

# History 191

## *American Masculinity in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*

Fall 2007

Instructor: Franklin Forts  
Office: 202A Arter Hall  
Office Hours: TTh 11:00 – 1:00 & W 1:30 – 3:30  
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### **Course Description**

This course is designed to allow students the opportunity to explore the change over time in the meaning of manhood and the construction of masculine identities in America between the closing decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the opening of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Using a chronological and thematic approach, we will investigate a variety of male experiences along the lines of social class, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, and age. In addition, the course will examine the link between masculinity and the popularity of sports, pornography, and the ever-present American cultural characteristic of violence. In this course students will be challenged to critically examine the historical and institutional disciplinary forces at work shaping and regulating gender formation in their lives.

### **Required Texts**

- Course reading packet.\*
- Readings distributed by the instructor.

**\*N.B.:** Please keep in mind that all course subjects and materials were selected for their insights and contribution to the study of American gender formation. Students should also be aware that it is in the nature of historical inquiry that they may be called upon to read, discuss, or otherwise study subjects which some may regard as offensive outside of the classroom. Confronting such material is a necessary part of the learning experience, but should students have concerns along these lines, they are encouraged to consult the instructor.

### **Course Requirements**

Below is a list of assignments and their weight in terms of your final grade:

- Midterm exams—40% (20% each)
- Final exam—35%
- Discussion: Reaction essays & Attendance—25%

**EXAMS:** There will be three exams during the semester: two Midterms and a Final. I will say more about each of these as they approach, and will provide you with specific study guidelines for each. These exams will be based on materials from all readings assigned prior to the exams and class lecture material. There are no make-up exams, save for exceptional circumstances.

**REACTION ESSAYS:** Information will follow under separate instructional handout.

**ATTENDANCE:** I expect you to attend class regularly, to be consistently prepared, and to participate during discussions. Attendance and participation at weekly discussion sections is particularly crucial—if you miss these discussion sections your reaction essay cannot be made-up. Excessive absences (**more than two**) will result in the loss of one of your **eight** reaction essays grades. **I make no distinction between excused or unexcused absences.**

**Plagiarism and Academic Integrity:** Allegheny College operates under an Honor Code, to which all students are subject. See The Compass: Student Handbook, 2007-2008, <http://allegheny.edu/campus/policies/handbook.pdf>. You should educate yourself as to how these policies apply to you. In particular, Article III, paragraph 3 specifically forbids plagiarism, “defined as using the ideas or words of another without citing the sources from which the ideas or words are taken.” A clear statement of what constitutes plagiarism is provided at: <http://webpub.allegheny.edu/dept/writingcenter/links/plagiarism.htm>.

**DISABILITY CONCERNS:** If you have a documented disability, please let the professor know as soon as possible so that he may make the appropriate accommodations. If you have provided documentation of a disability of any kind to the Learning Commons, and will need academic accommodations please arrange these with the Learning Commons and your instructor.

**Classroom rules:** No eating food or reading newspapers during lectures. Turn off all cell phones. Students violating these rules will be asked to leave.

**N.B.:** This syllabus is a general plan for this course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.

## Course Schedule

### August

30 Introductions

### September

4 What is identity? & Concepts of Masculinity

6 How boys are made: *Tough Guise*

11 Discussion: *Introduction and Barbie Girls vs. Sea Monsters*  
1<sup>st</sup> Reaction essay due

13 19<sup>th</sup> Century Manhood & Muscular Christianity

18 Daniel Boone, Western Frontiers, and Whiteness

20 Discussion: *The Strenuous Life & The Significance of the Frontier in American History*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Reaction essay due

25 Aristocracy of Violence: the Cowboys & American Violence

27 Discussion: *The Cult of Masculinity: American Social Character and the legacy of the Cowboy & American Adam*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Reaction essay due

### October

2 First exam

4 1920s Urban America: Consumer culture, Entertainment, Pansies, and the New Negro

9 Discussion: *Exclusion of Homosexuality from the Public Sphere*  
4<sup>th</sup> Reaction essay due

11 New Deals & World War II: White manhood challenged

### Fall Break 10/13 – 10/16

18 Discussion: *The Best War Ever: the Home front*, 5<sup>th</sup> Reaction essay due

23 Guest Lecturer

25 Post war suburban life & the challenges of the 1960s

30 Discussion: *Hip: the History, the Beats* (alternative manhood), 6<sup>th</sup> Reaction essay due

## **November**

- 1 Women's Movements & Men respond
- 6 2<sup>nd</sup> Exam
- 8 It's a Man's world: Sports & Pornography
- 13 Discussion: *Why American Love Sports & You are what you eat: the Pervasive Porn Industry...* 7<sup>th</sup> Reaction paper due
- 15 On the Margins I : African American Masculinity, 1965- 2007
- 20 Discussion: *Gangsta Culture & Don't make me hurt you.* 8<sup>th</sup> Reaction essay due

### **Thanksgiving Break 11/21 – 11/25**

- 27 On the Margins II: Gay Men & Female Masculinity
- 29 Discussion: *Female Masculinity & That Sexe which Prevaileth* 9<sup>th</sup> Reaction essay due

## **December**

- 4 White Southern Manhood & the American Military Tradition
- 6 Discussion: *NASCAR Dad & The Army we have*, 10<sup>th</sup> Reaction essay due.
- 11 Open – Last of class

**Final Exam: Schedule C: Saturday, December 15<sup>th</sup> 7pm**