

F500: Men in Education and the Male Teacher

Spring 2008

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Time: M 5:30p – 8:45p
Room: ED 1201
Hours: By appt.

Course Overview

This course will investigate the lack of male teachers in the United States, especially in the elementary grades. A number of common issues emerge within the existing literature on men in education, which will divide the course into **four** major themes. Both instructor and participants will explore the following issues collaboratively with regard to the male teacher dilemma:

- *Historical contributions and large-scale social changes*
- *Gender roles and the concept of masculinity*
- *Current status and experiences of male teachers*
- *Potential courses of action*

Ultimately, we will not be focused on achieving a specific mastery of content, per se. The instructor and course participants will be engaged in a collaborative process where we attempt to define the issues ourselves based on the relevant literature. There are several major claims about men in education that we will take into consideration. However, it will be up to us to decide if those particular issues affecting the lack of male teachers contribute to development of our own courses of action.

The course will be organized in a very collaborative and participatory fashion. Assignments will focus on our collective interpretations of the dearth of male teachers, which will result in written reflections and a final inquiry project. Throughout our group understanding of the significant themes of the course, it will be up to each individual student to decide if any issue is actionable enough to warrant social change. Do we need more male teachers and on what grounds? If so, how can we achieve that goal?

Course Readings

There is only one main text for this course:

Drudy, S., Martin, Maeve, Woods Mairide, and O'Flynn, John (2005). Men and the Classroom: Gender imbalances in teaching. London, Routledge.

The above text will help keep us somewhat grounded throughout the semester and is a good example of the many reviews of the male teacher issue – most of which done overseas – predicated upon a more progressive gender paradigm.

The remainder of the readings consists of selected articles and book chapters pertaining to each of the four central themes for the course and will be posted to **OnCourse**.

Course Assignments

Each meeting will rely on the discussion and synthesis of the readings. Careful consideration and analysis of the material is strongly encouraged in order to fully participate in the collaborative nature of the course structure.

Most assignments will consist of written analysis and reflection based on the readings and class discussions. Please utilize conventional formatting, proofreading, and citation guidelines for these assignments. Additionally, it is preferable that writing assignments be submitted **electronically** by the respective deadline.

Participation is divided into four modalities worth a quarter of the final grade for the course. They are as follows:

- 1. Discussion Briefs:** you will be asked to complete a brief narrative analysis of each of the four themes that organize the course. Each brief will consist of your interpretations and experiences with regard to the issues and ideas arising from class discussions and course readings. The written briefs will be due the week after we conclude work on a particular unit. Although the briefs will be loosely based on each of the four central themes of the course, more precise issues to be included will emerge from our discussions in class. As the semester progresses, we will collectively highlight such important details as they emerge that will help focus your narrative analyses.
- 2. Discussion Preparations:** your readings for particular weeks throughout the semester will come from a list of materials from which you will be able to choose. In preparation for weeks where those 'choice' readings are due, you will be asked to prepare a very brief and informal discussion of the readings you chose, such as summary details, significant findings, and perhaps limitations or points of contention. No formal notes or handouts are required; just come prepared to tell us about the readings you chose and ask us a question or two about them.
- 3. Final Project/Presentation:** you will be asked to complete a final project or presentation to conclude our semester together. The precise details and format of this assignment are forthcoming, which we will be planning and develop during class meetings. Although the logistics of the assignment have yet to be detailed, the project will focus on potential social actions or policy interventions that would lead to more male teachers and overall a more diverse teaching profession.
- 4. Attendance and Participation:** your regular attendance and active participation are encouraged and will be crucial to a successful semester. Hopefully, the manner in which the course is designed and its collaborative nature will give

everyone the opportunity to see the male teacher issue in unique ways and be able to make significant contributions to our collective understanding of the problem at hand. In addition to being prepared for each meeting, it will be further beneficial to synthesize the course readings as a whole and consider how they contribute overall to the male teacher issue and the teaching profession.

Course Outline

The structure of the course relies heavily upon a methodology that encourages discussion and collaboration as a group. Readings provide the requisite background information for issues that will be discussed in class. As mentioned previously, resources and activities are organized around four central themes regarding men in education.

The entire course will consist of four roughly three-week cycles that each culminates with research activities particular to that cycle’s overall theme. These sessions are vital to the participatory and interactive methods that are the foundation of this course. Participants will also be able to review and reflect on material and other issues presented.

During these research sessions, students and the instructor will collaboratively develop a conceptual outline of our thoughts regarding each major thematic strand, which will include both small and large group reflections and discussions. Ideas with regard to a central question will be collected, categorized, and labeled. Approximate relationships between the categories will be determined so that a visual representation, or system, of our thinking is presented for all to examine and review. Each of the four research sessions throughout the semester will contribute cumulatively to a larger conceptual map of our thinking with regard to the lack of men in education.

Course Outline		
<i>Readings listed are assigned for that meeting</i>		
Theme One: Historical Contributions and Social Change		
Date	Topic	Readings
1/7	<i>Introduction to the Course and Research Model</i>	
1/14	<i>History of Teaching and ‘feminization’</i>	Drudy (2005) – Chapter 1; Rury (1989); Albisetti (1993); and Bardeen (1908)
1/21	No Meeting: MLK Day	
1/28	<i>Alternate Histories and Research Activities</i>	Drudy (2005) – Chapter 2 and Apple (1988) Choose three from <i>Theme One</i> list

Theme Two: Gender Roles and Masculinity		
2/4	<i>Men's Studies and Male Teachers</i>	Drudy (2005) – Chapter 3; Newton (2002); Brod (1987); and Kimmel (2006) DUE: Discussion Brief 1
2/11	<i>Hegemonic Masculinity</i>	Donaldson (1993); Connell (1995); Demetriou (2001); and Pleck (1981)
2/18	<i>Masculinity at School and Research Activities</i>	Drudy (2005) – Chapter 4 Choose three from <i>Theme Two</i> list
Theme Three: Current Status and Experiences of Male Teachers		
2/25	<i>En Route to Teaching (Or Not)</i>	Foster & Newman (2005); Thornton & Bricheno (2006); Carrington (2002); and Goodman (1987) DUE: Discussion Brief 2
3/3	<i>Experiences on the Job</i>	Cushman (2005); Sargent (2000); Sumison (1999); and Williams (1992)
3/10	No Meeting: Spring Break	
3/17	<i>Effects of Teacher Gender and Research Activities</i>	Drudy (2005) – Chapters 5 & 6 Choose three from <i>Theme Three</i> list
Theme Four: Potential Courses of Action		
3/24	<i>The 'Call' for More Men</i>	Hoff-Summers (2000); King & Gurian (2006); Mead (2006); and Lingard & Douglas (1999) DUE: Discussion Brief 3
3/31	<i>Recruitment and Retention</i>	Drudy (2005) – Chapter 7; Cunningham & Watson (2002); Carrington & Tomlin (2000); and Mills et. al. (2004)
4/7	<i>Gender Justice, Democracy, and Research Activities</i>	Drudy (2005) – Chapter 8; Gutmann (1988) – excerpt Choose three from <i>Theme Four</i> list
Planning and Discussion for Final Inquiry Project		

4/14	<p><i>No Readings or special topics: discuss final project and presentation, concluding remarks, and course evaluations</i></p> <p>DUE: Discussion Brief 4</p>
4/21	<p><i>Plan Final Presentation for This Week</i></p>

As mentioned previously, the course is divided into four major themes or units of over three class sessions. Readings, activities, and discussions will be geared to those themes. Brief detail with regard to each unit is as follows:

Historical Contributions and Social Change: women have not always dominated the teacher workforce. Throughout our country's history, schoolmasters and other male educators were a common sight. However, as early as 1870, a 'feminization' of the teaching profession and a 'masculinization' of educational leadership was firmly in place. It is precisely these historical antecedents that will be discussed so that we can approach a fuller understanding of the current situation concerning male teachers.

Gender Roles and Masculinity: feminist scholarship over the last few decades challenged conventional discourse on gender and sexuality by suggesting a more fluid set of gender relations in lieu of the traditional masculine and feminine binary. In more recent years, a new set of empirical literature emerged specifically devoted to the study of masculinity. We will discuss the relevance of these issues to the lack of men in education and discover how pro-feminist goals can lead to more male teachers.

Current Status and Experiences of Male Teachers: the academic literature presents a number of reasons why men do not teach, such as teaching's low professional status and low salary. There are other reasons, however, that have to do with how mainstream society assigns roles for men and women. For instance, teaching is perceived as a natural fit to a woman's biological ability to nurture children. We will attempt to understand the various factors that discourage men from teaching, their unique experiences on the job, and how this information may be used to make teaching a more diverse profession.

Potential Courses of Action: parents, teachers, and various educational leaders argue that more male teachers are necessary without being able to point to conclusive evidence that the gender of the teacher matters. The call for more male teachers seems to strike a commonsense chord with most people without the need for empirical evidence. We will evaluate the various calls for more male teachers and assess proposed initiatives to get more men into classrooms. As a group, we will utilize our previous discussions to decide what interventions are possible and design potential courses of action.