



GSS 341 • Benson Zhou

## Global Masculinities

This course addresses the social construction of masculinity from a global and comparative perspective. Masculinity as an academic concept refers to more than traditional “manliness” or virility. The term also mediates gendered relations among men, between men and women, and among subjects who do or do not subscribe to fixed or binary understandings of gender. Thus, the first goal of this course is to deconstruct the term “men” as a universal and undifferentiated category and to spotlight the diverse dimensions of men’s lives. The second objective of this seminar is to contest a singular and Western-centered paradigm to understand man, maleness, and masculinity. Across various cultures, there are different cultural codes to define an ideal man. Who is considered masculine? What kind of attributes or behavior are regarded as masculine? By whom? What sort of men possess power and, conversely, what forms of power construct “men” as a category or are presumed to flow naturally or directly from masculinity? Cross-cultural experiences among men offer more than one answer to these questions. Thus, throughout the quarter, we will address scholarship focusing on Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, Latin America, and North America. That said, the class is not organized around separate “units” based in specific geographies. Instead, each section of the course devotes itself to a particular concept or question related to masculinity and will comprise readings addressing different locales around the world. In the first week, this seminar focuses on “varieties of masculinities” to contextualize multiple ways to be “real men” in distinct cultures. In the following weeks, we explore how other categories shape men’s daily lives and the meanings of being men. Readings will shed light on how masculinities intersect with notions of family, class and labor, race, colonialism, health, violence, etc. In the last weeks, since masculinity “in crisis” seems to be common cultural phenomena in both Western and non-Western nations, we will shift our focus to discussing why masculinity is precarious and how masculinity has been challenged. Readings will cover topics on female masculinity and male femininity, same-sex relations and masculinities, and new boundaries of masculinity. By the end of the quarter, students are expected to understand similarities and differences of masculinities in distinct cultures.

Tu/Th 11:00-12:30 PM, Parkes 212