

RELIGION & MASCULINITY

MW, 11:00-12:15

Friday 1

RELS 3050/WGST 3050

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Office Hours: Wed., 1:00-2:30 and by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Masculinity can be defined as the normative performance of maleness. As an ideal, masculinity serves as a measuring stick against which the behavior of any particular male (or female) is judged. Religious discourses have been significant cultural forces in providing content to the masculine ideal. Given that most societies give power, authority and privileges to those considered appropriately masculine, it is important to think about how the content of “masculinity” is determined and how its performance is regulated. It is also significant to note that the masculine ideal has changed from one time period to the next and is variable from one culture to the next. In other words, “masculinity” is not something that men (or women) possess *naturally*, but rather is a quality ascribed to some men (and some women?) *culturally*. To think about masculinity, then, is to think about the cultural organization of power.

In this course, we will be thinking about how Christian discourses have shaped and been shaped by normative understandings of masculinity. As we will see, masculinity has not had a stable, single meaning for all of Christian history. In fact, we will see that the relation between masculinity and Christianity has been fraught with numerous tensions and complications. We will also explore how masculinity and its putative opposite—homoerotic desire—also exist in a complicated and tense relation. By examining masculinity historically and culturally, we will be better prepared to understand the complex relation between Christian discourses and gendered systems of power in our contemporary cultural moment.

GENERAL RESPONSIBILITY

I want every student to succeed in this class. In selecting readings, crafting assignments, setting a schedule and articulating expectations, I have tried to create a framework that will enable this. In presenting material and responding to assignments, I strive to be clear and give you guidance that will help you improve. I will not, however, hunt you down, or pester you, to make sure you are doing the work required of you. *To succeed in this course, you must be proactive.* This includes both doing the work outlined in the syllabus and taking initiative if problems arise. If you don't understand something, if you are struggling with the material, if life is impinging on you, if the course itself or my teaching style is not working for you, *please* let me know. I will do what I can to help, but I am unable to help if I do not know there is a problem.

EXPECTATIONS

Students are expected to (1) attend, and be on-time for, all class meetings; (2) read attentively all assigned readings prior to class; (3) participate actively and productively in discussion of the assigned material; (4) familiarize themselves with the syllabus; (5) take responsibility for fulfilling the requirements of the course; and (6) check their 49er Express e-mail accounts regularly for course announcements and personal communications from the instructor.

Students are **NOT** expected to agree with the views espoused by the instructor, the course materials or other students, but are expected to manage any disagreement respectfully and productively.

ATTENDANCE

Students are expected to attend, and be on-time for, all class meetings. *Every absence after two, for whatever reason, will result in a three-point deduction from your final grade. Every two instances of arriving late or leaving early will count as one absence.* If you are absent from class, you are responsible for getting any course announcements, lecture notes, handouts or assignments.

E-MAIL COMMUNICATION

I will communicate with you as a class and as individuals using the 49er Express e-mail system. You are responsible for checking this e-mail account and responding promptly to any e-mail requests.

CLASS DECORUM

(1) Be on time for class. If you must arrive late or leave early, please do so as unobtrusively as possible. (2) Cell phones must be turned off prior to class. If your cell phone rings, or if I observe you text-messaging during class, it will result in a full letter deduction in your grade for the course. (3) Computers may only be used to take notes during class. If I observe you using your computer for any other purpose, it will result in a full letter deduction in your grade for the course.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Bjorn Kronorfer, *Men and Masculinities in Christianity and Judaism: A Critical Reader* (SCM Press, 2009)

Additional readings will be made available through electronic reserve.

You should bring all relevant readings to class.

SCHEDULE

- Mon., Jan 11** Introduction
- Wed., Jan 13** John Beynon, *Masculinities and Culture* (Philadelphia: Open University Press, 2002), 1-19
KRONDORFER, xi-xxi [Björn Krondorfer, "Introduction"]
KRONDORFER, 49-55 [Stephen Boyd, "Trajectories in Men's Studies Religion"]

Mon., Jan 15 **Martin Luther King Day – NO CLASS**

Wed., Jan 17 C.J. Pascoe, *Dude, You're a Fag*, 1-15, 25-71 (electronic reserve)

UNIT ONE: Textual Representations

Mon., Jan 25

Wed., Jan 27

The Gospels

- Gospel of Mark (electronic reserve)
Eric Thurman, "Looking for a Few Good Men," in *New Testament Masculinities*, ed. Stephen D. Moore and Janice Capel Anderson, 137-61 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003) (electronic reserve)
Colleen M. Conway, *Behold the Man*, 3-14, 143-57 (electronic reserve)
David J.A. Clines, "Ecce Vir, or, Gendering the Son of Man," in *Biblical Studies/Cultural Studies*, ed. J. Cheryl Exum and Stephen D. Moore, 352-75 (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998) (electronic reserve)
KRONDORFER, 96-112 [Graham Ward, "Bodies: The Displaced Body of Jesus Christ"]

Mon., Feb 1

Wed., Feb 3

The Apocalypse

- Selections from Revelation (to be distributed)
Chris Frilingos, "Sexing the Lamb," in *New Testament Masculinities*, ed. Stephen D. Moore and Janice Capel Anderson, 297-317 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003) (electronic reserve)
Lynn Huber, "Sexually Explicit?," *Journal of Men, Masculinities and Spirituality* 2, no. 1 (2008): 3-28 (www.jmmsweb.org/issues/volume2/number1/pp3-28) (to be distributed)

Monday, Feb 1: Guest Lecturer, Lynn Huber, Assistant Professor of Religious Studies and Coordinator of the Women's and Gender Studies Program, Elon University

Mon., Feb 8
Wed., Feb 10

The Hebrew Bible

- Selections from Genesis and Hosea (to be distributed)
Dennis T. Olson, "Untying the Knot?," in *Engaging the Bible in a Gendered World*, ed. Linda Day & Carolyn Pressler, 73-88 (Westminster John Knox, 2006) (electronic reserve)
David J.A. Clines, "David the Man," in *Interested Parties*, 212-43 (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995) (electronic reserve)
Susan Haddox, "(E)Masculinity in Hosea's Political Rhetoric," in *Israel's Prophets and Israel's Past*, ed. Brad Kelle and Megan Bishop Moore (New York: Continuum, 2006) (electronic reserve)
KRONDORFER, 163-83 [Howard Eilberg-Schwartz, "Unmanning Israel"]

UNIT TWO: Historical Developments

Mon., Feb 15
Wed., Feb 17

Martyrdom

- "The Martyrdom of Perpetua," "The Martyrdom of Polycarp" (to be distributed)
L. Stephanie Cobb, *Dying to Be Men* (New York: Columbia University Press), 60-91 (electronic reserve)
KRONDORFER, 235-58 [Mathew Kuefler, "Soldiers of Christ"]
KRONDORFER, 277-89 [Virginia Burrus, "'Begotten, Not Made'"]

*****Unit One Paper due by 9AM, Tuesday, Feb 16**

Mon., Feb 22
Wed., Feb 24

Monastic Life

- Philip L. Culbertson, "Men and Christian Friendship," in *Men's Bodies, Men's Gods*, ed. Björn Krondorfer, 149-80 (New York: NYU Press, 1996) (electronic reserve)
Ulrike Wiethaus, "Christian Piety and the Legacy of Medieval Masculinity," in *Redeeming Men*, ed. Stephen Boyd, W. Merle Longwood and Mark Muesse, ed. 48-61 (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1996) (electronic reserve)
Jacqueline Murray, "One Flesh, Two Sexes, Three Genders?" in *Gender and Christianity in Medieval Europe*, ed. Lisa M. Bitel and Felice Lifshitz, 34-51 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008) (electronic reserve)
Carolyn Walker Bynum, "'... And Woman His Humanity': Female Imagery in the Religious Writing of the Later Middle Ages," in *Fragmentation and Redemption*, 151-80 (NY: Zone Press, 1991) (electronic reserve)

Mon., Mar 1
Wed., Mar 3

Chastity & Marriage

Susan C. Karant-Nunn, "The Masculinity of Martin Luther," in *Masculinity in the Reformation Era*, ed. Scott H. Hendrix and Susan C. Karant-Nunn, 167-89

(Kirksville, MO: Truman State University Press, 2008)

Ruth Mazo Karras, "Thomas Aquinas's Chastity Belt: Clerical Masculinity in Medieval Europe," in *Gender and Christianity in Medieval Europe*, ed. Lisa M. Bitel and Felice Lifshitz, 52-67 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008) (electronic reserve)

Jacqueline Murray, "Masculinizing Religious Life," in *Holiness and Masculinity in the Middle Ages*, ed. P.H. Cullum and Katherine J. Lewis, 24-42 (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2004) (electronic reserve)

Carolyn Diskant Muir, "Bride or Bridegroom?," in *Holiness and Masculinity in the Middle Ages*, ed. P.H. Cullum and Katherine J. Lewis, 58-78 (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2004) (electronic reserve)

Mon., Mar 8
Wed., Mar 10

Spring Break – NO CLASS
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UNIT THREE: Twentieth & Twenty-First Century Meditations

Mon., Mar 15
Wed., Mar 17

Film Week – NO CLASS
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This week you must watch *The Passion of the Christ* (Mel Gibson, 2004) and *Rambo: First Blood, Part II* (Goerge P. Cosmatos, 1985). Copies of the films will be placed on course reserve in Atkins Library by Monday, March 15.

*****Film Analysis paper due by 5PM, Sunday, March 21.**

Mon., Mar 22
Wed., Mar 24

The Passion and Rambo

Kent L. Brintnall, "Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ* and the Politics of Resurrection," *English Language Notes* 44, no. 1 (Spring 2006): 235-40 (electronic reserve)

José Márquez, "Lights! Camera! Action!," in *Mel Gibson's Bible*, ed. Timothy K. Beal and Tod Linafelt, 177-86 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006) (electronic reserve)

*****Unit Two Paper due by 9AM, Tuesday, Mar 23**

Mon., Mar 29
Wed., Mar 31
Mon., Apr 5

Muscular Christianity

- Bruce Barton, *The Man Nobody Knows* (NY: Bobbs-Merrill, 1924), 1-55 (electronic reserve)
- Erika Doss, "Making a 'Virile, Manly Christ,'" in *Icons of American Protestantism: The Art of Warner Sallman*, 61-94 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996) (electronic reserve)
- George Chauncey, "Christian Brotherhood or Sexual Perversion?" in *Hidden from History*, ed. Martin Duberman, Martha Vicinus, and George Chauncey, 294-317 (New York: Penguin, 1989) (electronic reserve)
- Tony Ladd and James A. Mathisen, *Muscular Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999), 11-21, 123-60 (electronic reserve)
- KRONDORFER, 306-18 [Sean Gill, "Christian Manliness Unmanned"]

Wed., Apr 7
Mon., Apr 12
Wed., Apr 14

Promise Keepers

- Bill McCartney, Greg Laurie and Jack Hayford, *Seven Promises of a Promise Keeper* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1999), vii-10, 79-124 (electronic reserve)
- Susan Faludi, *Stiffed* (New York: William Morrow, 1999), 224-88 (electronic reserve)
- John P. Bartkowski, *The Promise Keepers* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2004), 25-44 (electronic reserve)
- KRONDORFER, 319-32 [Charles H. Lippy, "Miles to Go"]

Mon., Apr 19
Wed., Apr 21

Gay Masculinities

- Bob Goss, *Queering Christ* (Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim Press, 2002), 72-87 (electronic reserve)
- KRONDORFER, 56-62 [J. Michael Clark, "A Gay Man's Wish List for the Future of Men's Studies in Religion"]
- KRONDORFER, 393-407 [Ronald E. Long, "The Sacrality of Male Beauty and Homosex"]
- KRONDORFER, 421-36 [Björn Krondorfer, "Who's Afraid of Gay Theology?"]

*****Final paper proposal due by 9AM, Tuesday, Apr 20**

Mon., Apr 26
Wed., Apr 28

Ex-Gay Masculinities

- Chad Thompson, *Loving Homosexuals as Jesus Would* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2004), 17-29, 111-21 (electronic reserve)
- Tonya Erzen, *Straight to Jesus* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 85-125 (electronic reserve)
- Lynne Gerber, "From Gays to Men" (to be distributed)

Mon., May 3

Concluding Thoughts

*****Unit Three paper due by 9AM, Tuesday, May 4**

*****Final paper due by 9AM, Tuesday, May 11**

ASSIGNMENTS

You must submit your assignments by e-mail (kbrintna@uncc.edu). *You must submit them as “.doc” or “.rtf” files (Word documents), not “.docx” files.* Assignments submitted in formats I cannot open will be graded at my discretion.

All assignments should be double-spaced, in a 12-point font, with 1-inch margins. *No late papers will be accepted.*

Your assignments are evaluated, in part, on the quality of your writing. You should privilege depth over breadth in your writing. *It is better to address a small point, and do it well, than to try something grand, and do it superficially.* I am not asking you to be *comprehensive* and *exhaustive*, but I expect you to provide sufficient detail to flesh out generalizations and to show some kind of mastery about the topic on which you choose to write. Most importantly, your writing should be *accurate*, and *thoughtful*. **Remember** you will not be in the room when I am reading your paper, so what you put on the page must be a clear, complete and precise statement of your ideas.

Your writing should be free of spelling, grammatical and typographical mistakes, and should include accurate and adequate citations. Failure to correct writing mistakes I note in one assignment in subsequent assignments will negatively influence my evaluation of your work. I rely on Kate L. Turabian’s *Manual for Writers* (7th edition) to resolve questions about punctuation, grammar and style. If you have questions in these areas, please consult part III of Turabian’s *Manual* (or some other reputable grammar handbook). The Department of Religious Studies’ writing guidelines (www.religiousstudies.uncc.edu/research/writingguide.htm) provide sample citation forms. You may use parenthetical citations instead, but make sure you use them properly.

You should familiarize yourself with and conform your conduct to the University’s Code of Student Academic Integrity. Plagiarism on any assignment will result in a failing grade for the course.

Unit Papers (25% each)

You must write a 4-6 page paper for two of the three units of the course. These papers are **due by 9AM on February 16, March 23, and May 4** respectively.

These papers should consider some topic raised by, or related to, the material from that unit of the course. You should identify a question, a period, an author, a text or a movement from that interests you and explore it in more detail. ***You are expected to consult materials outside those considered in class as part of this assignment.***

Final Paper (40%)

You must write an 8-10 page research paper at the conclusion of the course. This paper is **due by 9AM on May 11.**

This paper should select some topic raised by, or related to, the material from the course. ***You may not treat a topic that has been the subject of one of your unit analysis papers.*** You should identify a question, a period, an author, a text or a movement that interests you and explore it in more detail. These papers can provide comparisons; they can pull in issues not considered in the course. ***You are expected to consult materials outside those considered in class as part of this assignment.*** You will be evaluated, in part, on the depth and breadth of your research related to your topic.

A 1-2 page proposal for this paper will be **due by noon on April 20.** It should provide a brief description of the paper and a provisional bibliography. The proposal is an informal document that allows me to give you feedback on your paper idea; it will not be graded.

Film Analysis (10%)

You must write a 3-4 page analysis of the two films we watch for the course. This paper is **due by 5PM, March 21.**

This paper should discuss the two films and the two articles relating to them. It should provide a sufficient summary of the films demonstrate that you have watched them, thought about the issues they raise related to the course as well as the questions asked about them by the articles assigned for the class. The papers will not receive a letter grade: if you show you've engaged the relevant materials, you will receive full credit; if not, you will receive no credit.

GRADE DESCRIPTIONS

- A** Exceptional work. Careful, accurate, complete, sympathetic interpretation of the text(s). General observations supported by specific detail from the text(s) under analysis. Contains a strong and clear thesis. Contributes something particularly interesting, unique or creative above and beyond class materials and discussion. Clear and well-organized writing free of grammatical, spelling and stylistic errors.
- B** Strong work. Attentive to the most significant details of the text(s). Conversant with the themes, questions and issues of the course. Has an obvious main point. Presents a reasonable interpretation supported by sufficient evidence. Clear and well-organized writing free of serious grammatical, spelling and stylistic errors.
- C** Acceptable work with some problems. Fails to understand the text(s) on some points, or presents an incomplete explanation of them. Fails to show comprehension of the themes, questions and issues of the course. Has an unclear or unsupported thesis. Analysis may proceed at too general a level. Writing unclear in places, lacks a clear structure or has numerous grammatical, spelling and stylistic errors. Fails to show a progressive improvement in analytic precision over previous assignments.
- D** Work with serious problems. Analysis proceeds at a very general level. Analysis gets significant details wrong or ignores issues that are inconsistent with the paper's main point. Discussion fails to engage the course materials. Significant problems with the clarity or organization of the writing. Significant issues with grammar, spelling or style. Repetition of writing errors noted in prior papers.
- F** Unacceptable work.

Given these standards, most students get B-range grades on most of their papers, especially those submitted near the beginning of the course. A handful of students will do A work, and another handful of students will do C work. Only rarely do students submit work that merits a D or F. *If you come to class, participate in discussion, work hard on your assignments and improve over the course of the semester, I will take that into consideration when translating your individual assignment grades into a course grade.*