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AASP 498M/AMST 498D
Black Masculinities
Spring 2012
JMP 3216
TTh, 12:30-1:45

My country needs me, and if I were not here, I would have to be invented.—Hortense Spillers

I am eager to burn this threadbare masculinity, this perpetual black suit I have outgrown.—Essex Hemphill

Black Masculinity suffers not just from overrepresentation, but oversimplification, demonization and (at times) utter incomprehension.—Thelma Golden

This course introduces students to black masculinities within America. Through an exploration of critical writings, literature, films, and performances from slavery to the present, we will gain a broad, but valuable insight into the complicated relationship between black male identity and American manhood. Our course focuses on understanding black masculinity as lived and represented. As we encounter various voices and versions of the black masculine, we will be using both our critical writing and reading skills to further our understanding of black male performances of gender.

Required Readings:
Jackson, Ronald
Scripting the Black Masculine Body: Identity, Discourse, and Racial Politics in Popular Media
Neal, Mark Anthony
New Black Man
McCraney, Alvin Tarell
The Brothers Size (to be sent as PDF—to be used FOR

All texts are available in the University of Maryland Bookstore. Additional readings are available, in a course packet, to be uploaded weekly on ELMS (www.elms.umd.edu). All Films will be put on reserve in the Multimedia Center and should be viewed before the class meeting to which they are assigned.

Requirements:
1.) Critical Responses (20%) Students are responsible, EVERY MW by 5pm submit a 1-2 paragraph response to the reading and/or visual texts, as a thread on ELMS. Before class by 9am on TTH, students should have responded to AT LEAST one of their peers' critical responses. Please remember that it is most important that you demonstrate your
engagement with the author(s) arguments and/or ideas. Make sure it has received proper proof-reading; it may help to read it aloud, to ensure clarity.

2.) **Group Project** (15%): This assignment entails groups of 5-7 students identifying a theme researching a topic on black masculinity and sharing their findings with the class. These presentations should be well-prepared, demonstrate rigorous research methods, and illustrate their wealth of knowledge on the subject. The projects can discuss implications and significance of a literary text, close readings of media texts, a surveying of images, etc. These projects (e.g. a critical performance, power point, "expert" panel) must be no more than 20 minutes in length. Each group will entertain discussion, soliciting questions from the class and professor after the presentation. **A short proposal of project must be given to me by the Thursday of Week Seven.**

3.) **Pop Quizzes** (30%): 5 impromptu examinations of your reading comprehension.

4.) **Final Exam** (30%): This will be a take-home written assignment. You will be given three questions and are required to write 3-5 pages in response to each question. This is a comprehensive exam, which helps you to pull all readings together, as well as in-class conversations, discussion, or visual materials.

5.) **Attendance & Participation** (5%): Attendance is a MUST! You are expected to be in every class. It is very difficult to participate when one is not present.

**ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS**
If you have a documented disability, you should contact Disability Support Services 0126 Shoemaker Hall. Each semester students with documented disabilities should apply to DSS for accommodation request forms that you can provide to your professors as proof of your eligibility for accommodations. Please do so right away if this applies to you. Unfortunately, accommodations cannot be retroactive. The rules for eligibility and the types of accommodations a student may request can be reviewed on the DSS web site: [http://www.counseling.umd.edu/DSS/receiving_serv.html](http://www.counseling.umd.edu/DSS/receiving_serv.html).

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**
All students are responsible for abiding by the terms of the UMCP Code of Academic Integrity. It is available on the web [http://www.inform.umd.edu/CampusInfo/Departments/JPO](http://www.inform.umd.edu/CampusInfo/Departments/JPO). Honesty is a necessity of intellectual inquiry and passing off other people’s ideas or expressions as your own is plagiarism. The UMCP Code of Academic Integrity defines plagiarism as “intentionally or knowingly representing the words or ideas of another as one’s own in any academic exercise.” This means that you cannot copy from a book, a fellow student, or any other source, including the Internet, without complete and adequate citation. You cannot cut even a few words and paste them into an assignment if you did not write them yourself unless you put them in quotation marks and acknowledge the source. You cannot paraphrase someone else’s work without citation. And you must understand how to cite the work of others so that it does not even seem that you are passing off others’ interpretations as your own. If information from the Internet has no recognized source, do not use it. If you do not know how to cite your sources please visit the style manual resource page on the Purdue Owl Writing Lab,Website: [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/557/01/](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/557/01/) or make an appointment with the UMD writing center. Please include the Honor Pledge (written by hand) and sign all assignments, unless otherwise advised.
**Tentative Schedule**

**Week 1: Introducing Black Masculinities**

**Day I (Jan 26)**  
Introduction: Black Masculinities, What it is and Why it’s Plural?

**Week 2: Visions of Masculinities**

**Day I**  
Baldwin, “My Dungeon Shook: Letter to My Nephew on the One Hundredth Anniversary of the Emancipation” from Fire Next Time  
Williams, “Meditations on Masculinity” from Constructing Masculinity

**Day II**  
Kimmel, “Introduction” to Men’s Lives  
Marable, “The Black Male: Searching Beyond Stereotypes” from Men’s Lives

**Week 3: Early Black Masculinities**

**Day I**  
Bederman, Manliness and Civilization 1-41

**Day II**  
Bederman, “The White Man’s Civilization on Trial”: Ida B. Wells, Representations of Lynching, and Northern Middle-Class Manhood” from Manliness and Civilization

**Week 4: Constructing Black Manliness and Manhood**

**Day I**  
Jackson, Chapter 1 “Origins of Black Body Politics,” in Scripting the Black Masculine Body

**Day II**  
View: Excerpts from Birth of a Nation (in class)  
Jackson, Chapter 2 “Scripting the Black Body in Popular Media: Exploring Process” in Scripting the Black Masculine Body

**Week 5: Black Masculinity and Lynching**

**Day I**  
Jackson, Chapter 3 “Black Masculine Scripts” in Scripting the Black Masculine Body  
Brown, “Scripting the Black Masculine Athlete: Donovan McNabb and the Double Bind of Black Masculinity

**Day II**  
Alexander, “Can You Be Black and Look at This?: Reading the Rodney King Video(s),” from The Black Interior
Week 6: “New Negro” Politics and its Role in Shaping the Black Masculine

Day I
Locke, “The New Negro” from The New Negro
Booker, “Marcus Garvey and the New Negro Man,” from “I Will Wear No Chain!”

Day II
View: Looking for Langston (in class)
Bennett, “Multiple Passings and the Double Death of Langston Hughes”

Week 7: Black Protest, Black Nationalism

Day I
Kelley, “The Riddle of the Zoot Suit: Malcolm Little and Black Cultural Politics During World War II” from Race Rebels: Culture, Politics, and the Black Working-Class

Day II
View: Get On The Bus
Reid-Pharr, “It’s Raining Men: Notes on the Million Man March” in Traps

Proposal of Group Project Due 5 pm.

Week 8: Coolness, Contemporary Manifestations of Masculinity, and the Post-Civil Rights Era Midterm

Day I
Billings and Major, “Cool Pose”, “Cool Pose and Masculinity from Cool Pose: The Dilemmas of Black Manhood in America
Jeffries, from a Cool complex to a Complex Cool

Day II
View: Black is Black Ain’t
Johnson, “The Pot is Brewing” from Appropriating Blackness: Performance and the Politics of Authenticity

Week 9: Black Male Sexuality

Day I

Day II
Harris, “Untitled”: D’Angelo and the Visualization of the Black Male Body
View: D’Angelo’s Untitled Video

Week 10: Black Men and Feminism

Day I
Neal, Intro, Chapter 1 & 2 in New Black Man

Day II
Neal, Chapter 3 & 4 in New Black Man

Week 11: Presentations

Day I (April 10)
Group Presentations

Day II (April 12)
Group Presentation

Week 12: Performance and Masculinity

Day I
McCraneey, The Brothers Size

Day II
McCraneey, The Brothers Size

Week 13: Black Men in Prison

Day I
Alexander, intro to The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness, “The New Jim Crow”
Hill and Abu-Jamal, “The Classroom and The Cell”

Day II
Shabazz, “So High You Can’t Get Over it, So Low You Can’t Get Under it: Carceral Spatiality and Black Masculinity in the United States and South Africa.”

Week 14: Hip-Hop and Black Masculinity

Day I
Brown, “Welcome to the TerrorDome”
Jackson, Chapter 4 “If it Feels This Good Getting' Used” in Scripting the Black Masculine Body
Neal, Chapter 5 in New Black Man
Day II
View: Beyond Beats and Rhymes

Week 15: Future Directions in Black Masculinity Studies

Day I (May 8)
View: Aggressives
Moore, “Gender Presentation"

Day II (May 10)
Jackson, Chapter 5 “Toward an Integrated Theory of Black Masculinity” in Scripting the Black Masculine Body
Neal, Afterword in New Black Man

Final Exam due on Finals Day by 3pm. No exceptions! Write Sooner and Write Well!

ENJOY THE COURSE!