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Masculinity

Masculinity has often constructed itself as the invisible gender, the norm against which "femininity" gets defined. In film and popular culture, masculinity is something that gets "tested" while femininity is constructed as a mystery to be pondered. Increasingly, however, "masculinity" as a set of beliefs and practices has been investigated and called into question, first by feminism, and later by queer theory and multiculturalism. What do we mean by "masculinity"? What institutions and social forces shape and reshape masculine identities? Are all men "masculine" or is "masculinity" a status that must be earned, something to be proved to oneself and others in the course of everyday life? How is "masculinity" learned and how does it shape important relationships? Can we change what it means to be "masculine" in American culture? If so, what might a transformed "masculinity" look like?

Our goal in undertaking this analysis of "masculinity" is to provide a new lens for social theory, a new tool for social change, and some possible sources of personal and creative inspiration. Our working assumption throughout the course will be that masculinity as a concept cannot be fully understood until we grasp its interconnectedness to race, class, nationality, sexual orientation and other factors that determine one's relative power and privilege (or lack thereof) in a society and a global economy of structured inequality.

REQUIRED TEXTS (available in the MICA bookstore):

Terrance Real, [I Don't Want to Talk About It](#)
Joshua Goldstein, [War and Gender](#)
Michael Kimmel, [Manhood in America](#)
Michael Messner, [Power at Play](#)
Dave Grossman, [On Killing](#)

Other required readings will be distributed as xeroxes in class. If you are absent, please pick up the handouts on the door of my office, Bunting 417.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

1. You will be asked to write a midterm paper (film analysis; 5-7 pages). Due Oct. 22
2. You will be asked to do a visual response to a specific reading or to issues and concepts emerging from the readings. Due. Dec. 3
3. You will be asked to write a final paper (suggested topics will be distributed). Due Dec. 17
4. You will be asked to do other informal assignments, such as weekly email responses to the readings.

GRADING POLICY:

Two papers	=	60% (30% each)
Class participation and emails	=	20%
Visual response	=	20%

SCHEDULE

Sept. 3 Introduction

Sept. 10 **Topic: "Hegemonic masculinity" and childhood gender socialization**

- * McGuffey and Rich, "Playing in the Gender Transgression Zone" (xerox)
- * Barrie Thorne, "Girls and Boys Together...But Mostly Apart" (xerox)
- * David Plummer, "Policing manhood: new theories about the social significance of homophobia" (xerox)
- * From Allen Johnson, Privilege, Power and Difference, (Xerox)
- * R.W. Connell, "The Social Organization of Masculinity" (Xerox)

Sept. 17 **Topic: Capitalism and the construction of US Masculinity**

- Kimmel, Manhood in America, Intro. and Ch 1-4 (available in MICA bookstore)
- Timothy Nonn, "Hitting Bottom: Homelessness, Poverty and Masculinity" (Xerox)

Sept. 24 **Topic: Hegemonic masculinity and U.S. social organization: marginalized masculinities (hierarchy)**

- * Espiritu, "All Men Are Not Created Equal: Asian Men in US History" (xerox)
- * Franklin, "Ain't I A Man?: The Efficacy of Black Masculinity for Men's Studies" (xerox)
- * Berger, "The Mouse that Never Roars: Jewish Masculinity on Television" (xerox)
- * Joshua Goldstein, War and Gender, Ch. 4 "Groups: bonding, hierarchy and social identity," pp 183-250 (available in MICA bookstore)

Oct. 1 **Topic: Subordinated Masculinities (Ingroup/outgroup: "other" masculinities)**

- * Barry Adam, "Gay Liberation and Lesbian Feminism" in The Rise of a Gay and Lesbian Movement (xerox)
- * Martha Southgate, "My Girlish Boy" (Xerox)
- * From Tim Bergling, Sissyphobia (Xerox)
- * C.J. Pascoe, "Dude, You're a Fag: Adolescent Masculinity and the Fag Discourse" (Xerox)
- * Film: "Ma Vie en Rose" (in class)

Oct. 8 **Social Construction of violent masculinity**

Triad of violence: against the self; against other men; against women or feminized "Others"

- * Terry Real, I Don't Want to Talk About It, (available in MICA Bookstore), Chapters 1-5 (pp. 21-135)

Oct. 15 **Topic: Violence against the self-- masculinity and depression**

- * Terry Real, I Don't Want to Talk About It, chapters 6-9 (pp. 137-262)

(Oct 16-20 Fall Break)

Oct. 22 **The Social Construction of Gender: sports and other institutions**

- * Michael Messner, Power at Play (available in the MICA Bookstore) Ch 1-4
- * Kimmel, Manhood in America, Ch 5

Oct.. 29 **Topic: Violence among men: Masculinity and Militarism**

- * Joshua S. Goldstein, War and Gender (available in MICA bookstore), Ch. 5, "Heroes: the Making of Militarized Masculinity" (pp. 251-331)
- * Lt. David Grossman, On Killing, pp 1-137

- Nov. 5 **Topic: Masculinity and Militarism:**
 * Lt. Col. Dave Grossman, from On Killing (available in MICA bookstore) pp. 141-295
 * Susan Faludi, "Gone to soldiers every one: the Vietnam War that no one dodged" from Stiffed (xerox)
- Nov. 12 **Topic: Violence against women and feminized "Others"**
 * Peggy Sanday, "The Socio-Cultural Context of Rape" (xerox)
 "Pulling Train" (xerox)
 * Nathan McCall, "Trains" (Xerox)
 * Joshua Goldstein, War and Gender, Ch 6: "Conquests: sex, rape and exploitation during war" (pp.332-402)
 *Michael Messner, "The Triad of Violence in Men's Sports"
- Nov. 19 **Topic: Bodies**
 *Joshua S. Goldstein, War and Gender (available in MICA bookstore), Ch. 2, "Bodies" (pp. 128- 182)
 * Ann Fausto-Sterling, "The Five Sexes" (Xerox)
 * Martha Coventry, "The Tyranny of the Esthetic" (Xerox)
- Nov. 26 Thanksgiving-no class
- Dec. . 3 **Student projects: visual responses**
- Dec. 10 **Topic: non-sexist parenting; fathers and sons**
- Dec. 17 **Topic: Masculinity and the framing of public discourse**
 * George Lakoff, from Don't Think of an Elephant (xerox)
 * Stephen Ducat, The Wimp Factor, (Xerox)

All students should be aware of the following policies regarding health, safety and learning accommodations:

ADA Compliance Statement

Learning Resource Center ADA Compliance Statement Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the instructor privately to discuss specific needs. Please contact the Learning Resource Center at 410-225-2416, in Bunting 458, to establish eligibility and coordinate reasonable accommodations. For additional information please refer to: <http://www.mica.edu/LRC>

Health and Safety Compliance

From the Office of Environmental Health and Safety (EHS)

It is the responsibility of faculty and students to practice health and safety guidelines relevant to their individual activities, processes, and to review MICA's Emergency Action Plan and attend EHS training. It is each faculty member's responsibility to coordinate with the EHS Office to ensure that all risks associated with their class activities are identified and to assure that their respective classroom procedures mirror the EHS and Academic Department guidelines. Each of these policies and procedures must be followed by all students and faculty. Most importantly, faculty are to act in accordance with all safety compliance, state and federal, as employees of this college and are expected to act as examples of how to create art in a way to minimize risk, and reduce harm to themselves and the environment. Faculty must identify, within each art making process, and require personal protection equipment use, by each student for each class, when applicable. Students are required to purchase personal protection equipment appropriate to their major. Those students who do not have the proper personal protection equipment will not be permitted to attend class until safe measures and personal protection is in place.

The National Conference on Gender (NCG), sponsored by the Gender Public Advocacy Committee (G PAC), brings together all the different communities and identities that have a common interest in ending discrimination and violence caused by gender stereotypes.

In an attempt to honor individual identities, while at the same time hoping to inspire coalitions across boundaries of expertise, experience, and community, the NCG organizers have evolved the following suggestions. These may be worthwhile as guidelines for our classroom discussions here as well.

* With many different people in attendance, not all of us will know about every other person's experiences. Let's take the risk, and the time, to educate each other about the different impacts of gender in our lives.

* "I Don't Feel Safe, Because of You:" Each of us needs to feel safe, but each of us is also responsible for our own safety. Unless someone threatens you physically or is overtly hostile, please think twice about using issues of safety or victimhood to close down debate.

* Hierarchies of Oppression: "I have it a lot worse than you do." Ranking and comparing oppressions usually just leaves everyone feeling disrespected or misunderstood, and usually does nothing to solve our common problems and bring us together. Please think twice about comparing your pain to someone else's. And try not to assume that anyone else hasn't paid a heavy price to be who and what they are and to bring their particular gifts into this world.

* Privilege: All of us walk around in one cocoon of privilege or another. Some of us have some gender privilege, but not race. Others have race but not gender or class. Introducing the argument of privilege can be used to illuminate as well as to diminish. Please make sure you use it in a way that doesn't overlook the price each of us has paid to survive.

* Generalizations: Generalizations, such as, "You straight white males just don't get it" are something we all use and we're usually wrong, because none of us is merely the sum of our group. We're all individuals and want to be recognized as such. Please think twice before making statements about "all straight people," or "all trans men," or about demonizing any one group.

* Representation: Look at who's in your workshops. If you see someone you think is the "only one" in the room, please consider that maybe their voice needs to be extra-heard. And think about who's not in the room, and which voices are not heard.

* Gender Rights and "Gender Transgression:" Gender oppression is not only about "transgressing" gender norms. It's also about a 4-year old jock-in-training who finds herself forced into pigtails and skirts; a quiet, artistic boy who is beat up in the boy's locker room; or a lesbian femme sexually assaulted and then blamed for wearing a short skirt and tight sweater. At some time in our lives, almost all of us have been harassed, shamed, or made to feel afraid because we don't meet someone's ideal of a "real man" or a "real woman." Gender rights are for those of us who transcend narrow gender stereotypes, but they're also human rights, and they're for all of us.