

PD Dr. Stefan Brandt

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Swashbucklers, Brutes, and Muscular Christians

The Remasculinization of American Literature and Culture (1875-1925)

Course description:

Recent cultural criticism has shown that the modern «tough guy» hero and the Western code of cold-blooded masculinity are, in fact, modern cultural constructions, shaped by the discourse of anti-genteel and anti-feminist writing around the turn of the 20th century. This course will examine under which historical and cultural circumstances the modern «code» of masculinity emerged in the United States. We will start by taking a look at the ideological roots of this reorientation in the 1870s to 1880s, then move on to the aesthetics of masculinist writing in the naturalist period from the 1890s to the



1900s, and finally explore the overall effects on American literature and culture, especially on the hard-boiled genre in the 1910s to 1920s. While the seminar focuses on negotiations of the masculinist backlash in literature (Stephen Crane, Frank Norris, Jack London, Owen Wister, Ernest Hemingway), we will also delve into other discourses, such as painting



(Thomas Anshutz, Thomas Eakins), non-fictional writing (Frank Norris, Theodore Roosevelt), and photography (Eadweard Muybridge). The main goal of the course is to gain deeper insights into

the function and aesthetics of the masculine paradigm shift at the *fin de siècle* and understand the inherent dynamic and performativity of modern gender codes. The course will be held in English.

Credit requirements: Regular attendance and thoughtful participation in class (30%), an oral presentation as part of an expert group (30%), and a final paper (40%).

Required reading: A course reader will be available at the start of the semester.

Seminar papers: The seminar paper will be 17 to 20 pages long. It will make an original argument about one or more of the texts we've been reading, present this argument coherently and logically, and use both close readings of the text(s) and secondary sources to support it. Every paper should include a «works cited» list of at least six secondary sources. The paper is due March 31, 2006.

! Note: There is no extension of this deadline. Late essays will not be accepted!

<i>1st session:</i>	<i>Tue</i>	<i>November 01, 2005</i>	<i>11:30-13:00</i>	<i>2/NK004</i>
<i>2nd session:</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>December 16, 2005</i>	<i>10:30-17:00</i>	<i>2/N106</i>
<i>3rd session:</i>	<i>Sat</i>	<i>December 17, 2005</i>	<i>10:30-17:00</i>	<i>2/B102</i>
<i>4th session:</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>February 03, 2006</i>	<i>10:30-17:00</i>	<i>2/N106</i>
<i>5th session:</i>	<i>Sat</i>	<i>February 04, 2006</i>	<i>10:30-17:00</i>	<i>2/B102</i>

SYLLABUS

01. Nov. 2005 Introduction: Manliness at the *Fin de siècle*

16. Dez. 2005 Victorianism and Its Discontents

10:30-12:00 Masculinity in Crisis: The Historical and Cultural Background

Main text: Michael S. Kimmel, "The Contemporary 'Crisis' of Masculinity in Historical Perspective" (1987), pp. 121-153.

Additional text: Michael S. Kimmel, "Masculinity as Homophobia" (1994), pp. 119-141.

12:00-12:15 Short Break

12:15-13:00 The 'Feminization' of American Culture

Main texts: Susan Warner, *The Wide, Wide World* (1850) (Chapter 1), 1-7.

Frank Norris, "Why Woman Should Write the Best Novels" (1901), pp. 231-38.

Additional text: Ann Douglas, *The Feminization of American Culture* (1998) (Introd.), pp. 3-13.

13:00-14:00 Lunch Break

14:00-15:30 The Paradigm Shift: The 'Masculine Principle' in American Fiction

Main texts: James L. Allen, "Two Principles in Recent American Fiction" (1987), pp. 433-41.

Stephen Crane, "The Blue Hotel" (1896), pp. 322-46.

Additional text: John Higham, "The Reorientation of American Culture in the 1890s" (1970), pp. 63-102.

15:30-15:45 Short Break

15:45-17:00 Victorian Manhood and the Visual Arts

Main text: Martin A. Berger, "Negotiation Victorian Manhood: Thomas Eakins and the Rowing Works" (1994), pp. 1-17.

Additional text: Melissa Dabakis, "The Erotics of the Laboring Body: Douglas Tilden's *Mechanics Fountain*" (1999), pp. 83-104.

17. Dez. 2005 Masculinity and Whiteness: Remaking Manhood Through Race

10:30-12:00 Gender, Race, and Civilization

Main text: Thomas Dixon, *The Clansman: An Historical Romance of the Ku Klux Klan* (1905) (Chapters XI and XII), pp. 165-86.

Additional text: Gail Bederman, *Manliness & Civilization* (Chapter 1), pp. 1-44.

12:00-12:15 Short Break

12:15-13:00 The Survival of the Fittest: The Lure of Darwin and Spencer

Main texts: Jack London, "The Strength of the Strong" (1908), pp. 273-286.

Additional text: Mark Seltzer, *Bodies and Machines* (1992) (Chapter "The Love-Master"), pp. 149-172.

13:00-14:00 Lunch Break

14:00-16:00 MCTEAGUE (Erich v. Stroheim, 1923), Film Screening

16:00-16:15 Short Break

16:15-17:00 Savage Realism: The Fascination of the Primitive

Main text: David Shi, "Savage Realism" (1995), pp. 212-222.

03. Feb. 2006 The Ideology of the 'Strenuous Life'

10:30-12:00 "Let's get physical": Living the Strenuous Life

Main texts: Theodore Roosevelt, "The Strenuous Life" (1899), pp. 1-21.

T. Roosevelt, "The Manly Virtues and Practical Politics" (1894), pp. 40-49.

Additional texts: Harvey Green, *Fit for America: Health, Fitness, Sport, and American Society* (Chapter "Living the Strenuous Life"), pp. 219-58.

Theodore Roosevelt, "Manhood and Statehood" (1901), 245-259.

12:00-12:15 Short Break

12:15-13:00 Old and New Frontiers: Challenges to American Manhood

Main text: Frank Norris, "The Frontier Gone At Last" (1902), pp. 69-81.

13:00-14:00 Lunch Break

14:00-15:30 Sentimentalism vs. Hardboiled Literature

Main text: Jack London, *The Sea Wolf* (Chapters 20-24) (1904), pp. 120-41.

Additional text: Mark Seltzer, *Bodies and Machines* (Chapter “The Love-Master”) (1992), pp. 149-172 (text can be found in the slot for the Darwin/Spencer session above).

15:30-15:45 Short Break

15:45-17:00 Realism, Romanticism, Naturalism

Main text: Frank Norris, “A Plea for Romantic Fiction” (1901), pp. 213-220.

04. Feb. 2006 Going Primitive: Men and Beasts

10:30-12:00 The Nature Revival: The American Landscape as a New Frontier

Main text: Owen Wister, *The Virginian: A Horseman of the Plains* (1901).

Additional text: Frank Norris, “The ‘Nature’ Revival in Literature” (1903), pp. 137-43.

12:00-12:15 Short Break

12:15-13:00 Edgar Rice Burroughs and the Male Savage Hero

Main text: Gail Bederman, “Tarzan and After” (1995), pp. 217-39.

13:00-14:00 Lunch Break

14:00-15:15 TARZAN OF THE APES (1918), Film Screening

16:00-16:15 Short Break

16:15-17:00 Back to Nature: American Literature and the Search for the Primitive

Main text: Ernest Hemingway, “Big Two-Hearted River” (1925), pp. 209-32.

Additional text: Ernest Hemingway, “The Light of the World” (1933), pp. 39-46.