

Spring 2017: GSWS 2240 **“Masculinities in Theory and Practice”**

Wednesday 2:30-5:00 / GSWS Library (402E Cathedral of Learning)
Prof. Todd Reeser, Director of the Gender, Sexuality, and Women’s Studies
Program

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Office hours: after class and by appointment (email me to set up a time)

Informed by work in feminist, ethnic, and sexuality studies, what has been termed “masculinity studies” or “critical masculinity studies” assumes that men and masculinity—in their numerous, complicated variations—are texts that can be analyzed from a gendered perspective. No longer are men considered as the incarnation of the universal (“the measure of all things”) or as an unmarked category, and no longer is masculinity the exclusive domain of cisgender men. More recently, scholars have begun to think about masculinity outside of the male body, analyzing how female and trans* masculinities function without “men.”

Our goals in this course will be twofold. First, we will study some of the most important theoretical approaches to masculinity that have influenced the growing field of study, with a focus on approaches from the humanities and social sciences. Our basic question will be: What is masculinity and how does it function? We will begin the course with a rigorous examination of key theoretical approaches, especially those of Connell, Bourdieu, Foucault, Butler, and Sedgwick. Throughout the semester, we will consider aspects of masculinity such as power, nature, anxiety, intimacy, effeminacy, the body, sexuality, homosociality, homoerotics, men in two’s, affect and emotion, female masculinity, transgenderism, globalization, race, and racialized relations. Theoretical familiarity will not be assumed in the course. Second, we will take a select number of case studies from various cultural contexts that are important in themselves as representations of masculinity and that will give us the opportunity to examine how the theoretical approaches studied can be “tested.” Thus, one of our goals will be to put theory and text/context in dialogue in order to better illuminate various aspects of men and masculinity, even as we approach theory as a text in itself.

Because this is an interdisciplinary course, with students from a wide variety of disciplines, students will be encouraged to relate the course readings to their own work in their home departments and to branch out into other disciplinary configurations. As the course is designed to help students think about masculinities in any context, students will be welcome to write their papers on subjects related to their own disciplines, if they so choose. The course is intended particularly for students in Gender/Sexuality Studies, English, Languages, Film, Fine Arts, Cultural Studies, Anthropology, Sociology, and Communication, and one goal of the course is for students from diverse programs and backgrounds to share their knowledge and receive feedback. The course will feature several external visitors who publish in masculinity studies and participation in a major colloquium on masculinity and affect.

Books to purchase (ordered at the bookstore):

Pierre Bourdieu, *Masculine Domination* (Stanford UP)

Judith Halberstam, *Female Masculinity* (Duke UP)

Todd Reeser, *Masculinities in Theory: An Introduction* (Blackwell)

Jane Ward, *Not Gay: Sex between Straight White Men* (NYU)

I have placed one copy of each of these books on reserve at Hillman.

Other texts will be available on Courseweb, and films will be on reserve at Hillman.

Grading:

The final grade will be calculated as three parts, each weighted evenly:

1. Preparation, quantity and quality of participation in class discussions and in group work, in-class presentations, attendance in class, at the masculinity/affect colloquium, and at (a minimum of) two other gender studies events hosted by the GSWS Program
2. Courseweb responses (8 total), and short paper early in the course
3. Final conference-length research paper on a topic of your choosing, related to the course readings and themes

As the instructor, I reserve the right to round grades up or down in borderline cases.

You are required to attend at least two GSWS events outside of class related to masculinity. Please send me an email for each event attended with a very short reaction to the event. You are also required to attend at least half of the affect/masculinity studies colloquium in April.

Over the course of the term, you will do at least **six** short responses (each 500 words minimum), each response on one (or more) of the class readings, to be posted to Courseweb discussion board by 6 p.m. the Tuesday just before the class period in which it will be discussed (at the latest). This does not mean that you summarize the piece (you can assume that we have read it and understand the basic elements). You can expand on one aspect of the text (take it further), critique it, discuss what is omitted, enlarge its scope, and/or apply the thesis to some particular case. But you must engage *directly* with the reading, and you must provide a personal “take” of some kind on the writing. To help you engage directly, you should do a close-reading of a part of the text, and you should cite the text. The basic question is: What do *you* make of the piece(s)? At least one of these responses must be completed in January. You may respond to suggested readings as long as your response does not assume that others have read the piece (i.e. you may need to explain more about the piece). In order to help establish a virtual community, I strongly encourage you to read and to respond to your colleagues’ postings on Courseweb each week. During class, I may ask you to present your “take” and/or to elaborate. The goal of these responses is for you to prepare in a more in-depth way for the class discussions and to put some of your ideas into writing, which often makes them more sophisticated than when simply oral.

I will also ask you to do at least **two** short on-line responses to someone else's response (100 words minimum). I will ask you to respond to one or more of the responses that were posted on Courseweb by noon on Wednesday (at the latest). The same guidelines apply as above: you should have a "take" on someone else's "take." This will help prepare you to respond to your colleagues in the class discussion.

While I will read all these responses as you post them, they will not be graded on their own, but evaluated as a whole at the end of the term. You are welcome to do as many as you like. Following all the above guidelines will result in a grade of "A" for this part of the final grade.

Short paper: to help you put theory and text/context into dialogue, you will turn in a short (750-1200 word) paper that puts a theoretical model into dialogue with some type of masculinity in practice. The first section of the paper should digest a theoretical model from the week's reading, and the second section should put it in dialogue with a cultural practice, representation, or artefact. I will ask you to share these in class. There are two possible due dates (see below).

Final paper: You are encouraged to start your paper early in the term, and to meet with me to discuss your selection of a topic and the writing process. I will ask you to submit an abstract for your final paper in advance of the due date. You may select a topic related to your "home" discipline or to another discipline, and/or you may write on theoretical approaches to masculinity. Your paper should be formatted in MLA or Chicago style (if you use another style sheet, please talk to me). Use standard margins and font. The argument-driven paper must show evidence that you have been thinking about the course topics, and it must show engagement with theoretical approaches to masculinity. Be sure the introduction lays out the stakes of your argument for an interdisciplinary audience (answer the "Who cares?" question for folks in other departments). Your thesis or main argument should be clear after about two pages, and you should provide a plan of the rest of your paper. During the last session, I will ask you to present your work to your colleagues and to me. This paper should be conference paper length (8-10 pages, double-spaced), but the final written version you turn in to me can be as long as you would like. Do note that you cannot get a passing grade for this course if you do not turn in a final paper.

University and GSWS Program Policies and Statements

Disability resources and services:

If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact both your instructor and Disability Resources and Services, 140 William Pitt Union, 412-648-7890 as early as possible in the term. Disability Resources and Services will verify your disability and determine reasonable accommodations for this course. For more information, visit <https://www.studentaffairs.pitt.edu/drs/> .

Academic integrity and plagiarism:

Cheating/plagiarism will not be tolerated. Students suspected of violating the University of Pittsburgh Policy on Academic Integrity will be required to participate in the outlined procedural process as initiated by the instructor. A minimum sanction of a zero score for

the quiz, exam or paper will be imposed. For the full Academic Integrity policy, go to: www.as.pitt.edu/faculty/policy/integrity.html.

Classroom recording policy:

To ensure the free and open discussion of ideas, students may not record classroom lectures, discussion and/or activities without the advance written permission of the instructor, and any such recording properly approved in advance can be used solely for the student's own private use.

E-mail policy:

Each student is issued a University e-mail address (username@pitt.edu) upon admittance. This e-mail address may be used by the University for official communication with students. Students are expected to read e-mail sent to this account on a regular basis. Failure to read and react to University communications in a timely manner does not absolve the student from knowing and complying with the content of the communications. The University provides an e-mail forwarding service that allows students to read their e-mail via other service providers (e.g., Hotmail, AOL, Yahoo). Students that choose to forward their e-mail from their pitt.edu address to another address do so at their own risk. If e-mail is lost as a result of forwarding, it does not absolve the student from responding to official communications sent to their University e-mail address.

Cell phone and laptop policy:

All cell phones and other electronic communication devices are to be turned to the off setting during class. Laptops are to be used for note-taking only.

Non-discrimination policy:

As an educational institution and as an employer, Pitt values equality of opportunity, human dignity, and racial/ethnic and cultural diversity. Accordingly, the University prohibits and will not engage in discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, age, marital status, familial status, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, genetic information, disability, or status as a veteran. For more information, visit

<http://cfo.pitt.edu/policies/documents/policy07-01-03web.pdf>

Gender-Inclusive language guidelines:

Aspiring to create a learning environment in which people of all identities are encouraged to contribute their perspectives to academic discourse, the University of Pittsburgh Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies Program provides guidelines and resources regarding gender-inclusive/non-sexist language (gsws.pitt.edu/node/1432). Following these guidelines fosters an inclusive and welcoming environment, strengthens academic writing, enriches discussion, and reflects best professional practices.

Language is gender-inclusive and non-sexist when we use words that affirm and respect how people describe, express, and experience their gender. Gender-inclusive/non-sexist language acknowledges people of any gender (e.g. first-year student versus freshman,

chair versus chairman, humankind versus mankind). It also affirms non-binary gender identifications, and recognizes the difference between biological sex and gender expression. Students may share their preferred pronouns and names, and these gender identities and gender expressions should be honored.

These guidelines fulfill the best intentions of the University of Pittsburgh's Non-Discrimination Policy: <https://www.cfo.pitt.edu/policies/policy/07/07-01-03.html>.

Content warning and class climate:

Our course readings and classroom discussions will often focus on mature, difficult, and potentially challenging topics. As with any course in the Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies Program, course topics are often political *and* personal. Readings and discussions might trigger strong feelings—anger, discomfort, anxiety, confusion, excitement, humor, and even boredom. Some of us will have emotional responses to the readings; some of us will have emotional responses to our peers' understanding of the readings; all of us should feel responsible for creating a space that is both intellectually rigorous and respectful. Above all, be respectful (even when you strongly disagree) and be mindful of the ways that our identities position us in the classroom.

I expect everyone to come to class prepared to discuss the readings in a mature and respectful way. If you are struggling with the course materials, here are some tips: read the syllabus so that you are prepared in advance. You can approach your instructor ahead of time if you'd like more information about a topic or reading. If you think a particular reading or topic might be especially challenging or unsettling, you can arrive to class early and take a seat by the door so that you can easily exit the classroom as needed. If you need to leave or miss class, you are still responsible for the work you miss. If you are struggling to keep up with the work because of the course content, you should speak with me and/or seek help from the counseling center.

Sexual misconduct, required reporting, and Title IX:

The University is committed to combatting sexual misconduct. As a result, you should know that University faculty and staff members are required to report any instances of sexual misconduct, including harassment and sexual violence, to the University's Title IX office so that the victim may be provided appropriate resources and support options. What this means is that as your professor, I am required to report any incidents of sexual misconduct that are directly reported to me, or of which I am somehow made aware.

There are two important exceptions to this requirement about which you should be aware:

A list of the designated University employees who, as counselors and medical professionals, do not have this reporting responsibility and can maintain confidentiality, can be found here: <http://www.titleix.pitt.edu/report/confidentiality>

An important exception to the reporting requirement exists for academic work. Disclosures about sexual misconduct that are shared as part of an academic project, classroom discussion, or course assignment, are not required to be disclosed to the University's Title IX office.

If you are the victim of sexual misconduct, Pitt encourages you to reach out to these resources:

- Title IX Office: 412-648-7860
- SHARE @ the University Counseling Center: 412-648-7930 (8:30 A.M. TO 5 P.M. M-F) and 412-648-7856 (AFTER BUSINESS HOURS)

If you have a safety concern, please contact the University of Pittsburgh Police, 412-624-2121.

Other reporting information is available here: <http://www.titleix.pitt.edu/report-0>

Syllabus

N.B.: Readings are available on Courseweb, unless indicated otherwise.
I strongly suggest reading the pieces in the order in which they are presented.

Wednesday January 4

Introduction to the course: What is masculinity? Is it always hegemonic?
What is masculinity studies? Where did it come from? Is it always critical?

Discussion of hegemonic masculinity, its importance, its limits: extract from Connell,
Masculinities

Read at least one of the following articles extending or critiquing hegemonic masculinity
(on Courseweb):

Demetriou, “Connell’s Concept of Hegemonic Masculinity: A Critique”

Hearn, “From Hegemonic Masculinity to the Hegemony of Men”

Moller, “Exploiting Patterns: A Critique of Hegemonic Masculinity”

Wetherell and Edley, “Negotiating Hegemonic Masculinity: Imaginary Positions and
Psycho-Discursive Practices”

Wednesday January 11

Masculinity as Ideology

“Nature,” Essence, and Power: The Problem of Masculine Domination

Bourdieu, *Masculine Domination*

Suggested:

Coles, “Negotiating the Field of Masculinity”

Reeser and Seifert, “Oscillating Masculinity in Bourdieu’s *La Domination masculine*” (n.b. citations are in French)

Kiesling, “Power and the Language of Men” (a classic article by a Pitt faculty member
that puts linguistics into dialogue with questions power and masculinity)

Wednesday January 18

Destabilizing Hegemony: Masculinity in/as Movement

Reeser, introduction and chapter 1 (“Theorizing Masculinity”) in *Masculinities in Theory*

Foucault, chapter 2 in *History of Sexuality*, volume 1 (chapter 1 is optional, but (re)read the hyper-famous paragraph on page 43 and think about possible relations to masculinity studies)

*Short paper due in class today or on next week (750-1200 words): Select an aspect of one theoretical model outlined in this week's reading and locate a specific example (cultural artefact or representation, interview, cultural practice, YouTube video, advertisement, scene from a film, play, novel...) that can be understood in such terms. Discuss the *specific* aspects of the theoretical model that are of relevance to you ("digest" them), then explain how your example does (and/or does not) relate to the model. How does the theory manifest itself in the specifics of your example? Use the language of your model in your analysis of your example. You can also discuss the limits of the model in your example. Focus on analysis, not description.

Suggested:

Sedgwick, "Gosh, Boy George, You must be Awfully Secure in Your Masculinity"

Moon, "Theorising Violence in the Discourse of Masculinities" (deals with how violence can be thought vis-à-vis discourse)

Deleuze and Guattari, extract from *A Thousand Plateaus* (section on "becoming-woman") (pair with Reeser, pp. 47-48)

Potts, "Deleuze on Viagra" (excellent example of how theory can put to very practical uses) (pair with Reeser, pp. 47-48)

Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (extract on post-structuralism, good introduction to the topic for those new to it)

Wednesday January 25

Sexing and Performing Masculinity: Or, Judith Butler, Meet Masculinity Studies

Reeser, chapter 3 ("Sexing Masculinity") in *Masculinities in Theory*

Butler, "The Compulsory Order of Sex/Gender/Desire" and "From Interiority to Gender Performatives," pages 6-13, 136-41 in *Gender Trouble*

Butler, introduction to *Bodies that Matter*

Butler, "Melancholy Gender/Refused Identification" (a *tour de force* on how heterosexuality relates to the queer)

Butler, "Acting in Concert" in *Undoing Gender* (see especially the provocative ideas on the last two pages about undoing, pp. 15-16)

*Short paper due in class (750-1200 words) if not done for last week. See directions above. Papers turned in this week must take Butler as theoretical apparatus.

Wednesday February 1

Black Masculinity: Class visit of Prof. Robert Reid-Pharr

Fanon, "The Fact of Blackness"

Wallace, "On Dangers Seen and Unseen," chapter 1 in *Constructing the Black Masculine*

McCune, chapters 1 and 3 in *Sexual Discretion: Black Masculinity and the Politics of Passing* (n.b. *Trapped in the Closet* is easily available online)

Denizet-Lewis, "Double Lives on the Down Low" from the *New York Times Magazine* (relate piece to McCune's thesis about the down low)

Wednesday February 8

Homosociality and Triangulation: Eve Sedgwick's *Between Men* Then and Now

Reeser, chapter 2 ("Social Masculinity and Triangulation") in *Masculinities in Theory* (first section summarizes Sedgwick: can be read before or after Sedgwick)

Sedgwick, introduction and chapter 1 in *Between Men*

Sedgwick in Triangulating Action:

Film to view before class: Truffaut, *Jules and Jim* (two copies of film on reserve at the multimedia center, Hillman Library; film also widely available)

Suggested:

Rubin, "The Traffic in Women: Notes on the 'Political Economy' of Sex" (basis of Sedgwick's model, also a canonical essay)

Wednesday February 15

It's not just for men: Female Masculinity

Halberstam, *Female Masculinity* (chapters 1, 2, 5, 8; other chapters suggested)

*Student-led discussion (in groups)

Suggested:

Reeser, chapter 6 ("Non-male Masculinities") in *Masculinities in Theory*

Wednesday February 22

Trans* Masculinities: Stasis, Movement, Visibility

Gottzén and Straub, "Trans Masculinities" (pp. 1-7)

Green, “Look! No Don’t!: The Visibility Dilemma for Transsexual Men”

Cromwell, “Queering the Binaries: Transsituated Identities, Bodies, and Sexualities”

Johnson, “Transnormativity: A New Concept and Its Validation through Documentary Film about Transgender Men*”

Watch one of the documentaries studied by Johnson, Wyman, *A Boy Named Sue* (at Hillman), or another transgender documentary (approved by me).

Still Black can be downloaded for a small fee at:

www.stillblackfilm.org/purchase-dvd.html

Girl or Boy, My Sex is not my Gender (Fille ou garçon, mon sexe n'est pas mon genre) can be downloaded for a fee at:

boutique.arte.tv/f7028-fille_ou_garcon_mon_sexe_pas_mon_genre

Suggested:

Brown, “Transsexuals in the Military: Flight into Hypermasculinity”

Catalano, “‘Trans Enough?’: The Pressures Trans Men Negotiate in Higher Education”

Westbrook and Schilt, “Penis Panics”

Wednesday March 1

Racial, Ethnic, Transnational, and Global Models of Masculinity

Eng, “Introduction: Racial Castration,” in *Racial Castration: Managing Masculinity in Asian America* (think about how the first section of the piece relates to other forms of masculinity besides Asian American)

In addition to Eng, read at least *three* of the following articles:

Beasley, “Rethinking Hegemonic Masculinity in a Globalizing World”

Boyarin, “What Does a Jew Want? or, the Political Meaning of the Phallus”

Fajardo, “Transportation: Translating Filipino and Filipino American Tomboy Masculinities through Global Migration and Seafaring”

Farahani, “Diasporic Masculinities”

Krishnaswamy, “The Economy of Colonial Desire”

Mora, “Latino Boys, Masculinity, and Puberty”

Sneider, “Complementary Relationships: A Review of Indigenous Gender Studies”

Suggested:

Blackwood, “Tombois in West Sumatra” (pair with Fajardo)

Farahani, “Racializing Masculinities in Different Diasporic Spaces” (pair with Farahani above)

Connell, “Margin Becoming Centre: For a World-centred Rethinking of Masculinities”

Wednesday March 8: No class, spring break

Wednesday March 15

Inclusivity and Heteroflexibility: Becoming Queer

Class meets in the Humanities Center (602 Cathedral of Learning) with Prof. Ward

Ward, *Not Gay: Sex between Straight White Men* (read chapters 1 and 3, and either 4 or 5)

Anderson, “Inclusive Masculinity Theory” and “Embracing Gay Men” in *Inclusive Masculinity*

Suggested:

Reeser, chapter 5 (“Masculinity in Disguise”) in *Masculinities in Theory*

Heasley, “Queer Masculinities of Straight Men”

Sender, “Queens for a Day: *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy* and the Neoliberal Project”

Wednesday March 22

Affective Masculinities

Massumi, “The Autonomy of Affect” in *Parables of the Virtual* (esp. pp. 27-28, 35-36)

Reeser, “Theorizing the Masculinity of Affect” (in *Masculinities and Literary Studies: Intersections and New Directions* (2017))

Ahmed, “Queer Feelings” in *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (How can this work be placed into dialogue with masculinity studies?)

Film to watch: *Force Majeure* (on reserve at Hillman, also on Netflix)

Suggested:

Wetherell, “Affect and Discourse – What’s the problem?: From affect as excess to affective/discursive practice”

Wednesday March 29

Angry White Men, Interracial Love, and other Masculine Affects and Emotions

Kimmel, introduction and chapter 1 (“Manufactured Rage”) in *Angry White Men*

Allan, “Phallic Affect”

Reeser, chapter 9 (“Interracial Masculinities”) in *Masculinities in Theory*

In class: viewing/discussion of episode from *Louie* (“Miami”)

Wednesday April 5

Phallic Bodies, Corporality, and Dis/Ability

Freud, “Some Psychological Consequences of the Anatomical Distinction between the Sexes”

Shuttleworth et al., “The Dilemma of Disabled Masculinity”

Coston and Kimmel, “Seeing Privilege Where It Isn’t: Marginalized Masculinities and the Intersectionality of Privilege”

Watch: *Murderball* (documentary) or *The Fundamentals of Caring* (film)

Discussion of interviews with disabled men with Prof. Chris Haywood

Suggested:

Shuttleworth, “Disabled Masculinity: Expanding the Masculine Repertoire”

Shakespeare, “The Sexual Politics of Disabled Masculinity”

Reeser, chapter 4 (“Theorizing the Male Body”) in *Masculinities in Theory*

***April 6-7: Required attendance at colloquium “Masculinity and Affect”**

Wednesday April 12: No class (work on final paper)

*Send to me as pdf e-mail attachment and upload to Courseweb: abstract (300-500 words) of final paper by April 14 at the latest. Abstract should include: hypothesis/argument, corpus (who/what are you going to analyze?), importance of thesis/project (why does it matter?), what you are positioning your argument alongside or against, relation to masculinity studies, theoretical orientation, and a general plan of the body of the paper. Include also a bibliography of 5-15 key primary and/or secondary sources (not part of word count). Include a title (even if provisional).

Wednesday April 19

Presentations of Final Papers and Discussion

Wednesday April 25

Presentations of Final Papers and Discussion

Whither masculinity studies?

Final version of paper due in class, or via email as a pdf file on April 27th at the latest.