

American Studies 413

Fall 2010

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Reading List

Norah Vincent, Self-Made Man: One Woman's Year Disguised As A Man
Mark Twain, The Adventures of Tom Sawyer
Karen Lystra, Searching the Heart: Women, Men, and Romantic Love in 19th century America
Barbara Ehrenreich, The Hearts of Men
Michael Kimmel, Guyland: The Perilous World Where Boys Become Men
Luis Rodriguez, Always Running: Gang Days in L.A.
Michael Datcher, Raising Fences: A Black Man's Love Story
Frank Chin, Donald Duk

Course Outline

August 24: Introductions

Understanding Men in Contemporary America: Cultural Rituals and the Codes of Masculinity

August 26: Creating Ned: Learning to Transact Masculinity

Assignment: Norah Vincent, Self-Made Man, chapter 1 and Michael Kimmel, Guyland, chapter 3

August 31: Bowling Alone: Male Friendship versus Internet dating

Assignment: Self-Made Man, chapters 2 and 4

September 2: Thinking makes it so: "Show your Balls" or "Find Your Feelings"

Assignment: Self-Made Man, chapters 6-8

Looking Backward: Some Historical Perspectives on Patriarchy, Gender Roles, and Love in Constructing Dominant Culture Masculinity

September 7: Bedrock gender assumptions: Early Anglo-American manhood and Expectations of Masculine dominance

Assignment: Lecture

September 9: Boy culture in Nineteenth-century America: An Ideal Boyhood ?

Assignment: Mark Twain, The Adventures of Tom Sawyer

September 14: The Development of Men's Attitudes toward Women: Sisters, Mothers, and Friends
Assignment: Finish The Adventures of Tom Sawyer

September 16: Work and Masculine Identity in Industrializing America: Creating a Breadwinner Ethic Based on Separate Spheres
Assignment: Lecture

September 21/23: The Development of Men's Attitudes about Women: Love, Sexuality, and Courtship
Assignment: Lecture plus Karen Lystra, Searching the Heart, chapters 3-4 and 6

September 28: Was there a Masculinity Crisis in Late Nineteenth-century America? Changing Standards of Manhood
Assignment: Lecture

Male Identities in the Early Twentieth Century: The Cultural Construction of Modern Homosexuality

September 30: Gay and straight Interactions in turn-of-the century New York: Trade, Wolves, "Fairies" and the Boundaries of "Normal" Manhood
Assignment: Lecture

October 5: Forging 'Queer' Identities and the Emergence of Heterosexuality in Middle-Class Culture
Assignment: Lecture

Changing conceptions of the Masculine Self: Remaking the Heterosexual Male in the Twentieth Century

October 7: The Breadwinner Ethic and the Equation of Manhood: Middle-class Conformity, the Beats, and the Fear of Effeminacy
Assignment: Barbara Ehrenreich, The Hearts of Men, chapters 1-3

October 12: The Playboy Philosophy: Remaking the Heterosexual Male
Assignment: The Hearts of Men, chapters 4-5

October 14: Attempting to Rewrite the Masculine Script: The Counterculture, Gay Liberation, and the New Psychology
Assignment: The Hearts of Men, chapters 6-10

October 19: First in-class exam day

October 21: If needed, second in-class exam day

Finding Validation: Male Bonding, Homophobia, and Initiations into Manhood

October 26: Hazing, Sports, and Media in Guyland
Assignment: Guyland, chapters 5-7

October 28: Babes in Guyland: Pornography, Hooking Up, and Growing Up
Assignment: Guyland, chapters 8-9, 11-12

Ethnicity, Class, and Race in Contemporary American Masculinity

November 2: Mexican-American Culture, Macho Ideals, and the Making of a Chicano Barrio Gang

Assignment: Luis Rodriguez, Always Running: Gang Days in L.A., chapters 1-6

November 4: Aggression, violence, and conflicting cultures of masculinity in America: The Valorization of Physical Masculinity in Working-class culture

Assignment: Always Running, chapters 7-10 plus Epilogue

November 9: Coming of Age in Middle-Class America: A Young Black Man's Education

Assignment: Michael Datcher, Raising Fences, chapters 1-10

November 11: Veteran's Day—CAMPUS CLOSED

November 16: Black Men and Fatherhood: Stereotypes and Self-Image

Assignment: Raising Fences, chapters 11-26

November 18: Racial and Ethnic Differences Among Guys: Rap, Pornography, Sports, and the Appropriation of Racial images in Contemporary America

Assignment: Finish Raising Fences and Revisit Guyland, pp. 163-167(music), 183-185(porn), 141-143(sports), 203-204(hooking up)

November 22-November 26: FALL RECESS—NO CLASSES

November 30: Tom Sawyer in San Francisco's Chinatown: Growing Up as an Asian-American Male

Assignment: Frank Chin, Donald Duk

December 2: Asian Stereotypes and American Masculinity: Fathers and Sons

Assignment: **Finish** Donald Duk

December 7: Catch Up Day

December 9: Last Day of Class

Assignment: Write a letter to some man in your life: father, brother, cousin, friend, lover, spouse, business partner, and so on. (You MUST attend class to receive credit for this assignment). More on what this entails in class.

Take Home Exam Due – Friday, December 17

Course Requirements and Assessment Tools

Your grade will be based upon an in-class exam (160 pts), a take-home essay (150 pts), a letter to an important man in your life (30 pts), and the contribution you make to class discussion (60 pts), including an assignment that requires you to help lead one class discussion.

The in-class exam will consist of some combination of identification, short answer, and essay questions. The in-class exam will cover all the lectures and discussion, plus material drawn from Tom Sawyer, Searching the Heart, The Hearts of Men, and Self-Made Man. The in-class exam will count 160 points.

The take-home essay will also be worth 150 points and will require a comparison of Guyland, Always Running, Raising Fences, and Donald Duk. You will be given the question(s) and will write an essay of 7 to 8 pages that includes evidence, analysis, and interpretation. (I reserve the possibility of asking 2 questions and requiring 4-5 pages on each one.) Your essay(s) must be typed in double-space, 11-12 font-size format.

I also wish to motivate and reward discussion as it is a crucial component of the intellectual success of this class. Thus class participation will count for 60 pts. I will take roll every day as a way to reward students who attend class faithfully. I realize that some students find discussion difficult, so I will try to help people “breakthrough” whatever barriers have kept them from talking in the past. I will ask you to bring a written question at times; at others I will go down the alphabet for responses; and sometimes I will call on people. This is not to punish you but to motivate participation, timely reading, and to make space for students who are shy or less secure about speaking their minds and hearts. A demonstrable and consistent lack of preparation for class will lower your grade.

You will be required, as part of your class participation grade, to help lead a discussion AFTER the midterm. The class will be divided up into groups who will be assigned a day to lead a discussion of either: Always Running, Raising Fences, or Donald Duk. I will expect each group to consult before class and develop a set of questions and a coherent strategy for leading the class. Each student in the group is responsible for at least two questions. A hand-out should be developed by the group and passed out before class with all the questions for the day and an attribution of individual student authorship in () parentheses after each question. (If the question was developed by the whole group, this should also be indicated.) I will give as much support in the class discussion as I can without taking over. Students should keep up with the reading so that their fellow classmates can successfully complete this assignment. *A poor class discussion will negatively affect the grades of your fellow classmates.*

I do give pluses and minuses on the borders between grades. I will be using a plus/minus grading system based on a standard percentage scale i.e. 90-100, 80-89, etc. Scores that hug the top or bottom of a grade scale cut-off will receive a + or -.

Graduate students must write an extra paper on two movies viewed outside of class—“Fight Club” and “Inception.” Obviously the theme of masculinity should be explored using these films as cultural documents which both teach and reflect cultural patterns. I want you to interpret the patterns that you identify i.e. what are their larger cultural meaning and significance to masculinity. Approximate length is 4 pages. Undergraduates may do this assignment as extra-credit. This is the only modification that will be made in course requirements.

Students’ right to receive accommodations for documented special needs through the Disabled Student Service Office (DSS):

The University requires students with disabilities to register with the Office of Disabled Student Services (DSS), located in UH-101 and at (714) 278 – 3112, in order to receive prescribed accommodations appropriate to their disability. Students requesting accommodations should inform the instructor during the first week of classes about any disability or special needs that may require specific arrangements/accommodations related to attending class sessions, completing course assignments, writing papers or quizzes/tests/examinations.

Incompletes will only be given in instances of genuine and documented emergency or unpredictable cataclysmic events.

Remember: The syllabus is only an approximation of course topics and reading due dates. Students are responsible for adjustments to the above schedule which may be made according to class interest and discussion needs.

I am looking forward to an intellectually exciting and challenging semester together.