



Psychology of Men and Masculinity

PSYC489W

Course Description & Learning Outcomes

What is masculinity, and how does one earn their manhood? How much of masculinity is biological versus socialized? What experiences are unique to men? What does masculinity look like across different cultural groups? What happens when masculinity is taken to the extreme? Can masculinity ever be positive? How do psychologists and mental health professionals understand and address mental health concerns among men?

This course will address a variety of topics, including psychological theories related to gender development, diversity among men and their experiences, the connection between masculinity and violence, positive masculinity, and mental health concerns specific to men. We will investigate masculinity from an intersectional perspective as well as review and critically analyze research related to men, masculinity, and mental health.

The expression of diverse viewpoints is highly valued in this class. It is expected that students and the instructor will strive to create a mutually respectful environment in which it is safe to express multiple perspectives.

Course Objectives: At the completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Describe theories and research findings related to the psychology of men and masculinity
2. Demonstrate an understanding of how empirical research methods are used to test hypotheses related to the masculinity
3. Critically evaluate the methods and conclusions of psychological research in relation to men and masculinity
4. Think critically regarding ethical and multicultural issues related to research methods, conclusions, societal perceptions, and interventions with men and boys
5. Articulate how historical views of men and masculinity shape and influence current society
6. Understand the role of biological, social, and ecological factors as they relate to men's development
7. Understand how psychology can be used to create social change and develop policies for issues related to men and masculinity
8. Demonstrate an understanding of privilege, oppression, and human rights issues related to gender

Teaching Team

Instructor:

Dr. Monica Cushnie

Pronouns: She/her

msk0191@umd.edu

Class Meets

Held asynchronously via Canvas. Please see example course completion structure on page 5.

Office Hours

by appointment via zoom (schedule a time via email)

For helpful guidance on writing professional emails (ter.ps@email).

Required Resources

Course website: elms.umd.edu

You will need computer with reliable internet connection to watch lectures and submit assignments.

Campus Policies

It is our shared responsibility to know and abide by the University of Maryland's policies that relate to all courses, which include topics like:

- Mask requirements
- Academic integrity
- Student and instructor conduct
- Accessibility and accommodations
- Attendance and excused absences
- Grades and appeals
- Copyright and intellectual property

Please visit www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html for the Office of Undergraduate Studies' full list of campus-wide policies and follow up with me if you have questions. Activities, Learning Assessments, & Expectations for Students

Activities, Learning Assessments, & Expectations for Students

Class time will be devoted primarily to lecture and discussion activities. In addition to lectures delivered by the instructor, students also may receive lectures from guest speakers. Students are expected to complete the assigned readings PRIOR to watching lectures and should be prepared to discuss the readings within course assignments

Course-Specific Policies

Class will be held asynchronously throughout the summer term. This is a paced, online course, wherein students are expected to work on their own time but with scheduled due dates to complete a series of modules. Each module will include pre-recorded video lectures, readings, and assignments. Pre-recorded video lectures will be located within modules, but will also be available through Panopto on our course Canvas page. You can access the course Canvas page at elms.umd.edu.

Students are expected to work through the modules sequentially, as later modules require mastery of the course material presented earlier in the term. **Some modules may not be accessible until completion of previous modules, or until the date the topic is presented on the syllabus.**

The instructor is available by email to respond to your questions about the course. **However, I cannot guarantee responsiveness after 5:00pm on weekdays and at all during weekends.** Therefore, it is in your best interest to begin assignments (or studying for knowledge checks) early so that you have enough time to have all your questions answered prior to the assignment due date.

Expectations of the instructor. You can expect that the instructor will treat students with respect, be prepared for class, respond to student concerns in a timely manner, demonstrate current content knowledge, and communicate clear expectations for students. If you believe these expectations are not being met, please schedule an appointment with the instructor to discuss the issue.

Expectations of students in the class. Students are expected to actively participate in class, be prepared for class, and to treat the instructor and each other with respect. Disruptive behavior of any kind will not be tolerated. Students who are unable to demonstrate civility with one another or the instructor will be subject to referral to the Office of Student Conduct or to the University Campus Police. You are expected to adhere to the Code of Student Conduct.

Get Some Help!

Taking personal responsibility for your own learning means acknowledging when your performance does not match your goals and doing something about it. I hope you will come talk to me so that I can help you find the right approach to success in this course, and I encourage you to visit tutoring.umd.edu to learn more about the wide range of campus resources available to you. In particular, everyone can use some help sharpen their communication skills (and improving their grade) by visiting ter.ps/write and schedule an appointment with the campus Writing Center. You should also know there are a wide range of resources to support you with whatever you might need (see go.umd.edu/assistance), and if you just need someone to talk to, visit counseling.umd.edu or [one of the many other resources on campus](#).



Most services are free because you have already paid for it, and **everyone needs help**... all you have to do is ask for it.

Names, Pronouns, and Self Identifications

Inclusive Learning Environment: Individuals come to this course with varied levels of exposure to gendered issues. It is important to remember that each person's contribution is valuable and sometimes questions or comments that appear simple can help bring a new perspective to an issue. Additionally, many of the topics in this course can be contentious, emotionally intense, and unfamiliar. Because of the personal nature of many of these topics, it is imperative that, despite our wide range of perspectives, everyone treats one another with patience, tolerance, and respect.

Students will be invited to share their thoughts during discussion activities and a diversity of opinions is welcome. Respectful communication is expected, even when expressing differing perspectives. Supporting one's statements with research findings is encouraged. In accordance with free speech statutes, speech that contains threats of violence is prohibited.

Reporting Racism and Other Forms of Hate and Bias: If you experience racism or other form of bias or hate in this class or any psychology course, I encourage you to do at least one of the following: Please report the experience to the instructor. Please also consider reporting all incidents of hate and bias to the Office of Diversity and Inclusion at <https://www.diversity.umd.edu/hbrp/>.

Names/Pronouns and Self Identification: The University of Maryland recognizes the importance of a diverse student body, and we are committed to fostering inclusive and equitable classroom environments. I invite you, if you wish, to tell us how you want to be referred to both in terms of your name and your pronouns (he/him, she/her, they/them, etc.). The pronouns someone indicates are not necessarily indicative of their gender identity. Visit trans.umd.edu to learn more.

Additionally, how you identify in terms of your gender, race, class, sexuality, religion, and dis/ability, among all aspects of your identity, is your choice whether to disclose (e.g., should it come up in classroom conversation about our experiences and perspectives) and should be self-identified, not presumed or imposed. I will do my best to address and refer to all students accordingly, and I ask you to do the same for all of your fellow Terps.

Basic Needs Security: If you have difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or lack a safe and stable place to live and believe this may affect your performance in this course, please visit go.umd.edu/basic-needs for information about resources the campus offers you and let me know if I can help in any way.

Grades

Grades are not given, but earned. Your grade is determined by your performance on the learning assessments in the course and is assigned individually (not curved). If earning a particular grade is important to you, please speak with me at the beginning of the term so that I can offer some helpful suggestions for achieving your goal.

All assessment scores will be posted on the course ELMS page. If you would like to review any of your grades (including the knowledge checks), or have questions about how something was scored, please schedule a time for us to meet.

Due Dates: All assignments must be **via Canvas by 11:59pm on the day they are due**, unless otherwise indicated. Assignments must be submitted on Canvas and will not be accepted via email or hardcopy. Poorly written assignments will receive lower grades regardless of content. Be sure to check your grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Please contact the Writing Center if you need additional help with your writing. All papers should be written in APA style in accordance with the latest edition of the publication manual of the American Psychological Association.

Extensions: I understand that life happens, and students may need some additional time to complete assignments. **Therefore, a grace period of 24 hours will automatically be applied to all assignments.** After the grace period, if students are facing an emergency (e.g., death in the family, severe illness with a doctor's excuse, car accident, etc.) and need additional time to complete their work, they will be asked to provide documentation of their emergency to receive a longer extension on any assignment. *Additionally, extensions requested due to technological issues will require documentation.* Extensions/excuses will not be granted otherwise. **Please send extension requests related to emergencies to the instructor's email address at msk0191@umd.edu.** Extensions requested through Canvas may go unread and therefore may not be granted.

Late work: **Late work will not be accepted for this course.** This policy can be waived in case of emergencies. Documentation of the emergency must be provided, and students must communicate with the instructor about their emergency in a timely manner (i.e., before the assignment due date or no later than 24 hours after the missed deadline).

Grading disputes: I am happy to discuss any of your grades with you, and if I have made a mistake, I will immediately correct it. After the return of any test, paper, or project, you have exactly **two days** (including weekends) to send the instructor a written explanation of why you believe your grade should be re-evaluated. After two days have passed, grade changes will no longer be considered. Again, if a written explanation is not submitted within two days, your grade will not be re-evaluated. **Please note that grading disputes may result in a higher grade, a lower grade, or the same score as the original grade. Grades resulting from a grading dispute are final and will not be re-evaluated.**

Tips For Success

1. **Make a schedule and diligently stick with it!** One of the most challenging aspects of asynchronous online work for many students is having to set their own pace for course completion without structured class meetings. I will do my best to make due dates and expectations clear and encourage you to use those dates to set a schedule that works best for you. Please see the example structure on page 5 for inspiration.
2. **Create flexibility in your schedule.** Inevitably, unexpected challenges or responsibilities may disrupt our well-planned schedule. Be sure to create a bit of a buffer between when you work on assignments and the

assignment due dates to ensure you can accommodate any unexpected concerns.

3. **Get to know your teaching team!** Your instructor wants you to be successful in this course! Please make time to see me during office hours by making an appointment with me via email. I am happy to discuss course content, assignment questions, career goals, current events...anything that is on your mind.

Example of Course Schedule

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Complete readings for the week & take notes	Watch pre-recorded lectures for the week & take notes	Complete “In-Class” Assignment” due at 11:59pm Request Office Hour if you have questions	Begin working on Real World Connections Assignment Contact the instructor if you need additional support or have questions	Finish and submit Real World Connections Assignment due at 11:59pm

Assessment of student learning:

“In-Class” Assignments	15%
Real World Connections	20%
Knowledge Checks	20%
Masculinity Interview	20%
<u>Photo Journal Portfolio</u>	<u>25%</u>
Total	100%

This course is graded on the following A+ to F scale (no rounding exceptions):

89.5-93.49	A-	93.5-97.49	A	97.5-100	A+
79.5-83.49	B-	83.5-87.49	B	87.5-89.49	B+
69.5-73.49	C-	73.5-77.49	C	77.5-79.49	C+
59.5-63.49	D-	63.5-67.49	D	67.5-69.49	D+

59.49 and below F, XF Failure due to academic dishonesty

Please understand that letter grades have specific definitions that **do not include regular attendance, effort, or desire.**

“A” denotes excellent mastery of the subject and outstanding scholarship.

“B” denotes good mastery of the subject and good scholarship.

“C” denotes acceptable mastery of the subject and the usual achievement expected.

“D” denotes borderline understanding of the subject. These grades denote marginal performance, and they do not represent satisfactory progress toward a degree.

“F” denotes failure to understand the subject and unsatisfactory performance.

Tentative Schedule:

The following schedule is tentative and subject to change at the discretion of the instructor. Students are responsible for being aware of any changes in this schedule announced in class or via Canvas.

Week	Dates	Topics	Readings	Wednesday "In-Class" Assignments	Friday Real World Connections
1	6/1-6/5	Introduction to Men, Masculinity & Mental Health Theoretical Underpinnings: Psychoanalytic, Sociobiological, Social Learning, Cognitive-Development, Gender Schema	Read: Cherry (2023) Slater (2013) Hyde (2014)	Complete: Introduction DB Masculinity Reflection	Theories Quiz Watch and Reflect: Karate Kid: Legends (2025) Trailer
2	6/8-6/12	Initiation into Manhood: Conformity to Masculine Norms, Precarious Masculinity, Toxic Masculinity	Read: Salgado et al. (2019) Vandello & Bosson (2013)	Complete: Toxic Masculinity DB	Complete: Man vs Bear Reflection Knowledge Check 1
3	6/15-6/18 UMD closed 6/19 for Juneteenth	Masculinity and Violence: Intimate Partner, Sexual Assault, and Gun Violence Does Positive Masculinity Exist?	Read: Reidy et al. (2014) Kaya et al. (2020) Di Bianca & Mahalik (2022)	Complete: Positive Masculinity DB	Watch and Reflect: Washington Post Introducing Masculinity into the Gun Debate Due to the holiday, assignment will be open until Monday, 6/22 at 11:59pm
4	6/22-6/26	Intersectionality: Men of Color, Queer Men, Transmen, and Ageing Men	Read: I Was Forced to Fight Washington Post Article: Asian American Masculinity Murgo et al. (2017) Clements et al. (2022) Knutson & Goldbach (2019)	Complete: Social Identity Wheel & Reflection Knowledge Check 2	Complete: Masculinity Interview Video due at 11:59pm Responses to classmates due Monday, 6/29 at 11:59pm (no extensions)

Week	Dates	Topics	Readings	Wednesday “In-Class” Assignments	Friday Real World Connections
5	6/29-7/2 UMD Closed 7/3 for Independence Day	Men & Their Unique Experiences: The Workplace, Sports & Greek Life, Eating and Exercise, Relationships	Read: Berdahl et al. (2018) Seabrook, Ward, & Giaccardi (2018) Gallagher et al. (2019) Way (2013) Listen: The Modern Love Podcast: Why Boys and Men are Floundering	Complete: Fraternities at UMD DB	Complete: Photo Journal Portfolio Due to the holiday, assignment will be open until Monday, 7/6 at 11:59pm
6	7/6-7/10	Wrapping Up: Men’s Movements and the Future of Men and Masculinity	Read: de Maricourt & Burrell (2022) Sparks et al. (2022)	Complete: Men’s Movement DB	Complete Course Reflection: The Future of Men and Masculinity

Course Readings

- Berdahl, J. L., Cooper, M., Glick, P., Livingston, R. W., & Williams, J. C. (2018). Work as a masculinity contest. *Journal of Social Issues*, 74(3), 422–448. <https://doi-org.proxy-um.researchport.umd.edu/10.1111/josi.12289>
- Cherry, K. (2020). *The Oedipus complex in children*. Very Well Mind. <https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-an-oedipal-complex-2795403>
- Clements, Z. A., Derr, B. N., & Rostosky, S. S. (2022). “Male privilege doesn’t lift the social status of all men in the same way”: Trans masculine individuals’ lived experiences of male privilege in the United States. *Psychology of Men & Masculinity*, 23(1), 123–132. <https://doi.org/10.1037/men0000371>
- de Maricourt, C., & Burrell, S. R. (2022). #MeToo or #MenToo? Expressions of backlash and masculinity politics in the #MeToo era. *The Journal of Men’s Studies*, 30(1), 49–69. <https://doi-org.proxy-um.researchport.umd.edu/10.1177/10608265211035794>
- Gallagher, K. A., Sonnevile, K. R., Hazzard, V. M., Carson, T. L., & Needham, B. L. (2019). Evaluating gender bias in an eating disorder risk assessment questionnaire for athletes. *Eating Disorders: The Journal of Treatment & Prevention*. <https://doi-org.proxy-um.researchport.umd.edu/10.1080/10640266.2019.1613846>
- Hyde, J. S. (2014). Gender similarities and differences. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 65, 373–398. <https://doi-org.proxy-um.researchport.umd.edu/10.1146/annurev-psych-010213-115057>
- Kaya, A., Le, T. P., Brady, J., & Iwamoto, D. (2020). Men who intervene to prevent sexual assault: A grounded theory study on the role of masculinity in bystander intervention. *Psychology of Men & Masculinities*, 21(3), 463–478. <https://doi-org.proxy-um.researchport.umd.edu/10.1037/men0000249>
- Knutson, D., & Goldbach, C. (2019). Transgender and non-binary affirmative approaches applied to psychological practice with boys and men. *Men and Masculinities*, 22(5), 921–925. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1097184x19875174>
- Morgan, R. (2021, June 27). *Asian American masculinity is being increasingly celebrated. but many men still Face stereotyping*. The Washington Post. https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/wellness/asian-american-men-stereotype-masculine/2021/06/21/d219025e-d2c6-11eb-a53a-3b5450fdca7a_story.html
- Murgo, M. A. J., Huynh, K. D., Lee, D. L., & Chrisler, J. C. (2017). Anti-effeminacy moderates the relationship between masculinity and internalized heterosexism among gay men. *Journal of LGBT Issues in Counseling*, 11(2), 106–118. <https://doi-org.proxy-um.researchport.umd.edu/10.1016/j.paid.2014.04.021>
- Reidy, D. E., Berke, D. S., Gentile, B., & Zeichner, A. (2014). Man enough? Masculine discrepancy stress and intimate partner violence. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 68, 160–164. <https://doi-org.proxy-um.researchport.umd.edu/10.1037/men0000211>
- Romano, A. (2018). *What a women-led incel support group can teach us about men and mental health*. Vox. <https://www.vox.com/2018/6/20/17314846/incel-support-group-therapy-black-pill-mental-health>
- Salgado, D. M., Knowlton, A. L., & Johnson, B. L. (2019). Men’s health-risk and protective behaviors: The effects of masculinity and masculine norms. *Psychology of Men & Masculinities*, 20(2), 266–275. <https://doi-org.proxy-um.researchport.umd.edu/10.1037/men0000076>
- Seabrook, R. C., Ward, L. M., & Giaccardi, S. (2018). Why is fraternity membership associated with sexual assault? Exploring the roles of conformity to masculine norms, pressure to uphold masculinity, and objectification of women. *Psychology of Men & Masculinity*, 19(1), 3–13. <https://doi-org.proxy-um.researchport.umd.edu/10.1037/men00002926>
- Slater, D. (2013). http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/13/opinion/sunday/darwin-was-wrong-about-dating.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0
- Vandello, J. A., & Bosson, J. K. (2013). Hard won and easily lost: A review and synthesis of theory and research on precarious manhood. *Psychology of Men & Masculinity*, 14(2), 101–113. <https://doi-org.proxy-um.researchport.umd.edu/10.1037/a0029826>

- Vegter, V. (2013). Conceptualizing masculinity in female-to-male trans-identified individuals: A qualitative inquiry. *Canadian Journal of Counselling and Psychotherapy*, 47(1), 88–10
- Way, N. (2013). Boys' friendships during adolescence: Intimacy, desire, and loss. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 23(2), 201–213. <https://doi-org.proxy-um.researchport.umd.edu/10.1111/jora.12047>

Assignments:

“In-Class” Assignments: Throughout the term you will be asked to complete “in-class” assignments. These assignments may take the form of a quiz or discussion boards. Each “in-class” assignment will have its own set of instructions on Canvas. **“In-class” assignments will be due Wednesdays at 11:59pm.**

Real World Connections: Assignments in the Real World Connections category will ask you to reflect on what have learned and apply course concepts to current events and media examples such as TedTalks, commercials, and movies. **Real World Connection assignments will be due Fridays at 11:59pm.**

Masculinity Interview: The goal of this assignment is to develop a nuanced understanding of intersectionality shapes manhood. You will select a self-identified man to interview. This person may be a relative, friend, professional (e.g., professor, supervisor, manager etc.), or acquaintance. The interview will be semi-structured: Most questions will be provided for you, but you may ask additional follow-up questions after the required questions in order to gain a more detailed understanding of your interviewee's responses. You will also ask 2 additional, unique questions of your own. For the interview, you must ask the following four questions:

1. How do you identify in regards to race, ethnicity, age, gender identity, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, and socio-economic status? (Please note that your interviewee may refrain from responding to any aspect of identity they do not wish to disclose).
2. [Describe what intersectionality means to your interviewee] Which aspects of your identity have been most influential or important to your relationship with masculinity and why?
3. What does the phrase “man up” mean to you?

Then, students should ask 2 additional questions of interest that they have generated themselves based on empirical research not included in the course.

After you conduct your interview, you will reflect on what you learned about intersectionality and manhood from your interviewee. You will put together a 10-minute video presentation to submit for the assignment. For the presentation, please respond to the following prompts:

1. Introduce your interviewee. What is their relationship to you? How do they identify?
2. Describe intersectionality **[Remember, it's not about just having multiple identities, but how those identities influence the ways people experience privilege/power/oppression]**. How does intersectionality contribute to your interviewee's relationship with masculinity/manhood?
3. What does it mean to “man up” for your interviewee? What do you think about their definition? Connect their response to course concepts.
4. Discuss the empirical research you found for this assignment and how it inspired you to develop the two unique questions that you asked your interviewee. Share your interviewee's responses and how they connect back to the research you found or other course concepts.
5. What was your experience of the interview?
6. What is one take-away about the importance of intersectionality you gained from this interview?

You will be asked to watch 2 other classmate's interviews and provide them with feedback or follow up questions.

Knowledge Checks: There will be two (2) knowledge checks throughout the course. Knowledge checks will ask you to apply the concepts learned in class to current events or media. You will be given advance notice when a knowledge check is going to take place. Please note that it would be in your best interest NOT to miss the knowledge checks. In an attempt to be fair to all students, note that only university excused absences (e.g., death in the family, severe illness with a doctor's excuse, car accident with documented pictures) will result in excused absences from knowledge checks. **If you miss the knowledge checks without a reason that the instructor has approved in advance and in writing, you will receive an F (0 points).**

Photo Journal Portfolio: For your final paper, you will complete a photo journal portfolio that documents your on-going reflection and application of course material to your everyday lives. The goal of this assignment is for you to connect course content to your own observations, thoughts, feelings, personal experiences with masculinity.

For each week of the course, you will:

1. Take or create one photo that demonstrates the course topic(s) for the week.
2. Complete a one-to-two-page reflection on each photo, apply class concepts, and share your observations of masculinity as it relates to the course concepts. Each reflection should include the following:
 - a. Describe what is going on in the photo(s) you captured or created.
 - b. Apply the photo(s) to one course concept. Define and discuss the course concept in detail and be sure to include in-text citations for your definition. Use primary sources (i.e., research articles, book chapters) only. Do NOT cite course lectures. Feel free to bring in outside research and readings (i.e., readings not required for the course) if needed.
 - c. Share your thoughts on the observation you captured or the picture you created and how it shapes your understanding or experience of masculinity.
 - d. Based on your observations of masculinity as captured by your photos, what can the field of psychology do to improve the lives and mental health of men and/or people who interact with men?

Based on these guidelines, your portfolio should consist of 5 photos and 5-10 pages of written material (not including cover page or reference page).