

# Contemporary Masculinity & Men's Issues

WST 302

Summer 2013, 3 Credit Hours

M,T,W,TH,F @ 1:30 – 2:45, Todd Hall 204

Michael Johnson Jr.,

Office: Wilson-Short 107A

Office Hours: After Class @ 2:45PM & by appointment

Email: [mjohnso9@wsu.edu](mailto:mjohnso9@wsu.edu)<sup>1</sup>

## Course Description

This course explores what it means to be a man in contemporary society. We will examine how both society and men actively construct multiple “masculinities” in different sociohistorical contexts and at different stages of their lives with different consequences for both individuals (men, women, children) and social institutions (family, school, work, health, sports, politics and the media). This course explores the social construction of masculinity and maleness in tandem with analyses of race, class, gender, ability and sexuality. This course will interrogate how the discourses of power influence, mobilize and put into practice the functions of cultural formation in the United States through individual and institutional levels. *Please Note: Your continued enrollment beyond the first week of class affirms your willingness to abide by the conditions set forth in this document.*

## Student Learning Outcomes

- Recognize how masculinities shape individual lives, relationships and institutions, particularly in its construction and reconstruction over time and in various contexts
- Recognize how masculinities intersect with race, class, gender and sexuality, while comprehending how otherness is produced, maintained, adapts and is reinforced through systems of inequality and oppression
- Comprehend and conceptualize how these categories of being are connected to systems, structures and institutions which continue to perpetuate and simultaneously construct gender
- Formulate effective, persuasive, critical communication skills to include writing and presentation on these subjects as indicated in various assessments throughout the course

## Required Texts

*Men's Lives, 9th Edition.* Michael S. Kimmel, Pearson, 2012

*Masculinities, 2nd Edition.* R. W. Connell, University of California Press, 2005

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<sup>1</sup> Students who elect to contact me by email, please remember to include as a courtesy, a salutation, and a precise description of your concern, issue, etc. Every attempt is made to respond to student emails within 24hrs of receipt. Emails are read and responded to during normal business hours (9-5) M-F. Emails received after 5 pm M-F will be responded to the following day. Emails received after 5 pm on Friday will be responded to on Monday.

## Course Policies And General Information<sup>2</sup>

**Academic Etiquette:** Class will begin promptly at 1:30. Arriving late or leaving early is not acceptable. Your participation in this course is predicated on principles of reciprocal respect, tact, courtesy, and professionalism. I require your attention and tolerance for a diversity of voices expressed in class (especially voices espousing unpopular views). Class discussions will follow these principles thereby fostering a respectful and safe learning environment for all students. Likewise, disruptive behavior<sup>3</sup> will not be tolerated. In order for us to learn from each other, we have to allow each other to make mistakes and to offer unpopular positions for debate. However, name-calling and other forms of verbal harassment will not be tolerated and will result in students being asked to leave the class<sup>4</sup>.

**Cell Phones and Other Communication/Electronic Devices:** Turn off your cell phones, and other electronic devices *before* entering the classroom (including laptop computers, iPods, iPads, PDAs, etc.); Do *not* wear headphones, earbuds, etc. in the classroom. If your device goes off more than once during the semester, or I discover you texting in class, I will immediately deduct points (at my discretion and without notifying you) from your participation grade. Students who violate this policy will have to turn your phone into me at the beginning of every class, to be returned to you at the end of class, for the duration of the semester.

**Academic Integrity:** In all instances, you must do your own work. There is no excuse for plagiarism, or for submitting another's work, ideas, or wording as your own, or for not doing your own work. In simple terms, plagiarism is the act of using another person's words or work without giving them credit for it. You are encouraged to read *WSU's Academic Integrity Policy*. Plagiarism and academic dishonesty, whether intentional or unintentional, may result in a grade of "F" for the assignment in question, or a grade of "F" for the entire course, at my sole discretion. Should there be any suspicion of plagiarism or any other form of academic dishonesty, I will discuss the situation with you first and then with the Chair of department. I may then alert the Office of Student Conduct at my discretion, which may result in an academic integrity hearing and university sanctions against you. If you are at any time unclear about what constitutes plagiarism, cheating, or academic dishonesty, contact me and I will clarify it for you.

**Disability Accommodation:** Reasonable accommodations are available for students with a documented disability. If you have a disability and may need accommodations to fully participate in this class, please visit the Access Center (Washington Building 217) to schedule an appointment with an Access Advisor. All accommodations **MUST** be approved through the Access Center.

**Campus Safety Plan/Emergency Information:** In the interest of campus safety and emergency procedures, please become familiar with the information available on the following websites: (1) <http://safetyplan.wsu.edu> (Campus Safety Plan); <http://oem.wsu.edu/emergencies> (Emergency Management Plan); and (3) <http://alert.wsu.edu> (WSU Alert Site).

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<sup>2</sup> Prerequisites for enrollment in this course include either CES 101 or WST 200

<sup>3</sup> Arriving late, leaving early, talking during lecture, reading the newspaper, etc.

<sup>4</sup> Such request will also necessarily count as an absence

## Course Requirements

**Attendance and Participation:** Attendance is compulsory. I will take attendance *every* class and those students who arrive *after* attendance has been recorded will be marked absent. Thus, lateness equals an absence. Moreover, “attendance” and “participation” shall be construed as being in class both mentally as well as physically. You are allowed **3 absences, period**. Missing a 4<sup>th</sup> class will result in the reduction of your final grade by one letter (e.g. A- reduced to a B-). On the 5<sup>th</sup> absence you **will** receive an “F” grade in the course. Only approved and documented “sponsored university events” will be exempted from this rule<sup>5</sup>. Arrangements for makeup work must, therefore, be made **at least one week** in advance pursuant to *University Regulation no. 73*. Attendance in class is required and invaluable. It is also to your advantage to listen closely to lecture material and to take notes during lectures and films. It should, therefore, go without saying that everyone is expected to come to class having completed all of the readings assigned for that day.

**Coursework Expectations:** Written work is to be turned in during class, on time and in the format required for each assignment. Late work will not be accepted without penalty unless accompanied by a doctor’s note or another form of official documentation of an emergency. In all cases those forms of documentation provided will be subject to my exclusive judgment regarding validity. If you are anticipating:

computer glitches, being the victim of street crime, bad planning, a Senate filibuster, embarrassing messages from “Mom” on your *Facebook* wall, animal attacks, hurtful comments by close friends, terrorism, seeing your new brother in law on *Cops*, being struck by space junk, unforeseen cataclysmic acts of God, suburban malaise, urban ennui, a date ending with an interview with Chris Hansen, the paralysis of analysis, rude tweets, trouble with your *Toyota* accelerator pedal, loss of hope in your audacity or vice versa, the debilitating shame of buying a Justin Beiber CD, undergoing enhanced interrogation techniques, losing your mojo or anything else that might interfere with your completing your assignments in a timely way, get your work started early.

Students, who by virtue of their absence have missed an assignment eligible to be made up, must turn in their work **no later than the next** normally scheduled class meeting, provided that work is accompanied with the appropriate documentation described above (electronic files are **not accepted**). While this is *not* a writing class per se, your ability to effectively and persuasively communicate your thoughts on paper *is directly related* to your ability to succeed in this course<sup>6</sup>. If you require help with the mechanics of writing please see the Writing Center in CUE 403. This course will utilize the Chicago citation style; familiarize yourself with it **before beginning** any written assignments. Deviations from **any** of these standards will result in point reductions.

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.registrar.wsu.edu/Registrar/Apps/AcadRegs.ASPX> #73

<sup>6</sup> All written assignments must conform to the standard conventions of academic writing: e.g., typed in 12 point, *Times New Roman* font, with all 1” margins and double spaced with page numbers centered at bottom on each pg.

**Course Performance:** As you can gather from the detailed syllabus I have provided for you, the only thing you can do to get a passing grade in the class is complete the work assigned in the syllabus on time and without excuses. In order to pass the class (i.e., obtaining at least a C-) you need to do two fundamental things: (1) follow the syllabus, and (2) do the assigned work *well*. In order to do better (i.e., obtaining at least a B), you need to follow the syllabus and do the assigned work *very well*. And in order to receive an excellent grade in this class (i.e., at least an A-) you need to follow the syllabus and *excel in your work*.

Thus, it is the quality of your work what will guarantee your grade. What does this all mean? Essentially, I am warning you that the level of effort you put into the class, *may not correspond to the quality* of your work (which is what ultimately matters in obtaining a grade). That is, sometimes a person's best effort may only earn them a "C". Therefore, please know that I will tolerate no drama at the end of the semester about how you "wanted an A in this class" and are actually getting a C- and can I do something to help you "improve your grade." My standard response to that kind of request will always be: "sorry, but you had an entire semester to work on improving your grade."

**Last, But Not Least is the "How Is That My Problem" Clause:** I am a very busy person, and as an instructor, my role in this class is to teach you about effects of intersecting social markers and to generally prepare you for the professional world. I feel the need to warn you, then, that often times I will have a standard response to many of your "problems" or "conflicts." The response will usually be a variation of "How is that my problem?" *Before* you raise any issue with me, understand that your personal matters should bear *no effect* on me or on how this class is conducted. It is ultimately up to you to make your own decisions, but decisions, even in college, have consequences attached to them. Please keep that in mind. Many students' low grades are a result of not closely following assignment directions, class policies or not expending enough effort. It is your responsibility to be aware of the policies on this syllabus and follow them appropriately. If you miss class it is your responsibility to check *with your classmates* to find out what you have missed. And though you are always welcome to follow up with me if you are absent, *do not* ask me if you "missed anything important."

**Incompletes:** No incompletes will be considered absent *extraordinary* circumstances, subject to my discretion and the student *must be passing* the class when the incomplete is requested.

**Grading Procedures:** I will try to remain as faithful as possible to this syllabus. However, I reserve the right to amend any and all assignment due dates which are subject to change without notice. I will attempt to grade assignments as efficiently as practicable and return them to students as soon as possible, depending on the course and university schedules.

Portfolio	200 Points
Participation	200 Points
Research Paper	100 Points
<i>Total:</i>	<i>500 Points</i>

## Course Assignments

**Portfolio (200pts):** You are required to compose a typed reading response for all assigned reading(s) or film(s) for each class meeting. These responses should be one page in length, *single spaced*. I will require all students to turn in their reading responses at the beginning of class; if you are late or absent, you will receive *a zero*. These reading responses will be returned to you and students are to keep them in a portfolio to be turned in at the end of the semester. Each graded reading response will be worth up to 10 points for a total of 200 points, provided that students turned theirs in on time on the date checked. Students who fail to retain their reading responses *will not receive any credit for missing* documents. Additionally, students must compose a one page summary with their Portfolio that reflects on the cumulative strengths and weaknesses of their reading responses over the course of the semester, and what they have or haven't learned from the assigned readings. *No portfolio will be graded without this summary!* In order to get full credit, all entries should *not summarize* the readings, but rather identify an important observation that resonates with you *and* explain why you found that observation personally relevant while tying it to larger discourses of power and oppression relating to other readings, films, lectures, etc. in the course.

**Research Paper (100pts):** You will author a research paper of *no less than 10 pages*, on a subject of your choice related to the content of the course. This research paper will attempt to assess the current status of your subject of study, its relevance to US constructions of masculinity within larger discourses of power and avenues of racial, classist, sexist and homophobic oppression. The paper will conform in all respects to the standard conventions of writing, e.g. 1" margins, Times New Roman 12 pt. font, double spaced, an attached Bibliography of scholar sources, etc. Students will receive additional instructions for this assignment later in the semester.

**Participation (200pts):** You will notice that student participation is heavily weighted in this class; while there are no exams and this course requires two writing intensive components, debate and discussion are intrinsically vital to the discovery of knowledge and student's intellectual development. Student's participation grade is comprised of my critical assessment of your contributions to the course's progress. This determination is based on two objective criteria related to class discussion: (1) the regularity and quality of your comments in the pursuit of a given line of inquiry or discussion relevant to that day's assigned reading or activity and (2) student's Presentation performance determined by the averaged grade of both their peers and my own. While I may solicit student recommendations as to their final participation grade, please note that such *recommendations* are just that – recommendations and therefore are not binding.

## Grading Scale

100 – 94 = A  
93 – 90 = A –

Suggests that a student's work is outstanding to excellent; the student's work reflects an engaged comprehension of the course content and shows thoughtful insight into the complexities of the course. Student shows an attentive engagement with the course. Student's work is consistently well-considered and well-written.

89 – 87 = B+  
86 – 83 = B  
82 – 80 = B-

Suggests that a student's work is very good to good; the student's work reflects a very strong, engaged, and solid understanding of course material. Occasionally, the student's work doesn't go the extra step in critical analysis. Student's work is mostly well considered and well-written.

79 – 77 = C+  
76 – 73 = C  
72 – 70 = C-

Suggests that a student's work is adequate; the student's work reflects a fair, but essentially disengaged, grasp of the course material and doesn't go very far in comprehension, or reflects a lack of understanding of the issues represented in the material. Student's work is un- or underconsidered and unclearly written. Class attendance and/or participation may be a problem.

69-67=D+  
66-63=D  
62-60=D-  
59-0=F

Suggests that a student's work shows some, but very little effort; the student's work does not reflect any comprehension of the course material, is disengaged, or reveals a lack of reading, attention, and/or attendance.

Date	Readings / Class Activities
6/17	Introductions and Syllabus Review
6/18	“The New Social Science”, pg. 27-38 <i>Masculinities</i>
6/19	“Men’s Bodies”, pg. 45 – 58 <i>Masculinities</i>
6/20	“The Social Organization of Masculinity”, pgs. 67-86 <i>Masculinities</i>
6/21	“The History of Masculinity”, pgs. 185-203 <i>Masculinities</i>
6/24	“Cavemen Masculinity”, “The Be a Man Box” <i>Men’s Lives</i>
6/25	“Men’s Resistance to Equal Sharing” <i>Men’s Lives</i>
6/26	“Warrior Narratives in the Kindergarten Classroom” <i>Men’s Lives</i>
6/27	“Guyland: Gendering the Transition to Adulthood” <i>Men’s Lives</i>
6/28	Documentary Film
7/1	“Ethnicity, Race, and Difference...” <i>Men’s Lives</i>
7/2	“All Men are Not Created Equal: Asian Men in U.S. History” <i>Men’s Lives</i>
7/3	“The Black Male Privileges Checklist”, “Latino Masculinities...” <i>Men’s Lives</i>
7/4	<b>Independence Day – No class</b>
7/5	Documentary Film
7/8	“College Men’s Meanings of Masculinities”, “He’s Got no Game...” <i>Men’s Lives</i>
7/9	“Why College Men Drink” <i>Men’s Lives</i>
7/10	“The Male Consumer as Loser: Beer and Liquor Ads in” <i>Men’s Lives</i>
7/11	“Sexual Harassment and Masculinity” “Why Men Rape” <i>Men’s Lives</i>
7/12	“If Men Could Menstruate”, “Gender Capital and Male Bodybuilders” <i>Men’s Lives</i>
7/15	“The Heterosexual Questionnaire”, “Becoming 100 Percent Straight” <i>Men’s Lives</i>
7/16	“No way my boys are going to be like that!” <i>Men’s Lives</i>
7/17	“Guys are Just Homophobic” <i>Men’s Lives</i>
7/18	“They Don’t Want to Cruise your Type” <i>Men’s Lives</i>
7/19	“Why I Hate Abercrombie & Fitch: Essays On Race and Sexuality” (.pdf)
7/22	Presentations
7/23	Presentations
7/24	Presentations
7/25	Presentations
7/26	Presentations

1 John Doe  
2 WST 485 – Reading Response 1  
3 The Repressive Hypothesis, *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1*  
4

5 Above you will see on line number 1, your name. On line 2 you will find the course  
6 prefix and the Reading Response number. On line 3 you will find the title(s) of the assigned  
7 reading for that specific Reading Response. After a single space, the rest of the body of your text  
8 would normally appear here. Please remember that for the reading responses the text of your  
9 paper should always appear single spaced, fully justified as is the case in this example. Please  
10 include only the information above, left justified on each of your reading responses. Do not  
11 include student ID numbers, dates or other information; this makes grading much easier on me  
12 and will result in your assignments being returned to you in a more timely fashion. Please ensure  
13 that the content of your papers appear like this for each of these assignments.  
14