COMPARATIVE MASCULINITIES: CATEGORIES AND PROCESSES

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:
This course invites students to ethnographically and theoretically explore the meanings and practices of gender and masculinity in Europe and the Middle East. The course will examine gender-related social phenomena including literary and artistic forms with a view to arriving at a critical and comparative understanding of formations of masculinity. The lectures, discussions and readings will focus on Middle Eastern cultures (both Arab and non-Arab) as well as on Mediterranean cultures (such as Spain, Greece, Italy, Portugal and Nicaragua). The course will also involve a focus on the gendered dimensions of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and relevant socio-cultural processes within and between the Israeli and Palestinian societies. Analytically, the course will focus on the following themes: modernization and the patriarchal crisis; femininity, homosexuality and hegemonic masculinity; nationalism and masculinity; postcoloniality and masculinity; masculinity and militarism; religion (Islam, Christianity and Judaism), fundamentalism and gender.

LEARNING OUTCOMES AND COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

This course is an introductory class to masculinity studies. Students should be registered to Key Issues in Social and Cultural Anthropology and Key Issues in Social Theory. By the end of the term students should be able to analyze masculinity as a relational mode and identify the modus operandi of gender practices and discourses. Distinguishing between masculinity as collective category and masculinity as individual subjectivity, students should be able to use examples from Mediterranean cultures and history to assess the processes that reconfigure patriarchal power.

[1] Careful preparation of assigned readings by the date on which they are to be discussed in class. Class discussion will require informed participation on the part of all.

[2] Submission via email to all participating students by 8PM each Thursday of a substantive discussion question on the then-current reading material for potential use in class discussion on Friday.

NOTE: A discussion question, to stimulate discussion, not to close it off, is concise; it is not just a declaration of a [= your] position, though in its formulation you probably reveal a positioned perspective on issues. A discussion question properly emerges, in reading, from your perceiving that there is an issue needing exploration or clarification,
perhaps to resolve or at least confront problematic concepts or analyses in one or another of the current week’s readings. It can involve as well the concurrent or contrastive positions on an issue you may see in two of the readings, the nature of that concurrence or contrast being perhaps in question in some way. A (very!) short quotation or citation (with page reference) is generally useful to orient discussion of the point, since it gives a textual location to the issue. The text of the question as formulated should make clear what is being sought in the way of responses; avoid such formats as: “’[Quote].’ Discussion” – and the like.

**GRADE:**
Reading and Participation (including class presentations): 35%
Mid-term paper: 20%
Final Research Paper: 45%

**CLASS FORMAT:**
We will begin each class with an introductory lecture that treats the themes and readings for that week. The second part should function to promote class discussion and student-led conversation about the various reading assignments and other materials. Distinguishing between masculinity as category and masculinity as subjectivity, students should be able to identify the modus operandi of gender practices and discourses. Examples

**Theme I: Introduction – Masculinity Studies**
Key Concepts: Definition of Masculinity; Gender Relationality; Theory of Practice; Sex Roles; Structuralism and Categorical Theory; Nature/Culture; Gendered Cosmology; The Crisis of Masculinity; Cultural Relativism; Essentialism; Women’s Studies/Second Wave Feminism

Theme II: Sexual Representations of the Middle East and the Mediterranean
Key Concepts: Orientalism and Post-Orientalism; Discourse; Knowledge/Power; Alterity/Otherness; Strangeness; Stereotypes; Harem; Fixity; Binarism; Sexual Geographies.


Theme III: Modernization in the Middle East – the Crisis of Patriarchy
Key Concepts: Modernization; Patriarchy and Neopatriarchy; Sexual Division of Labor; Feminization; Private Sphere/Public Sphere; Authoritarianism; Dependency; Imperialism; Kinship Systems; Patrilocality/ Patrilineality; Extended Family.


Theme IV: Hegemonic Masculinities and Subordinate Identities
Key Concepts: Homosociality; Indirectness; Machismo; Homophobia; Rites of Passage; Hypermasculity; Unconscious Schemata; Hanan; Fina; Muru’a; Mediterranean Masculinity; Masculine Doxa; Somatization of Domination; Honor/Shame; Masculine Habitus and Hexit; Symbolic Violence; Passive/Active.

General Reading: Western and Middle Eastern Notions of Masculinity and Power

Femininities:
• Mernissi, F., 1975. Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in a Modern Muslim Society. Cambridge, Mass.: Schenkman. [Chapters 1,2 and Conclusions; Recommended Chapter 6].

Hegemonic Masculinities in the Circum Mediterranean:
• Vale de Almeida, M., 1996. The Hegemonic Male: Masculinity in a Portuguese Town. Bergham Books: Oxford. [Chapter 4 and 5; Recommended Chapter 6 and the whole book]

Hegemonic Masculinities in Arab Cultures:


Homosexualities:


**Theme V: Masculinity in the Military and Other Institutional Settings**

Micro-power; Technologies of Docility (Foucault); Resistance; Blue-Collar Masculinities; Women Fighters; Combat Schemata; Homosociality.


**Theme VI: Masculinity and Nationalism**

Gender Polarization; Male Melancholia; Stereotypes of Normativity; Countertype of Masculinity; Longing for Heterosexuality; The New Jew; Muscle Jewry; Rituals of Resistance; Identity Strategies.

• Mosse, G., 1996. *The Image of Man: the Creation of Modern Masculinity* NY: Oxford University Press. [Read chapters 4, 8, and 9].

Theme VII: Postcolonial Masculinities
Race as Signifier of Sexuality; Split Subject; Colonial Ambivalence; Redemption by Violence; Anti-colonial Machismo; Intermarriage; Hybrid Masculinities; Masculinity as Alienation; Dis-alienation; Phallocentric Ideology.
• Fanon, F. (1967) “The Man of Color and the White Woman” in Black Skin, White Masks NY: Grove Press. [Chapter 3; Recommended Chapter 2 and 5].

Theme VIII: Religion, ‘Fundamentalism’ and Gender
Bedouin Love (al-hub al-badawi) and Urban Love (al-hub al-hadari); Wives and Anti-Wives (Concubines); Sexual Alienation; Dialectic of the Sexual, the Sacral and the Social; Inheritance Laws; Un Etat de Désamour; Carnal Israel; the “Penis” and the “Phallus”; Talmudic Masculinities.
• Riesebrodt, M., “Fundamentalism and the Political Mobilization of Women” In Said Arjomand (ed.) The Political Dimensions of Religion SUNY Press.
• Hawley, 1994. Fundamentalism and Gender NY: Oxford University Press.

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Films:

- “Tough Guise” (Stephen Katz, US)
- “Wedding in Galilee” (Michael Khleifi, Palestine)
- “Man of Ashes” (Nouri Bouzid, Tunisia)
- “Yossi and Jagger” (Avner Bernheimer, Israel)
- “Leila” (Dariush Mehrjui, Iran)
- “Swept Away” (Guy Ritchie, US)
- “Atash-Thirst” (Tawfiq Abu Wa’il, Israel/Palestine)
- Lady Kul al-Arab (Israel)