WSt 302/CES 305/SOC 302: Contemporary Masculinity & Men’s Issues
Fall 2015
Washington State University

Instructor: Tiffany A. Christian
E-mail: tchristian@wsu.edu
Mailbox: Wilson-Short 111
Office Location/Hours: Wilson-Short 10K
TR 10:30a - 12p and by appt.

Class Hours: TR 9:10a-10:25a
Class Location: CUE 219
Credit Hours: 3
Last day to drop course with no record: September 22

Required Materials:
Reeser, Masculinities In Theory
Neal, The New Black Man
Kimmel, Angry White Men
Course reader (available at CougarCopies ONLY)

Recommended Materials:
Halberstam, Female Masculinity

You are responsible for making sure you are reading the correct material for the course. Other reading materials and activities may be handed out in class or provided via Blackboard (learn.wsu.edu).

Course Objectives

This course seeks to understand and complicate the concept of “masculinity” as a socially constructed and unstable set of gender identities and performances. We ask questions such as what it means to “be a man” and explore the notion that masculinity is not simply a matter of biology. Rather, masculinities take many different shapes depending on other aspects of social location, including race and ethnicity, sex and sexuality, socioeconomic status, dis/ability and more. Using this intersectional lens, we will engage with various representations and performances of masculinity in popular culture and cultural practice in order to understand how masculinities can function to both maintain and challenge hierarchies of power and privilege in a Western (American) context.

Performance-Based Learner Outcomes

Upon successful completion of the course, students should be able to:

• Articulate their knowledge of masculinity as a concept, including its ongoing (fluid) construction and instability as well as its general value in a patriarchal society.

• Discuss masculinity in terms of intersectionality, structural inequality, and as more than simply “biology.”

• Analyze contemporary issues and concerns involving various masculinities through a critical, intersectional lens.

• Critically analyze academic literature in order to ascertain main arguments, supporting points, and logical fallacies.

• Demonstrate the continuing development of written and verbal skills through various assignments and class discussion.
**Course Requirements**

**Readings:** Read the essays and chapters assigned and prepare for discussion on the day they are listed (see course calendar). Please read carefully and make notes of questions, concerns, and comments. Allow yourself ample time to do the readings justice. It is best to pace the reading rather than try to absorb it all in one sitting. **Bring the readings to class every day. In the case of readings assigned online, you should either print out the article or take notes and bring those to class.**

**Participation:** In order to create a productive learning experience, both attendance and active, informed participation during lectures and discussions are essential. This is the primary and most basic responsibility of all students. The participation grade will be determined by both attendance and your level of informed participation. Asking questions or sharing opinions that demonstrate a lack of engagement with course materials is not considered participation.

**Critical Analysis Essays:** You will write two critical analysis essays (2-3 pages each, double-spaced) during the course of the semester using a reading of your choice (with some exceptions) from the available materials. The essay is due on the day we discuss that reading. **I will not accept the essay after we have discussed the reading!** Each essay will analyze or “break down” an aspect of the reading in order to question it and/or connect it to other readings we have discussed. Your analysis should demonstrate an understanding of important terms as well as show that you understand the major argument/s the author is making in your effort to expand on or complicate the author’s points. **DO NOT SIMPLY SUMMARIZE THE ESSAY!** Essays will be typed and presented in standard MLA format. **Please note: there is a general cut-off date for each essay. You MUST turn in your first critical analysis essay by the end of Week Five and your second essay by the beginning of Week Nine.**

**In-Class Media:** I will screen media throughout the semester. For any media that take up the majority of the class, viewing worksheets will be provided and must be filled out during class and turned in before you leave. Attendance in class and completed worksheets are mandatory to receive attendance for these days, and said attendance cannot be made up (see attendance policy below).

**Conferences:** During Week 7 you will sign up to meet with me for a conference to discuss your final project. This conference is mandatory and worth two absences if you miss your appointment.

**Midterm:** You will receive a take-home midterm exam and be given approximately a week to complete it. As with all other written materials, the midterm should be typed, double-spaced, and in MLA format.

**Final Project:** You will have a choice between a research essay (8-10 pages) on a topic of your choice (topic must be approved by me) or a collaborative creative option of equivalent length/effort. More information will be provided about each option on a separate handout.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th>1000 pts (100%)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>200 pts (20%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Analysis Essay #1 (2-3 pages)</td>
<td>150 pts (15%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm</td>
<td>150 pts (15%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Critical Analysis Essay #2 (2-3 pages)</td>
<td>150 pts (15%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Project</td>
<td>350 pts (35%)</td>
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Rubric: Consider your assignments and participation as something akin to the Ordinary Wizarding Levels (OWLs) of *Harry Potter*. All scores earned fall within the same general rubric:

A = Outstanding [O]: Hermione Granger is the obvious example here. Not only have you demonstrated a superior, nuanced understanding of the assignment and the concepts involved, but you have executed the assignment with much creativity and style. You have not only worked hard, but that effort shows in your superior organization and your “swish and flick” technique. In short, you made me say “Wow!”

B = Exceeds Expectations [E]: Harry Potter. You have demonstrated not only a basic understanding of the assignment and concepts, but you seem to have grasped things on a more nuanced level (it took Cedric Diggory ages to figure out his egg clue). You have executed the assignment showing some level of style and creativity as well as demonstrating your more nuanced understanding in more than one area. Look at that Patronus!

C = Acceptable [A]: Ron Weasley. You have demonstrated a basic understanding of the assignment and the concepts involved, and you have executed the assignment in a way that demonstrates just enough effort to get by.

D = Poor [P]: Neville Longbottom in his earlier years (except in Herbology). Whatever level of effort you may have put into understanding the assignment and the concepts involved, more work is needed in order to demonstrate that you have a basic understanding (beyond the very superficial) of what we are learning in this class. You’ll need to put in some extra effort and communicate with the instructor to get that Expelliarmus spell down.

F = Dreadful [D] / Troll [T]: Here are most likely Draco Malfoy’s goons, Crabbe and Goyle. You have failed to demonstrate a basic understanding of class concepts or assignment instructions. This may be due to several reasons, including lack of attendance, lack of engagement with the readings, not communicating with the instructor in times of need, bullying people in the House of Gryffindor, etc.

*OWL denominations based on the ideas of J.K. Rowling.

Course Policies

Attendance: We are a community of thinking readers and writers and, therefore, we need one another’s presence in order to succeed in this course. Missing any class time affects both your ability to contribute meaningfully to the class as well as your peers’ understanding of the course topics. Should you have to be absent, it is your responsibility to get notes, assignments, or announcements from your peers. You are allowed three (3) absences without any effect on your grade. After that, your grade will be reduced by one-third per absence (so, an A becomes an A-, and so on) at my discretion. Please note: I do not make distinctions between excused and unexcused absences, with the exception of extreme/extended emergencies or official, documented school absences.

Coming to class late and/or leaving early are both considered “tardy.” Tardiness is disruptive and detrimental to both you and the rest of the class. Therefore, coming to class after we have officially started or leaving early without telling me ahead of time counts as one-third of an absence.
**Late Policy:** I do not accept late work except in extreme situations, such as a family emergency or extended health issue (issues with technology are not considered extreme). If you know in advance that you will not be in class when an assignment is due, **turn it in early. This includes official school absences such as sports events.** If you have an emergency, discuss your situation with me as soon as possible.

I will only accept hard copies of assignments for grading purposes. If for some reason you are unable to provide a hard copy on the day an assignment is due (such as a printing issue), you are allowed to email me your assignment so that it counts as on time, but you must still provide me with a hard copy at the next class meeting. I expect that you will have been working on your assignments for several days prior to turn-in, and not the night before they are due. **Thus, technology problems or other minor mishaps cannot be used as an excuse to give yourself extra time on an assignment.**

**Classroom Etiquette:** Use of electronic devices (laptops, cell phones, audio devices) in the classroom is not allowed except by special permission. Please make sure that all such devices are turned off or muted prior to the beginning of class **remove your headphones and earbuds!** Disruption of the class through rude behavior (talking/whispering during lectures or films, sleeping, making inappropriate comments that distract from the task at hand, making rude or overtly hostile comments, TEXTING, etc.) will result in you being asked to leave the classroom, at which point you will receive a full absence for that class period.

**This classroom is to be considered a “safe” space.** We cover topics in this class that may be sensitive or challenge your personal beliefs or opinions. It is critical that we learn to value different opinions and engage them in a manner that is not hostile to your peers or the instructor. Maintain an atmosphere of respect at all times. Hostility in various forms (sarcasm, personal attacks, use of hate speech, etc.) is not only unproductive but also can make people feel uncomfortable and even unsafe. If you are unable to maintain a respectful environment, you will be asked to leave. If at any time you feel uncomfortable or find class material to be too “triggering,” please talk to me. **Diversity Statement:** We are a college community enriched by the diversity of our students and staff. Each individual and group has the potential to contribute to our learning environment. Each has dignity. To diminish the dignity of one is to diminish the dignity of us all.

**A Note about Communication:** Email is the most convenient way to communicate with me, and I attempt to answer all inquiries within 24 hours. However, thanks to past abuses, I have to set a limit on certain forms of communication. In particular, the following types of emails will **not** be answered:

- The answer to your question can be found within the syllabus.
- You are asking me to cover an entire class’s materials via email. (If you are having difficulty with a concept in the class, you are encouraged to make an appointment to talk to me in person.)
- You are asking for a grade on an assignment.
- You are attempting to argue for a better grade via email. (If you have questions about a grade you have received, you are encouraged to make an appointment to talk to me in person.)
- You are writing to figure out your number of absences. You are expected to keep track of those on your own.
- You are emailing me about the same subject and 24 hours has not passed.
- The tone of the email is rude/disrespectful/demanding.
- The email is written such that I cannot understand what you are saying (sentence skill issues).
**Academic Honesty Statement:** Academic honesty is an indispensable value as students acquire knowledge and develop skills in college. Students at Washington State University are expected to practice academic honesty by not cheating, plagiarizing, or misrepresenting their coursework in any way. Students are ultimately responsible for understanding and avoiding academic dishonesty whether such incidences are intentional or unintentional. Plagiarism, collusion, and other forms of misrepresentation hurt the student and run counter to the goals of education. If at any time you are not sure about the legitimacy of your work in this course, ask me for clarification.

**Plagiarism Policy:** The consequences of plagiarism depend on the nature of the offense and may range from a zero grade on an assignment (which is worse than a grade of F) to failure of the class. Students who violate WSU’s Standards of Conduct for Students will also be reported to the Office of Student Standards and Accountability. Cheating is defined in the Standards for Student Conduct WAC 504-26-010 (3). It is strongly suggested that you read and understand these definitions, available here: [http://conduct.wsu.edu/default.asp?PageID=338](http://conduct.wsu.edu/default.asp?PageID=338)

**Special Accommodations Statement:** Reasonable accommodations are available for students with a documented disability. If you have a disability and need accommodations to fully participate in this class, please either visit or call the Access Center (Washington Building 217; 509-335-3417) to schedule an appointment with an Access Advisor. All accommodations MUST be approved through the Access Center.

**Safety Statement:** Washington State University is committed to maintaining a safe environment for its faculty, staff, and students. Safety is the responsibility of every member of the campus community and individuals should know the appropriate actions to take when an emergency arises. In support of our commitment to the safety of the campus community the University has developed a Campus Safety Plan, [http://safetyplan.wsu.edu](http://safetyplan.wsu.edu). It is highly recommended that you visit this website as well as the University emergency management website at [http://oem.wsu.edu](http://oem.wsu.edu) to become familiar with the information provided.
Schedule of Readings and Assignments

**This schedule is subject to change with notice.

Section One – History, Nature, Power, & Privilege

Week One

Tues 8/25   Syllabus and course overview; introductions
Thurs 8/27  In-class activity

Week Two

Tues 9/1    Reeser, Ch. 1 (pp. 17-29); Reeser, Ch. 10
Thurs 9/3   Reeser, Ch. 1 (pp. 29-54)

Week Three

Tues 9/8    Reeser, Ch. 3
Thurs 9/10  Reeser, Ch. 4

Week Four

Tues 9/15   Reeser, Ch. 2; Neal, Ch. 1
Thurs 9/17  Neal, Ch. 1 (cont.)

Week Five

Tues 9/22   Neal, Ch. 2
Thurs 9/24  Cut-off date for Critical Analysis Essay #1; Neal, Ch. 2 (cont.)

Section Two – Queer Masculinities

Week Six

Tues 9/29   Midterm distributed; Reeser, Chs. 5 & 6; Halberstam, 1-19 (reader)
Thurs 10/1  Neal, Ch. 3
Week Seven

Tues  10/6  Final Project Conferences

Thurs 10/8  Final Project Conferences

Midterm due Friday, 10/9, by 10:30am in my office or my mailbox in Wilson-Short 111.

Week Eight

Tues  10/13  Cohan, “Queer Eye for the Straight Guise” (reader)

Thurs 10/15  Cooper, “Boys Don’t Cry and Female Masculinity” (reader)

Section Three – Masculinities in Pop Culture/Cultural Practice

Week Nine

Tues  10/20  Cut-off date for Critical Analysis Essay #2; Messner et al, “The Televised Sports Manhood Formula” (reader); Jenkins, “’Never Trust a Snake’” (reader)

Thurs 10/22  Palahniuk, Ch. 6 (reader); Fight Club (film)

Week Ten

Tues  10/27  The Walking Dead (television)

Thurs 10/29  The Walking Dead (cont.)

Week Eleven

Tues  11/3  Neal, Ch. 5

Thurs 11/5  Robertson, “Of Ponies and Men” (reader)

Section Four – Masculinity “In Crisis”

Week Twelve

Tues  11/10  Kimmel, Introduction (skim) and Ch. 1

Thurs 11/12  Kimmel, Ch. 3
Week Thirteen
Tues 11/17  Kimmel, Ch. 3 (cont.); Kimmel, Ch. 5
Thurs 11/19  Rough Draft of Project due; Kimmel, Ch. 5 (cont.)

Week Fourteen
THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY

Week Fifteen
Tues 12/1  *The Secret Life of Walter Mitty* (film)
Thurs 12/3  *The Secret Life of Walter Mitty* (cont.)

Week Sixteen
Tues 12/8  creative option presentations
Thurs 12/10  NO CLASS

Finals Week
Final Project due on or before Wednesday, December 16, 1pm