM, Chapter 3
- Friday, 4/19: **Class cancelled; enjoy the day off.**
- Monday, 4/22: **Profeminist Engagements**
Read:
 1) Messner, POM, Chapter 4
- Wednesday, 4/24: **Racial and Sexual Identity Politics**
Read:
 1) Messner, POM, Chapter 5
Fourth journal installment due today
- Friday, 4/26: **Backlash or Social Justice?**
Read:
 1) Messner, POM, Chapter 6
- Section IV: New Masculinities**
- Monday, 4/29: **The Many Paths of (Pro-)Feminism**
Read:
 1) Schacht and Ewing, Feminism and Men (FAM), Chapters 7, 2
- Wednesday, 5/1: **To Be Black, Male and Feminist**
Read:
 1) Schacht and Ewing, (FAM), Chapter 3
- Friday, 5/3: **Getting Off on Feminism?**
Read:
 1) Schultz, "Getting Off on Feminism" (handout/coursepack)
 2) Schacht and Ewing, (FAM), Chapter 5

Fifth journal installment due today

Monday, 5/6:

Real Men Don't Have (a) Sex

Read:

Schacht and Ewing, (FAM), Chapters 6, 8

Section VI:

Final Matters

Wednesday, 5/8:

Major papers due; we will discuss them in class. No readings.

Friday, 5/10:

Future Masculinities?

Read:

1) Kaufman, "Men, Feminism and Men's Contradictory Experiences of Power"
(handout)

Final exam handed out.

FINAL EXAM DUE IN MY OFFICE BY 5 PM, THURSDAY, MAY 16.

HAVE A GREAT SUMMER!

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