Course Description

“Making Men” addresses the social construction of masculinities in our current historical moment, and is meant as a broad introduction to the competing discourses we have come to call studies in critical masculinity. Through a wide range of works and cultural contexts—from the world of hip hop to the locker room, from studies in education to recent queer theory—this course considers the manner in which expectations surrounding ‘man’ and ‘masculine’ become produced, reproduced, and adopted within our collective social imagination.

Critical studies in masculinity is a relatively recent domain of thought, but the concepts it interrogates are far from new. As such, part of this course will be spent questioning why critical studies in masculinity have become so important, particularly in dialogue with feminist thought, queer theory, critical race theory, education, social research, disability studies, and other academic domains.

We are currently experiencing a heightened awareness of what it means to ‘be a man.’ This course will remain attuned to our collective social anxiety to ‘help the boys,’ including how such a call may be structured by long held assumptions about gender and its attendant impacts on performance, image, and behaviour. Ultimately, this course actively encourages students to question these assumptions, to think creatively about masculinities, and to develop a well honed critical apparatus for tackling the question of how men are ‘made.’

Learning Objectives

This course will:
• Examine the history development of critical masculinities as a field of study.
• Place critical masculinity studies in to discussion with feminist thought, political theory, studies in education, queer theory, critical race theory, and disability studies.
• Provide a forum for discussion (and interrogation) of what it means to ‘be a man’ in our contemporary historical moment.
• Explore how sociocultural expectations of masculinities are constructed and reproduced in our collective imaginations.
• Analyze representations of masculinities in media, novels, art, music videos, film, and theoretical texts.
• Consider a variety of case studies to better understand how the study of masculinities might impact our understanding of gender, sexuality, race, politics, and social research. The case studies will equally demonstrate how and where the limits of our expectations (of ‘man,’ and ‘masculine’) become alternatively apparent, undone, subverted, or productively ignored.

The course will enable students to:

• develop skills which focus on written and oral analysis; critical thinking and reading; and gathering and assessing evidence
• articulate their own analysis of an issue as well as listen to and understand the perspectives of others
• gain proficiency in oral presentations and formal academic writing

Course Texts

1. Course Package, WS 2205: Making Men
2. James Baldwin, Giovanni’s Room
* any supplementary readings will be posted on the course website.

Assignments and Grade Breakdown

1. 3 short response papers (500 words, 3 x 10% = 30%)
2. Final Essay (5-6 pages, 30%, Due April 6)
3. Mid-Term Quiz (1 hour, 10%)
4. Final Exam (25%)
5. Participation and Attendance (5%)

Information on the response papers and the final essay will be handed out in class.

Course Policies

Classrooms ought to be at all times dynamic, engaging, and thought provoking. Please attend all lectures having read the assigned material with questions, contentions, examples, and counter-examples in mind. I actively encourage creativity and outside-the-box thinking.
Scholastic Offenses: Scholastic offenses are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offense, at the following website: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf. As always, when in doubt ask before doing! Students should submit all work to “Turnitin” before the work is graded. Turnitin login information will be handed out with the essay topics.

Assignment Submission: Please submit your essays in hardcopy, preferably in class. Otherwise, assignments can be placed in the Women’s Studies drop box with the instructor’s name clearly written on top. If you use the drop box, please let me know so that I can retrieve the essay promptly. Assignments handed in past the due date are subject to a 2% penalty per day.

Academic Accommodation: Students requiring academic accommodations for tests, essays, and examinations, should consult the policy the senate’s policy on academic accommodation, which states: “Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department.” For Western Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness see: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/medical.pdf.

Students experiencing emotional or mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western (www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth) for a complete list of options of how to obtain help.

I am readily available to help, answer questions, field comments and concerns, or to just chat about the content of the course. Email is the best contact method. I will respond to all email within twenty-four hours.

As a courtesy to everyone, please turn off your cellphones in class, and please do not pack up your belongings until the class has fully finished.
Reading Schedule

* Items marked (CP) are located in the course pack. Everything else will be posted online. Bibliographic information is found in the course pack.
* Items marked ‘optional’ are meant to provide additional context, especially for those students wishing to think about a topic further in the form of an essay or response paper. Optional items will not be asked about directly on the mid-term test or exam, but you are more than welcome to refer to them in your answers.

**Week 1: Introduction: Critical // Masculinities (Jan 5)**

Christopher J. Grieg and Susan Holloway, “Canadian Manhood(s)” (CP)

Video: Macklemore & Ryan Lewis feat. Mary Lambert “Same Love”
Art: Felix Gonzalez-Torres, “Untitled (Portrait of Ross in LA)”

**Week 2: Expecting Boys, Making Men - Part 1, Framing the Conversation (Jan 12)**

R.W. Connell and James Messerschmidt, “Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept” (CP)
bell hooks, “Being a Boy” (CP)

Optional: Michael Kimmel, “‘What’s the Rush?’: Guyland as a New Stage of Development” (CP)

**Week 3: Expecting Boys, Making Men - Part 2, Education (Jan 19)**

James Burns and Michael Kehler, “Boys, Bodies, and Negotiated School Spaces: When boys fail the litmus test”
Leanne Dalley-Trim, “The Boys' Present... Hegemonic Masculinity: A performance of multiple acts.” (CP)

**Week 4: Expecting Boys, Making Men - Part 3, Homosociality/Friendship (Jan 26)**

Tom Migliaccio, “Men’s Friendships: Performances of Masculinity” (CP)
Michel Foucault, “Friendship as a Way of Life” (CP)
Poem: Frank O’Hara, “Having a Coke With You”

**Week 5: Case Study 1: Fight Club (David Fincher) (Feb 2)**

Film: *Fight Club*

Optional: Brian Locke, “‘The White Man’s Bruce Lee’: Race and the Construction of White Masculinity in David Fincher’s *Fight Club*”

**Week 6: Sports, Athleticism, and Fandom (Feb 9)**
**Mid-Term Quiz, 1 hour**

Michael Kimmel, “Sports Crazy” (CP)
Richard Majors, “Cool Pose: Black Masculinity and Sports” (CP)
Film: “Shredded,” Richard Gaudio, Douglas C. Taplin (National Film Board of Canada)

**Reading Week: February 16-20**

**Week 7: Trans* Men, Trans* Theory (Feb 23)**

Raine Dozier, “Beards, Breasts, and Bodies: Doing Sex in a Gendered World” (CP)
Judith Jack Halberstam, “Transgender Butch: Butch/FTM Border Wars and the Masculine Continuum” (CP)

Optional: Susan Stryker, “An Introduction to Transgender Terms and Concepts” (CP)

**Week 8: Panic in the Nation! (Mar 2)**

Joane Nagel, “Masculinity and Nationalism: Gender and Sexuality in the Making of Nations” (CP)
José Esteban Muñoz, “The White to be Angry: Vaginal Creme Davis’s Terrorist Drag” (CP)

**Week 9: Case Study 2: Giovanni’s Room (James Baldwin) (Mar 9)**

James Baldwin: *Giovanni’s Room*

Optional: Josep M. Armengol, “In the Dark Room: Homosexuality and/as Blackness in James Baldwin’s *Giovanni’s Room*” (CP)

**Week 10: Racializing Masculinities (Mar 16)**

Frantz Fanon, “The Lived Experience of the Black Man” (CP)
Shyam Selvadurai, “Pigs Can’t Fly” (CP)

**Week 11: Case Study 3: Hip Hop, Angst, and the Expectation Game (Mar 23)**

Michael P. Jeffries, “The Meaning of Hip-Hop” (CP)
Hilton Als, “White Noise” (CP)
Carrie Battan, “We Invented Swag: NYC’s Queer Rap”

VIDEO: Eminem, “The Real Slim Shady”
VIDEO: DJ Snake and Lil Jon, “Turn Down for What?”
VIDEO: Le1f, “Wut”
VIDEO: Zebra Katz, “Ima Read”
Week 12: Gender Based Violence (Mar 30)

*Guest Speaker* TBD

For this week’s class, you are invited (but not expected) to bring a friend to class, particularly those who identify as male who may find this topic useful, thought provoking, or inspirational.

Ryan Barone, Jennifer R. Wolgemuth, and Chris Linder, “Preventing Sexual Assault Through Engaging College Men” (CP)
Michael Kaufman, “The Day the White Ribbon Campaign Changed the Game: A New Direction in Working to Engage Men and Boys” (CP)

Week 13: HIV, Disability, and the Body (April 6)

**Final Papers Due

Chris Bell, “I'm not the Man I Used to Be” (CP)
Leo Bersani, “Is the Rectum a Grave?”