Northwestern University  
Spring 2020  
**Masculinities**  
GSS 331/SOC 376  
MW 2:00PM - 3:20PM CST, Lacey Hall 111

This course will be hosted online until further notice due to the pandemic.

**Struck through** portions of this syllabus are not applicable with the move to an online course. These portions will become relevant if we hold class in person. **Bolded sentences** are aspects of the course specific to it being hosted online.

Instructor: Tony Silva; tony.silva@northwestern.edu  
Office: 1808 Chicago Ave., Room 105  
Office Hours: Monday 1-2pm and Wednesday 3:30-4:30pm, or by appointment. **Meetings will take place over Zoom. You can join the office hours session through the link in the Canvas calendar. Students will be in a “waiting room” until it is their turn.**

Teaching assistant: Ryan Mack; ryanmack2013@u.northwestern.edu. For questions about grading, you can email him to set up a time to meet **over Zoom.**

**Course Description:**

This course will survey research about masculinity: what it is and how understandings and expressions of masculinity differ across social contexts and time periods. Studying masculinity brings us to research in many disciplines, covering a wide variety of topics. Questions this course will explore include: What is masculinity? How has it varied historically? In what ways does masculinity differ across social contexts? How can masculinity create, reflect, and/or challenge different types of social inequalities? In what ways can some seemingly progressive forms of masculinity actually reinforce inequality? When did emotional intimacy between men become seen as something that was un-masculine, and why? The course will also explore the relationship between masculinity and topics as varied as voting patterns, gun ownership, and sexual harassment. Additionally, the course will examine how masculinity relates to sexuality, class, race/ethnicity, geographic location, and nationality.

**Goals:**

- Understand how understandings and expressions of masculinity differ across social contexts, time periods, and groups of people.
- Develop the tools necessary to constructively participate in conversations about issues of race, gender, and sexuality in academic and nonacademic settings.
- Understand how critiques of power structures and institutions are not necessarily critiques of individual people. All individuals are embedded within social structures.
- Analyze the ways in which different forms of masculinity uphold and/or challenge social inequalities.
- Discuss why and how masculinity changes over time.
Course Requirements:

This course is focused on the readings and discussion. I cut down on assignments and eliminated the midterm paper to ensure students have enough time to thoroughly read course materials and come prepared to discuss them. Consequently, discussion and quizzes memos based on the reading are a substantial portion of the overall course grade.

Students will be expected to:

- Do all required readings prior to each class session and participate in all class discussions. Classes will be held online, via Zoom.
  - On one or more days I may assign a video or podcast. On those days, the Zoom portion of the class will be shortened to allow time for students to watch/listen to the video/podcast. Students will turn in a response memo in reaction to these videos/podcasts by the end of the next day. These memos will be structured similarly to the memo described in the next bullet point. Further instructions will be provided on these days.

- Complete short reading quizzes each class session. These are opportunities for students to demonstrate that they did the readings and remembered key concepts.

- Write a short memo (500 words) for each day’s group of readings. Memos should succinctly summarize the main points of each reading. Memos should also briefly discuss the relevance of the readings for society today, for instance by incorporating news or current events. At the end of the memo, pose 2-3 discussion questions. Submit your memos online by 1pm CST the day of class. Submitting at least half of the memos are necessary to pass the course.

- Submit a final paper electronically by Monday, June 8, by 11:59pm. Submitting a final paper is necessary to pass the course.

Policies and Procedures:

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All spring courses are graded as pass/no pass. “Pass” for this course is 64% and above. Grades will not be rounded up.

Attendance and Participation:

Attendance and participation are key components of the final grade. I will take attendance at the beginning of every class. Students are expected to be here on the course Zoom session, on time and prepared, until the end of class. Readings should be completed before the lecture they are assigned.
4 absences from the real-time Zoom course sessions will be forgiven no matter the reason. An “absence” includes missing any part of the course Zoom session, coming late, or leaving early. For these 4 absences, no make-up work is required and there is no need to tell us about the absence.

Once you exceed 4 absences, points must be made up by posting two 550-word responses (per absence) to questions I post on response boards, for a total of 1100 words. One of these two posts may be in response to another student’s post. When addressing questions or student responses, posts should (1) succinctly describe relevant information, including information and readings from the course; (2) bring in outside information, including through the use of contemporary examples; and (3) pose additional discussion questions. Posts should be based on facts and sound analysis of facts; posts should not be opinion-based. These make-up posts will be graded on a 1-5 scale with half points possible, with the grade depending on the overall quality of the two posts. Posts must be made in response to the discussion questions for the day that was missed. They must be substantially different from posts already on the discussion board, as well as memos (in other words, a student cannot write their memo and use portions of that as one or both of their online posts to make up an absence). These posts must be made within one week of the absence to count for credit. Each absence beyond four will result in a 10 percentage-point deduction from the final course grade unless made up. (The 1-5 scale system of scoring posts will be of the 10 percentage-point deduction per absence.) These points are deducted from the final course grade, not just the participation grade. This means that students can fail from absences that are not made up. To help illustrate this policy, an example: a student who misses 6 sessions (2 beyond the 4 allowable) can earn a maximum of 80% in the course unless they make up these two absences with discussion board posts and earn full credit on those posts. If they make discussion board posts in line with the guidelines above and earn full credit on those posts, they will have no points deducted. This policy means it is, hypothetically, possible to pass the course without attending many Zoom sessions. High-quality responses on discussion boards that make up for an absence will require the same time equivalent of one full class session, so each will require the same time commitment for engagement.

Once you exceed 4 absences, 10 percentage points per absence will be deducted from your attendance and participation grade. For instance, a student who has a perfect attendance/participation score will go from 30/30 to 10/30 if they miss six class sessions. Given that discussion is central to the course, students who miss more than 6 sessions (more than 1/3 of the course days) automatically fail the course, no matter the reason. I understand that “life happens.” For that reason, I do not believe in making judgments about excusable or inexcusable absences. If something happens that necessitates missing more than 6 class sessions, students should drop the course. This is not meant to be harsh, but rather to reflect that missing more than 6 class sessions means missing much of the material. It is the responsibility of students to determine what material they missed on days they were absent. Consult fellow students first.

Your attendance and participation grade will be calculated according to your: 1) record of class attendance, including showing up on time and leaving at the end of class, 2) participation in in-
class discussions, and 3) active engagement with in-class group and writing activities. Simply attending without consistent and active participation will result in a poor grade for this segment of the course. I understand that some students prefer to not talk in front of the class. I encourage these students to use this course as an opportunity to gain confidence expressing themselves in public settings, as difficult as it can be. In any case, some participation points will be possible through group or solo activities in class. Participation is impossible when not paying attention in class, including but not limited to sleeping or working on anything not directly related to the current class activity or discussion.

Note that it is possible to lose participation points beyond 30% of the final grade. For instance, students who disrupt class daily will not only lose all their daily points they could have earned, but also additional points on top of that. Specifically, each day students are disruptive will result in a 5 percentage-point deduction from their final overall course grade. Thus, it is possible to fail the course based solely on disruptive behavior. Disruptive behavior includes using electronic devices for any reason and/or engaging in conversation with others that is not part of the official class discussion facilitated by the instructor.

Please turn on your video when you join the class Zoom session but mute your audio unless you are talking. This helps to prevent background noise. The default I have selected is for everyone to be muted upon entry to the course session, but you can unmute at any time. Having your video turned on and being an active participant is necessary to gain participation points.

Posting on the discussion section of Canvas may also be required as part of the attendance/participation grade. Details will be provided about this at a later time.

Electronics in Class: Research has established that most students retain less information when they take notes electronically. Taking this into account, no electronic devices of any kind may be used in class except for the device used to participate in the Zoom course session. For more information on notetaking and electronics, see the following resources:

https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/a-learning-secret-don-t-take-notes-with-a-laptop/


https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2014/05/to-remember-a-lecture-better-take-notes-by-hand/361478/


Audio and/or video recording is also expressly prohibited, as is audio and/or video streaming. This applies to any part of the course and/or interaction with the instructor (including during
office hours) and/or interaction with enrolled students in the course during class time. It also includes all class sessions. Failure to follow this policy will result in an automatic failure of the course. **This policy extends to all electronic mediums including but not limited to Zoom. Screenshots are also expressly prohibited.**

Links to class Zoom sessions (and other information about Zoom access to class sessions) should not be made available to anyone but enrolled students. Due to the risk of “Zoombombing,” sharing links or other access information about class Zoom sessions with anyone but enrolled students will result in an automatic failure of the course.

Using electronic devices will be treated as disruptive behavior and handled accordingly. Make sure your cell phone is turned off or and is not capable of making noise, even through vibration.

**Weekly Quizzes:** There will be short in-class quizzes most class sessions based on the readings assigned for that day. They will include short answer questions that cover the major arguments, ideas, or descriptions within that day's reading. Questions will not ask about minute details or abstract ideas. Completing the reading prior to arriving to class is key to your success with weekly quizzes. Students must demonstrate an understanding of readings beyond that which is explained in article abstracts. Quizzes will take place in the first 10 minutes of class. No quizzes will be given outside of that time window, so coming late could result in a failed quiz. I will drop the four lowest quiz scores at the end of the course.

I grade quizzes on a 1-5 point system, with half points possible. I do not plan to return quizzes but can do so upon request, during office hours. Questions about scores can be discussed in office hours.

**Daily Memos:** Completing all assigned readings, succinctly writing about their key points, reflecting on their relevance for society today, and providing thought-provoking discussion questions are key to success on daily memos. Memos should be based on facts and sound analysis of facts; they are not opinion papers. See the information about the memos earlier in this syllabus. I grade memos on a 1-5 point system, with half points possible. Half a point will be deducted for each 24-hour period of lateness after 1pm CST the day of class. For instance, a memo turned in at 1:01pm the day of class until 12:59pm the next day can earn a maximum of 4.5/5.

While it is necessary to turn in at least half of the memos to pass the course, this in itself is not a guarantee that a student will pass the course. Memos are worth 40% of the final grade. If a student turns in half, that means their highest percentage possible in the course is an 80%, assuming they receive full credit on everything else. If they do not receive full credit on the final paper, other memos, and participation/attendance, that means their final course grade could be below a 64%--thus not passing the course. When the syllabus states that it is necessary to turn in half the memos and submit the final paper, that simply means that students who do not automatically get a "no pass." Students who do, however, may still not pass if they lose enough points on the other memos, final paper, and participation/attendance.
Final Term Paper:

No late papers will be allowable no matter what. I provide the prompt well in advance to ensure everyone has plenty of time to work on it.

Diversity of Opinions:

In this course we will discuss topics that can be controversial. You may be exposed to opinions that differ considerably from your own. Disagreement with the instructor or other students is fine, as long as you are respectful in how you present your own points of view.

Facts Versus Opinions:

Most of what we discuss in this course will be facts and analysis and application based on those facts. We cannot agree or disagree with facts. Some of these facts may contradict how we have previously understood the world, and we may react strongly to them. This is a normal part of the learning process. Part of the educational process is learning about facts that may make us feel uncomfortable and challenge our belief systems. Doing so helps students learn and develop their critical thinking and analysis skills.

There are some topics on which only facts are relevant, including analysis based on those facts. There are other topics on which there are not necessarily correct or incorrect answers, which involve opinions or perspectives. We will discuss both types of topics in this course. See the following popular-press articles that provide a clear introduction for how to distinguish between facts and opinions:

https://theconversation.com/no-youre-not-entitled-to-your-opinion-9978

https://www.houstonpress.com/arts/no-it-s-not-your-opinion-you-re-just-wrong-updated-7611752


Communication:

This course will use the Canvas course management system (http://www.it.northwestern.edu/education/login.html). You are responsible for logging in, checking regularly for posted announcements, and obtaining readings and assignments from the site. You will receive course announcements that will be sent to the students’ registered campus email address. You are responsible for checking your registered email accounts regularly. Students can message me either on Canvas or via email. I respond within one business day.
Students can, optionally, discuss concepts with a fellow student. Jeanne Paulino, who previously took the course, is not involved with the current course but has an excellent understanding of course concepts and has stated that she is happy to discuss them with students. She is available at these times: Tuesdays from 11:00am-12:00pm and Wednesdays 3:30-5:00pm. You can reach her at jeanepaulino2020@u.northwestern.edu. Jeanne is not involved with grading or course management but is instead available as a peer mentor to help students think through concepts.

**Syllabus is Subject to Change:**

This syllabus and schedule are subject to change in the event of unforeseen circumstances and course progress. I will post announcements of changes on Canvas.

**Academic Integrity:**

Academic integrity is fundamental for this course, and plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. I strictly follow university regulations concerning academic integrity, which means that I report all suspected violations of the policy (including suspicion of cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, obtaining an unfair advantage, and aiding and abetting dishonesty) to the Assistant Dean for Advising and Academic Integrity, who then carries out a formal investigation. Suspected violations of academic integrity will be reported to the Dean's Office. For more information on Northwestern’s academic integrity policies, see [http://www.northwestern.edu/uacc/](http://www.northwestern.edu/uacc/) and [https://www.weinberg.northwestern.edu/undergraduate/courses-registration-grades/integrity/](https://www.weinberg.northwestern.edu/undergraduate/courses-registration-grades/integrity/).

You should understand that examples of plagiarism include obtaining text from any source (including the Internet), and passing off such text as your own work, rather than citing the source of the material. In addition, while I encourage students to collaborate when studying or learning course material or when working on any group projects, it should be clear that no collaboration is permitted on written work, exams, or quizzes, and any collaboration in those cases constitutes academic dishonesty. If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism or academic dishonesty, I encourage you to speak to me about it. Confirmed violations of academic integrity will result in both an administrative penalty and an academic penalty. The administrative penalty, assigned by university officials, typically is suspension for one quarter; any such suspension becomes part of your record, which is made available on request to potential employers and graduate school admissions committees. The academic penalty is assigned by the instructor and can severely affect your grade for the course; failure is possible.

Unauthorized student recording of classroom or other academic activities (including advising sessions or office hours) is prohibited. Unauthorized recording is unethical and may also be a violation of University policy and state law. Students requesting the use of assistive technology as an accommodation should contact [AccessibleNU](http://www.northwestern.edu/uacc/). Unauthorized use of classroom recordings — including distributing or posting them — is also prohibited. Under the University’s Copyright Policy, faculty own the copyright to instructional materials — including those resources created specifically for the purposes of instruction, such as syllabi, lectures and lecture notes, and presentations. Students cannot copy, reproduce, display or distribute these materials. Students who engage in unauthorized recording, unauthorized use of a recording or
Unauthorized distribution of instructional materials will be referred to the appropriate University office for follow-up.

**Turnitin:**

This course makes use of Turnitin, a software program that compares your work against other texts in its database in order to safeguard academic integrity. You will be required to submit your written essays electronically via Canvas and Turnitin. All student work may be analyzed electronically for violations of the university’s academic integrity policy and may also be included in a database for the purpose of testing for plagiarized content.

**Accessibility:**

Any student with a documented disability needing accommodations is requested to contact the Accessible NU Center: https://www.northwestern.edu/accessiblenu/. Please also speak with me as early as possible in the quarter (preferably within the first two weeks of class). All discussions will remain confidential. My office is wheelchair accessible via a ramp from the parking lot in the back of the building. Let me know if you plan to drop by during office hours and require use of the ramp so that I can open the door to the building for you.

Students can find useful resources for safety and security, academic support, and mental and physical health and well-being at the NUhelp website and app:

https://www.northwestern.edu/nuhelp/get-help/nuhelp-app-features.html

https://www.northwestern.edu/nuhelp/

**Class materials and lectures:**

Students are prohibited from selling or being paid, compensated, or rewarded for taking notes during this course to or by any person(s), business, organization, or entity without my express written permission. As stated above, no audio and/or video recordings or data streaming is permitted. This includes any part of the course and/or any interaction with myself, other students, or course guest speakers.

**Visitors:**

No visitors in class are allowed. This includes but is not limited to family, friends, partners, colleagues, and acquaintances, regardless of whether or not they are financing a student’s cost of attending Northwestern. Only enrolled students are allowed in class. No exceptions are allowable. **This policy extends to Zoom sessions.**

**Office Hours:**

I am always happy to answer questions in office hours. Please print your paper if you would like me to provide feedback or answer questions.
Also feel free to come to office hours to discuss course concepts. Students are always welcome! The reason office hours are scheduled is so that students can talk to me about grades, assignments, or course concepts.

**Readings:**

All non-book readings will be available in Canvas, either as a PDF file or with a link to their online location. If you have trouble, simply search for the article title on the library search feature at [https://www.library.northwestern.edu/](https://www.library.northwestern.edu/)

All newspapers and magazines that require an online subscription can be accessed online through the Northwestern Library.

**Required Books and Materials:**


**Important Dates:**

Friday, May 8 is the last day to drop.

**Please note that most readings are short. Many are news articles. There is no need to be intimidated by several readings per day.** I assign heaviest readings on Mondays, so that you have the weekend to read. Focus on main points rather than small details. Readings should be completed for the day under which they are listed.

**Class Schedule:**

**Class 1: Introduction**


Class 2: Theoretical Overview


Class 3: Masculinity Historically


Class 4: Contemporary Masculinity


Class 5: Construction in Adolescence I


Class 6: Construction in Adolescence II


Class 7: Politics


Class 8: Intimacy


Class 9: (Hetero)sexual Identification


Class 10: Sexuality


Class 11: Costs


Class 12: Guns, Violence, and Backlash


Class 13: Food and the Environment


**Class 14: Masculinity Across National Borders**


**Class 15: Intersections with Race and Nationality**


**Monday, May 25: Memorial Day. No class.**

**Class 16: Masculinity in People Who Identify as a Woman, Non-Binary, or Transgender**


Class 17: Masculine Subcultures and Practices


Final paper due electronically via Canvas on Monday, June 8, at 11:59pm.