

**Healthy Guys or Healthy Guise: Men, Masculinity and Health  
Fall 2016**

**Wednesday from 4:00-6:30, Location 212 Bartlett**

**Instructor: Tom Schiff**

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This course examines how health outcomes play out in relation to various manifestations of masculinity, with a particular focus on intersections of masculinity with race, ethnicity, class, sexual orientation, and culture, primarily from a U.S. perspective. The major thrust of the course is to examine how the gendered social order influences men's individual and collective health behaviors, and the way men perceive themselves, other men, women, and health. We will In addition to interrogating the intersection of masculinity, identity, and health, we also will explore strategies for individual, institutional, and cultural change.

## **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

In this course we will examine:

- connections between masculine gender construction, masculine performance, and the impact on men's health;
- how masculinity influences a variety of health behaviors and outcomes;
- theories of masculinity in the context of health;
- arenas and limits of masculinity;
- the socialized journey into "manhood";
- ways in which masculinities are embodied;
- the dominant and counter stories of masculinities
- health disparities and masculinities;
- violence as part of the male psyche and as a form of validation of masculinity;
- individual and community health impacts of masculinities;
- strategies for creating healthy masculinities.

## **TEXTS**

All readings will be either online or distributed in class.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

**Due dates are set. Assignments that are late (without speaking with me prior about this) automatically will receive a deduction in grade.** You also may hand in

assignments early. If you have an excused absence from class (you are sick or have a pre-arranged reason to be absent) you still are expected to submit your assignment on time, as it is electronic submission.

In addition, **ALL ASSIGNMENTS ARE EXPECTED TO BE TURNED IN VIA MOODLE UNLESS OTHERWISE SPECIFIED.**

**ALL WRITTEN DOCUMENTS MUST BE SUBMITTED IN WORD OR RICH TEXT FORMAT (RTF). NO EXCEPTIONS.**

I will check my email at least one time per day Monday through Thursday (and usually on Fridays too) by 4pm and will respond within 24 hours. In addition, I will, on occasion, send emails to the class and/or individuals, so it is useful for you to check your email regularly, as sometimes an email may actually contain important information. While not required, I strongly suggest you check this email account once a day as well.

**“What is a Man” paper** - A 4-6 page “autobiographical” statement focusing on your own experiences in regard to manhood and masculinity. How do you define manhood and masculinity, and how is this informed by your experiences in life with men and masculinity. Due September 29. 20 points.

**Conversations about Masculinity and Health** – A 3-5 page paper in which you write about your experience initiating and having a one on one conversation with at least 3 friends the connection of hegemonic masculinity to a specific health issue. The point of this is to stretch yourself and have conversations that you think may be challenging. You must ground your conversation in course readings and/or other literature and be able to explain this in your paper. Due December 8. 20 points.

**Event Response papers** – You must attend at least 3 events related to course content and then write a 2-3 page analysis connecting with course readings. We will do weekly check-ins in class to see what events are upcoming and appropriate. This may not be as easy as one might think, so we will need to be creative, and think about intersections. Each paper is due one week after the event. 15 points (5 points for each paper).

**Reading Responses** - You are required to write three (3) two page, 500-750 word responses on our readings this semester. These are focused responses, so you need to address your point(s) and argument directly from your first sentence. You must make a claim about what you are discussing and use specific instances from the text for support. The key here is to be succinct, making every word you write count. At the end of your response, you are required to include two (2) thought-provoking questions about the text (or a particular passage from the text). Your questions should be sharp and challenging and reveal a sophisticated understanding of the nuances of the text. These responses will be graded as follows: 0 (lowest)—5 (highest). Due dates are October 13, October 27, and November 17. 15 points (5 points for each paper).

**Research paper or Taking Action** – You have a choice. You can either plan and implement an action project focused on in some way taking a planned and deliberate action connected to men, masculinity and health, or you can write a 12-15 page research paper on topic related to men, masculinity and health. I also am open to other creative alternatives you suggest individually. Action projects may be done with others in class, papers are must be done on an individual basis. Whatever you choose to do, you must submit a 1-2 page proposal outlining what you intend by October 6. Action projects will require a 2-4 page summary paper as well. In addition, you will make a 5-7 minute presentation to the class about your results, learnings, findings, etc. This will happen at the class, possibly the class before that as well. Proposal due October 6, paper or summary due December 1. 30 points total (10 points for proposal, 20 points for the rest).

**Attendance and participation in class sessions** – Interaction is as essential part of this course. If you know you will miss more than 2 classes due to other commitments, please do not take this class. In addition, if conflicts arise (illness, games, family situations, religious holiday, etc.) you are expected to let me know either before or within 24 hour the class meets. Waiting any longer is unacceptable and will be considered an unexcused absence. By the way, excuses such as “I have a review session for another class” or “Oops, I forgot” are not considered examples of “etc.” Each unexcused absence will lower your final grade by 3 points (roughly half a grade). You are expected to be in class and ready to start at 4:00. More than ten minutes late (according to the professor’s time piece) will be considered one half of an unexcused absence.

### GRADING SCALE

**A = 94-100 pts. A- = 90-93.99 pts. B+ = 87-89.99 pts. B = 84-86.99 pts. B- = 80-83.99 pts. C+ = 77-79.99 pts. C = 74-76.99 pts. C- = 70-73.99 pts. D+ = 67-69.99 pts. D= 64-66.99 pts. F= 0-63.99 pts.**

*\*note\*: If you have particular learning disabilities/styles that will require other arrangements in order to participate fully in this class or to complete the required work, please let me know so we can work something out.*

***\*\*Note Well: You are responsible to know the content of this syllabus – due dates, formatting for assignments, etc. If you have questions, please ask them well in advance of due dates. I would hate to see you jeopardize your grade due to lack of preparation.***

### **WRITING EXPECTATIONS**

All assignments, whatever length or point value, should be clearly written and free of grammatical and spelling errors. Your writing should contain arguments or ideas that are well supported and thoroughly explained. It is not enough to write that you agree or do not agree with an idea presented in class or in the readings; you must write why and support your point of view. You also may not write that you disagree with an idea simply because you have not seen it in your life—this is not scholarly.

All assignments should be typed in 12 pt normal (not bold or italics) Times New Roman font with 1 inch margins and should be double spaced. **Please note that the default setting for left and right margins for Word is 1.25, so you must change this for written work in this class.** If the assignment requires research, the document should include parenthetical in-text citations and a works cited page (see APA style manual for formatting rules – a great website for this is <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>). If assignments do not meet expectations, you may be asked to rewrite the assignment in order to earn points for it, or you may not receive points for the assignment at all. If you require any assistance with writing, I am available for some help, and on campus offices such as the Writing Center and Disability Services provide excellent writing services.

Please keep in mind, if an assignment calls for a minimum number of pages written, that means complete pages. It does not mean what the page number says on the bottom of the page. For example, if the minimum length is 4 pages, that means 4 full pages. Typically this will mean you have started a page 5.

One of the most important things you can learn in college is how to write. Knowledge of appropriate grammar, spelling, and punctuation, as well as clarity of thought, etc., will serve you in your work life after college. At no time are email / text abbreviations (such as CU L8R, BTW) appropriate in college coursework.

## **RIGHTS AND WELL-BEING OF ALL CLASS MEMBERS**

The University of Massachusetts community is dedicated to the advancement of knowledge and the development of integrity. In order to thrive and excel, this community must preserve the freedom of thought and expression of all its members. The University of Massachusetts has a long and illustrious history in the area of academic freedom and freedom of speech. A culture of respect that honors the rights, safety, dignity, and worth of every individual is essential to preserve such freedom. We affirm our respect for the rights and well-being of all members.

Thus, all members of this class are expected to engage in this class in a manner that:

- respects the dignity and essential worth of all individuals
- promotes a culture of respect throughout the university community
- respects the privacy, property, and freedom of others
- rejects bigotry, discrimination, violence, or intimidation of any kind
- practices personal and academic integrity and expect it from others
- promotes the diversity of opinions, ideas, and backgrounds that is the lifeblood of the university

## **COURSE CONTENT NOTE**

This course looks at human beings, and thus there may be some content and ideas this semester that may be disturbing, even traumatizing, to some students. If you suspect that

specific material is likely to be emotionally challenging for you, I'd be happy to discuss any concerns you may have before the subject comes up in class. Likewise, if you ever wish to discuss your personal reactions to course material with the class or with me individually afterwards, I welcome such discussions as an appropriate part of our classwork.

At the same time, I also understand that it may be hard to identify what content may be disturbing in advance. I also understand that content and conversations about race and racism, violence, sexism, and more, may inherently be uncomfortable for at least some of us. That is different than disturbing, or even triggering. Discomfort can lead to productive learning. Being triggered rarely does. I trust that you will know for yourself the difference and take care of yourself.

If you ever feel the need to step outside during a class discussion you may always do so without academic penalty. You will, however, be responsible for any material you miss. If you do leave the room for a significant time, please make arrangements to get notes from another student or see me individually to discuss the situation.

## **ACADEMIC HONESTY**

“Intellectual honesty requires that students demonstrate their own learning during examinations and other academic exercises, and that other sources of information or knowledge be appropriately credited. Scholarship depends upon the reliability of information and reference in the work of others. Student work at the University may be analyzed for originality of content. Such analysis may be done electronically or by other means. Student work may also be included in a database for the purpose of checking for possible plagiarized content in future student submissions. No form of cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, or facilitating dishonesty will be condoned in the University community.” (*Academic Regulations* 2006-2007, pp. 7-8)  
<http://www.umass.edu/registrar/media/academicregs.pdf>

In other words, any form of academic dishonesty will be taken extremely seriously by this professor. For example, plagiarism, which can be as “simple” as not citing where specific information emanates or cutting and pasting something from a website without attributing the source, will likely help you earn an immediate “F” in this course, and perhaps could have greater implications for your continued tenure as a student at this university.

## **OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:**

**Electronic courtesy:** There will be no use of phones, computers, etc. in class, unless you have discussed this with the professor and gotten prior approval. Texting, checking messages, etc. will not be tolerated and will impact your grade negatively. If you are communicating outside of class, I will perceive that you are not present in this class. You will receive one warning for the semester, after which time such behavior will constitute

an unexcused absence (see Attendance and Participation above). Phones should be off unless you are expecting a call about a family member's surgery or something of equal gravity. In that case, please let me know when you come into the room, and set your phone to silent or vibrate out of consideration for your classmates and your instructor.

**Prompt Communication of Difficulties:** If you are having a problem with the assignments or anything else related to the class it is your responsibility to communicate with the instructor promptly. Class issues and grading issues are to be discussed in person, NOT E-MAIL. It is the student's responsibility to make an appointment with the instructor to discuss the specific issue in person.

**Common Sense:** Just because it is not named specifically in this syllabus, do not assume it is acceptable. "You didn't tell us we couldn't" will not be accepted as an excuse or explanation.

### **AN ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITY!!**

Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies is offering an additional practicum or internship credit to anyone who wants to do some sort of community service project related to this course! Could be this or next semester. If interested, please see me.

## **Tentative SEMESTER CALENDAR – Assignments and Readings**

### **Setting the Context – Men, Masculinities, and Health**

#### **Week 1 – September 8**

Welcome!

#### **Week 2 – September 15**

Due

Reading:

- Men, masculinity and help-seeking behavior
- Courtenay – Engendering Health...
- Is patriarchy the source of men's higher mortality?
- Initiation
- Cutting to the Roots of Colonial Masculinity
- Learning to Fight

#### **Week 3 – September 22**

Due

Reading:

- Bruce Lee's Fictional Models of Masculinity
- Hey Brother, How's Your Health?
- Compulsive Heterosexuality
- "I'm the King": The Macho Image
- Straight White Male: The Lowest Difficulty Setting There Is
- The Invisible Masculinities of Indian Men
- He Defies You Still - Memoirs of a Sissy

### **The Body**

#### **Week 4 – September 29**

Due

Reading:

- Embodied Masculinities and Health
- Pumping and Crunching: Body Image and the Media
- Theorizing the Male Body
- Measuring up

*"What is a Man" paper*

## **Week 5 – October 6**

Due

Reading:

- Sport, health, and steroids: Paradox, contradiction, or ethical self-formation
- Beyond Muscle and Fat
- Understanding Masculinities within the Context on Men, Body Image and Eating Disorders
- Pigskin, Patriarchy, and Pain

*Research paper or Taking Action proposal*

## **Men at College**

### **Week 6 – October 13**

Due

Reading:

- Mapping Guyland in College
- Putting on my man face
- Interpersonal Relationships - Exploring Race and Relationship Decisions Among African American Men
- Man of Multiple Masculinities: Complex Individuality and Identity Intersectionality among College Men

*Reading Response 1 due*

### **Week 7 – October 20**

Due

Reading:

- Vulnerable Women, Invulnerable Men?
- Internet Use and Sexual Health of Young Men Who Have Sex with Men: A Mixed-Methods Study

## **Mental Health**

### **Week 8 – October 27**

Due

Reading:

- Men's mental health
- Young men, masculinity and alcohol

## **Week 9 – November 3**

Due

Reading:

- Influence of Unrestrained Access to Erotica on Adolescents' and Young Adults' Dispositions Toward Sexuality
- The Impact of Internet Pornography on Marriage and the Family - A Review of the Research
- Pornography Viewing among Fraternity Men- Effects on Bystander Intervention, rape Myth Acceptance and Behavioral Intent to Commit Sexual Assault

*Reading Response 2 due*

## **Violence**

## **Week 10 – November 10**

Due

Reading:

- Containing and resisting masculinity - Narratives of renegotiation among resilient male survivors of childhood sexual abuse
- Understanding the Predatory Nature of Sexual Violence
- Male Violence and Male Privilege
- Violence and Men's Health
- The Construction of Masculinity and the Triad of Men's Violence

## **Week 11 – November 17**

## **Creating a Vision for the Future**

Due

Reading:

- Pollack – Epilogue
- Confronting Racism and Sexism to Improve Men's Health
- Love as the Practice of Freedom
- Future research agenda in men's health

*Reading Response 3*

## **Week 12 – November 24 – Thanksgiving break**

No class

**Week 13 – December 1**

Due

*Research paper or Taking Action final due including presentation of findings*

**Week 14– December 8**

Due

*Conversations about Masculinity and Health due*