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ENGL 380, Topics in Literary Study: Masculinities in Literature, Fall 2014

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Fall 2014, Rhodes College
ENGL 380 - Masculinities in Literature

Clough 300

Mark Behr

Tue/Thu 3.30 – 4.45

901-843 3979

Office hours: Office Hrs: Mon 3.30 – 5.30 pm & by *appointment*

The Course: The course aims to introduce students to the key debates and concepts that have arisen with the development of a more recent academic field of inquiry called ‘masculinity studies.’ We read various theoretical texts that we will use to apply to our own lives and gendered identities, as well as to films, non-fiction texts as well as selections of fiction. We will be asking questions such as: What are the problems inherent in the concepts woman, man, masculine, feminine, gay, lesbian, straight, transgender, bisexual and androgenous? What is the relationship of boyish to girlish? What happens to notions of the masculine and of male sexuality, of whiteness and white male privilege (and all non-normative gender and sex categories) in an era when public discourse begins to include articulate challenges to the very foundations of our knowledge – also about ourselves and our own sex and gender identities?

Course Outcomes: Students are knowledgeable with regard to key concepts of masculinity theory and are able to apply theoretical concepts in their daily lives, in other academic fields and to their reading of primary literary, cinematographic and cultural texts.

Required Books:

1. William Shakespeare: Hamlet
2. Bam Stoker: Dracula
3. Carson McCullers: The Balad of the Sad Cafe
4. Paul Monette: Becoming A Man
5. J.M Coetzee: Disgrace
6. Adams and Savran, eds. **The Masculinity Studies Reader**

Other Texts:

Articles on the File Server

Films on Moodle:

1. Hamlet, Kenneth Branagh
2. First Blood (Ted Kotcheff) and Rambo First Blood Part II (George Cosmatos)
3. James Bond: Skyfall: Sam Mendes
4. The Balad of The Sad Café: Simon Callow
5. Django Unchained: Quinton Tarantino
6. The Lion King: Walt Disney
7. Tongues Untied: Marlon Riggs

Quizzes, Tests & Exams: In addition to the mid-term and the final take-home exam there are no scheduled tests for this class. However, if class discussion lags or if, in my opinion, preparation for class is not up to scratch, I shall include more frequent methods of assessment, at times without announcing them in advance. Scores for any such unscheduled assessment will be included in your grade. *Should you miss any such tests for whatever reason, it is your responsibility to reschedule with me.* If you do not reschedule, you will receive a zero grade for the test.

Term Paper: As part of this course you will write one standardized academic term paper of no less than eight and no more than ten pages in length. The paper – a personal essay will engage your own gendered identity in terms related to theories of masculinity. The paper will make use of secondary sources from the course and is to be concerned with your own gender identity. The paper will demonstrate your grasp of the relevance of the class materials to your life. *No term paper or exam that is handed in after the deadline will be accepted.* Format: Times New Roman, Twelve Point Font, Spaced at 1.5.

Attendance: As this class is based on participation, you are allowed three excused absences but *no unexcused absences*. Absences are not excused unless you have offered me a reasonable motivation such as illness, disease or disaster *before class*. A fourth absence means your grade will automatically go down by one third of a letter, for example, from a B+ to a B. Being late will be frowned upon. Three late arrivals for class will constitute an absence. If you miss six classes you automatically fail the course.

The Hours: This course does not require a large volume of reading and so you are expected to come to class thoroughly prepared to discuss *each article and each primary text*. I suggest you will have to do at the very least an

hour of reading per day in addition to work on your term paper and your take-home exams in order to complete the course with a reasonable grade.

Classroom Language and Culture: We will at times be working with provocative material, subject matter and language that may be uncomfortable to some of us. As a teacher I will aim to maintain a safe and respectful space while also at times making use of provocative remarks and language aimed at stimulating debate and inquiry. You are free to come and discuss the classroom culture with me if you are experiencing problems in this regard.

Final Grades:

20%: Participation

20%: Mid-Term Take-Home Exam

20%: In Class Tests

20%: Final Paper: Personal Essay

20%: Final Take-Home Exam

Participation: Because we will be discussing theory, preparing to engage about the readings, stories and films, participation is key. Coming to class, and coming to class on time, creates the best environment for enthusiastic and thoughtful conversation.

Letters of Recommendation: Students frequently request letters from professors to assist them in being selected for graduate schools and/or into careers in later life. To write an honest, thorough, sincere and appropriate letter of recommendation takes time, effort and focus. In addition to the most basic gesture of respect such as giving your referee ample advance warning and therefore time to compose a meaningful letter and make submissions, you may consider the use of an occasional note of thanks, or, of keeping your referee abreast of the outcomes of whatever you have applied for. (I turn fifty this year and I'm still occasionally asking former colleagues and teachers for letters of recommendation). As you may be requesting letters for years to come, it may stand you in good stead to keep your referees abreast of major developments in your professional life.

Intellectual honesty: All work is assumed to be the student's own and produced exclusively for the course in which it is submitted. Papers written for one course, even if revised, are not to be submitted in another without the instructor's prior approval. Borrowing of ideas or language from other sources (including published material, other student papers, the internet or other electronic resources, etc.) must be carefully documented. Students are advised against posting their work on the internet since doing so may lead to suspicion of plagiarism. Students are advised to maintain drafts of their work to verify its originality. Cases of suspected plagiarism may be referred to the Honor Council, and the student if convicted will receive a grade of F in the course in addition to sanctions assigned by the Council. Clear evidence of plagiarism (failure to use quotation marks around verbatim or copied language, failure to adequately paraphrase, and failure to cite the source of quoted, paraphrased, or borrowed text and ideas), regardless of the Council hearing outcome, may likewise result in failure of the course. Carelessness in documenting sources, even if not technically plagiarism, will be penalized as the instructor deems appropriate. If you are uncertain about how or whether to document sources, consult your teacher.

Disabilities: Rhodes College makes every effort to provide appropriate accommodations for students with documented disabilities. Students may request accommodations by making an appointment to speak to Melissa Butler, the Coordinator of Disability Services.

Phone: 843 3944.

E-Mail: mbutler@rhodes.edu

Schedule of Classes:

Week 1: 08/28: Class Introductions
Syllabus
Allocate Presentations
The Lion King

Week 2: 09/02: R.W Connell: The History of Masculinity (Masculinity Studies Reader 245)

Week 2: 09/04: Freud: Some Psychological Consequences (Masculinity Studies Reader 14)

Week 3: 09/09: Silverman: Masochism and Male Subjectivity (MSR 21)

Week 3: 09/11: Alan Bray: Homosexuality and Male Friendship (MSR 340)

Week 4: 09/16: Carol Pateman: The Fraternal Social Contract (MSR 119)

Week 4: 09/18: *Hamlet*, Film, Branagh

Week 5: 09/23: *Hamlet*, Play

Week 5: 09/25: *Hamlet*, Play

Week 6: 09/30: *First Blood & Rambo: First Blood Part II*

Week 6: 10/02: Judith Butler, Imitation and Gender Insubordination

Week 7: 10/07: Judith Butler, continued

Week 7: 10/09: Bam Stoker: *Dracula*

Week 8: 10/14: Bam Stoker: *Dracula*

Week 8: 10/16: Michael Kimmel: The Birth of the Self-made Man (135)

Week 9: 10/21: Fall Break

Week 9: 10/23: Paul Monette: *Becoming A Man* (First Half)

Week 10: 10/28: Eve Sedgwick: How To Bring Up Your Kids Gay

Week 10: 10/30 *Behind The Candelabra*, Movie

Week 11: 11/04 Halberstam: Introduction to Female Masculinity (355)

Week 11: 11/06 Anne Fausto-Sterling: That Sex Which Prevaileth (375) and, *A Boy is Not a Girl*: Behr and McKaiser, Listserve

Week 12: 11/11 *The Balad of the Sad Café* (novella and movie)

Week 12: 11/13 (a) Krishnaswamy: The Economy of Colonial Desire (292) and (b) Ralph Ellison: *Battle Royale*. (Fileserver)

Week 13: 11/18 Richard Dyer: The White Man's Muscles (MSR 262)

Week 13: 11/20 (a) Franz Fanon: Fact of Blackness (232)
(b) Kobena Mercer: Robert Mapplethorpe (188)

Week 14: 11/25 Thanksgiving Break

Week 14: 11/27 Thanksgiving Break

Week 15: 11/26 (a) Tarantino: *Django Unchained*
(b) Bersani: Is The Rectum a Grave? (Fileserver)

Week 15: 12/02 Paul Monette: *Becoming a Man* (Second Half)

Week 16: 12/04 JM Coetzee: *Disgrace*

Week 16: 12/09 JM Coetzee: *Disgrace*

Week 17: 12/15 Final Paper Due, noon, hard copy, on my door

12/17 Take-home Exam Due, noon, hard copy, on my door