RELIGION & MASCULINITY
MW, 11:00-12:15
Friday 1
RELS 3050/WGST 3050

Kent L. Brintnall
kbrintna@uncc.edu
704.687.3736
Office Hours: Wed., 1:00-2:30 and by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION
Masculinity can be defined as the normative performance of maleness. As an ideal, masculinity serves as a measuring stick against which the behavior of any particular male (or female) is judged. Religious discourses have been significant cultural forces in providing content to the masculine ideal. Given that most societies give power, authority and privileges to those considered appropriately masculine, it is important to think about how the content of “masculinity” is determined and how its performance is regulated. It is also significant to note that the masculine ideal has changed from one time period to the next and is variable from one culture to the next. In other words, “masculinity” is not something that men (or women) possess naturally, but rather is a quality ascribed to some men (and some women?) culturally. To think about masculinity, then, is to think about the cultural organization of power.

In this course, we will be thinking about how Christian discourses have shaped and been shaped by normative understandings of masculinity. As we will see, masculinity has not had a stable, single meaning for all of Christian history. In fact, we will see that the relation between masculinity and Christianity has been fraught with numerous tensions and complications. We will also explore how masculinity and its putative opposite—homoerotic desire—also exist in a complicated and tense relation. By examining masculinity historically and culturally, we will be better prepared to understand the complex relation between Christian discourses and gendered systems of power in our contemporary cultural moment.

GENERAL RESPONSIBILITY
I want every student to succeed in this class. In selecting readings, crafting assignments, setting a schedule and articulating expectations, I have tried to create a framework that will enable this. In presenting material and responding to assignments, I strive to be clear and give you guidance that will help you improve. I will not, however, hunt you down, or pester you, to make sure you are doing the work required of you. To succeed in this course, you must be proactive. This includes both doing the work outlined in the syllabus and taking initiative if problems arise. If you don’t understand something, if you are struggling with the material, if life is impinging on you, if the course itself or my teaching style is not working for you, please let me know. I will do what I can to help, but I am unable to help if I am do not know there is a problem.
EXPECTATIONS
Students are expected to (1) attend, and be on-time for, all class meetings; (2) read attentively all assigned readings prior to class; (3) participate actively and productively in discussion of the assigned material; (4) familiarize themselves with the syllabus; (5) take responsibility for fulfilling the requirements of the course; and (6) check their 49er Express e-mail accounts regularly for course announcements and personal communications from the instructor.

Students are **NOT** expected to agree with the views espoused by the instructor, the course materials or other students, but are expected to manage any disagreement respectfully and productively.

ATTENDANCE
Students are expected to attend, and be on-time for, all class meetings. *Every absence after two, for whatever reason, will result in a three-point deduction from your final grade. Every two instances of arriving late or leaving early will count as one absence.* If you are absent from class, you are responsible for getting any course announcements, lecture notes, handouts or assignments.

E-MAIL COMMUNICATION
I will communicate with you as a class and as individuals using the 49er Express e-mail system. You are responsible for checking this e-mail account and responding promptly to any e-mail requests.

CLASS DECORUM
(1) Be on time for class. If you must arrive late or leave early, please do so as unobtrusively as possible. (2) Cell phones must be turned off prior to class. If your cell phone rings, or if I observe you text-messaging during class, it will result in a full letter deduction in your grade for the course. (3) Computers may only used to take notes during class. If I observe you using your computer for any other purpose, it will result in a full letter deduction in your grade for the course.

REQUIRED TEXTS

*Additional readings will be made available through electronic reserve.*

*You should bring all relevant readings to class.*
SCHEDULE

Mon., Jan 11  Introduction

              KRONDORFER, xi-xxi [Björn Krondorfer, “Introduction”]
              KRONDORFER, 49-55 [Stephen Boyd, “Trajectories in Men’s Studies Religion”]

Mon., Jan 15  Martin Luther King Day – NO CLASS


UNIT ONE: Textual Representations

Mon., Jan 25  The Gospels
              Gospel of Mark (electronic reserve)
              Colleen M. Conway, *Behold the Man*, 3-14, 143-57 (electronic reserve)

Mon., Feb  1  The Apocalypse
              Selections from Revelation (to be distributed)

Monday, Feb 1: Guest Lecturer, Lynn Huber, Assistant Professor of Religious Studies and Coordinator of the Women’s and Gender Studies Program, Elon University
Mon., Feb 8
The Hebrew Bible
Selections from Genesis and Hosea (to be distributed)
KRONDORFER, 163-83 [Howard Eilberg-Schwartz, “Unmanning Israel”]

UNIT TWO: Historical Developments

Mon., Feb 15
Martrydom
“The Martyrdom of Perpetua,” “The Martyrdom of Polycarp” (to be distributed)
L. Stephanie Cobb, Dying to Be Men (New York: Columbia University Press), 60-91 (electronic reserve)
KRONDORFER, 235-58 [Mathew Kuefler, “Soldiers of Christ”]
KRONDORFER, 277-89 [Virginia Burrus, “Begotten, Not Made”]

***Unit One Paper due by 9AM, Tuesday, Feb 16

Mon., Feb 22
Monastic Life
Carolyn Walker Bynum, “... And Woman His Humanity’: Female Imagery in the Religious Writing of the Later Middle Ages,” in Fragmentation and Redemption, 151-80 (NY: Zone Press, 1991) (electronic reserve)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Class Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mon., Mar 1</td>
<td>Chastity &amp; Marriage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon., Mar 8</td>
<td>Spring Break – NO CLASS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wed., Mar 10</td>
<td>Spring Break – NO CLASS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**UNIT THREE: Twentieth & Twenty-First Century Meditations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Class Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mon., Mar 15</td>
<td>Film Week – NO CLASS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wed., Mar 17</td>
<td>Film Week – NO CLASS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This week you must watch <em>The Passion of the Christ</em> (Mel Gibson, 2004) and <em>Rambo: First Blood, Part II</em> (Goerge P. Cosmatos, 1985). Copies of the films will be placed on course reserve in Atkins Library by Monday, March 15.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em><strong>Film Analysis paper due by 5PM, Sunday, March 21.</strong></em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon., Mar 22</td>
<td><em>The Passion and Rambo</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em><strong>Unit Two Paper due by 9AM, Tuesday, Mar 23</strong></em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wed., Mar 31</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon., Apr 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon., Apr 26</td>
<td>Ex-Gay Masculinities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mon., May 3       Concluding Thoughts

***Unit Three paper due by 9AM, Tuesday, May 4
***Final paper due by 9AM, Tuesday, May 11

ASSIGNMENTS
You must submit your assignments by e-mail (kbrintna@uncc.edu). You must submit them as “.doc” or “.rtf” files (Word documents), not “.docx” files. Assignments submitted in formats I cannot open will be graded at my discretion.

All assignments should be double-spaced, in a 12-point font, with 1-inch margins. No late papers will be accepted.

Your assignments are evaluated, in part, on the quality of your writing. You should privilege depth over breadth in your writing. It is better to address a small point, and do it well, than to try something grand, and do it superficially. I am not asking you to be comprehensive and exhaustive, but I expect you to provide sufficient detail to flesh out generalizations and to show some kind of mastery about the topic on which you choose to write. Most importantly, your writing should be accurate, and thoughtful. Remember you will not be in the room when I am reading your paper, so what you put on the page must be a clear, complete and precise statement of your ideas.

Your writing should be free of spelling, grammatical and typographical mistakes, and should include accurate and adequate citations. Failure to correct writing mistakes I note in one assignment in subsequent assignments will negatively influence my evaluation of your work. I rely on Kate L. Turabian’s Manual for Writers (7th edition) to resolve questions about punctuation, grammar and style. If you have questions in these areas, please consult part III of Turabian’s Manual (or some other reputable grammar handbook). The Department of Religious Studies’ writing guidelines (www.religiousstudies.uncc.edu/research/writingguide.htm) provide sample citation forms. You may use parenthetical citations instead, but make sure you use them properly.

You should familiarize yourself with and conform your conduct to the University’s Code of Student Academic Integrity. Plagiarism on any assignment will result in a failing grade for the course.
**Unit Papers** (25% each)
You must write a 4-6 page paper for two of the three units of the course. These papers are due by 9AM on February 16, March 23, and May 4 respectively.

These papers should consider some topic raised by, or related to, the material from that unit of the course. You should identify a question, a period, an author, a text or a movement from that interests you and explore it in more detail. You are expected to consult materials outside those considered in class as part of this assignment.

**Final Paper** (40%)
You must write an 8-10 page research paper at the conclusion of the course. This paper is due by 9AM on May 11.

This paper should select some topic raised by, or related to, the material from the course. You may not treat a topic that has been the subject of one of your unit analysis papers. You should identify a question, a period, an author, a text or a movement that interests you and explore it in more detail. These papers can provide comparisons; they can pull in issues not considered in the course. You are expected to consult materials outside those considered in class as part of this assignment. You will be evaluated, in part, on the depth and breadth of your research related to your topic.

A 1-2 page proposal for this paper will be due by noon on April 20. It should provide a brief description of the paper and a provisional bibliography. The proposal is an informal document that allows me to give you feedback on your paper idea; it will not be graded.

**Film Analysis** (10%)
You must write a 3-4 page analysis of the two films we watch for the course. This paper is due by 5PM, March 21.

This paper should discuss the two films and the two articles relating to them. It should provide a sufficient summary of the films demonstrate that you have watched them, thought about the issues they raise related to the course as well as the questions asked about them by the articles assigned for the class. The papers will not receive a letter grade: if you show you’ve engaged the relevant materials, you will receive full credit; if not, you will receive no credit.
GRADE DESCRIPTIONS

A  Exceptional work. Careful, accurate, complete, sympathetic interpretation of the text(s). General observations supported by specific detail from the text(s) under analysis. Contains a strong and clear thesis. Contributes something particularly interesting, unique or creative above and beyond class materials and discussion. Clear and well-organized writing free of grammatical, spelling and stylistic errors.

B  Strong work. Attentive to the most significant details of the text(s). Conversant with the themes, questions and issues of the course. Has an obvious main point. Presents a reasonable interpretation supported by sufficient evidence. Clear and well-organized writing free of serious grammatical, spelling and stylistic errors.

C  Acceptable work with some problems. Fails to understand the text(s) on some points, or presents an incomplete explanation of them. Fails to show comprehension of the themes, questions and issues of the course. Has an unclear or unsupported thesis. Analysis may proceed at too general a level. Writing unclear in places, lacks a clear structure or has numerous grammatical, spelling and stylistic errors. Fails to show a progressive improvement in analytic precision over previous assignments.

D  Work with serious problems. Analysis proceeds at a very general level. Analysis gets significant details wrong or ignores issues that are inconsistent with the paper’s main point. Discussion fails to engage the course materials. Significant problems with the clarity or organization of the writing. Significant issues with grammar, spelling or style. Repetition of writing errors noted in prior papers.

F  Unacceptable work.

Given these standards, most students get B-range grades on most of their papers, especially those submitted near the beginning of the course. A handful of students will do A work, and another handful of students will do C work. Only rarely do students submit work that merits a D or F. If you come to class, participate in discussion, work hard on your assignments and improve over the course of the semester, I will take that into consideration when translating your individual assignment grades into a course grade.