ENGL 267: Masculinity Studies in American Literature and Culture

Prepared By: John Peabody
April 2015
A. **TITLE:** Masculinity Studies in American Literature and Culture

B. **COURSE NUMBER:** ENGL 267

C. **CREDIT HOURS:** 3

D. **WRITING INTENSIVE COURSE:** Determined by semester

E. **COURSE LENGTH:** 15 weeks

F. **SEMESTER OFFERED:** Spring

G. **HOURS OF LECTURE, LABORATORY, RECITATION, TUTORIAL, ACTIVITY:** 3 credit hours per week

H. **CATALOG DESCRIPTION:** This course explores the ways in which gender, and in particular the broad concept of masculinity, arises from and impacts American literature and culture. Students examine novels, short stories, creative nonfiction, theatrical productions, and films, as well as excerpts from prominent gender studies scholars. Students also increase their understanding of how masculinity functions and shapes American culture, as well as develop a critical and theoretical lens for reading and interpreting literary works. Through the study of masculinity and masculinities, students leave the course with nuanced knowledge of the complex implications of gendered men and women.

I. **PRE-REQUISITES/CO-REQUISITES:**
   a. Pre-requisite(s): ENGL 101
   b. Co-requisite(s): none

J. **GOALS (STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES):**

   By the end of this course, the student will be able to:

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<tr>
<th>Course Objective</th>
<th>Institutional SLO</th>
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<tr>
<td>a. <em>Identify</em> and discuss factors that contribute to the social construction of gender, particularly masculinity and masculinities in American culture.</td>
<td>1. Communication</td>
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<td>b. <em>Describe</em> and <em>explain</em> the ways in which masculinity and masculinities emerged from and/or impact American literature and culture.</td>
<td>3. Inter-Intrapersonal Skills</td>
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<td>c. <em>Analyze</em> literary works through the critical lens of masculinity studies to create written arguments.</td>
<td>2. Critical Thinking Skills</td>
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K. **TEXTS:**
(Representative texts)

**Novels and Plays**
Ellison, Ralph. *The Invisible Man.*
Hinton, S.E. *The Outsiders.*
Lia Block, Francesca. *Dangerous Angels.*
Levithan, David. *Boy Meets Boy.*
Murray, Xtya Maya. *Locas.*
Vaughn, Brian K. *Y: The Last Man.*
Williams, Tennessee. *A Streetcar Named Desire.*

**Short Stories and Creative Nonfiction**
Emerson, Ralph Waldo. “Self-Reliance.”
Sedaris, David. “Full House.”
Staples, Brent. “Black Men and Public Space.”
Thoreau, Henry David. Excerpt from *Walden, or Life in the Woods.*
Guante. “Ten Responses to the Phrase ‘Man Up.’”

**Film and TV:**
*Boyhood* (2014)
*The Butch Factor* (2010)
*RuPaul’s Drag Race* (2009)

**Articles and excerpts:**
Bederman, Gail. Introduction of *Manliness and Civilization.*
Brown, Jeffrey A. “Comic Book Masculinity and the New Black Superhero.”
Gutterman, David S. “Postmodernism and the Interrogation of Masculinity.”
Kimmel, Michael. “Masculinity as Homophobia.”
Whitehead, Stephen M. Excerpt from *Men and Masculinities.*
Connell, R.W., & Messerschmidt, James. “Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept.”
Peters, Brian M. “Emo Gay Boys And Subculture: Postpunk Queer Youth And (Re)Thinking Images Of Masculinity.”
Trites, Roberta. “Queer Discourse and the Young Adult Novel: Repression and Power in Gay Male Adolescent Literature.”
Wickens, Corrine. “Codes, Silences, and Homophobia: Challenging Normative
Assumptions About Gender and Sexuality in Contemporary LGBTQ Young Adult Literature.”
Halberstam, Judith. Excerpt from Female Masculinity.

L. REFERENCES:
(Representative references)


M. EQUIPMENT: Internet access

N. GRADING METHOD: A-F

O. MEASUREMENT CRITERIA/METHODS
• Discussion forums
• Papers and projects
• Evaluative reflections

P. DETAILED COURSE OUTLINE: (must use the outline format listed below)

I. Masculinity and Masculinities
   A. History
      a. Early American literature and the concept of the “rugged individual”
      b. The “wild west” and the idolization of the “cowboy”
      c. The American hero (i.e. cowboys, soldiers, warriors, superheroes, etc.)
      d. The early 20th century “man of the house”
      e. Gay male masculinity (and femininity)
      f. Female masculinity
      g. Masculinities
   B. Gender Studies
      a. Feminism as a movement and as a theoretical lens
      b. Gender as a social construct
      c. Feminism and its impact on masculinities
      d. The emergence of the “Men’s Movement”
      e. The development of multiple masculinities, including queer masculinity, female masculinity, and hegemonic masculinity
      f. The intersection of race, social class, and sexuality and their impact on masculinity and masculinities
      g. Transgender and genderqueer influence on masculinities
   C. Literature and Media
      a. Masculinity and masculinities emerging from American writers
b. Masculinity and masculinities emerging from television, advertisements, and film

c. Masculinity and masculinities and their impact on American identity, identities, and lives

Q. **LABORATORY OUTLINE:** None