

EFR 590: Special
Topics in Educational
Foundations and
Research:

Boys, Masculinities & Schooling

Spring 2008

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Class: 4-6:50PM, Thursdays, Education
Room 203

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This course is on Blackboard

Course Description

Boys and their education have received a great deal of popular attention in recent years, both here in the U. S. and many other countries. This course explores this trend and its many complexities, including the political and ideological dimensions of it. Students will also explore theories of masculinity and consider the many ways in which masculinity influences the lives of boys and men (and girls and women) in schools, both as students and as educators. Special attention will be given to diverse forms of masculinity.

Course Format and Pedagogical Activities

This is a small class, and it explores a specialized topic. Therefore, it will be run as a *true* seminar, meaning that students will be expected to actively participate in the instruction of the class and the acquisition of methodological knowledge in educational research and theorizing. To that end, students will lead classes on occasion and complete an article-length paper by the end of the course. As the instructor, I will also lend my expertise, of course; I use a variety of instructional practices, including lecture, whole group discussion, small group discussions, film viewings, student presentations, demonstrations, and others.

Foundations courses require a great deal of reading, for, as the name implies, these courses serve to lay the foundations of knowledge on which educators build their interpretive, normative, and critical views on the educational field. Students should read all of the works assigned.

Foundations Standards

Foundations courses at UND strive to meet the standards of the Council of Social Foundations of Education (CSFE) for student learning. At the successful completion of this course and other foundations coursework,

1. The educator understands and can apply disciplinary knowledge from the humanities and social sciences to interpreting the meanings of education and schooling in diverse cultural contexts.
2. The educator understands and can apply normative perspectives on education and schooling.
3. The educator understands and can apply critical perspectives on education and schooling.
4. The educator understands how moral principles related to democratic institutions can inform and direct schooling practice, leadership, and governance.
5. The educator understands the full significance of diversity in a democratic society and how that bears on instruction, school leadership, and governance.
6. The educator understands how philosophical and moral commitments affect the process of evaluation at all levels of schooling practice, leadership, and governance.

Required Readings

The following books are required and will be available in the book store and online.

- Connell, R. W. (2005). *Masculinities (2nd ed.)*. Berkeley: University of California Press. ISBN 0520246985.
- Ferguson, A. A. (2000). *Bad boys: Public schools in the making of Black masculinity*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. ISBN 0472088491.
- Gutmann, M. C. (2006). *The meanings of macho: Being a man in Mexico City* (10th anniversary ed.). Berkeley: University of California Press. ISBN 9780520250130.
- James, A. N. (2007). *Teaching the male brain: How boys think, feel, and learn in school*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press. ISBN 1412936632.
- Pollack, W. (1998). *Real boys: Rescuing our sons from the myths of boyhood*. New York: Random House. ISBN 0805061835.
- Sommers, C. H. (2000). *The war against boys: How misguided feminism is harming our young men*. New York: Simon & Schuster. ISBN 0684849577.
- Other readings available on the course Blackboard site.

Students who do not have one already are encouraged to obtain a copy of the 5th edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. Students who feel that their writing could use improvement are encouraged to purchase Strunk and White's *The Elements of Style* or Swales and Feak's *Academic Writing for Graduate Students*, which is in the bookstore as a recommended text.

Evaluation:

Students' final grade will be based on the following activities and products:

1. Class participation and seminar leading (40%)—Students are expected to attend every class, to be prepared, to have done the reading, and to join discussions. Students will be assigned to lead discussion on two nights.
2. Class presentation of research (10%)—Students will present findings and/or arguments from their research during an in-class “conference.” Students will choose either a poster presentation format or a roundtable format. Alternative formats will be considered.
3. Research Project (50%)—Students will conduct a small-scale research project based on real-world observation of a lesson, classroom, student, student group, or policy. This is not a library-based research project, but it should utilize independent research as listed on the annotated bibliography and/or class readings, if appropriate. The research should demonstrate the student's understanding of themes discussed in the course. Students will write a report of findings and arguments based on their research. A description of methods and a list of references should be included.

*All work should be word processed, **strictly** adhering to the format outlined in the APA Manual (5th edition).*

Policies

Attendance

I expect graduate students to be in class every class period, on time. Please alert me in advance when this is impossible. If a student is going to miss three or more classes, we must meet to discuss whether it is appropriate to continue the student's enrollment in the course. Be aware that I do not distinguish between reasons for absences. *Absences do not excuse students from completing assignments and they may negatively affect class participation scores.*

Prompt Work

I expect graduate students to present their work in a professional manner and on time. *Absences do not excuse students from completing assignments on the day they are due.* Please E-mail any papers to me on the due date when it is impossible to be in class.

Weather

When the University is open, class will meet. Closure of the University is rare; when storms occur, listen to local media or call (701) 777-6700. Also, please check your E-mail before driving in, if possible, in the *rare* event that I cannot get to class (but, please, no requests!!); any such E-mail should come well in advance of class time. PLEASE NOTE: I want above all for everyone to be safe. *If you feel it is not safe, don't come to class.*

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

I expect that graduate students are striving to meet the highest standards of scholarship, which includes honest and skillful use of scholarly knowledge. I take plagiarism and other acts of academic dishonesty very seriously, and I am also quite good at catching it. *I do not differentiate between purposeful and accidental plagiarism.* Please learn about the very easy ways you can avoid plagiarism. As outlined in section 3-3 of the Code of Student Life, it is my discretion as to whether to handle

plagiarism as a scholastic matter (i.e., failing the course) or as a disciplinary matter (i.e., referral to the Graduate Dean).

Incompletes

The University's policy: "The mark "I", Incomplete, will be assigned only to the student who has been in attendance and has done satisfactory work up to a time within four weeks of the close of the semester, including the examination period, and whose work is incomplete for reasons satisfactory to his or her instructor." (See the 200507 UND Catalog for complete policy statement.)

Exceptionalities

Students who feel they may need some instructional modifications to complete course requirements due to exceptionalities have the responsibility of making the instructor aware of this in a timely manner.

Weekly Schedule

Readings listed under each week are due to be read for class that week. This schedule is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor. Readings with "(BB)" listed after them are available from Blackboard as pdf files. Readings are listed below in alphabetical order, not order of importance.

Week One (January 10)

Syllabus and introductions; Why boys? What about the boys? Gender *vs.* sex *vs.* sexuality;
In-class viewing of *The Full Monty*

Part One: What about the boys?

Week Two (January 17)

The panic over boys and the larger context for examining boys; international pressures and panics; the "Boy Turn"; in-class viewing of *Raising Cain*

READ Titus, "Boy Trouble" (BB)

Epstein, et al., "Schoolboy frictions" (BB)

Selections from Kenway & Willis, *Answering Back* (BB)

Weaver-Hightower, "The 'boy turn' in research on gender and education" (BB)

DUE Write an essay in which you explore the topic "Boys" in two pages. Please feel free to interpret this in whatever way you will. Creativity is encouraged.

Week Three (January 24)

Conservative notions of boys' education; psychological views; popular-rhetorical and backlash views. In-class viewing of *Real Boys*.

READ Pollack, *Real Boys*

Martino & Berrill, “Boys, schooling, and masculinities: Interrogating the 'Right' way to educate boys”(BB)

Week Four (January 31)

The social world of boys; In-class viewing of *Boys Alone*; Boys and girls in interaction

READ Sommers, *The War Against Boys*

Selections from Willis, *Learning to Labor* (BB)

DUE Tentative topic for your final paper

Week Five (February 7)

Boys and literacies; Reading and writing “like a boy”; Approaches to pedagogy

READ Newkirk, “Misreading masculinity” (BB)

Meinhof, “The most important event of my life!” (BB)

Selection from Millard, *Differently literate* (BB)

Selection from Pirie, *Teenage boys and high school English* (BB)

Selection from Smith & Wilhelm, “*Reading Don’t Fix No Chevies*”

DUE Write a two-page essay on one of the following: a) why boys don’t read, or b) why boys do read. I encourage you to think broadly about what is meant by “don’t” or “do” and what is meant by “read.”

Week Six (February 14) NO CLASS (Conference)

Part Two: Which boys?

Week Seven (February 21)

Masculinities; Hegemony; History of studies of masculinity; Masculinity politics; APA formatting.

READ Connell, *Masculinities* (front matter, Chapters 1-3, 8-10)

Week Eight (February 28)

African-American Males; Discipline and punishment

READ Ferguson, *Bad boys*

Murtadah-Watts, “Theorizing urban black masculinity construction in an African-centered school” (BB)

Week Nine (March 6) NO CLASS--SPRING BREAK

Week Ten (March 13) NO CLASS (Child's Surgery)

Week Eleven (March 20)

International, comparative, and ethnographic understandings of masculinity

READ Guttman, *The Meanings of Macho*

Week Twelve (March 27)

Other diversities of masculinity; Sexuality; Disability; Intersexuality and "Female Masculinity" (in-class reading from *The Masculinity Studies Reader*)

READ Friend, "Choices, Not Closets" (BB)

Selection from Martino & Pallotta-Chiarolli (BB)

Savin-Williams, "Boy-on-boy sexuality" (BB)

Tolman, et al., "Getting close, staying cool" (BB)

Part Three: Some things some men and boys do

Week Thirteen (April 3)

Violence; In-class viewing of *Tough Guise*

READ Selection from Mills, *Challenging violence in schools* (BB)

Katz, "The Sounds of Silence" (BB)

Week Fourteen (April 10)

Male teachers

READ Sargent, "Real men or real teachers?"

Williams, "The glass escalator: Hidden advantages for men in the 'female' professions"

DUE Write an essay in which you explore the topic "Boys" in two pages. Please feel free to interpret this in whatever way you will. Creativity is encouraged.

Week Fifteen (April 17)

Sports

READ Lesko, "Preparing to teach coach" (BB)

Rowe & McKay, "A Man's Game: Sport and Masculinities" (BB)

Week Sixteen (April 24)

What is to be done?; Policy; Pedagogy; Curriculum

READ Skim Australian House of Representatives, *Boys: Getting it right* (BB)

Selections from Salisbury & Jackson (BB)

Selections from Browne & Fletcher (BB)

Weaver-Hightower, "Dare the School Build a New Education for Boys?"

Week Seventeen (May 1)

DUE Presentation of your final project.

Final paper.

Bibliography of Supplemental Readings

- Adams, R. & Savran, D. (2002) *The masculinity studies reader*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers.
- Australian House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Training. (2002). *Boys: Getting it right. Report on the inquiry into the education of boys*. Canberra, Australia: The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia.
- Browne, R., & Fletcher, R. (Eds.). (1995). *Boys in schools: Addressing the real issues--behaviour, values, and relationships*. Sydney: Finch.
- Epstein, D., Elwood, J., Hey, V., & Maw, J. (1998). Schoolboy frictions: Feminism and "failing" boys. In D. Epstein, J. Elwood, V. Hey & J. Maw (Eds.), *Failing boys? Issues in gender and achievement* (pp. 3-18). Buckingham, England: Open University Press.
- Friend, R. A. (1993). Choices, not closets: Heterosexism and homophobia in schools. In L. Weis & M. Fine (Eds.), *Beyond silenced voices: Class, race, and gender in United States schools* (pp. 209-235). Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Katz, J. (2000). The sounds of silence: Notes on the personal politics of men's leadership in gender-based violence prevention education. In N. Lesko (Ed.), *Masculinities at School* (pp. 283-304). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Kenway, J., & Willis, S. (1998). *Answering back: Girls, boys and feminism in schools*. London: Routledge.
- Lesko, N. (2000). Preparing to teach coach: Tracking the gendered relations of dominance, on and off the football field. In N. Lesko (Ed.), *Masculinities at school* (pp. 187-212). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Martino, W., & Berrill, D. (2003). Boys, schooling, and masculinities: Interrogating the 'Right' way to educate boys. *Educational Review*, 55(2), 99-117.
- Martino, W., & Pallotta-Chiarolli, M. (2003). *So what's a boy? Addressing issues of masculinity and schooling*. Maidenhead, England: Open University Press.
- Meinhof, U. H. (1997). "The most important event of my life!" A comparison of male and female written narratives. In S. Johnson & U. H. Meinhof (Eds.), *Language and Masculinity* (pp. 208-228). Oxford, England: Blackwell.
- Millard, E. (1997). *Differently literate: Boys, girls and the schooling of literacy*. London: Falmer Press.

- Mills, M. (2001). *Challenging violence in schools: An issue of masculinities*. Buckingham, England: Open University Press.
- Murtadha-Watts, K. (2000). Theorizing urban black masculinity construction in an African-centered school. In N. Lesko (Ed.), *Masculinities at school* (pp. 49-71). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Newkirk, T. (2000). Misreading masculinity: Speculations on the great gender gap in writing. *Language Arts*, 77, 294-300.
- Pirie, B. (2002). *Teenage boys and high school English*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Rowe, D., & McKay, J. (2003). A man's game: Sport and masculinities. In S. Tomsen & M. Donaldson (Eds.), *Male trouble: Looking at Australian masculinities* (pp. 200-216). Melbourne, Australia: Pluto Press Australia.
- Salisbury, J., & Jackson, D. (1996). *Challenging macho values: Practical ways of working with adolescent boys*. London: Falmer Press.
- Savin-Williams, R. C. (2004). Boy-on-boy sexuality. In N. Way & J. Chu (Eds.), *Adolescent boys: Exploring diverse cultures of boyhood* (pp. 271-292). New York University Press.
- Titus, J. J. (2004). Boy trouble: Rhetorical framing of boys' underachievement. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 25(2), 145-169.
- Tolman, D. L., Spencer, R., Harmon, T., Rosen-Reynoso, M., & Striepe, M. (2004). Getting close, staying cool: Early adolescent boys' experiences with romantic relationships. In N. Way & J. Chu (Eds.), *Adolescent boys: Exploring diverse cultures of boyhood* (pp. 235-255). New York University Press.
- Way, N. & Chu, J. Y. (Eds.). (2004). *Adolescent boys: Exploring diverse cultures of boyhood*. New York: New York University Press.
- Weaver-Hightower, M. B. (2003). The "boy turn" in research on gender and education. *Review of Educational Research*, 73 (4), 471-498.
- Weaver-Hightower, M. B. (2005). Dare the school build a new education for boys? *Teachers College Record*. Retrieved February 14, 2005, from <http://www.tcrecord.org/content.asp?contentid=11743>
- Williams, C. L. (1992). The glass escalator: Hidden advantages for men in the "female" professions. *Social Problems*, 39, 253-267.
- Willis, P. (1977). *Learning to labor*. New York: Columbia University Press.