

This is the homepage for "What is a Man?" a course in the new UF Quest GenEd curriculum. *This class can be taken in place of IDS1611, "What is the Good Life?"*

Instructor

- Trysh Travis, Assoc. Prof. of Women's Studies
- ttravis@ufl.edu 273-0393, 305 Ustler Hall
- Office Hours: Tues., 12:30-2:30 and by appt.
- Please email for an appointment, even within posted office hours.

Teaching Assistant

- Asmaa Ghonim [Essmaa Gonim], PhD Candidate in English
- asmaa@ufl.edu, 4307 Turlington Hall
- Office Hours: Fri, 11-1 and by appt.
- Please email for an appointment, even within posted office hours.

This course uses literature, art, music and film to complicate popular science claims about the "nature" of masculine identity. Focusing on the experiences of African American and White men in the late 20th century, we will examine the ways that ideas of "what is a man" are formed in dialogue with ideas about the family, meaningful work, class, race, and sexuality. To understand how that happens, we will read popular texts produced during moments in 20th century American life when changes in the nation's political and economic structures have called long-held ideals of masculinity into question. Through these imaginative works we will see how diverse men construct identities for themselves (and find meaning and value in their lives) not only through their relationships with women, but also through their friendships and work, their political and their spiritual beliefs. We will ask and answer these questions through class discussion, formal/analytical writing, and less formal, personal writing.

You can learn more about me, the Instructor, [here](#), and see past student evaluations of my classes [here](#). If you want to learn more about Women's Studies, the department in which I teach, you can go to [this page](#).

Student Learning Outcomes

Reflecting the curricular structures of Quest 1 and Gen Ed H, D, and WR designations, after taking What is a Man? students will be able to:

1. Identify, describe, and explain the historical evolution of African American and White masculine identity in the 20th-century US, with attention to the ways gender, race, and natural identity intersect and dynamically interact with other identity categories such as (but not limited to) class, ethnicity, religion, age, sexual orientation, and disability (**Content SLOs for Gen Ed Hum & Diversity and Q1**)
2. Analyze and evaluate popular culture texts by a diverse group of artists that depict and help to construct ideals of masculine identity using established practices appropriate to the arts and humanities (**Critical Thinking SLOs for Gen Ed Hum & Diversity and Q1**)
3. Analyze and evaluate how social inequities are constructed and affect the opportunities, constraints, and perceptions of different groups of men in the United States (**Critical Thinking SLO for Gen Ed Diversity**)
4. Analyze and reflect on the ways in which cultures and beliefs mediate understandings of masculinity in an increasingly diverse U.S. society (**Critical Thinking SLO for Gen Ed Diversity**)
5. Analyze, evaluate, and critically reflect on connections between course content and their intellectual, personal, and professional development at UF and beyond (**Critical Thinking SLO for Q1**)
6. Develop and present clear and effective responses to essential questions about masculine identity in the 20th-century US in oral and written forms appropriate to the relevant humanities disciplines incorporated into the course (**Communication SLO for Gen Ed Hum and Q1**).

Items marked "course res." are available through the Canvas course reserves link in the left menu. You should download and print them and bring them to class.

Unit One: Introductions

Week 1

Getting Started

7-11 Jan

- M: What is a Man?
 - Introductions, Images
 - [Today's PPT](#)
- W: What is a Quest Class?
 - Survey, Syllabus review
 - [Today's PPT](#)
- F: What are Humanities and Why are we Using them?
 - Fine, "Gender Education" (course res.)

Unit Two: Archetypes

Week 2

Historicizing

14-18 Jan

- M: Popular Science and "Boys will be Boys"
 - Fine, "Introducing Testosterone Rex" (course res.)
 - **Due via Canvas: Syllabus reflection paper (500-ish) words**
- W: Beyond Science to Culture
 - Kimmel, "Introduction" (course res.)
- F: Historicizing Masculinity
 - Kimmel, "The Birth of the Self-made Man" (course res.)
 - **Due: Learning Log #1**

Week 3

Gender & the
Greatest
Generation

21-25 Jan

- M: No class-- MLK Holiday
- W: Lecture: Gender & the Greatest Generation
 - Documents: WWII Propaganda Posters
- F: Curtiz, *Casablanca* (1941)
 - **Due: Learning Log #2**

Week 4

The Hero (and his
Sidekick)

28 Jan-1 Feb

- M: *Casablanca*, cont'd
- W: *Casablanca*, conclusion
- F: Lecture: Postwar America-- Domesticity and Civil Rights
 - Documents: VA Mortgage Advertisements
 - **Due: Learning Log #3**

Unit Three: Renegotiations

Week 5

The Black Man
(and His Place)

4 Feb- 8 Feb

- M: Hansberry, *A Raisin in the Sun* (1959)
 - Act I
- W: *Raisin*, Act II
- F: *Raisin*, Act III
 - **Due: Learning Log #4**

Week 6

The Meaning of
"Mr."

11 Feb-15 Feb

- M: Jewison, *In the Heat of the Night* (1967)
- W: *Heat*, cont'd
- F: *Heat*, cont'd
 - **Due in class: The Meaning of Work essay (500-750 words)**

Week 7

Postwar Liberal
Consensus
Masculinity (and
Its Limits)

18 Feb-22 Feb

- M: Open Class-- review, reflect, plan
 - **Due in class: statement of financial or scheduling conflicts for *Mercy Killers* field trip on 21 March**
- W: Mid-term exam (in-class)
- F: Lecture: The Limits of Postwar "Liberal Consensus" Masculinity
 - **Due in class: Final project commitment letter**

- (150-250 words)

Unit Four: Remixing

Week 8

25 Feb-1 March
Masculinity in
Popular Music

- M: Overview of Final Projects with topics and schedules
- W: Lecture: Rock, Country, & Hip-hop Masculinities
 - *articles to choose from*
- F: selections from Springsteen, *Born in the USA* (1984) and Earle, *Guitar Town* (1986)
 - **Due in class: Learning Log #5**

Week 9 4-8 March No class--spring break

Week 10

11-15 March
Post-Breadwinner
Masculinity

- M: *USA and Guitar Town*, cont'd
- W: selections from NWA, *Straight Outta Compton* (1988)
- F: *Compton*, cont'd
 - **Due in class: Learning Log #6**

Week 11

18-22 March
"These Jobs are
Going, Boys"

- M: Lecture: Deindustrialization & Militarization
 - **Due in Class: The Meaning of Women essay**
 - (500-750 words)
- W: TBA: Field Trip Preparation
- **Th: Field Trip to see *Mercy Killers* at the Phillips Center, 7:30 pm**
- F: Guest Speaker: Michael Milligan, author/performer *Mercy Killers*
 - **Due in class: Final project formal proposal**
 - (250-300 words)

Unit Five: Re-imagining?

Week 12

25-29 March
The Hero and His
Sidekicks,
Revisited

- M: Open Class--review, reflect, plan
 - **Due in class: Learning Log #7**
- W: Russell, *Three Kings* (1999)
- F: *Kings*, cont'd

Week 13

1-5 April
Masculinity Here
& Now, pt 1

- M: Lecture: The Critique of "Toxic Masculinity"
 - **Due in class: Learning Log #8**
- W: Final project conferences
- F: Final project conferences
 - **Due via Canvas: Final Project rough draft**

Week 14

8-12 April
Masculinity Here
& Now, pt 2

- M: Open Class--review, reflect, plan
- W: Organize peer editing groups
- F: Jenkins, *Moonlight* (2016)

Week 15

15-19 April
"What's a Faggot?"

- M: *Moonlight*, cont'd
 - **Due via Canvas: Chapbook pages (350-500 words)**
- W: *Moonlight*, cont'd
- F: Peer Editing groups meet

Week 16

22-24 April
Winding Up (or
Down)

- M: Evaluations and Future Plans
 - **Due via Canvas: Final Papers (600-1000 words)**
- W: Conclusions
 - Distribute chapbooks and take-home exam questions

Take-home exam due via Canvas end of [exam period 2D](#), 5:00 pm, Th., 2 May

Papers

- [Syllabus paper](#) (300-500 words) Week 2; Points: 16
 - Summarize and respond to syllabus with thoughts on/hopes for the class and potential challenges
 - Advances SLOs: 4, 5, 6
- [Meaning of Work paper](#) (500-750 words) Week 6; Points: 32
 - Summarize and explain Kimmel's theory of "breadwinner masculinity" and apply it to one character we have encountered in texts to this point, examining how he uses work to create identity and a sense of meaning and value
 - Advances SLOs: 1, 2, 3, 4, 6
- [Meaning of Women paper](#) (500-750 words) Week 11; Points: 32
 - Summarize and explain Kimmel's treatment of sexual conquest and domesticity and apply it to one character we have encountered during weeks 5-11, examining how women serve to create identity and a sense of meaning and value
 - Advances SLOs: 1, 2, 3, 4, 6
- [Chapbook pages](#) (300-500 words) Week 15; Points: 8 each for a total of 16
 - Drawing on learning logs, choose two quotations that represent key insights into an ideal of masculinity that you support. Summarize the source of the quotations, and explain their importance within the work from which they are taken and to you personally. One page from each student will be selected for inclusion in the class chapbook.
 - Advances SLOs: 2, 4, 5, 6

Final Project Components

- [Commitment Letter](#) (150-250 words) Week 7; Points: 8
 - A business letter to the instructor presenting the work about which you will write in your final paper, explaining your choice, and articulating concerns and hopes for the project as you move forward
 - Advances SLOs: 5, 6
- [Formal Proposal](#) (250-300 words) Week 11; Points: 16
 - Brief summary of the biography of the author of your chosen book, its status in the field, and its most important points, with overview of how you intend to analyze it and what texts read in class you will draw on in that analysis
 - Advances SLOs: 5, 6
- [Rough Draft](#) (no word limit) Week 13; Points: 24
 - Summarize and explain the main ideas of your chosen book, analyzing it in terms of the ideals of masculinity encountered in the class and your personal values
 - Advances SLOs: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
- [Final Paper](#) (600-1000 words) Week 15; Points: 64
 - Analysis of a popular men's self-help book, placing it in the current historical moment and evaluating its arguments and ideals
 - Advances SLOs: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

Exams

- [Mid-term](#)—in-class blue book exam with short answer and essay questions. Week 7; Points: 24
 - Advances SLOs: 1, 2, 3, 4

- [Final](#)—take-home exam with one required synthetic essay and another essay from a choice of two. Questions distributed last day of class, answers submitted via Canvas at assigned exam period. Points: 32
- Advances SLOs: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

Other Assessments

- Learning Logs (variable words) 7 of 8 options over course of semester; S/U completion grade.
 - Periodic informal writing on assigned work and class discussion. Content will vary but in each log you must identify at least one quote (from class or an assigned text) that conveys a key insight regarding masculine identity; these quotes will be form basis of the class chapbook.
 - Advances SLOs: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
- Participation. Daily; Points: 20
 - Consistent informed, thoughtful, attentive, courteous, and professional engagement with class materials, fellow students, and instructor/TA in class and/or office hours
 - Advances SLOs: 1, 2, 3, 4, 6
- Attendance: Daily; Points: 42
 - On-time, all-class period, and consistent attendance at 42 class meetings (45 class days less one holiday + two conference days).

Total possible points: 325

Course policies available on the Canvas page titled “Administration and Policies”