STUDENT AFFAIRS PROFESSIONALS TEACHING IN HIGHER EDUCATION: A DECONSTRUCTION OF A *MEN AND MASCULINITIES* COURSE

A Dissertation
by
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Abstract

STUDENT AFFAIRS PROFESSIONALS TEACHING IN HIGHER EDUCATION: A DECONSTRUCTION OF A *MEN AND MASCULINITIES* COURSE

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The purpose of my study was to use the framework of feminist poststructuralism and Derrida's ongoing process of deconstruction to examine how men who teach men and masculinities courses negotiated their own masculinity while teaching their course. In doing this deconstruction, I exposed the fragility of meaning in the men and masculinities classroom and the fluidity of the instructor's complicity with and disruption of traditional, hegemonic masculinity.

I used deconstruction and Jackson and Mazzei's *Thinking with Theory* (2012) as a starting point in order to view and re-see the transcripts of semi-structured interviews with self-identified cisgender men who teach men and masculinities courses at public, four year, higher educational institutions.

By using my research questions to learn about the participants' personal histories and how those personal histories influence the masculinities discourses privileged in the classroom, this study sought to reveal how these discourses were privileged. Additionally, this research

sought out to demonstrate that the men and masculinities class is needed, yet needed to be troubled at the same time, showing its frailty and incompleteness.

Additionally, through feminist poststructural analysis, specific strategies of instructors remaining complicit with traditional hegemonic masculinity and disrupting traditional, hegemonic masculinity allowed for them to convey a message that is, ultimately, hopeful of disruption of masculinity's norms and grand narratives.

This research ultimately ends with the implications and recommendations for future educators and higher education leaders having the recommendations being presented as a way of opening of knowledge and opening new opportunities in the men and masculinities classroom.

Keywords search terms: *alecia jackson, appalachian state university, complicity, crystallizations, deconstruction, disruption, education, feminist, feminist poststructuralism, gender studies, hegemonic masculinity, higher education, leadership, leadership education, lisa a. mazzei, masculinities, masculinity, men's studies, refractions, semi-structured interviews, teaching, thinking with theory*

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Additionally, I would like to thank the University of Nebraska - Lincoln, Appalachian State University, Northern Kentucky University, and Xavier University for providing so many opportunities to question policy, advocate for students, and disrupt institutional practices in order to make change happen.

Reflecting on my travels to this point, I can't thank my partner, Aleia White, enough for putting up with me writing a dissertation and actively listening to ideas that she understood in her own way because she is brilliant. Thank you for sacrificing your time, events, and closeness together in order for me to finish this thing. You are my person and I will from here to eternity make up for the time lost together. Your love and support means the world.

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Dedication

This study is dedicated to the field of higher education and Men and Masculinities research. This is given with the hope that all genders can be more open, more inclusive of our subjectivities and our discourses, and expand what we mean when we say "men."

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Chapter 1: Introduction

In December of 2016, I was finishing my time as an instructor of a men and masculinities course at Appalachian State University. Dazed from the recent presidential election, I was nervous about what the future of the United States held in terms of this new transition of power. In seeing the behavior of the president-elect on the campaign trail, his mocking and degradation of women, his desire to win at all costs, and his only display of emotion being indignation and anger, I saw the signs of traditional, hegemonic masculinity in its worst forms. I worried students would see the president-elect in his new position of authority and learn from him what it means to be a man in society today. Alternatively, if they had already adopted traditional, hegemonic masculine behaviors for themselves, I worried this could validate that this behavior was advantageous, with no negative consequence.

Additionally, I worried that his administration would challenge gender in upsetting and unsettling ways, for example, by removing policies from the previous administration's legacy of supporting all genders and their societal needs. History would eventually show that when President Trump came into office, this removal happened with the implementation of executive orders, one right after another. Because of this display of traditional, hegemonic masculinity, I knew that we needed the men and masculinities classroom more than ever if we wanted to continue the work of supporting students on their journeys to becoming educated around gender equity and equality.

One of the most revealing assignments I constructed for my students that semester asked them to write about when and how they had previously learned about masculinity. This was an assignment given on the first day and due by the end of the first week of class. I designed this assignment in this way so that I could get "no class reading or discussion-informed" answers,

only personal and honest takes. The students in the course remembered their fathers and other male role models helping them understand what masculinity means. This recognition happened through the language of boys being described as "big" and "strong" (Karriker et al, 1995) or even images imposed on boys in their early childhood bedrooms through implanted expectations of seeing cowboys vs. tea parties, seeing blue instead of pink (Lynch & Kilmartin, 2013). Because classrooms are conduits for educating about gender and equity, I began to think of the subjectivities of the male or male-identifying instructors who are given the responsibility to teach students of all genders about the social construction of masculinity. How did they experience the world, and how did they negotiate not only their own masculinity, but also their masculinity while teaching the course? I began to feel compelled to investigate these questions.

I began with the previous anecdote to ground this dissertation in a time when traditional, hegemonic masculinity was being demonstrated at the highest level of government and to examine how this performance of masculinity might relate to everyday practices in what is taught in the men and masculinities classroom. What this connection might demonstrate is that traditionally masculine behavior and its way of confining what gender "means" (sometimes overt and at other times covert) illustrates how traditional, hegemonic masculinity is now (and always has been) a part of our lives. Brookfield (2005) writes, "Hegemony is lived out a thousand times a day in our intimate behaviors, glances, body postures, in the fleeting calculations we make on how to look at and speak to each other, and in the continuous microdecisions that coalesce into a life" (pp. 96-97). This "life" that Brookfield speaks of, at least as it relates to my research, are the lives and subjectivities of the course instructors and their students at institutions of higher education. This "life" is the connective tissue between what the discourse of masculinity in America demands of us and what it produces because of that demand.

Professional Positionality

Through my position as a white, heterosexual, cisgender man working simultaneously in Student Affairs and as an instructor of a men and masculinities course, I began to recognize masculine practices as both overt and covert, yet still corrosive. These masculine practices, such as who was allowed to speak in departmental meetings, who held the higher paying positions at higher education institutions, and who was policing what I was and was not allowed to share during divisional gatherings, rendered me a gendered social construct. Traditional, hegemonic masculinity circulated, and I saw the negative ways in which others treated women, men who did not measure up to masculine ideals, and those who identified as marginalized genders being further pushed to the margins. Simply put, these groups were not deemed worthy. Time after time, I would see authority figures talk down to women and other marginalized genders, remove them from the conversation, and/or belittle and impose stereotypes upon them. This process was repeated to the point where some formative female role models began to believe what men were saying, ingraining this sexism into their next interaction and showing me that not only was sexism "not just a women's issue" but that it was all part of a larger structural system of patriarchy which hurts everyone. The practices of patriarchy, misogyny, and chauvinism, through both micro and macro practices, were so entrenched in our everyday workings and relations that often those in privileged positions were unaware that these practices were even happening.

In my classroom, there was a tension between instructing my students how to be men and negotiating my own masculinity. Many times, I witnessed myself espousing that traditional, hegemonic masculine behavior and its sexist productions needed to be called out in the students' co-curricular meetings and social gatherings if real change were to happen. However outside of

the classroom, I at times remained silent in order to preserve order or to be favorably seen by those in supervisory positions. I understood that in class I privileged the active bystander discourse and disrupting Robert Brannon and Samuel Juni's (1985) masculine measures, but in turn remained complicit by essentially saying that this was the only way to be a "good man." As an instructor, I balanced on the tightrope of being simultaneously complicit with traditional, hegemonic masculinity, in order to set up what being male in America means, and actively trying to disrupt it. I had to show that there was a collective understanding of what being male in America currently allows. At the same time, I had to disrupt that understanding through discussions and assignments of reflection and through personal exploration and experience which was counter to what traditional, hegemonic masculinity was telling us and itself producing. This matters because the traditionally hegemonic male social construction was and is harmful. Ultimately, I realized negotiating what it meant to be an instructor of a men and masculinities course was precarious, sometimes problematic, but also necessary to challenge and disrupt what was happening in the world at institutional and structural levels.

Problem Statement, Purpose, & Research Questions

The problem of teaching masculinities is that it can produce and reinforce compulsory behavior through language and instruction depending on what discourses are privileged in the men and masculinities classroom. Additionally problematic is that instructors are simultaneously negotiating their own masculinity while instructing others on what masculinity means in America today, at times complicit in perpetuating the compulsory behavior of traditional, hegemonic masculinity and at other times disrupting it. Adding to the complication of teaching men about men and masculinity is that some men do not even realize that this essentialist masculine behavior of showing no emotion, being all-knowing, relying on risk-taking behavior,

and operating in anti-feminine ways is happening, let alone a problem. This allows them to remain blind to traditional, hegemonic masculinity's overt and covert circulation and, thus, remain unaware of what traditional, hegemonic masculinity produces and reinforces. In the end, this enables traditional, hegemonic masculinity to persist, leaving sexism, misogyny, and chauvinism unchallenged.

The purpose of my study is to use the framework of feminist poststructuralism and Derrida's (2016) ongoing process of deconstruction to examine how men who teach men and masculinities courses negotiate their own masculinity while teaching their course. In doing this deconstruction, I expose the fragility of meaning in the men and masculinities classroom and the fluidity of the instructor's complicity with and disruption of traditional, hegemonic masculinity.

I used the following research questions to deconstruct the instructors' experiences:

> Research Question 1: What are the discourses and instructor histories that produce the privileged meanings of masculinities in a higher education course pertaining to men and masculinities?
>
> Research Question 2: How do the practices of instructors who teach a men and masculinities course disrupt and comply with traditional, hegemonic masculinity?

I utilized my first research question to address the discourses available in men and masculinities courses and my second research question to address when and how (and if) deconstruction of these discourses took place; all happening through the instructors complicity and disruption of traditional, hegemonic masculinity. In reference to research question one, as my literature review later provides a basis for, some instructors are teaching traits, behaviors, and actions that constitute masculine behavior but are not discussing their political connection through power and privilege in society. For example, one participant teaches a men and

masculinities course that works to espouse leadership skills on a college campus but never discusses that these leadership traits are good for all genders, not just men, thus perpetuating that men are leaders and women and other genders are not. On the contrary, others are instructing their masculinities courses by taking each trait and questioning why it is a trait, how it is performed or enacted in everyday life, and what is produced from it, ultimately showing how these traits impede showing men as having multiple subjectivities. Some instructors also show how they are helping men, women, and other marginalized genders fulfill the original goals of why Men's Studies was created (Brod, 1987; Connell, 2005; Kimmel, 1987; Martino & Ingrey, 2016).

In reference to research question two, my research findings provide discourses that both support the notion that instructors are deconstructing as they teach and demonstrate that deconstruction is not happening in some courses. Some instructors work to draw attention to how masculine stereotypes reaffirm discourses that may not be true for all men, breaking down why it is important from a political and scholarly point of view to discuss masculinity. Unfortunately, many teach men as a monolith and do not consider the population that is sitting in the class with whom they are constructing the subjectivities of: college men (Harris III & Barrone, 2011). Further, I worked to see where the participants were both complicit with and disruptive of traditional, hegemonic masculinity. This work is important to address as instructors' pedagogical practices influence what is learned in the course. If the instructor is seen complying with traditional, hegemonic masculinity discourse and the students do not choose to question his authority, taking his actions as fact, this perpetuates what the course is against, thus working against the mission of the course and defying the men's studies purpose. This question also helps to show the precarious wavering of the instructors' roles, both being complicit with traditional, hegemonic masculinity to demonstrate how masculinity is perceived in America and then also

disrupting it at the same time in order to push for a more just and equitable society through education. Research question two is designed to lead to understanding ways of teaching masculinity and better-informed pedagogical approaches when teaching masculinity, again opening up masculinity rather than solidifying it.

Scholarly Context

For my dissertation research, I focused on the expression of gender referred to as *masculinity* or *masculinities*. Specifically, I focused on traditional, hegemonic masculinity. To define traditional, hegemonic masculinity is to recognize the constructions that essentialize behaviors deemed masculine and to observe masculinity's current structure of practices that constitute men's dominant position in society. This dominant position both confirms and maintains the subordination of women and other marginalized ways of being a man (Connell, 2005). This construction of male subjectivity is produced by *discourse*, which Stuart Hall (1997) describes as:

> … Ways of referring to or constructing knowledge about a particular topic of practice: a cluster (or formation) of ideas, images and practices, which provide ways of talking about forms of knowledge and conduct associated with a particular topic, social activity, or institutional site in society. (p. 6)

For example, the construction of masculinity is shaped within the discourse of Brannon and Juni's (1985) masculinity scale, in which they develop a way to define what makes someone or something masculine. These traits include: avoiding femininity, concealing emotions, being the breadwinner in a relationship, being admired and respected, having a sense of toughness, and having a sense of adventure as well as a willingness to fight or be violent.

Also fundamental to my research is differentiating *gender expression* from *gender identity*. Gender identity is "one's innermost concept of self as male, female, a blend of both or neither – how individuals perceive themselves and what they call themselves" (Human Rights Campaign, 2021, para. 3). One's gender identity can be the same or different from their sex assigned at birth. This concept is different from gender expression. Gender expression is the "external appearance of one's gender identity, usually expressed through behavior, clothing, haircut or voice, and which may or may not conform to socially defined behaviors and characteristics typically associated with being either masculine or feminine" (Human Rights Campaign, 2021, para. 4).

Essentialism of Masculinities

The scholarship on masculinity creates boundaries that men are expected to fit into in order to function in society and are, in turn, taught through macro and micro practices at higher education institutions across the United States of America (Brannon & Juni, 1985; Irvine, 1990). Examples of these practices include how to sit without allowing one's legs to be crossed at the knee, who to talk to and not talk to based upon perceptions of one's levels of power and competence, and the understanding that every conversation will help a masculine person advance in their career. This construction even extends to which majors to choose, as English, the arts, and the humanities, among others, are considered too feminine for men by some (Mullen, 2014). Additionally, and perhaps more importantly, men are constrained to showing no emotion toward or connection to other men as this behavior is considered homoerotic (Mahaffey et al., 2005) and, therefore, connected to femininity, which is considered *less than* in response to masculine behavior.

Further, masculinities discourses are problematic because they are present at all levels of higher education, all constituting the paths men need to take in order to be successful. However,

many men may not necessarily *want* to or are even *aware* that they are following these constructed paths. Regardless, the performance of masculinity continues, be it through a student matriculating, an administrator performing their job tasks, or an instructor teaching (Laker & Davis, 2011).

Because compulsory masculinity is so pervasive and sometimes unseen, higher education courses that teach students about what constitutes masculinities are needed to make this production explicit, as this pervasiveness allows for privilege in society to be hidden and not be taken into account. At predominantly white institutions, students' experiences of whiteness, cisgenderedness, and maleness are difficult to discern or question, especially in environments where these subjectivities are privileged. Faculty, staff, and students alike do not recognize this privileging because non-recognition works for, benefits, and fuels the university as well as the white, cisgender, male students.

Even the ability to access higher education institutions is a privilege that tends to go unnoticed. For example, being part of the higher education system produces graduates who tend to get better positions in higher paying companies, and, therefore, positions those with privileged expressions as more successful. All throughout the process of affluence and access, the lack of challenging authority (who is traditionally male) and strict adherence to rules perpetuates the system of men's dominance over women, other genders, and subordinated masculinities. In this study, I not only trouble what is deemed masculine but also the binary construction of masculine/feminine. Additionally, I show how discourses of masculinity are constructed and can be troubled and recreated into many differing forms within the men and masculinities classroom.

A Problem of Men's Studies

One way to interrogate the hegemony of masculine discourse is by offering a men and masculinities course. This course allows cognitive dissonance to happen by asking all genders participating in the course to examine gender expression and gender identity in different ways, deconstructing as the course goes. But is this interrogation happening in these courses, and are instructors prioritizing interrogation as the goal or outcome? Are instructors deconstructing masculinity as they teach throughout their course? In order to address these questions, I offer discussion of the construction of the men and masculinities classroom.

Recognizing the pedagogical construction of men and masculinities courses is essential, as it is the place of subject formation for instructors, who are the participants in my research. Men's Studies first emerged in the 1970s, when men began to realize that they were gendered beings. Men who were witnessing the women's movement saw that women were being constructed to behave in certain ways and saw the consequences of that construction as being essentialized gender roles. More importantly, this gendered difference was seen as academically viable and worth studying. Sociologist Meredith Gould (1985) describes her teaching tenure moving from only a female perspective, with little masculinities rhetoric in her sociology course, to a course in which she personally felt that she needed to teach masculinity with feminism in order to combat masculinity's "lethal" effects (p. 286). Adding to this urgency, in *The New Men's Studies: From Feminist Theory to Gender Scholarship* (1987), Harry Brod comments that men's studies must be a "qualitative different study of men … not quantitatively more study of men" (1987, p. 190), alluding to the need to not continue the centering of men in history, research, and instruction, as well as using their histories as *standard* societal positions. Instead there is a need for research on discussing men's societal influence and domination of women and

how these traditionally hegemonic events and everyday practices influence the lives of *all* those around them. Over time, the emerging focus on the construction of masculinity filtered into sociology, psychology, and general interest classrooms that slowly incorporated masculinities into their curricula.

In the late 1990s, men and masculinities curricula started to become commonplace through increased scholarship surrounding men's studies and creations of foundational documents like the journal *Men and Masculinities*, founded by Michael Kimmel in 1998. These first courses began as responses to the contemporary men's rights movement taking hold predominantly in Australia, the *Promise Keepers*, a religiously conservative group that drew its masculinity teachings from the Bible (promisekeepers.org, 2021), and Robert Bly's (1990) work of connecting men to their somewhat primitive emotional states, which, in his eyes, men had lost. These courses later morphed into feminist classrooms with feminist pedagogical practices as masculinity became more accepted as a social construct rather than a biological, essentialized experience. This focus on feminist pedagogical practices connected masculinity to being taught in specific, feminist ways. Gould (1985) describes contemporary feminism as "...emphasiz[ing] the validity of feelings, emotions, and senses, regarding them as authentic ways of perceiving social reality. The felt social world, the world of subjective understanding, is thus considered salient and valuable by sociologists of gender" (p. 287). Gould's perspective inspired instructors to work through an ecological perspective in the classroom. For example, the feminist practice of furniture placement creating a circle to encourage dialogue as well as the instructor being allowed to offer personal thoughts and stories in order to connect with their students, attended to this ecological perspective. Eventually, the confluence of woman's studies and men's studies found its way to many institutions, developing along the way the moniker of Gender Studies,

which allowed for inclusion of transgender discourse and a discussion of how all genders along the continuum at times interact, repel, intersect, and construct each other in creating the American gendered experience. Directly relevant to my own research is Ginsberg's assertion, in a 2009 interview with *Inside Higher Ed*, that, "... [Gender Studies] invites men to look at their experiences in American culture, as well as how they may be complicit in the continuation of systems of power and privilege. It also compels men to see themselves not as the "norm" but as gendered human beings" (Jaschik, 2009).

However, a problematic tension that exists in the men and masculinities classroom, mine included, is that at times essentialism becomes very apparent and reinforced throughout the teaching process. In a class about men as a collective group, where most research is done as a collective, it is hard to go beyond men are_____or men should_____, echoing the belief of essentialism that all men have a confined set of characteristics which make them what they are. Wendy Brown (1997) wrote about this essentialism in regards to the women's studies classroom. Her writing helped to confront the purpose of these classes and provided perspectives that challenge these courses to open up their constructions, meanings, and institutional possessiveness or "preservation" of collecting this work all under the moniker "women's studies" when there is ambiguity in why women's studies information and concepts could and should be taught in the mix of other courses' content. Brown describes this notion as a "proud interdisciplinary undergirding the intellectual project of women's studies" (p. 84). One example that shows up in the men and masculinities classroom is teaching about intersectionality. If instructors do not take the time to introduce intersectionality and offer multiple perspectives of masculinity, these courses will still label groups and confine them to narrow, limited descriptions. For instance, there are many traits specifically associated with Black/African American masculinity. Majors and Bilson's (1992) research on African American

men developing a "cool pose," meaning " a set of ritualized behaviors that involve toughness, detachment, control, and stylish, sometimes flamboyant presentation" (as cited in Kilmartin and Smiler, 2015, p. 106). This perspective essentializes an entire group found within the masculinities moniker to act and behave in a specific, narrow way when we know that this is not the case for the entire population. If the instructor is not deconstructing as they are teaching, they are *solidifying*. I ask the reader to trouble this concept by considering Black masculinity in the southern region of America or in France. Intersectionalities and individual discourses are different and even more differentiated when examined on a smaller group or individual level. I argue that the men and masculinities classroom may still be solidifying the meaning of the intersectional groups, even when it is trying to be inclusive and encouraging of opening up knowledge and awareness about masculinity in general. For example, women's studies, at one time, could be seen as white women's studies courses due to its focus only on white women's history and societal issues. Additionally, when teaching classes about women of color, whiteness still is centered and normalized (Hunter & Nettles, 1999). Responding to the centering of whiteness in women's studies classrooms, Ginsberg (2008) states, "The idea of women's studies suggests that there is something that unites *all* women, but the differences among women are as salient as the similarities. Moreover, the use of the term "women of color" is problematic because it suggests that white women are the "norm" and everyone else is clumped into one single category of difference" (para. 8). This notion is connected to a discussion that has been happening for a long time (Collins, 1992; Crenshaw, 1991) and is important for women's studies as well as men's studies.

Although masculinities discourses affect most men from birth, the arena of higher education is an area that I focus on because in this late maturation stage for students, masculinities are rarely spoken about, let alone taught or interrogated. My focus is important because many issues surrounding higher education institutions can be attributed to the patriarchal notions of masculinities. The socialization of students in the classroom, job acquirement/requirements, who is deemed important enough to include in the conversation about policy-making, and which student aspirations are more valuable than others once they graduate, that is, valuing CEOs over non-profit volunteers, are all examples of patriarchy influencing higher education. This mindset is in conjunction with philosophical notions of masculinities that require men to strive to be successful at all costs, to suppress their emotions, and to use anti-femininity in power relations (Bannon & Juni, 1985). As evidenced in the next chapter, the field of higher education is lacking in poststructural analysis of traditional, hegemonic masculinity. In particular, there is limited research that examines how the subjectivities of men and masculinities course instructors are demonstrated while negotiating their own masculinities in their classes.

Rather than men and masculinities instructors and their classrooms perpetuating traditional, hegemonic masculinity in higher education, my ultimate goal for this project is to help instructors recognize where they are complicit with or disrupting it.

Rationale for Study

The research on college men is robust and provides avenues for deconstruction that some instructors take on in their classrooms in order to challenge long held ideas of not only men as a group, but also of college men and their intersected identities (Cerezo, et al., 2013; Dancy, 2012; Harper, 2004; Harris et al., 2011; Liu & Iwamoto, 2007; McGowan, 2017; Perez, 2014; Shek, 2007). This research is important because it proliferates and expands our knowledge about college

men instead of solidifying it. Having said that, while we have multiplied the number of groups included within the discipline, men's studies still perpetuates behaviors and traits assigned to these groups that are not true for all involved. These are important critiques to consider as I employ deconstruction throughout my research to challenge and trouble the essentialized expectations of traditional masculinity as well as pedagogical practices of instructors. I will demonstrate how deconstruction also reveals how language and discourse in the men and masculinities classroom can be politically created and motivated, how language and discourse can produce privileged discourses in the classroom, and how masculinity is not structurally based in transcendental Truth but constructed in relations of power.

I chose to research this specific type of course because as a former instructor of a men and masculinities course, a goal for my course was to examine the experiences of men of all identities, to study men in the past, present, and possibly the future, and to provide a space where this conversation was allowed to happen, as these conversations tend to be limited or non-existent in everyday America. I previously found that in teaching this course, I needed at different moments to essentialize the experience of men in order to first create a sense of what being a man in America meant so that I could show dominant thoughts and positions in society. However, in doing so, I felt complicit with traditional, hegemonic masculinity by saying that men should_____in order to be better men, which, depending on the discourses available in the classroom, could mean many things to many different students and instructors. Thus, one reason I chose this course as the "site" of my research is that it is a place of subject formation for both the instructor and the students in the course working within and against dominant identities. It is also a vehicle that can trouble long-held grand narratives of gender and be an impetus for

social change outside the classroom, depending on which discourses are privileged. As an instructor, I strive to show how the narrative always comes back to men and their relation to others, particularly to their binary counterparts women. Ultimately, I focused my research on a men and masculinities class because this class tends to be designed to deconstruct gender in order to promote equity among all genders. While teaching my course, complicity and disruption of masculinity's grand narratives were always at play within each lesson and interaction with the students in the course, and I wanted to see if this was happening in other men and masculinities courses. From my research, I found that the men and masculinities classroom was a precarious space where instructors, if they were aware of deconstruction as they taught, worked to unpack meaning and discuss how the meaning of masculinities is fragile or, in their words, "false." Also, in this "unpacking," many instructors were not *either* someone who was complicit *or* someone who was disruptive, but *both/and* at different times. It was because of this confluence that they had to negotiate their own masculinity throughout their course. My research questions aided the research by providing a path of inquiry that not only recognized the instructors' subjectivities, but helped to reveal their complicity and disruption of traditional, hegemonic masculinity.

Overall, the first research question illuminated the multiple meanings of masculinities in the men and masculinities higher education classroom and how particular discourses, if provided in the classroom, privileged certain meanings. This question helped me to deconstruct those meanings and their productions as well as the personal histories the instructors brought to their classrooms. The first research question also addressed the discourses that produced both "common sense" understandings as well as disruptions of traditional, hegemonic masculinity. The second research question guided me to see what, even in these new meanings, the instructors of the men and masculinities courses were producing and if they were still disrupting or

complying with traditional, hegemonic masculinity. The two research questions together allowed for a close, theoretical reading of the interview transcripts to determine where deconstruction was happening, as it was always happening in the text.

My research questions were also important because there is no specific literature examining the experiences of male or male identifying instructors who were teaching men about masculinities in a higher education course.[1] While no research on this exact topic exists, the most peripheral studies examine dominant discourses surrounding the failings of boys and education (Epstein et al, as cited in Mills, 2010), critical scholarship around how identity and gender are constructed in school settings (Noguera, 1997, 2008), and the experience of education from the male student perspective (Way & Chu, 2004). I did find poststructural work, but it was in the form of an ethnography study and took place in England over five years (Mac an Ghaill & Gha Mac, 1994). This study centered around, once again, the perspective of the student, highlighting that research from the perspective of the instructor was needed. Other studies surrounding the influence of male teachers exist (Carrington & McPhee, 2008; Cushman, 2010; Drudy et al., 2005) but the focus is on policy and tends to take place in elementary or primary schools settings, not higher education.

Summary of Theoretical Framework and Overview of Methodology

For this dissertation project, I conducted feminist poststructural and deconstructive readings of the concept of masculinities in higher education through the participants' semi-structured interview responses. Engaging with Derrida's theory of deconstruction, I used Jackson

[1] After completing this research, two resources were created that discuss teaching masculinity from a feminist lens. *Feminist Perspectives on Teaching Masculinities* (Routledge) edited by Sveva Magaraggia, Gerlinde Mauerer, Marianne Schmidbaur and a teaching module created from the *Sociology of Gender Journal* - https://gendersociety.wordpress.com/2020/10/16/teaching-modules-men-masculinities/

and Mazzei's (2012) *Thinking with Theory* to find deconstructive moments throughout the transcripts.

In addition to deconstruction, I layered a poststructural feminist analysis of the men and masculinities courses taught by the research participants in order to examine how discourse constitutes individuals within and against common and accepted understandings of masculinities. I chose to use a feminist perspective because this approach "positions gender at the categorical center of inquiry" (Hesse-Biber, 2014, p. 3) and allows the focus to be on discourse, the structure of language, and power while also enacting an ethic of care for the interviewees. Additionally, a feminist approach reveals that "discourse and language are neither neutral nor objective" (Davis & Craven, 2016) and provides "alternative ways of seeing" (p. 27) that may show where the masculine/feminine discourse has or has not been previously privileged, which is a goal of my research.

Ultimately, I used *Thinking with Theory* (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012) as a way to utilize various philosophical concepts, such as deconstruction, to interrogate a common data set effectively in order to "open up" the analysis of the data set. *Thinking with Theory* "challenges researchers to use theory to accomplish a rigorous, analytic reading of qualitative data" (Jackson and Mazzei, p. i). Using this method allowed me to see the data set "proliferated, rather than solidified" (p. vii), in multiple new ways. An analytic reading is different from traditional coding of data. Rather than seeking meaning and patterns, I used theory to see what emerged from the text, looking at each emergent piece and discussing how it affects the overall structures it is working within and against.

The data sources I used for my dissertation are primarily the participants' interviews. I interviewed five self-identified cisgender men who teach men and masculinities courses at four-

year public institutions and who have a history and breadth of student affairs work experience. Within this group, one participant was a teaching assistant, and teaching his course was a requirement of his master's program. Another participant asked to teach men and masculinities during his doctoral program in higher education. The rest of the participants held specific positions that required teaching as part of their student affairs roles on campus. Of the participants who have a position which requires teaching as part of their role, one identified as an Assistant Director for Greek Affairs and the other two were directors for the Student Success Office and the Student Wellness Office at their respective institutions. Class levels were all undergraduate level courses and of the five courses, two were not available until the students' second year; for the rest, matriculation was available right away.

In addition to professional positionality, identity was an attribute I took into consideration in order to diversify participants. Although as a researcher I was open to those participants who identified as transgender but still identified as masculine, those who came forward and wanted to participate in this research were all cisgender men. Additionally, representation of race and sexuality was important to me as well. One participant identified as African American/African Diaspora while the others identified as White or Anglo-American (capitalization and wording was theirs). As for sexual orientation, one participant identified as bisexual, while the rest of the participants identified as "heterosexual" or "straight." Finally, the age range for the participants spanned from 28 - 45 at the time of this research.

Significance of the Study

The literature on men and masculinities courses primarily focuses on understanding men's development through identity work (Edwards & Jones, 2009; Harper & Harris, 2010; Harper et al., 2011), navigating patriarchy through positive masculinity work

(Englar-Carlson & Kiselic, 2013; Shen-Miller et al., 2013), understanding biological (Sigelman & Rider, 2009; Thomas & Chess, 1977) and social construction (Bem, 1989; Deaux & LaFrance, 1998; Gilmore, 1990; Whiting & Edwards, 1988). Most people have constructed what it means to be masculine before even taking a step inside a higher education classroom. However, in doing so, they have not always questioned what masculinity means, what it produces, or how it affects others. This study is timely and critical because it focuses on the pedagogical experiences of the instructors, something missing from the research. Knowing about the experiences of the instructors and how the men and masculinities classroom is constructed can re-make the classroom and open up the definition of masculinity in order to serve what I feel is a purpose of higher education: to increase knowledge and understanding of the multitudes of perspectives that the human experience offers. Also, by using the higher education tools of critique and challenge, this study can show us how to be more productive community members who support societal efforts that work to form a just and equitable community by disrupting traditional, hegemonic masculinity. Additionally, recognizing which discourses are privileged in the men and masculinities classroom will help to illuminate pedagogical avenues that instructors could take in order for instructors to teach in multiple ways and with multiple meanings of masculinity. Teaching in a non-essentializing manner, will contribute to the proliferation of the American gendered experience. Further, scholars point to the importance of recognizing the increasing scholarship on men and their gendered experiences, but currently there are no documented experiences of male instructors who teach men and masculinities courses. Also, no research exists explicitly stating what has produced these instructors and what the instructors produce from their experiences. This research is needed and necessary because by examining the personal histories discourses brought to the classroom by

instructors, we will have a better understanding about which discourses of masculinity are available to the instructors and how those discourses influence the complicity and disruption of traditional, hegemonic masculinity in the classroom and at large. This is important to know, as without analysis of the instructor experience, we will not be able to envision alternative pedagogical practices or how classroom practices can influence learning about masculinity.

If we have classrooms that do the work of disrupting traditional, hegemonic masculinity, this highlighting of where men teach men and other genders to look at their experiences in American culture and ask where they are complicit with traditional, hegemonic masculinity, instructors can challenge the normalizations of what it means to be masculine in America and create change by bringing awareness to places where, before, this might not have happened, thus creating better leaders. Additionally, if we learn from and speak to what masculinity produces, both directly and indirectly, the atmosphere of higher education can be disrupted to produce better versions of itself that are more inclusive, equitable, and healthy for those identifying along the gender spectrum. These better versions of the American higher education system are necessary and urgently needed, especially in light of what is taught about gender and how it affects the higher education experience and beyond.

In the end, by analyzing men's experiences of teaching in a men and masculinities classroom, as well as their personal meanings of masculinity, I will demonstrate which discourses are privileged over others. I will also show where and how instructors can trouble the men and masculinities classroom in order to push against traditional, hegemonic masculinity even while negotiating their masculinity throughout their course. I believe that through disruption of traditional, hegemonic masculinity, instructors can begin to heal the underlying problems of sexism, patriarchy, chauvinism, and misogyny and provide better pathways to

leadership, ultimately illustrating why what is taught in the men and masculinities classroom matters in higher education.

Organization of Dissertation

My research questions seek to expose the discourses that produce privileged meanings of masculinities in higher education courses pertaining to men and masculinities and how the practices of instructors who teach an introductory higher education men and masculinities course comply with and disrupt traditional, hegemonic masculinity. In order to answer my research questions, I have organized my dissertation by first introducing the reader to the problem of masculinity in society and how the teaching of this concept in a higher education setting can both be beneficial and problematic. I do this work in order to present the immediate need to re-see what is happening in men and masculinities classrooms. In Chapter 2, I lay out the literature used to describe the content, scope, and organization of the information presented in this dissertation, providing readers with a better understanding of the concepts deconstructed later in Chapter 5. In Chapter 3, I provide a discussion of feminist poststructural theory and how it is connected to traditional, hegemonic masculinity. Next, in Chapter 4, I discuss my methodology for conducting my research, showing meaning through the interviews, crystallizations, and refractions as crafted from Richardson and St. Pierre's (2005) article. In Chapter 4, I also discuss how I utilized Jackson and Mazzei's (2012) *Thinking with Theory* and Derrida's theory of deconstruction. Then, in Chapter 5, I analyze the experiences of the study participants, illuminating and analyzing the crystallizations emerging from the research in order to provide multiple, refracted perspectives, meanings, and futures for the men and masculinities classroom. Finally, in Chapter 6, I provide an overview and summation of key points, offer implications for higher education, and give recommendations for educators and higher education leaders.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In order to understand the resources currently available to instructors in men and masculinities classrooms, I turn now to examine the previous research within the discipline pertaining to the socialization of men. I review the following research in order to trouble the assumed stability of the instructors and of the men and masculinities classroom, my hope being that the recognition of these issues will provide new ways of understanding that could influence the actions of male-identifying individuals. As a result, I expose the historical and social constructions of the meaning of traditional, hegemonic masculinity and describe its intensity as it operates through discourse, norming masculine behaviors and limiting its definitions both overtly and covertly.

I divide the literature review into two sections: First, I review the early research to justify claims that masculinity as a discourse constructs male subjectivity by creating normative behaviors and limited definitions, closing off any proliferations of masculine subjectivity. The early research also reveals that structures of masculine/feminine measurement are based on arbitrary definitions of masculinity. A review of past literature indicates that not only was traditional, hegemonic masculinity pervasive through the masculinities discourse, it was the guiding force of what constitutes, has defined, and still defines what being male in America means. Second, I review the literature on the construction of the men and masculinities classroom, demonstrating the urgent, yet problematic, attributes a course might provide. These attributes reveal how traditional, hegemonic masculinity might be disrupted in classrooms by making traditional, hegemonic masculinity and its productions in society overt, while at the same time showing that instructors might still constitute normative behavior, circulating grand narratives when teaching others what masculinity is. This literature is important because it shows

the initial positivist construction of masculinity research, masculinities' privileged meanings, and how defining masculine behavior and expectations has set up a binary: men/women with men in the dominating position. Given that my study challenges positivist research design by using feminist poststructuralism, a discussion of these issues is critical.

This literature review provides a place of grounding to work from in order to answer the following research questions:

> Research Question 1: What are the discourses and instructor histories that produce the privileged meanings of masculinities in a higher education course pertaining to men and masculinities?
>
> Research Question 2: How do the practices of instructors who teach a men and masculinities course disrupt and comply with traditional, hegemonic masculinity?

The major themes and trends in this literature review are important to address. The first trend that emerged from the overall research was how traditional, hegemonic masculinity determines and divides what is masculine and feminine through closed definitions, normative expectations, and regulatory rules. The second trend to emerge was how college men as a discourse both opened up masculinity to be viewed differently, while simultaneously continuing to confine it to narrow and limited categories. Third, measurement and positivistic methods seemed to constantly vie for definitive and concrete answers of what is right and wrong, closing off the possibility of multiple subjectivities when it comes to masculinity. Finally, the literature reveals how the men and masculinities classroom plays a role in being both complicit with and disruptive of traditional, hegemonic masculinity. In summary, the trends in the literature help me identify the discourses and their privileged meanings of masculinity in order to allow space to deconstruct the instructors' experiences.

Once again, this is all to meet the purpose of this dissertation study which is to use the framework of feminist poststructuralism and Derrida's ongoing process of deconstruction to examine how men who teach men and masculinities courses negotiate their own masculinity while leading their course. In doing this deconstruction, I expose the fragility of meaning in the men and masculinities classroom and the fluidity of the instructor's complicity and disruption with traditional, hegemonic masculinity.

Early Masculinities Research

The early research on masculinity works to create definition and division, privileging certain masculine behaviors and constructing the box that men need to fit within in order to conform to the grand narratives of masculinity in America The enclosure of meaning is part of what a men and masculinities course instructor and this research is working against. Early research provides a genealogy of and context for these established meanings and demonstrates how they became accepted over time. In order for me to deconstruct their excesses, it is vital that I understand how meanings within masculinity narratives come to be accepted as "true." Additionally the early research in this review reveals masculinity's productions as well as what happens when a man does not meet these masculine standards. The trends within the literature point to the urgency of what is at stake when there is both compliance and disruption within discourse, inform my overall study by challenging the grand narratives of masculinity privileged in the classroom, and acknowledge the multiple subjectivities of those teaching the course.

We Are Constructed to Be this Way

A review of the early literature shows that as humans, we are divided between the concept of girl and the concept of boy before we are even born (Chu, 2014; Dean & Platt, 2016; Kilmartin & Smiler, 2015, p.70; Lytton & Romney, 1991). The first question most people ask

expecting parents is “Is it a boy or a girl?” This question echoes for nine months and even sometimes into the children's first year because of the androgynist appearance of new babies. Once born, this division, originally thought to only register with adults, has been shown to be recognized even by very young children (Maccoby, 1998). Judy Chu (2014), a developmental psychologist, confirms the introduction to gender before the baby is even born and describes this acknowledgement as a key developmental period for children because this is the time when parents begin to construct and reinforce binary gender schemes. The recognition of gender divisions begins the process of socialization and the disciplining of what each gender is supposed to/allowed to do within society’s constructed meanings.

Research on masculinity overflows with comparisons and contrasts of males and females, highlighting the effects this binary on the personalities of adult men and women (Lytton & Romney, 1991). From there, the concept of masculinity can be seen as biologically or socially constructed. Kilmartin and Smiler (2015) state, “Biological psychologists compare brain structure and hormone levels of males and females and attempt to describe these influences on behavior. Social psychologists seek to specify the interpersonal conditions that give rise to gendered actions” (p. 1). This view, though, does not only belong to those in the biological and sociological disciplines. Other researchers include “....historians, anthropologists, linguists, economists, and philosophers” (p. 1) which offers the notion that recognitions of gendered subjectivities are pervasive among many disciplines.

This defining and delineation matters because this research shows how men are constructed to be men and what subjectivities, discourses, and/or personal histories the instructors bring into the classroom, thus informing what and how they teach. Ultimately, this affects the subject formation of the instructors and their students. Also, this matters because what

is taught in the classroom affects the students who then affect society once they graduate, thus perpetuating the knowledge or the rejections of said knowledge.

Defining Masculinities

In order to understand how masculinity works and how prior research shows masculinity's norming process through discourse, I must define what masculinity is and has been in our society. Traditionally, men are and have been described as being strong, independent, achieving, hard-working, tough, aggressive, and unemotional. They are also shown as possessing such attributes as being physical, competitive, and forceful while also referring to elements that are identity-based such as their relationship to whiteness and heterosexuality. These components of the masculine role provide *the* not *a* picture of what masculine behavior is supposed to be and how this behavior is to be demonstrated. Harris and Barone (2011) define this confining and limited ideology as traditional, hegemonic masculinity:

> Hegemonic masculinity is the virtually unattainable privileged model of living life as a man. The perpetuation of this as the ultimate way to enact masculinity adversely impacts all of society as individuals knowingly and unknowingly contribute to its potency and are influenced by the socio-cultural scripts teaching us how it is performed. (as cited in Laker and Davis, pp. 50-51)

Harris and Barone's definition is powerful due to its all-encompassing factors highlighting the phrase "… impacts all of society…" Overt and subversive gendered actions create and, at times, mandate men's domination over women and other genders in societal structures like institutions of higher education and society at large. In their fundamental seminal work, Robert Brannon and Samuel Juni (1985) displayed four major themes regarding traditional, hegemonic masculinity: Anti-femininity, Status and Achievement, Inexpressiveness

and Independence as well as Adventurousness and Aggressiveness (p. 297). Brannon and Juni also create phrases to help the reader remember that Anti-femininity equals "No Sissy Stuff," Status and Achievement equals, "The Big Wheel," Inexpressiveness and/or Independence equals "The Sturdy Oak" or "The Male Machine," and finally Adventurousness and Aggressiveness equals "Give'em Hell." These four attributes from Robert Brannon's work have now become a concept sometimes referred to as the *Man Box*, a way of systematically "containing" those who are constrained to act out hegemonic masculinity. Alternatively, having a box means that if there are men *inside* of the box then there are men *outside* of the box. Individuals placed outside the box are there because they do not socially conform to those on the inside. The box maintains and polices the culture of traditional, hegemonic masculine behavior while those outside the box do not count and have been cast aside (Kimmel, 2008), thus causing division between what is felt by men and what society is telling them to be in order to be considered society's version of a man. What is equally disturbing is that this mandate is done both subversively and conspicuously at different times, indicating which discourses are being privileged and which are being suppressed.

The Man Box discourse provided context to my study by identifying the normative behavior that men need to live by in order to conform to traditional, hegemonic masculinity. Recognizing these issues and addressing their concerns will help to demonstrate where the finite, limited definitions of masculinity can be deconstructed to point out their fragility, both in and outside the classroom.

Anti-Femininity

Of the discursive practices related to Brannon and Juni's (1985) *Man Box*, many theorists feel that anti-femininity is the central theme from which all others branch off (Brannon, 1985; Chodorow, 1978; Hartley, 1959; O'Neil, 1981). Anti-femininity is believed by these theorists to

cause the most harm through rules, policies, and influential behavior by peers or authoritarian figures, one example being a college or university instructor. Through Anti-femininity, men are devalued or even shunned if they publicly exhibit emotions, value relationships, display the interconnectivity of all genders, are vulnerable enough to admit areas in need of growth, or engage in male closeness because they are seen as weak or feminine. There is much evidence to show that, in addition to adolescents and adults, children regulate masculine and feminine behavior within their peer groups in order to conform to hegemonic ideals of gender (Lytton & Romney, 1991; McCreary, 1994). Closely related to this finding, and directly linked to the topic of anti-femininity, is homophobia. Homophobia, a hostility or fear and even intolerance of sexual attraction between persons of the same sex, is seen as feminine, something related to society's prescribed ways of adhering to female social norms or "doing what a a female should do" (McCreary, 1994, p. 522). The homophobia fear is based on when men act in femininely defined ways, thus, men who act in these socially-defined feminine ways can be perceived as being gay (Blumenfeld, 1992; McCreary, 1994) where gay is seen as deviant or less-than. Men who are socially defined as being hegemonically male actively avoid all modes of behavior that could cause them to be perceived as gay. C. J. Pascoe, in her ethnography, *Dude, You're a Fag* (2007), describes what she calls "fag identity" where the discourse of being gay in high school is navigated at times and punished at others by heterosexual students, mostly male, as well as by the gender scripts men at the high school are expected to follow. Punishments include physical assault, verbal harassment, and active separation from privileged groups. These actions create an atmosphere of policing and a transactional nature by which participants reinforce that if a man acts in *x* manner, *negative* action will happen to him and exposes that femininity is viewed as negative and is to be avoided at all times. Rejection or avoidance of femininity is demonstrated

more powerfully by males, who are significantly more likely to hold negative attitudes toward gay men (Herek, 1991, 1994). Additionally, within their male peer groups, men tend to use anti-femininity and homophobia to police behaviors of the others within the group in order to encourage them not to stray away from the attributes of the man box (Kimmel, 2008, Plummer, 2001). I review anti-femininity literature because it is a product of the discourse of masculinity that my research can disrupt. One of the purposes of my study is to challenge sexism, patriarchy, misogyny, and chauvinism by showing that the language used in masculine discourse is fragile. Therefore, the literature on anti-femininity grounds my work because it shows how anti-femininity fuels sexism, patriarchy, misogyny and chauvinism and how these practices are embedded in traditionally hegemonic masculine behaviors. Revealing this embeddedness provides rationale for my study and my approach of using the theoretical framework of feminist poststructuralism to challenge masculinity's narrow, damaging meaning and its collision with anti-feminine practices.

Society provides men who are viewed as hegemonically masculine with many social privileges and rewards (Connell, 2005). For example, if a man adopts a masculine attitude and performs the way that a hegemonic male should behave by living life through a "boys will be boys" lens, he will be provided with acceptance and approval from his peer group. This is also a way for men to feed their need to belong to a group without displaying traits typically associated with being feminine. A sense of belongingness connects men to the conduit of constructed societal power privilege: if the group that constructs the world accepts me to be part of the privileged community, I am more likely to get an internship, get a job, find a career, and be financially stable in this world. Suddenly, the axis of Brannon's "Big Wheel" is rotating toward society's version of success.

However, the question that still arises is what if someone feels that they do not *need* to adhere to the norms of hegemonic masculinity? Or, further, what if they can't adhere to these norms? Once again, retributions and consequences for not complying can be seen as overt and subversive. Men who are deemed "unmasculine" may experience social and even *physical* punishment (Kimmel, 2008). Gay men especially are often subject to abusive comments stigmatized and unprovoked violence and are relegated to the margins. Society views men who show emotions as unhealthy and not strong enough to handle daily pressures (Lutz, 2001). Additionally, men who display emotions might experience subversive acts against them by the hegemonic group and may not be included in key decisions or in work opportunities, committees, or policy-making arenas. Consequently, men who do ask for help may internalize negative reactions from others (Addis & Mahalik, 2003) until they release their stockpiled feelings in the form of anger, one of the only emotions men in our society are allowed to express. This theme from the literature contributes to the reason my research is important. In examining the experiences of men who teach men and masculinities courses and how they negotiate their own masculinity while teaching their courses, we can begin to determine which discourses are privileged in the men and masculinities classroom.

I believe it is important to note at this juncture that all of the previously discussed theories represent the grand narratives men are told they must conform to in order to be complicit with traditional hegemonic masculinity and reap the rewards for doing so. However, the above grand narratives are fictional or, rather, constructed because they do not represent every man, as men behave in very individual ways. There are "multiple truths" to what it means to be a man (Thompson & Pleck, 1995). Also, the responses to individual events that either contribute to or detract from hegemonic masculinity may or may not affect the individual at every moment. From

a poststructural standpoint, there is not one essentialized Truth because people and their individual subjectivities are always changing and coming from multiple, subjective locations. What I mean is that the essentialism of masculinity is neither naturally occurring nor stable throughout time and place. What my study examines is how masculinity's discourse, while narrow at times due to traditional, hegemonic masculinity's overt and covert punishments via societal expectations and behaviors, allows for multiple versions of masculinities to exist and be accepted. A purpose of my research is to continue to widen the possibilities in order to include additional discourses and subjectivities available to men.

Measuring Masculinities

Positivist approaches and quantitative measurements of traditionally, masculine expectations and behavior are common in the early literature. Throughout the research, there are many ways of measuring masculinity. The most problematic measurements of masculinity are positivist constructions based on positivist theoretical models. This problem lies in that fact that the initial criteria used to decide if something is masculine or feminine are formed by arbitrary traits based upon patriarchal and sexist behaviors and expectations. Also problematic is positivism's claim to certainty. There can never be certainty when it comes to masculinity, as the traits associated with it are arbitrary and subjective. My research challenges the traits as well as the models in order to serve the purpose of my study and provide rationale why new research needs to be done.

One example of a problematic positivist model is the Gender Identity Model. This model is one of the oldest psychological models that measures gender and gender roles. In this model and others, there are pre-determined traits which are considered "appropriately masculine" and

"appropriately feminine." In the Gender Identity Model, sex/gender differences are viewed as biological and essentialist in nature. Gender differences are also seen as being part of all aspects of humanity, effecting affect, behavior, and cognition (ABC). Furthermore, masculinity and femininity are seen as opposing sides of the same coin and if one identifies differently than a hegemonic male should, one will be viewed as having more feminine qualities and will be referred to as *gender inverted*. For example, gay men, considered feminine, as previously discussed, have often been perceived in this way. Theorists (Adorno, et al., 1950, Toby, 1966) have shown that historically, men, when not meeting the requirements to be traditionally male or feeling insecure, needed to prove their masculinity through acts of hyper-masculinity. Hyper-masculinity is an over-the-top performance of hegemonically masculine gender stereotypes, which include demonstrating violence, risk-taking, and showing hostility toward women and other marginalized masculinities. Hyper-masculinity is a caricature of masculinity used to hide insecurities of not meeting social expectations of being male in society today. Early research reveals that the arbitrary roles assigned to men are used to measure and place value on their roles without context or relation to other experiences that the participants were engaging in at the time. Indeed, even the use of the language "appropriately masculine" creates a connotation that if I do not meet these requirements, I am not "appropriate" and am, therefore, wrong in my behavior. This language has provided rationale for my study, as my study is in direct opposition to much of the early research on men and masculinities. My research argues against utilizing this type of measure that creates and facilitates the binary of men/women and does not disrupt said binary.

Another way of measuring masculinity is the Androgyny model. The implication of this model, which questioned the assumptions assigned to masculinity and femininity, provided that

masculinity and femininity were not in opposition to each other. The Androgyny model assumes that both masculinity and femininity can be measured separately. The measures that have been used by those mentioned above are Sandra Bem's Sex Role Inventory (1974) and Spence and Helmreich's (1979) Personality Attribute Questionnaire (PAQ). While this change in measurements may seem like a step in the right direction, I still see these methods of measurement creating and encouraging the notion that gender is a binary and fostering the impression that the male/female binary exists, rather than questioning those labels all together. Also, the Androgyny model of measurement tries to privilege the separation of genders and its measurement. However, gender is not separate in society; all genders exist in relation to other genders, producing certain consequences for each. Without acknowledging this production, it seems irresponsible.

After challenging the Androgyny model, researchers began looking at masculinity and focused solely on what masculinity is and what it possibly creates. This set of models also relies heavily on the feminist critique of psychology, which originates in the 1970s. The models relay the information that masculinity is constructed, whereas the previous models, such as Bem's (1974) and Spence and Helmreich (1979), still hold on to the notion that masculinity is essentialized or incorporated with biology. These models work in practice through role theory, script theory, norm-based approaches, and ideological approaches. Role Theory is similar to someone enacting a role on stage in a theatre. The focus of this model is on the individual acting out a role and does not take into account the context of what is happening around the actor. Script Theory refers to being programmed like a computer, and a script is defined as a set of instructions for what to do in a given situation (Bem, 1993). Here,

scripts can be context specific: if in this situation, then do this. In the end, Script Theory is akin to a recipe or a formula that men need to follow.

Next, there are norm-based approaches. These are definitions of commonly held standards of behavior to which people attempt to adhere (Mahalik et. al, 2003). These norms may be broad or culturally-based (Pleck, 1981a, 1995) or localized and micro-contextualized. An example of this is when one male colleague would like to be called "Doctor" and another male colleague with the same education prefers to be called by his first name. Here the recipe or script does not work, as not everyone follows that same pattern or way of acting. Lastly, there are ideological approaches. In calling this an ideological belief system (Levant, 1996) masculinity is seen as comparable to an individual's system of values, political beliefs, or religious beliefs in that they provide an overarching set of ideals about how men should behave. Connecting to role theory, ideological approaches focus on the individual without much attention to the context of the given situation.

Finally, in addition to models that determine how masculinity is seen, created and/or measured, there are models that measure the level of strain and stress masculinity places on men. One such model is the Gender Role Strain Model by Jamie O'Neil (1981). In this theory, O'Neil argues, as does Joseph Pleck, that "compulsive dominance, passivity, and emotional constriction, are maladaptive" (p. 204). Other researchers have been documented as agreeing with Pleck (O'Neil, 1982; Pleck, 1981a, 1981b). They argue that trying to become androgynous presents a different -- but still potentially stressful -- set of standards that may be even greater than the expectations to line up with traditional, hegemonic masculinity. The attributes of androgyny include emotional expression, relationship orientation, and gentleness. In the Gender Role Strain Model, pressure and stress compound upon the role requirements of traditional,

hegemonic masculinity. O'Neil (1981) further argues that with this strain, a man feels a large amount of pressure to conform to the cultural norm of hegemonic masculinity and, as a result, is not able to reach his "full human potential" (p. 205). Ultimately, the key assertion of the Stress and Strain Models are that maintaining masculinity is inherently stressful and that masculinity is constructed. O'Neil's study matters to my research, as his measurements and their continued relation to positivistic thinking (i.e., their search for clear, delineated answers) produce an ability to place data in one category or the other. What is important to remember is that there is no answer to find because we use language to construct the world. If masculinity is constructed, then it can be deconstructed, which is the part of the framework that I use for this dissertation. Previous models have been created and imbued with subjective meanings and divisive outcomes in seemingly arbitrary ways. I contribute to the research by troubling those meanings, providing data that is contextually located, and pushing against gendered norms instead of being defined by them.

Overall, the early research on masculinity is important to discuss because it offers a narrative about the ways in which discourse produces a definition of masculinity and establishes normative behavior men need to adhere to in order to be seen as "true men." Understanding that the idea of "being male" has been created and crafted through positivist theoretical frameworks of arbitrary definitions shows the fragility of language and of masculinity as a concept. Recognizing the constructed nature of gender expectations and the negative effects non-conforming individuals experience are helpful in understanding why traditional views on masculinity are is so hard to change and why they are so ingrained in the hegemony of our culture, race, social class and sexual orientation. Ultimately, early research informed the "virtually unattainable" privileged model of living life as a man that Harris and Barone (2011) provide at the beginning of this chapter. More importantly, the research has shown me how,

depending on which definitions are complied with or disrupted in men and masculinities course, grand narratives and overgeneralized measurement scales can be troubled in order to create profound effects on other structural, institutional or political systems' components.

Men's Studies

Men and masculinities courses can be precarious spaces, full of both scholarly and political implications, especially for the course instructors already negotiating their own masculinity. In the following sections, I discuss the men and masculinities course and the field of Men's Studies. Then, I continue on challenging the assumptions happening in the course including if the course is still needed due to men's power circulating in society, how the rise of women have affected the course, and how it can be seen as anti-feminine and part of the men's movement.

Studying Gender

Although the study of masculinity is critical to removing sexism, misogyny, and chauvinism, it is a fairly new area of focus. New ideas emerged from 1960s feminist scholars who critiqued the prescribed ways of being female in America. They critiqued not only actions but also modern social science theory and research methods (Ginsberg, 2008, p. 11), thus interrogating ways of knowing as an essentialized truth about women. Early Women's Studies pioneers' interactions with societal norms ruptured traditional inquiry. This rupture made space for the creation of Women's Studies in the higher education curriculum and feminist pedagogy, thereby producing and curating knowledge that could now be considered academically viable. Theorists and researchers in Women Studies urged not only students and instructors, but

everyone, to take this concept of owning one's gender or being part of a gendered group by showing its academic and discursive importance, because in the end having a gender produced effects on and through one's behavior. From this notion, the idea of gendered beings grew as a concept among research and research designs.

As a result of the introspection of Women's Studies and the conversation around women as gendered beings, in the 1970s, Men's Studies became part of the academic conversation. Joseph Pleck (1988) provides an argument in favor of the creation of Men's Studies that helped shape a "gender aware" perspective (p. 2). Pleck struggles to prove his argument because most, if not all, research for psychology done previously used males (presumably white males) as the examples, yet these were to be interpreted for all humanity. Pleck urges that research about men was necessary not for humanity's sake but instead for the sake of men and to also capture men's "gendered" experience. He asserts that men are "powerfully affected" by the experience of growing up male, alluding to social constructionism. Some of the behavioral responses mentioned by Pleck are people recognizing and responding to men as males, recognizing men's power and authority simply by being male, acknowledging the expectations of and from both men and women, having others expect certain behaviors based on their "masculine gender roles, subscribing to the 'natures' of males and females, and then finally having feelings about their masculinities" (p. 2). This recognition is significant because in order to have feelings about one's masculinity, one has to recognize that masculinity exists.

Harry Brod (1987), as cited in Michael Kimmel's edited journal *Changing Men: New Directions in Research on Men and Masculinity*, states that traditional scholarship is about men "only by virtue of it not being about women" (p. 264). Directly, even without women referenced and studies solely involving men, men's experience as part of a larger culture is needed and Brod

along with others make this case through Men's Studies. Brod continues, in *The New Men's Studies*, claiming that "men's studies is essential to fulfilling the feminist project which underlies women's studies, and that feminist scholarship cannot reach its fullest, most radical potential without the addition of men's studies" (as cited in Libertin, 1987, p. 144). Brod's assertions indicate how both women's and men's studies can speak to gendered experiences in America.

Assumptions of Men's Studies

There are three main assumptions about Men's Studies coming from the research. One assumption is about whether Men's Studies is actually needed given the way that our society has been created (and reflected) today since society is already centered around men. Comments such as "men have all the power and get to do whatever they want'" are pervasive through our gendered discourse. While it is true that men as a group have enormous social power and that many men get what they want due to having less obstacles in their way, there are men who do not feel this way. They feel powerless and have been damaged by the masculine socialization they have been told they need to endure to be successful. What this means is that there is an assumption that if one identifies as masculine he reaps all the societal benefits. This is not always the case. Men's Studies accomplishes the task of providing education around privilege and power and how such assumptions can be true for some subject positions and not others.

The second assumption about Men's Studies alludes to the rise of women and their power in society (Kilmartin & Smiler, 2015). Once again, Kilmartin and Smiler re-examine these claims. It is true that many men have trouble perceiving women as fully-realized human beings, eligible for all the same rights, entitlements, and protections as men. This thought, in conjunction with men being socialized to be dominant and powerful may lead to some men feeling threatened by this shift in thinking. Kilmartin and Smiler (2015) stress that women are powerful

and “men must learn to accept” and work with women “in constructive ways” (p. 3). Men’s Studies, if taught from a pro-feminist point of view, brings awareness to and creates multiple avenues where masculine behavior can be challenged and urged to be more inclusive to all genders.

The third assumption about Men’s Studies is that it is anti-feminist and is connected with the global Men’s Movement. With the “Men’s Movement” being associated with anti-feminism, some Men’s Studies scholars have created a sense that *all* men believe this and have subsequently essentialized this belief. Other scholars and most Men’s Studies programs today focus on teaching from a feminist lens (Gardiner as cited in Kimmel, et al., 2005, p. 36). Robert Heasley (2013), former president of the American Men’s Studies Association (AMSA), asserts, “We have disappointed some by not incorporating the language (or ideals) of ‘men’s liberation’ and still others as being ‘too feminist,’ with an insistence that men’s studies should be what our detractors have called ‘masculinist’ -- advancing the cause of men’s rights. We have not pleased a lot of people. I prefer to see this as an indication of both our success...as our resilience” (p.12). Kilmartin and Smiler (2015) also provide purpose, writing, “The purpose of studying men from a gender aware perspective is not to further oppress women, but to address quality of life issues for men *and* women” (p. 3).

Overall, it is important to understand these early efforts show how the courses were created and allowed to be part of the larger institutional structure. Learning the history of the men studies course shows what previous conversations have formed what is commonly known now as a men’s studies course as well as providing hidden narratives and political underpinnings that may not be seen at first glance. In the context of my study, to know that these hidden discourses exist is a vital part of my approach to deconstructing them. The scholarship urges me

to investigate whether these discourses show up in the instructors' experiences of the course and/or inform their teaching methods or comprehension of the subject matter.

Critiques of the Literature on Masculinity

In reviewing the above literature, one of the largest critiques I have of masculinities research is its dual nature of overtness/subversiveness. Whether this duality happens in conversation or the classroom, there is power in discussing masculinities and not discussing this duality. In discussing masculinities we can help to show how masculinity operates in the classroom and in society. In not discussing traditional, hegemonic masculinity and its implications, traditional, hegemonic masculinity is able to continue its negative, subversive productions, thereby continuing to produce weak, tenuous actions by men and further privileging its discourses. Throughout this dissertation, I challenge the grand narratives of masculinity to open up knowledge in order to create new and different understandings of these terms among others, hopefully affecting what and how an instructor teaches these topics and revealing how vital it is to expose these meanings to college-aged men.

Another critique of the literature is that it treats masculinity as a separate, often contained unit that is outside of the researcher. Throughout much of my research, I encountered no discussion of how the researcher viewed or was affected by his or her views of masculinity. Masculinity was simply something “out there” that needed to be tested for when, instead, masculinity can be conceptualized as behavior in relation to patriarchal structures, such as those in higher education. Thus, the approach I take in my research to examine the subjectivity of the participants is different because it views masculinity from a subjective location that is always locationally changing depending on what context the participant is working within.

The literature provides a strong context for what men as a group are experiencing and shows what male subjectivity has been shaped to be. Additionally, research centering around intersectionality, namely the intersection of identities --black men or gay, Christian men for example --is improving and becoming more accessible. Knowledge that provides entry for some marginalized groups to enter into a conversation they previously did not have access to is needed and impactful because it proliferates the awareness of having multiple subjectivities; however this is still problematic from a poststructural point of view. My research challenges that intersection by exposing where current groupings are still closed off with narrow definitions, not recognizing that masculine subjectivity is not stagnant but shifts locations depending on context. In poststructural thought, we are always "becoming" and our subjective locations are always shifting with nothing being essentialized.

Finally, in terms of my theoretical framework, deconstruction troubles the grand narrative of masculinities by employing theory to expose multiple meanings. If the meaning of masculinities is slippery and always escapes, then what is still absent? What must be suppressed in order to privilege dominant meanings? What does this reveal about the presence of the masculinities discourse in the classroom but the absence of this discourse in other parts of the university? My research provides additional challenges to meaning and subjectivities of masculinity and troubles it at the same time.

Conclusion

This literature review provides the needed scholarly context to understand not only the common discourse that construct masculine identities and expressions, but also what discourses are being brought into the men and masculinities classroom. In addition, the literature review

provides new research surrounding masculinities at the intersection, while also demonstrating the precarious nature of the men and masculinities classroom within the discipline of Men's Studies. This review reveals that missing from the research are the experiences of men and masculinities instructors and how, by knowing or not knowing these discourses, they negotiate their own masculinity while teaching their courses; this negotiation leading to where they are eventually complicit and disrupting of traditional, hegemonic masculinity. My study fills gaps in research by examining experiences of men who teach men and masculinities courses, challenging new research associated with college men, and demonstrating how to use the theoretical framework of feminist poststructuralism as analysis.. Additionally, through my research approach, I strive to open up masculinity's closed definitions, reveal hidden discourses, and challenge the essentialism of masculinity.

In the next chapter, I provide an overview of feminist poststructuralism, highlighting its tenets and why I employ this theory to examine the discourse of masculinity. Also, I showcase the process of deconstruction in order to demonstrate the fluidity of the complicity and disruption performed by the instructors of men and masculinities courses.

Chapter 3: Theory

In Chapter 2, I discuss how masculinity is defined, how it has been studied, and how the men's studies classroom came to be seen as both beneficial and problematic when it provides its privileged meanings of masculinities. In showing that these definitions privilege certain discourses over others, I present a scholarly context for how hegemonic masculinity might play an important role in the men and masculinities classroom. In order to examine how men who teach men and masculinities courses negotiate their own masculinity while teaching their courses, I use the theoretical framework of feminist poststructuralism and Derrida's ongoing process of deconstruction to do research that is not found in the literature. This research aims to challenge previously held definitions and measurements of masculinity; to study masculinities in a different way, exposing the fragility of meaning in the men and masculinities classroom; and to examine the fluidity of the instructor's complicity with and disruption of traditional hegemonic masculinity.

As a reminder, Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) describe hegemonic masculinity as a pattern of practices, i.e. the actions and set of masculine role expectations men need to live by in order to maintain men's dominance over women in society (p. 832). These actions and behaviors do not operate in a vacuum; they are happening all around us, both overtly and covertly. Men who are expected to perform masculinity feel the individual, political, and structural impact of such expectations. Expectations include not expressing emotions, not being able to back down from confrontation, not possessing the ability to ask for help, or not knowing the threat of ostracization, ridicule, and physical harm that could come from behaving in "feminine" ways. A problem with these expectations, as identified in my literature review, is that through the early research on masculinity, femininity has been deemed wrong, demonizing women and placing

them in opposition to men and in the category of "less than." This is perpetuated through hegemonic acts and behaviors that are ingrained in our interactions, classrooms, institutions, and, for the purpose of this study, higher education. Currently, some institutions of higher education respond to the structural impact of these behaviors by developing courses about men as gendered beings; the purposes of these courses are to discuss the implications of being read as masculine and to critique how the discipline of masculinities measures its supposedly presumed, inevitable, limited expectations and definitions.

As a former instructor of one of these courses who collected data about how men who teach men and masculinities courses negotiate their own masculinity while teaching their course, I needed a theoretical framework to deconstruct long-held assumptions about masculinity, reveal hidden discourses, and challenge meanings and structures that seemed immutable. Feminist poststructuralism thus became the theoretical framework for my dissertation. Feminist poststructuralism locates the subject as someone who is always changing, always locationally different, and, therefore, always adjusting their subjectivities with each interaction. As an instructor, I felt the movement of subjectivities and frequent adjustments of perspectives each time I needed to answer a student's question or when trying to understand what discourse the student was "speaking" at that moment. With multiple subjectivities being produced throughout the teaching of my course, I wanted to examine how instructors negotiate their own masculinity while teaching their course and where the instructors are both complicit with and disruptive of traditional, hegemonic masculinity. After reviewing the literature for how the male experience is codified, presented as a grand narrative in America, and measured, I began to see the hegemonic, structural components creating a brick-walling effect and maintaining the boundaries of traditional, hegemonic masculinity. Further review revealed how new research on the college

men discourse was opening up masculine subjectivities while, uniquely, remaining limited and narrow, lumping all meanings under one label. Together with the above points, I showed that the men's studies classroom was a precarious place of complicity and, comparatively, disruptive of traditional, hegemonic masculinity. From my of the literature, I created the following research questions to employ feminist poststructuralism to interrogate the meaning of masculinity, to further examine the experiences of men teaching men and masculinities courses and their complicity and disruption of traditional, hegemonic masculinity:

> Research Question 1: What are the discourses and instructor histories that produce the privileged meanings of masculinities in a higher education course pertaining to men and masculinities?
>
> Research Question 2: How do the practices of instructors who teach a men and masculinities course disrupt and comply with traditional, hegemonic masculinity?

The significance of my research into masculinities instructors' experiences of teaching their classes lies in the opportunity to gain a new understanding of how definitions of masculinities affect the discourse in the classroom, how the grand narratives of masculinities research produce privileged discourses of masculinities, and how the topic of masculinities has been studied in the past. Demonstrating what actions, conversations, and cultural performances of masculinity are deemed as privileged in the classroom reflects which discourses of masculinity are privileged in society. These practices, when coupled with the participants' personal histories, demonstrate the influence that the instructor has on the direction and curricular message of the course. Additionally, most early masculinities research has been conducted through positivist, social constructionist, or narrative case study theoretical frameworks that attempt to codify, group, and find an answer that is "out there" to discover. I

chose feminist poststructuralism as a theoretical framework for my research in order to position gender at the center of the research and push against the codification and the privileging of grand narratives. Other frameworks produce stable, troublesome answers that do not account for subjective location the way feminist poststructuralism does. On the other hand, feminist poststructuralism addresses gender as an organizing structure in higher education discourses and within masculinity. It challenges conventional inherited wisdom about what it means to be a man and a male American college student and how it is experienced and reinforced by the instructors in my research. This is significant because the instructors, assumed by the students to be the people most learned on issues of masculinity, struggle to navigate contingent meanings of masculinity in their personal subjectivities as well as in their position as the sage-on-stage speaking to students asking them tough questions. Feminist poststructuralism and deconstruction enable me to challenge the closure of meaning in masculinities discourse and to expose the fluidity of the instructors' compliance with and disruption of traditional hegemonic, masculinity.

Feminist Poststructural Theory

In the previous chapters, I have demonstrated that masculinities in higher education is an important issue because it is so pervasive in policy-making decisions and everyday discursive practices, creating rules and regulations that continue to place traditionally, hegemonic men in a position of domination over women and other genders. Educational research on this issue provides possible ways out of these practices to move toward more equitable learning environments that can lead to change in the classroom, the structure of higher education, and hopefully in society.

While there has been a substantial amount of qualitative research on teaching Men's Studies, masculinities, and the concept of teaching men's psychology courses, I could not find any research focusing on men's experiences teaching men and masculinities courses at American higher education institutions, especially studies in which researchers examined and deconstructed the instructor's experiences. Furthermore, most research studies surrounding masculinities work is performed through a lens of social constructionism. Social constructionism adheres to the practice of creating meaning from "a publicly available system of intelligibility," meaning that "all objects are made not found" in society and are part of commonly held assumptions and behaviors that are, in turn, constructed as part of institutions that have preceded us (Fish, 1990 as cited in Crotty, 2003). Rather than studying the meaning of these institutions, I challenge the institutions, the commonly understood discourses and grand narratives of masculine assumptive behavior, and the "system of intelligibility" that social constructionism espouses. Further, I examine what the instructors participating in my study produce by analyzing their complicity with and disruption of traditional, hegemonic masculinity. I contribute to the scholarship by using feminist poststructuralism as an overarching theoretical framework and the living, already occurring process of deconstruction to produce new understandings within/against the concept of masculinities.

An Overview of Feminist Poststructuralism

Feminist poststructuralism challenges gender's constructed meanings; uses language, subjectivity, and power relations to question the often arbitrary categorizations of "man" and "woman"; and refocuses itself on the "relative experiences of each individual" (Hesse-Biber, 2014, p. 43). Additionally, feminist poststructuralism questions "the validity of distinctions and

assumptions based on cultural, societal distinctions; and it deconstructs these socially constructed categories to explore variations in the individual experience with these groupings" (p. 43), thereby challenging the groupings themselves and leading to their eventual obsolescence. By understanding that these gendered experiences exist merely in relation to the world around them and that knowledge and experience is "socially produced, unstable, and contextualized" (p. 44). From this understanding, instructors can recognize that discourse and language become the constructors of what we know as well as the tools to analyze and disrupt the creation of and the power behind these subjugated subjectivities, language signifiers, and discourses in the first place. Weedon (1997) describes feminist poststructuralism as having the ability to "explain the assumptions underlying the questions asked and answered by other forms of feminist theory, making their political assumptions explicit" (p. 20). That is, feminist poststructuralism creates an opportunity for instructors to question the questions and expose why some questions are privileged over others. Feminist poststructuralism also provides a chance to ask why the answers are sometimes presented in a crafted or constructed manner as well as bringing to light the implications that may come from that question. Masculinity's discursive practices are presented as the norm, and other gendered practices are seen as strong/weak, normal/not normal thus the implication is that women and other marginalized genders are weak, not normal and not meeting or are not allowed to meet masculinity threshold. This then means masculinity's discourse will continue to shape our practices and institutions. For example, knowing that masculine discourses are practices and expectations that, socially, men are aware of, instructors can recognize those discursive practices circulating within institutional structures, such as higher education and the men and masculinities classroom. Furthermore, the men and masculinities classroom can show how the discourse of masculinity is implicated in feminism. Weedon explains, "Poststructuralism

can also indicate the types of discourse from which particular feminist questions come, and locate them both socially and institutionally. Most important of all, it can explain the implications for feminism of these other discourses" (p. 20). Knowing why and from what discourses the questions come from and whom they will affect when answered is important, as this troubles long held concepts and conventional wisdom.

Equally important, Weedon suggests that there is no inherent essential meaning of experience in feminist poststructural theory. "It may be given meaning in the language through a range of discursive systems of meaning which are often contradictory and constitute conflicting versions of social reality, which in turn serve conflicting interests" (p. 33). When experience happens there is no meaning that is contained in the event and experienced the same for all involved. Instead, meaning is created by the "discursive systems" that are available to the individuals trying to understand that experience.

St. Pierre (2000) describes work by feminist poststructuralists as "women who, having duly struggled with the schizophrenia of language, move resolutely toward faint intelligibilities they hope will enhance the lives of women" (p. 479). The "schizophrenia of language" to which St. Pierre refers, tells women what they need to be in order to be women, which is in tension with a woman's subjectivity. The same "schizophrenia" can be said for men and what it means to be masculine in America. The dissonance of what men are told and what men feel through their subjectivities is important to understand as the instructors who teach masculinities negotiate their own masculinity. St. Pierre argues that this work strives to enhance women's lives, writing that "[f]eminists and others representing disadvantaged groups use poststructural critiques of language...to make visible how language operates to produce very real, material, and damaging structures in the world," (p. 481). St. Pierre's work connects to a goal of the men and

masculinities classroom as well; making lives better for women makes lives better for all genders. Critiquing the men and masculinities classroom produces "real, material" actions that could harm or heal the structures located in society. Overall, feminist poststructuralism provides a strong framework for my research because it challenges the binary categories of gender, makes visible the constitutive force of power relations, and deconstructs the language and subjectivities of those disrupting and/or being complicit in traditional, hegemonic masculinities.

Truth Claims

In feminist poststructuralism, truth is multiple rather than fixed and stable. Truth as multiple rejects a positivist framework based on searching for a singular, observable, universal truth that is "out there" to discover, part of a linear line that recognizes gaps in research; meaning if researchers do the right experiment at the right time, then they can find a universal truth and explanation of this truth (Jones, 2011, p. 202). Feminist researcher Collins (2000) addresses feminist theory and truth, by stating, "what I believe and why something is true are not benign academic issues. Instead, these concerns tap the fundamental question of which versions of truth will prevail and shape thought and action" (p. 203). That is, when many truths exist, the individual truth that best benefits those in positions of privilege will be used and reified as the one and only Truth, punishing (either physically, emotionally, and/or spiritually) those who believe or act differently.

How is this claim to multiple truths relevant to pedagogy and a men and masculinities course? In the beginning of teaching my course on men and masculinities, I worked to show that one person's truth was not another's. I taught my students there are multiple truths, multiple lenses to critique the research around masculinities. The importance of challenging others when they claim to have "the" answer was something that I wished to impart on first-year students

taking my course. This skill was important to me, as I saw this ability as being necessary to navigate the institutions they were a part of at the time as well as in their future studies. This skill was not only in their gendered world, but in society at large as well. Throughout my research for this dissertation, the participants in my study explained that they were eager to provide their students the opportunity to challenge what they had been told about men, men's behavior, and men's interactions within society.

Also important to my research, and related to this claim of multiple truths, is my desire to disrupt the transcendental Truths the men in my study were told as they grew up. Their personal histories demonstrated to me that the "ideal man" inscription they were taught did not match up with their experiences, thus leading to the excitement and intrigue of teaching a class to students along the gender spectrum of what masculinity means in America today. The knowledge that this "ideal" Truth is shaping traditional, hegemonic masculinity allows for the disruption of that Truth when that version is challenged by other versions taught within the course. This knowledge then inspires the question: why has this truth become the only truth that dictates and manipulates hegemony in America. Poststructural feminist theory recognizes the authority of this language and provides the tools to challenge it.

Feminist poststructuralism also allows researchers to trouble society's structures and institutions and, in turn, reveal what the structures produce and what produces those structures. Williams (2005) writes that poststructuralism takes an essentialized, hegemonic belief and is able to "deconstruct it, transform it, show its exclusions," which then unsettles its assumptions "about purity (in morals), about essences (in terms of race, gender, and backgrounds), and about values (in art and politics), about truth (in law and philosophy)" (p. 4). The rattling of "confined

concepts" once again reveals the multiple, non-static meanings of concepts and discourses we use every day.

Ultimately, feminist poststructuralism is something that I brought with me in my thinking and in my analysis throughout my research. I argue that feminist theory is lens that is so interconnected to a poststructuralist framework that it is difficult to have one without the other. Each theory challenges meanings surrounding truth, authority, gender roles and, most importantly for this dissertation, gendered experiences and their productions. Because feminist theory is so important to the discussion, I employ it throughout my analysis in order to show that the gendered experiences of male instructors teaching a class on how men should be men demonstrates their complicity with and disruption to traditional, hegemonic masculinity. In Chapter 4 of this dissertation, I demonstrate through my methodology that I position gendered experiences and subjectivity at the center of my inquiry. However, I do this in relation to society and the institutional artifact of the men and masculinities class, which both constitute the students as well as the instructors. Additionally, I chose to employ semi-structured interviews to allow for the instructors to open about their experience and to allow the conversation to go in the direction the participants want it to, once again centering their experiences. This allowed me, as the researcher, to ask different questions in order to understand how the participants' gender influenced their teaching, their lives and their understanding of the categories of gender, as well as how they were complicit or disruptive of traditional, hegemonic masculinity. Feminist theory also informed my interview questions, as I asked about definitions of gender and masculinity, allowing me to do the poststructural work of challenging said normative definitions. These topics will be more fully discussed later in Chapter 4 and analyzed in Chapter 5.

To further elaborate upon my chosen theoretical framework, I focus on three of feminist poststructuralism's key principles and assumptions. These key principles and assumptions are the concepts of the subject and self; the signs, systems, and structures of language; and finally the destabilization and deconstruction of meaning.

Subjectivity and Discourse

Feminist poststructuralism recognizes the subject as the person being acted upon, who acts within discourse and also within ever-changing locations. Feminist poststructuralism also posits a subjectivity that is uncertain, inconsistent, and always in process -- always being reconstructed each time we think and speak (Weedon, 1997). This subjectivity is a person's being that is always mobile and always shifting rather than stable and essentialized. Instructors have multiple subjectivities that are bound to discourses. Stuart Hall (1997) define discourse as ways of referring to or constructing knowledge about particular topics or practices: a cluster (or formation) of ideas, images or practices which provide ways of talking about, forms of knowledge and conduct associated with a particular topic, social activity, or institution site in society. Furthermore, as defined by Weedon (1997), "Subjectivity is used to refer to the conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions of the individual, her sense of herself and her ways of understanding her relation to the world" (p. 32). Weedon helped me think about the participants' subjectivities and how I consciously chose participants who navigated different discourses in their work. As instructors of men and masculinities courses, the participants identified themselves as having strong student affairs backgrounds, meaning that they had previously worked within student affairs, held or were working toward a higher education/student affairs oriented degree, and/or they currently worked at a higher education institution and had a position within the realm of student affairs. Specifically, three participants

worked within student affairs and two worked within higher education academic programs with some previous responsibilities in student affairs. The participants were also instructors of classes housed in other academic discourses like psychology, communication, sociology, leadership, and a first-year seminar in student success. Thus, in terms of the relation between subjectivity and discourse, in interviews for this dissertation, the participants talked about walking that line between the discourses of academia and student affairs, meaning most considered themselves instructors but not faculty members at the institution. Their subjectivities lived in the realm of completing the goals of the course within the discourse of student affairs and using the skills of their student affairs background (understanding the student's entire identity, having conversations to that effect, less lecture-based information delivery and practical skills building measures). Meeting their goals to meet student affairs' needs was their focus and not living in the realm of faculty needs such as ensuring tenure, the writing of scholarship and participating in the larger research conversation. Moreover, I thought with Weedon's feminist poststructuralist theory to make visible possible unconscious thoughts and emotions that created the subjectivities of the participants. This concept is important because subjectivity is constructed through multiple forces acting upon the instructors: the discourses of their home life, cultural norms within their communities, popular culture's privileging of one discourse over another, their religious beliefs, and many more. These discourses can account for the relationship between the individual and the social (Weedon, 1997, p. 3) by revealing that structures are what the individual is working within and against, creating who they are and regulating their behavior in order to comply or disrupt discourse. Also, these lenses of discourse and subjectivity shed light on the fact that not only are instructors of men and masculinities courses part of the structures that subjugated them to be

who they are, they are also a part of the forces acting upon the lives of students constructing their own subjectivities.

Structures

To provide a broader picture, I must note that all of these structures pre-exist us. As children, we are told through direct and indirect terms what women and men should be and how each should act in society. Our subject positions do not always comply with what society tells us to be. Thus, we need the men and masculinities classroom as one site to demonstrate multiple social locations in order to disrupt the rigid structure of men, women, and other genders each needing to be and act in one, solidified, preconceived way. Participating in the traditionally, hegemonic domination of men is not the only way to be a man. In fact, participating in the system hurts men who possess multiple subjectivities. Hence, a disruption of such a system will not only affect the individual subjectivities of the instructor, but also the students in the course. This disruption could produce student awareness of the multiplicity of subjectivities that could affect a change in their perspective and eventually produce a sizable shift in equity among all genders by undermining traditional, hegemonic masculinity. Feminist poststructuralist theory helps to examine this awareness by acknowledging how these structures influence and create subjectivities and inspires hope by maintaining that subjectivities are always in process and can be changed, challenged, or adjusted at any point because there is no final state of being.

If a men and masculinities instructor's subjectivity is always shifting, they are always negotiating their subject location, as well as their pedagogical positionalities, when teaching their courses. One of the most important assumptions of feminist poststructuralism is that the self is constructed by the discourses in which we are acting within and against, our self is ever-changing and not fixed or stable. Richardson and St. Pierre (2005) state:

> Language is how social organization and power are defined and contested and the place where one's sense of self -- one's subjectivity -- is constructed. Understanding language as competing discourses -- competing for ways of giving meaning and of organizing the world -- makes language a site of exploration and struggle … Language is not the result of one's individuality; rather, language constructs one's subjectivity in ways that are historically and locally specific. What something means to individuals is dependent on the discourses available to them. (p. 961)

Richardson and St. Pierre are arguing that our sense of self, our subjectivity, is constructed from the discourses that are around us. In this dissertation, I position masculinity as gendered subjectivity, and analyze how particular subjectivities are produced and privileged in a course focused on men and masculinities. Feminist poststructuralism allows for new ways to understand masculinities, primarily through the competing discourses of what being masculine means, as taught and enacted in a higher education classroom. Deconstructing this shift of subjectivity is examined through my research question: how do the practices of instructors who teach a men and masculinities course disrupt and comply with traditional, hegemonic masculinity?

Discourse and Masculinity

A discourse of masculinity demonstrates a "way of referring to or constructing knowledge" (Hall, 1997, p. 6 as cited in Hesse-Biber, 2014). It assembles clusters of information and informs ideas through images, phrases, and practices that "provide ways of talking about, forms of knowledge and conduct" around masculinity. The discourse functions as "a system of meaning created by a combination of texts and the social practices that inform them" (p. 6). A discourse of masculinity defines, through specific actions and definitions, what it means to be

masculine in society, for example, how a masculine person walks, talks, expresses their gender, who structurally holds top positions, and who dictates policy within institutions.

The subject positions available within a masculinities discourse limit those trying to create a sense of self and constrain what is viable beyond what the world expects, beyond regular, traditional, and common practices. Feminist poststructuralism provides a framework for analyzing the linguistic and politically felt repercussions of both congruent and incongruent subjectivities with what is expected in society. Therefore, in my study I analyze how instructors of men and masculinities courses are teaching what is already established in terms of what it means to be masculine in America. As a researcher, it is crucial for me to examine at the course content and teaching strategies and analyze their productions: how men are subjects and part of a discourse in the first place, how labels that narrow and limit meaning associated with them instead of being inclusive, and how privileging some discourses of masculinity over others can affect students who do not identify with the discourse's "rules." A discussion of how the self and the subject are formed when disruptions by the instructor can happen, but only if the instructor is aware of their complicity in the first place. My study focuses on the participant's personal histories that allow me to determine what discourses they have been exposed to and, thus, how they are affected by and affecting students through discourse. My analysis will show that while there are multiple discourses of masculinity, some are privileged over others in the men and masculinities classroom. Additionally, I disrupt the binary of complicit/disruptive and demonstrate that the instructors provide an experience that is not either/or but both/and.

Authority

Lastly, a discussion that arises from the subjectivity of an instructor is the concept of authority, which connects to an instructor's sense of self in the classroom. According to Janck

(1997), “epistemic authority is conferred … as a result of other people’s judgement of our sincerity, reliability, trustworthiness, and ‘objectivity’... certain people are [understood to be] in a better position to ‘see’ the world than are other people” (p. 133). Through the instructor's internal and the students’ external “judgment,” authority is negotiated through the instructor’s “sincerity” of the subject matter, the perceived “reliability” of the information delivered, and the “trustworthiness” of that information given. Feminist poststructuralism provides the tools to challenge concepts such as sincerity, reliability, and trustworthiness, not only in the classroom but also within the discourse of masculinity itself. Feminist poststructuralism challenges this authority and repositions it as one truth among many. During my own research, feminist poststructuralism allowed me to question where the participants recognized their authority in the classroom and where their subjectivities were involved in their class instruction and provided me tools to challenge their experience as part of the overall higher education structure.

Signs, Systems, and Structures

The concepts of the sign, signified, and signifier are essential when understanding structuralism and feminist poststructuralism. Feminist poststructuralism is a response to structuralism that is interested in the study of signifying or symbol systems, and its structure is what gives structuralism its name. Jeffrey Nealon and Susan Searls Giroux (2012) agree by arguing, “for any given signifying phenomenon, there must be an underlying structure that makes the signifying act possible and governs it in some way” (pp. 144-146). Ferdinand de Saussure chooses to place and divide the sign into two distinct categories: “signifier” and “signified,” which, together, make a “sign” (Belsey, 2002). An important question for my research is, “Who and/or what decides what a sign means (or signifies)?” The relationship between signified and signifier is considered arbitrary and socio-culturally constructed. One

example of a sign system within hegemonic masculinity is the construction of who a college instructor is supposed to be. The signified is the mental concept of a person, most likely a white male, over 40, white or gray haired, displaying signifiers like wearing a tweed jacket with arm patches, having earned educational degrees higher than a bachelor's degree (most likely a doctorate in the topic being taught), and caring little about students' lives outside the classroom. I now have a "sign" or meaning attributed to this person as an instructor. Feminist poststructuralism allows me to think more critically about this sign. I can see that this is a construction within discourse governing what counts as the typical college or university instructor. Feminist poststructuralism creates a path to interrogate this sign through its signified and the signifier components, granting me permission to look differently at the meaning behind the sign, demonstrating that not all instructors act, look, and react this way.

Poststructural theory deconstructs the sign "college/university instructor," disturbing its meaning as transcendental and universal, even though the stereotype exists. For feminist poststructuralist theory, the common factor in the analysis of social organization, social meetings, power, and individual consciousness is language:

> Like all theories, poststructuralism makes certain assumptions about language, subjectivity, knowledge, and truth. Its founding insight, taken from the structuralist linguistics of Ferdinand de Saussure, is that language, far from reflecting an already given social reality, constitutes social reality for us. Neither social reality nor the 'natural' world has fixed intrinsic meanings which language reflects or expresses. (Weedon, 1997, p. 21-22)

In other words, language does not predate anything: language produces the world around us, and the world is not referring to an already existent language, but the other way around. The

language of masculinities and the discourses that produced them did not come from a transcendental source. They were created (and are being created) using a system of signs. This language is constructed, not only by the fixed nature of the sign, systems, and structures, but also through the construction of subjectivities, which are never stable. In terms of the essentialism of masculinity and men's specific behaviors, deconstructing constructions of meaning may provide new insights on what masculinity/ies does. Within the discourse for college/university instructors, outside of the above sign there are instructors who have a range of experience, can be any age, gender or race, with varying ability levels, and build healthy and supportive relationships with others, especially students. Some might avoid dressing in a stereotypical manner, abhor tweed jackets with patches, and treat students of all genders with respect and grace, caring holistically about the students in their classes. My research challenges the discursive systems and sign systems found within this discourse, opening up new meanings about masculinities by analyzing the experiences of instructors in the men and masculinities classroom. In my research, the signs of "instructor," "student," and "masculinities" are interrogated. Through the interrogations, I show how the participants remain complicit or are disruptive by examining which challenges to supposedly universal signs they choose to confront or not and how they privilege some signs and their constructions over others.

Meaning

Feminist poststructuralist theory claims that meaning cannot be an essentializing practice (Weedon, 1997, p. 33). One of the ways meaning is constructed is through discourse. Weedon (1997) states that meaning:

> … through a range of discursive systems of meaning which are often contradictory and constitute conflicting versions of social reality, which in turn

> serve conflicting interests. This range of discourses and their material supports in social institutions and practices are integral to the maintenance and contestation of forms of social power, since social reality has no meaning except in language. (p. 34)

For Weedon, meaning is partial, contradictory, and conflicts with interests depending on what discursive location one is inhabiting at that moment. St. Pierre (2000) adds, "Poststructural thought accepts de Saussure's idea that there is no correspondence between a word and a thing, that signs have no intrinsic meaning but obtain meaning because of their difference from other signs in the language chain" (p. 481). The concept of *différance*, originally described by Derrida (2016), asserts that meaning cannot be pinned down, or events cannot be described to mirror reality. Meaning always escapes, is always deferred down the chain of signification. My understanding of a college instructor can only be informed by the college instructors I have seen in life, those that have been described to me or experienced through the media. To demonstrate différance, my meaning of a college instructor is only *my* meaning because a college instructor is different from other instructors -- elementary school teachers, for example -- and they are not students in a course and, instead, are functioning as lecturers at the front of the classroom. An example of the "deferring" piece of différance is that no matter how many details someone can communicate to describe a stereotypical professor (male, 40s/50s, tweed jacket, one who does research), the exact meaning of a college/university professor cannot be expressed. Through discursive constructs, we create meaning that defines social behavior, even though social reality may not exist in this manner, and what is defining in one place, may not be defined in another.

In my research, meaning was the concept that was present more than any other, as the instructors participating in my study wanted to create a space for their students to learn and think

differently. In a way, the men and masculinities class is one that defines behavior by providing definitions of the right way/wrong way to be a man. When the subjectivity of the instructor teaching or the student taught in a men and masculinities course does not adhere to or coalesce with the "right" or "wrong" way to be a man, that creates conflict and cognitive dissonance, which Weedon describes as "a site of disunity and conflict, central to the process of political change and to preserving the status quo" (Weedon, 1997, p. 21). In other words, if meaning is created by the instructors through discourse, and that discourse defines what a category or group of men behaves/acts like in everyday life, this discourse can produce actions that are politically or socially motivated. This motivation appears as expectations of what masculine behaviors are, whether certain men meet those expectations, and what is produced from meeting or not meeting those expectations. For example, a common expectation is that men are leaders of industry, not homemakers or caregivers. This notion may lead to men actively resisting being caregivers/homemakers altogether, strengthening the discourse and creating disunity and social conflict among peers and, sometimes, with the man's own subjectivity. However, if that meaning is disrupted, new meanings of said discourse are created, shifting the more dominant discourse altogether. As I will discuss in Chapter 5, the participants in my research were implicitly and explicitly working to challenge and disrupt the discourses of traditional, hegemonic masculinity. Each participant, in their own subjective way, worked to address, challenge, and disrupt what masculinity means in America today.

Conclusion

In previous sections of this chapter, I presented the main features of feminist poststructuralism: how feminist poststructuralism 1) challenges gender's constructed meaning; 2)

uses language, subjectivity, and power relations to question arbitrary categorization of "masculine" or "feminine;" 3) challenges transcendental Truth; and 4) troubles society's structures as well as discourse. I moved on to explain why I chose feminist poststructuralism to study masculinities through an overview of subjectivity and discourse, employing the example of an instructor to describe Saussure's concept of the sign. In doing so, I demonstrated how I came to the research questions I did and why it was important to frame them in this way.

In Chapter 4, I provide an overview of my methodological approach. Additionally, I highlight my process for recruiting participants, who those participants were, and the methods I used in completing the study, as well as my incorporation of the process of deconstruction and why I employed deconstructive work. In Chapter 5, I provide an analysis putting to work Richardson and St. Pierre's (2005) concept of crystallizations and Derrida's ongoing process of deconstruction. Within Chapter 5, I highlight three specific crystallizations: instructors instructing by constructing then deconstructing, the questioning of authority, and instructors' disruption of traditional teaching practices.

Chapter 4: Methodology

In the previous chapter, I provided an overview of my theoretical framework, feminist poststructuralism, and how it works throughout the dissertation. In recognizing feminist poststructuralism's tenets regarding truth claims, subjectivity and discourse, authority, and meaning, I transition from a description of my theoretical framework to explaining how that theoretical framework informs the methodology of this dissertation. As a reminder of my purpose, I examined how men who teach men and masculinities courses negotiated their own masculinity while teaching their course.

In this chapter, I first construct a brief introduction to feminist poststructuralism. I highlight its key principles and assumptions as they relate to masculinities and my examination of those teaching masculinities. Second, I explain my research methods by describing my study's setting and context, data sources, data collection, and participants. Next, I briefly discuss the analytic methods of thinking with theory (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012). I then elaborate on the ongoing process of deconstruction that opened up my analysis of the interviews with the participants of the study. Finally, I address issues of ethics, reflexivity, and trustworthiness in order to demonstrate how I made sure that care was taken for the participants in this dissertation study. In doing this deconstruction, I expose the fragility of meaning in the men and masculinities classroom and the fluidity of the instructors' complicity with and disruption of traditional, hegemonic masculinity, my ultimate goal being to answer the following research questions:

> Research Question 1: What are the discourses and instructor histories that produce the privileged meanings of masculinities in a higher education course pertaining to men and masculinities?
>
> Research Question 2: How do the practices of instructors who teach a men

and masculinities course disrupt and comply with traditional, hegemonic masculinity?

Overall, this chapter elucidates how I designed my study using specific methods of recruiting participants, interviewing those participants, and analyzing the data to show how the men and masculinities instructors' discursive practices reveal their complicity in and disruption of traditional, hegemonic masculinity. My aim is to expose how individuals are shaped by institutions and discourse.

Feminist Research

To begin, I must connect epistemology, or how we know what we know, with my methodology, "a body of methods that allows us to create knowledge by engaging with feminist theoretical and ethical perspectives" (Davis & Craven, 2016, pp. 76-77). Feminist theoretical and ethical perspectives allow my research to be recognizable as feminist. For this methodology section, I demonstrate that my what makes my research feminist and how ethics, reflexivity, and trustworthiness all play a part in creating the methodology.

In *Feminist: Research Practices: A Primer* (2014), Sharlene Hesse-Biber writes:

> Feminist research positions gender as the categorical center of inquiry and the research process. By using a variety of research methods...feminist researchers use gender as a lens through which to focus on social issues. Research is considered 'feminist' when it is grounded in the set of theoretical traditions that privilege women's issues, voices, and lived experiences. (p. 3)

In my dissertation, I use feminist theoretical tradition and feminist research methods to demonstrate which discourses are privileged by masculinity and how the instructors of men and masculinities courses disrupt or are complicit with traditional, hegemonic masculinity. My

research challenges what it means to be masculine in order to show the fragility of meaning in the men and masculinities course.

Context of Interviews - A Moment to Situate

In order to situate my dissertation study, as well as the discussions happening in the courses, I need to locate these classes in a time and place. The classes I use in my study took place in the United States of America during the first two years of the Donald Trump presidency. Interestingly, throughout the interviews, instructors mentioned that students in their classes who seemed to experience the most tension with what was taught in the courses and what was happening outside of the classroom were those who identified as white men and were, themselves, complicit with traditional, hegemonic masculinity by actively participating in the angry, white man discourse as researched by Michael Kimmel (2017). The discourse on which Kimmel focuses is one of male-dominated white entitlement, often echoing with white supremacist leanings. The participants of Kimmel's study were angry because they think or feel that individuals of differing identities have taken away their societal privileges, leaving them unheard and unseen. While this sentiment can be seen as holding or not holding weight, additionally entangled in Kimmel's Angry Men Discourse is the presidential discourse of "Make America Great Again" (2016). The "Make America Great Again" discourse harkens back to a time viewed by white men as "easier" and "happier." But if this discourse is left unchallenged, this discourse elides to the background the question of "easier" and "happier" for whom? Generally speaking, the answer is white men, who benefit from the rhetoric and discourse of the traditionally hegemonic male and are fully complicit in enacting this discourse and propagating its productions. This discourse operating within the classroom at this time pushes

acknowledgements and discussions about racism and sexism (among many other -isms) to the background. Additionally, this discourse creates an absent presence saying: if we need to make America great again, then America is not great in its present state and assumes it was once great; once again thinking, not great for whom? This discourse additionally refers to a time containing a Derridean trace or haunting of 1940s/50s American nostalgia, a time when society seemed more outwardly/obviously defined by binary opposition of hierarchical power: good/bad, white/black, rich/poor, and masculine/feminine gender roles. This discourse, perpetuated by the Trump campaign and administration, was and is held to an even higher gendered significance because his challenger was the first woman to receive the Democratic nomination for the Office of the President of the United States, Hillary Clinton, inviting the discussion that the USA chose Donald Trump over Hillary Clinton in part because of her gender identity. This discussion shows that Donald Trump is a solidified example of hegemonic masculinity's influence on the structure of our country, policy, and T/truth telling. Indeed, Donald Trump may even be an example of hegemonic masculinity personified. The context of setting and examples I have provided are relevant because discourses and cultural events influence, produce, and entangle the practices of instruction and the discussions happening in the courses and, thus, in the instructor's interviews. Deconstructing masculinities in the classroom may feel uneasy, unsafe, and perhaps precarious in its branched thinking. However, by using this perspective, instructors can challenge and highlight the fallibility of concepts like masculinity/ies in order to open up and provide space for students to learn to think differently about long-held concepts and subjectivities. Ultimately, my dissertation study challenges the above discourses by challenging the experiences of instructors and their power, authority, and language use in the men and masculinities classroom.

Research Setting, Methods, and Sources of Data Creation

The settings I chose for my research are four-year public institutions because this is an arena that I recognize and have taught within. I believe my familiarity aided in the deconstruction of the experience at the end of the interviews during my analysis and helped limit my scope of research to focus on similar, recognizable discourses that I was familiar with prior to this research. Furthermore, my familiarity with four-year public institutions helped me to avoid wondering if any variation in the interviewees' experiences was due to them acting within the institutional discourse of their type of institution.

I chose to limit my participant pool to individuals who have a student affairs background similar to my own journey in higher education because I had better access to them through my involvement in student affairs national organizations and a better understanding of their role on campus through my experience teaching and holding a student affairs position simultaneously. Additionally, I taught my course with more of a student affairs/student development holistic lens, focusing on the whole student and what that meant in regards to their whole selves, i.e. belief systems, morality connections, identity influences, reflections and rejections of prescribed identities, as well as geographic awareness and personal stories of myself connected to masculinity, all within the higher education setting. Doing this work as an instructor for three years and a student affairs practitioner for fourteen helped me identify with the vernacular used within the men and masculinities discipline, the common programmatic practices that were mentioned by the instructors, and student affairs subjectivities. As I explained earlier, the instructors I interviewed taught classes as if they were programs or events in the hall, with less lecture and more interaction. Rachel Wagner (2011) motivated my choice to interview instructors with a student affairs background by writing, "I feel strongly that all student affairs

practitioners should have some experience mastering a select subset of knowledge that pertains to men, such as a basic understanding of masculine gender role development, as it is integral to the development of our students who were socialized as men" (Wagner as cited in Laker & Davis, 2011, p. 211). Wagner's argument for student affairs professionals to develop and inform their work with an understanding of masculine gender role development recognizes that this action is needed in the student affairs world so better, more dynamic interventions can be created surrounding co-curricular programmatic opportunities, student conduct situations and identity development outside the classroom. Wagner's point helped me imagine a world where there was a blend of student affairs and men and masculinities work and made me curious to see if others were also teaching men and masculinities using a student affairs lens. Furthermore, while Wagner focuses on student affairs practitioners in general at higher education institutions, this focus can extend to the student affairs practitioners who instruct students and how those instructors view their groups of students. An opportunity exists for instructors to address the subjugation of men, women, and all other genders, if we take the time to understand men's experiences as well as the experiences of men who teach men how to be men. This is a positive goal to work toward, yet from a poststructural perspective, I want to recognize that in Wagner's words, "mastering" cannot happen because experience is partial and never all-knowing.

To choose the participants for my study, I used purposeful selection (Glesne, 2011). Purposeful selection is generally used so that those selected are "information-rich," meaning they have a close connection to the topic or hold lots of experiences related to the research questions being asked (p. 44). I chose to recruit individuals who identify as men because they can speak to their male/masculine experience and bring with them the socialization of being men throughout

their lives. While this research was open to those who identified as trans men as well, only cisgender men came forward wanting to be interviewed, making all of my participants cisgender men. As I have mentioned in previous chapters, teaching a course about masculinity was such an enjoyable, but easily problematic, tightrope of complicity and disruption to walk upon that I was curious how other instructors arrived at and navigated their teaching positions, as well as negotiated their own masculinity throughout their courses. I purposefully selected participants by sending out an electronic message and group post through the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators' (NASPA) Men and Masculinities Knowledge Community. This is a group of all genders that supports discussion around the concept of masculinities and its current connection to student affairs and academia. In the email and post, I identified myself, my purpose for interviewing men who teach men and masculinities courses, how long the interview would take, and how the interview would be conducted (i.e., electronically, face-to-face through Zoom video conferencing software). I also highlighted how the research might eventually benefit them in their classroom and in the construction of their syllabus by exposing spaces where complicity and/or disruption of traditional, hegemonic masculinity was happening. Through this method, I recruited three of my participants, then I adjusted to snowball sampling. Snowball sampling allowed me to ask the participants to identify other men who teach a men and masculinities course that I could interview using the same methods. Snowball sampling provided many advantages, including the ability to recruit hidden populations (Dudovski, 2016). While I would say that my participants are not "hidden" per se, they are a small group who are not often asked about their experiences.

The chain of sampling I used allowed me to connect to people faster around an ever-changing, unstable topic that pervades the higher education system, a system that itself is almost constantly in a state of flux. Along with the advantages of the snowball sampling method, there

were also some drawbacks. Oversampling in a particular area or group or "network of peers" (Dudovski, 2016, p. 3) could lead to a specific bias. However, for my research, this commonality helped me to understand community discourse as well as the traditional and counter-discourses among that community better. Also, because of my poststructural perspective, I was not trying to find validity for one answer. At the time, there were 577 members of NASPA's Men and Masculinities Knowledge Community, which allowed for a large possibility that the people within the group would identify as men, be instructors, and/or know someone who teaches men and masculinities in the United States. In understanding both purposeful sampling and the snowball method, snowball sampling remained a way of identifying participants that provided me a new way to see what emerged from my research.

Additionally, I tried and succeeded in recruiting a diversified sample of men, enabling me to deconstruct each instructor's subjectivities and experiences. My participant sample is diverse in race, age, sexual orientation, as well as faculty rank (adjunct instructors and teaching assistants). Of the five men who participated in my study, one identified as African American/Black Diaspora and the rest as white. Additionally, one participant identified as bi-sexual, while the rest are heterosexual. Two participants were using the course to obtain their next degree, two participants were Directors of their departments, and one participant was an Assistant Director. This is important as each instructor brings different subjectivities to the research honoring multiple perspectives allowing for more and different knowledge to be shared.

Once I found my participants, I used semi-structured interviews to obtain instructors' individual histories. Glesne (2011) explains that semi-structured interviews are used when "[q]uestions may emerge in the course of interviewing and may add to or replace pre-established ones" (p. 102). Employing only specific, rigid questions may have led the interviewee down a

narrow path, confining answers to possibly patriarchal, prescribed responses. Leaving the questions and interview practices open allowed the interviewee and I to "open up" thought and see where the dialogue took us. Also, it allowed us to see what came naturally out of a robust conversation of at least one hour. By acknowledging myself and my subjectivities, as well as attaching experiential knowledge, I showed the interviews important connection to feminist work as this recognizes power and subjectivities in the interview. While my questions began the process, the participant, through their responses, guided where the interview went, thus keeping power circulating throughout the interview.

I used interviews because they were the best way to gain insight into the experiences of the participants. As a feminist researcher, I am interested in uncovering subjugated knowledge of the diversity of men's gendered experiences, as well as their contribution to and how they affect the lives of women through their personal and classroom productions. Throughout the interviews, I recognized being an insider as one who was also an instructor teaching similar classes as the participants. Also, I saw myself as an outsider who no longer teaches as well as not being part of the participants' institutional discourses. I continuously reminded my participants that they could stop at any time and that they would be seeing the transcript at the end to confirm what was asked and said as well as to discuss the positionality I brought to the space as the researcher vs. the researched. It was important for me to build rapport and develop a relationship with each participant, not only because we are a community of instructors who can share research in the future, but also to build trust between us. Through the participants' words, phrases, and responses, I heard stories about how they construct their subjectivities as men who are disrupting traditional, hegemonic masculinity. Hesse-Biber (2014) would consider this approach feminist because often in feminist research, the goal is to expose the realities that "lie

hidden and unarticulated" (p. 184). I layer the instructors' perspectives with the literature, as well as deconstruct these responses, to allow the disruption of masculinities to be part of the conversation.

To interview the participants in my study, I used Zoom video-chatting sessions. I chose this method because of the massive distance between me and the participants as well as time and monetary constraints; I was financially ready or able to take time to travel to interview the participants face to face. Through Zoom, I was also able to record and then transcribe the semi-structured interviews to later analyze more easily. I then analyzed participants' responses using theory to deconstruct their complicity with and disruption of masculinity.

I interviewed five men who teach or have taught a course with men and masculinities as a focus at a public, higher education institution. I limited my participants to individuals who identify as cisgender men in order to draw connections between how discourses of masculinities and their individual personal histories produced these men and, in turn, what discourses they are sustaining or producing in the classroom, thus privileging, through their syllabi and in how they talk about their work (i.e., via their responses to my semi-structured interview questions).

Below is a listing of my participants' chosen pseudonyms, as well as their connected universities (also in pseudonym form):

Havoc. Havoc taught at Homestead University and did not provide an age but describes himself as a white, Anglo-American, physically able, bi-sexual, atheist, lower-middle-class, and cisgender male. Havoc was a teaching assistant with a background in Sociology.

TJ. TJ teaches at Barstow College and describes himself as white (ethnicity and race), 44 years old, having a "full" ability status, straight, Christian, middle-class, cisgender, and male. TJ

was the Director of Academic Success Programs with a background in Educational Leadership and counseling.

JJ. JJ teaches at South Atlantic University and describes himself as an African American/Africa Diaspora ethnicity, "non-disability", straight, Christian, middle-class, black, cisgender, and male. JJ was the Director of the Student Wellness Center with a background in Pan-African Diaspora Studies and Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity work.

Professor Glass. Professor Glass teaches at Brewster College and describes himself as a 28-year-old, white (ethnicity and race), able-bodied, straight, Agnostic, middle-class man. Professor Glass is the Assistant Director of Fraternity and Sorority Life with a background in Higher Education.

Montag. Montag taught his course at Public Ivy University. He describes himself as 33 years old, American, temporarily able-bodied, heterosexual/straight, "spiritual," upper middle class from a working-class background, and a cisgender, white man. Montag was a doctoral student in Educational Leadership with a background in higher education and student affairs.

Thinking with Theory: Analysis

For my analytic process, I chose to employ Jackson and Mazzei's concept of thinking with theory (2012). It is here that I decided to "[put] philosophical concepts to work" (p. 5) in order to demonstrate how theory and practice constitute one another. Specifically, I demonstrate how the participants' personal histories of masculinity create the instructors who are both complicit with and working to disrupt traditional, hegemonic masculinity. Also, I show how, in turn, what is taught in the men and masculinities classroom teaches what constitutes masculinity/ies, a process ever-revolving in American society and in higher education.

Thinking with theory is a method of utilizing various philosophical concepts, such as deconstruction, to interrogate a common data set, effectively to "open up" the analysis of the data set. It "challenges researchers to use theory to accomplish a rigorous, analytic reading of qualitative data" (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012 p. i). Using the thinking with theory method allows me to see the data set in multiple new ways "proliferated rather than solidified" (p. vii). In addition, the thinking with theory method helped me create my research questions and allowed me to jump into the middle of my research then to backtrack to update my research questions. In the beginning of my study, I had research questions that I wanted to find answers to, however, when my research began to crystallize, I realized that I needed to adapt my questions in order to reflect feminist poststructuralist theory, highlight the process of deconstruction connect my study to feminism.

First, I used thinking with theory to create my interview questions, to make apparent the notion that I wanted to do deconstructive readings of my interview transcripts. My goal was to think with poststructuralism, deconstruction, and feminism to reveal the structures informing and constituting my study participants' responses. I re-read theory while re-reading the interview transcripts and realized that there was an "overabundance of meaning" (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012, p. 5) lurking within the texts. After each reading, theory began to adjust and change the meaning that I was seeing in the text. At the same time, I was also recognizing that my personal, subjective locations were changing.

Jackson and Mazzei (2012) write about bringing a reader to the "threshold" of theory and data. This is an area that is both/and. Specifically mentioned, a threshold is both an entry place and an exit. "In the space of the threshold, we become aware of how theory and data constitute or make one another and how, in the threshold, the divisions among the definitions of theory and

data collapse" (p. 6). Throughout my research process, I was surrounded not only by my thoughts and the deconstructive readings but also the data collected and created throughout the research process. As definitions and other limitations began to reveal themselves, they were immediately challenged and interrogated to reveal new meanings or to show that the original, hegemonic meaning "collapsed." For example, all participants identify as male, but each participant did not cosign with and resisted Brannon's (1985) measurements of a man: stoicism, risk taking, anti-femininity, and status and achievement. The hegemonic meaning of what a male should be, collapses into this new self-aware, care for others model of masculinity, a new meaning in direct opposition to the traditional, hegemonic meaning. This threshold of meaning shows that meaning can escape at any moment, providing the possibility for the theory or practice in the "threshold to be transformative" (p. 7).

Through the process of thinking with theory, I entered the "process of arranging, organizing, and fitting together" (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012, p. 1) theory and data. However, at the same time, I was also trying to un-make and push against what is made or re-constructed in the new combination. This practice is "irruptive" and maintains that there is not a binary opposition between theory and data, demonstrating that theory is not valued over data. Additionally, when doing my analysis, I demonstrate that I was thinking *both theory and data* with the hope of making new "connectives" (p. 4), plugging in different theories with the same text or different texts with the same theories, and, ultimately, thinking *across* different discourses, theories, and texts.

Alternatives to Coding

Coding has been a significant practice in traditional qualitative research. In the coding of data, conventional researchers found significance and grouped commonalities, forming themes

and patterns to inform their research questions. While this practice works for some researchers, coding did not work for my poststructural research project. Coding would create groupings of data that, in turn, would create a grand narrative(s) that then would create a structure that needs to be interrogated. As I discussed earlier, poststructuralism questions the meanings assigned by language. If we assign meaning to a constructed group, we are doing a disservice to feminist poststructuralism, this dissertation's framework, and not showing how meaning is multiple, non-transcendental, and contextually located. St. Pierre (2011) reminds us this is not traditional coding by arguing that data does not have to occur multiple times to be significant. Many times throughout my research, one participant gave an answer that was not repeated by another participant, yet provided insight and interrogation of men and their experiences teaching a men and masculinities course. These interrogations were avenues to challenge and discuss in order to "produce different knowledge" by "producing knowledge differently" (St. Pierre, 1997). To say that this one occurrence was not significant or important in the collection of the data once again puts this experience into the background, does not bring hidden voices to the forefront, and could be argued to be part of the process complicit in maintaining male privilege if the data highlights men's dominance in society.

Instead of coding, as a concept or practice stood out to me through interviewing and then through re-reading the transcripts alongside theory, I noticed concepts such as deconstruction, *différance*, and Derridean absent presences, slowly crystalizing throughout the interviews, as well as questions of authority on how discourse produces certain subjectivities through privileging certain masculinity discourses. I took notes on concepts and ideas that led to a moment of pause which caused me to reconstitute my thoughts, re-thinking with theory and again with the data. I call this moment a "record skip" in my thought process about masculinities,

a process based on looking for what masculinity was reinforcing, what constitutes masculinity, how it was operating through discursive practices in the interviews, and even what it was privileging. I read about and wrote down additional concepts such as discourse, masculinity, intersectionality, deconstruction, authority and the workings of the instructors' pedagogical practices as they emerged in the interview. After I transcribed the interviews, I repeated this process, thinking with deconstruction, feminist, and poststructural theory both separately and together as feminist poststructuralism. I highlighted new areas like authority, subjectivity, and disruptions of masculinity that began to crystallize as I read more theory. I use the word crystallize intentionally as borrowed from Richardson and St. Pierre's article, "Writing: a Method of Inquiry" (as cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 2005), in which the authors discuss the central image of crystallization. For Richardson and St. Pierre, the crystal:

> … combines symmetry and substance with an infinite variety of shapes, substances, transmutations, multidimensionalities, and angles of approach. Crystals grow, change and are altered, but they are not amorphous. Crystals are prisms that reflect externalities and refract within themselves creating different colors, patterns and arrays casting off in different directions. What we see depends on our angle of repose. (p. 963)

Richardson and St. Pierre's argument was originally made to refute validity in qualitative work or, in this case, finding trustworthiness in post-qualitative work. I took this concept one step further and used their work as a way to look at the text/interview transcript. I then took these "crystallizations" and wrote about their refractions, the different castings of light through the crystal that was forming. Simply put, I looked at a concept from multiple theories through the crystal, each time seeing the concept "bend light" in a new way. I examined how concepts were

changed or altered throughout the interview and how they refracted later through the re-reading of theory and contemplation. I was careful to always highlight that I was only looking at the concept from one of multiple possible directions, providing awareness that there are many other directions the light through this "crystallization" could cast. Crystallization gave me the opportunity to reiterate that because of the refractions and the multidimensionalities within the crystal, there is no one single truth, making truth multiple. Richardson and St. Pierre (2005) continue, writing, "Crystallization provides us with a deepened, complex, and thoroughly partial understanding of the topic. Paradoxically, we know more and doubt what we know. Ingeniously, we know there is always more to know" (p. 963). This sentiment echoes in my research. Additionally, throughout my re-reading process, I noted where happenings in the interviews, such as a comment or gesture, could be deconstructed or where deconstruction brought to light arbitrary binaries, hidden and overt language used that constituted subjectivities, and interrogations of power throughout the participants' experiences.

Even though a researcher may wish for an instruction manual, a prescribed way of doing processes to find the "right" answers, a poststructuralist needs to challenge and interrogate what "prescribed" and "right" answers produce. St. Pierre and Jackson (2014) claim that "there is no recipe for this kind of analysis" (p. 717). A main component of this analysis is a close and careful reading that incorporates theory throughout said reading. My dissertation study utilizes multiple strategies that inform a close reading of the interview transcripts of men who teach men and masculinity courses, integrating poststructural analysis, such as deconstruction as mentioned above, throughout the study. Finally, St. Pierre and Jackson (2014) provoke this inquiry when they state that this work, "cannot be neat, tidy, and contained …cannot easily be explained" (p. 717). This provocation was a driving force for me when I was looking at the experiences of instructors in the men and masculinities classroom and to see where theory, this framework, and

methodology took my thinking.

The Process of Deconstruction

Jacques Derrida, a key philosopher of poststructuralism, provides one of the strongest philosophies as part of the poststructuralism emergence in his book, *Of Grammatology* (2016). In this introduction of his book, Derrida pushes against the traditions of structuralism and critiques the finite structures and systems set in place by language. He does this by stating that he was suspicious of the sacred and the universal truths that were being implied by "structuralism's trace of a certain theological or transcendental claim for structure" (Nealon & Giroux, 2012, p. 153). Deconstruction allows for the breaking apart and undoing of the idea whose linguistic signs have one stable, often assumed, transcendental meaning. Derrida also refers to meaning as being endlessly deferred, never really reaching one ultimate meaning that is held by all (Norris, 1987), and argues that meaning is based on contexts, cautioning that one context will not secure and enclose meaning for others. Working with deconstruction throughout my research exposed how the concept of masculinities is taught through finite, structured definitions and, often, hidden discourses in the classroom.

My data consisted of the instructors' interview transcripts, which highlighted where deconstruction was happening and where concepts were not challenged or interrogated. I utilized the places in the videos and audio recordings where speech inflections or body movement signaled compliance with grand narratives or disruption of traditional, hegemonic masculinity. To address structured definitions, I asked specific questions regarding the definition of gender and how it was taught in their classroom, as well as what the easiest and hardest parts of their

instructor positions were to implement. For many, building relationships in the course was easiest, while the hardest was to have conversations and discussions that were not a part of the instructor's personal belief system when challenged by other students in the class. I also interrogated the definitions of "instructor" and scanned the interview transcripts for the participants' thoughts and feelings regarding their higher education institutions. These structured definitions were both apparent and hidden in the interviews.

When I asked the instructors about their histories, I learned that some of them were struggling with understanding their own version of masculinity and how that fit into how they were teaching their course while some participants had never seemed to question where their idea of masculinity came from. Specific histories and/or discourses that are explicit through the interviews were the military discourse, the student success discourse, the fraternity discourse at a large institution, the feminist discourse with motivation for transformational change, academic discourse as part of wanting to be a scholar in this area, and also the intersectionality discourse of identifying as African American/Black diaspora teaching a class of predominately African-American students about masculinity. The participants' commitment to being instructors ranged from always wanting to be an instructor who teaches courses on gender to those who were only teaching the course as a requirement of their position at the university. Additionally, their locations within the USA and the areas' connected cultural practices informed their histories. My study included participants from the South, the East Coast, the Midwest, the Great Plains, and the upper-Midwest regions of the United States. Lastly, each participant was at a different place in their careers, with experience levels ranging from ranging from one year in the field to decades in the field. The participants consisted of a master's student, a doctoral graduate student, an Assistant Director in Greek Life, a Director of Student Wellness, and a Director of Student

Success. All of these signifiers provided guidance for highlighting the deconstructive moments throughout the dissertation.

Derrida's (2016) deconstruction of binary oppositions is also important to my analysis. Throughout this dissertation project, I recognized binary oppositions, both subversively and overtly through the comments made by the participants. Also, while many may seem to think that this is merely a linguistic exercise, I have found from Derrida's thinking that this action of placing one category or answer in direct binary opposition of the other, produces real, tangibly felt, and politically enacted outcomes that not only affect the person in its direct path but is felt through societal reverberation, much like what is taught through the concepts, the topics, and the discourses used in the participants' classrooms.

In his work with binary oppositions, Derrida does not merely reverse the binary to reveal how one is privileged over the other; he also demonstrates that one side of the binary opposition is far from separate from the other (Butler, 2016, p. xi, xvii as cited in Derrida, 2016). Gayatri Spivak (as cited in Derrida, 2016) summarizes Derrida's non-rules regarding deconstruction, referring to this grouping as "deconstruction in a nutshell" by positing on should "locate the marginal text...to reverse the resident hierarchy, only to displace it; to dismantle in order to reconstitute what is always already inscribed," (p. c). Spivak's point is that the original order/hierarchy carries baggage that is and has always been inside the text/transcript. This baggage, though it may change a little in the reversal, still exists in the hierarchy, flipping the domination of the new hierarchy and giving the reader of the text the ability to question the fixability or stability of the new hierarchy.

Deconstruction demonstrates that nothing is stable and everything should remain unfixed in order to open up knowledge. My study participants' language use and performance in the classroom regarding authority, gender, power, feminism, the binaries of the right/wrong topics to

cover in the course, and, additionally, the blurring of lines between instructor/student revealed that deconstruction is always happening.

The Un-process of Deconstruction

Spivak provides researchers a way of "rereading" texts (1993, p. 11). While I wish I could define the process of deconstruction more specifically and systematically for my dissertation, this would violate the process of deconstruction as well as its poststructural tenets. Spivak argues, "There is...no useful definition of deconstruction anywhere in Derrida's work" (p. 31). Throughout my work, I located my intentions through Derrida by way of Spivak's preface. Additionally, I relied on this definition of deconstruction through John Caputo (1997):

> The very meaning and mission of deconstruction is to show that things - texts, institutions, traditions, societies, beliefs, and practices...do not have definable meanings and determinable missions, that they are always more than the mission would impose, that they exceed the boundaries they currently occupy...A meaning is a way to contain and compact things, like a nutshell, gathering them into unity, whereas deconstruction bends all its effort to stretch beyond those boundaries, to transgress these confines, to interrupt and disjoin all gatherings. (p. 31-32)

I argue that deconstruction is always happening and has already happened within each of the transcripts of the men who participated in my research. Re-reading transcripts and re-listening to audio from participant interviews, looking specifically for those deconstructive moments, revealed to me binary oppositions, privileged discourses within the men and masculinities classrooms, and new avenues to explore the multiple meanings of masculinities. My method was to create a list of questions for the interviews that helped reveal the participants' personal histories of masculinities that provided opportunities for the interviewees to share what

was happening in their classrooms and how that affected their experience teaching the course. An example of a discourse that was evoked but not voiced was the feminist discourse existing in the classroom and in the pedagogy of the course. Specifically, three participants spoke about feminist classroom practices: a room placement that encourages dialogue, the reduction of authority between teacher and student, and an introduction to the concept of power playing a role in structural, institutional decision making. However, none mentioned the word "feminism" in their answers. I felt this was intentional, as the term is resisted by some students and instructors due to its connection to past stereotypes and lack of understanding by both students and instructors about what feminism is and is not. This conversation was also happening in some courses overtly while in others practices that where feminist were happening, but intentionally were avoided, possibly due to its connection to anti-femininity and other's understanding of feminism.

After scribing these notes, I re-read *Deconstruction in a Nutshell: A Conversation with Jacques Derrida* (1997), sections of *Thinking with Theory* (2012), as well as *Contemporary Perspectives on Masculinity* (1997), *The Masculine Self* (2015), *Masculinities in Higher Education: Theoretical and Practical Considerations* (2011), *Men and Masculinities: Theoretical Foundations and Promising Practices for Supporting College Men's Development* (2019), *Reconstructing Policy in Higher Education: Feminist Poststructural Perspectives* (2010), and *Teaching to Transgress: Education as a Practice of Freedom* (1994). I found areas in the texts that echoed what the participants were saying or where the participants were eliding topics or concepts. I would then co-read these passages together with the texts and write about these happenings as part of my analysis. In this analysis I would answer the following questions:

- What is most apparent and what is being elided?

- What are the crystallizations showing up in the text?
- What structures are instructors working within and against?

While this analysis completed my work in my analysis chapters, I still want to recognize that these chapter's findings are again locally contextualized, partial, and incomplete.

Within the concept of deconstruction are the concepts of *différance* and *absent presence* that are revealed at different times throughout this dissertation. Derrida explains that *différance* (Norris, 1987) is the meaning attached to the language we use where we can never pinpoint exactly what is being described as there is no original or transcendental meaning. *Différance* means to "differ" and to "defer," demonstrating that meaning is constantly deferred and has different meanings to different sets of people. *Absent presence* describes what may not be physically there but is always already there in reading the text. The absent presences are meanings or feelings, or "hauntings," that have existed before in what Derrida calls a trace (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012). This is currently defined as what participants are deferring the meaning of and what the participants in my research are not talking about, yet it is fully present in their answers, as well as what they represent in their day to day actions as well as within the larger structures of which they are a part. Focusing on deconstructing the language used in the interview, helped me interrogate the texts used in my research project.

Furthermore, deconstruction is about everything and nothing (Derrida, 1991, p. 275), a play on language disrupting the binary of something/nothing. Derrida does not use deconstruction as a method nor a technique "not even an act" (Rolfe, 2004, p. 274). Additionally, Michael Payne (1993) defines deconstruction as a process that is "always occurring in the texts and already there waiting to be read" (p. 121). Gary Rolfe also (2004) claims that a deconstructive process "comes not from the reader/critic but from the text itself. It is already

there in the text" (p. 274). Likewise, Norris (1987) writes specifically that deconstruction exists "between what the text manifestly means to say and what it is nonetheless constrained to mean" (p. 19). Using deconstruction, I show how masculinities and masculinities' productions have been privileged in higher education and how male instructors are complicit with or are disrupting masculinity. To recognize Rolfe and "what the text manifestly means to say," I deconstructed the texts of the interviews by looking for the imposed binaries, grand narratives, and the prescribed meanings in the transcripts and participants' syllabi, I also used a gendered lens to focus on topics, mentions, or items that the participants highlighted in their answers that proposed to say one thing but were constrained to mean another.

I used deconstruction from a feminist perspective to reveal relational power, representational politics, privileged binaries, and biased meaning-making structures; these pieces of the ever-changing feminist poststructural landscape help demonstrate what is happening in the classroom. To use feminist poststructuralist theory as a springboard into masculinities research, as well as the conceptual gifts of deconstruction, allows for the disruption of the grand narratives regarding subjectivity, language, power, and discourse through the analysis of the interview transcripts. My analysis challenged the instructor/student role, interrogated the power relations in the course, and demonstrated that language and meaning surrounding masculinities' societal mandates of traditional, hegemonic masculinity is fallible and unstable. Also this analysis illuminated where the instructors were complicit or disrupting traditional, hegemonic masculinity. Looking for what was elided helped me present what was being left out and not spoken about, which led me to the questions, "Why was this left out? What does leaving this out produce?" My analytic technique also revealed what was privileged and what aligned with traditional, hegemonic masculinity. Also, the crystallizations that began to form worked to

dismantle the idea that there is one clear, transcendental answer. Ultimately, my analysis demonstrated that these crystallizations are locally situated, and each are one of many partial understandings.

Overall, Derrida, Spivak, Rolfe, and Norris' theories and concepts deconstruct meaning. James Williams (2005) writes, "One aspect of poststructuralism is its power to resist and work against settled truths and oppositions. It can help in struggles against discrimination on the basis of sex or gender" (pp. 3-4). I trouble, disrupt, and deconstruct grand narratives about masculinity and in higher education within the men and masculinities course. I illustrate through poststructural practices where poststructuralism challenges discrimination based on sex and gender by breaking down previously held meanings, providing new ways of knowing about gender, and revealing the structures that have produced these meanings. My analysis questions helped the interrogation to become something beyond the participants themselves. I challenge and interrogate the structures that the participants are both within and against. Not only is this a worthwhile analysis that worked for my research and the chosen participants, it is a question that can live beyond the research and be actively used in every-day decision making in order to make higher education a more equitable and inclusive place.

A Feminist Framework of Care

Ethics

For my dissertation, feminist ethics provided a framework for care as I completed the research. The rules of research conduct and practices that make up ethics are important to a feminist study because they can bring about certain areas where the care of the participants, the study, and the researchers need to be brought to light in order to reveal who or what produces

power relations. These rules are both conscious and unconscious. When I demonstrated ethics within my research, I used Linda Bell's key aspects of ethical practice:

> (1) Do no harm (beneficence); (2) confidentiality, privacy, and anonymity; (3) informed consent; (4) disclosure and potential for deception (e.g. relating to overt and covert research practices); (5) power between researcher and subject; (6) representation or ownership of research findings; (7) ensuring the respect for human dignity, self determination, and justice, including safeguards to protect the rights of vulnerable subjects; (8) demonstrating that the researcher with the above six issues, in order to obtain required formal ethics approval and/or show adherence to professional codes and guidelines. (as cited in Hesse-Biber, 2014, p. 85)

Bell's guidelines are important to follow, as they provide a checklist for "researchers to consider various issues more specifically during research practice, such as: 'who are the people involved in and affected by the ethical dilemma raised in the research? What is the context for the ethical dilemma in terms of the specific topic of the issues it raises? And what is the balance of personal and social power between those involved in the research" (Edwards & Mauthner, 2012, p. 26). For the purposes of my research, I felt it was important to prioritize informed consent and think about my positionality, the power circulating between me and the interviewees, and ownership of the data.

In my research, it was ethically desirable to recognize my multiple subjectivities. By acknowledging my multiple subjectivities and the locations of power I hold in the relationships with the participants in my study, I could better reflect Bell's ethic of care model. For example, while interviewing the participants, I became frustrated that they were unaware of common

definitions within gender studies, such as gender, feminism, and patriarchy. Additionally, leadership was often equated with traditional male qualities, even though these qualities can be displayed by any gender. Honestly, I was hopeful that the participants who also identified as men and masculinities instructors would be aware of these terms. However, when the opposing case was shown, I was disappointed. I found it hard to continue my research because in my analysis, in order to show how the participants privileged certain meanings in the classroom, some participants revealed that they were not as learned about gender as I would expect of college instructors. But when I challenged and interrogated my own subjectivities, I remembered that all knowledge is partial and not part of a good/bad instructor binary; instead, it is part of a continuum where multiple ways of being an instructor exists.

Another ethical issue I ran into as a feminist researcher was the confidentiality of the participants involved. Most participants were scared of retaliation from a faculty director or person of authority within their student affairs department as a result of voicing their possible disruptions of masculinity, especially if their comments in the interview were deviations from what was stated in their syllabi. This was a significant concern because their forthright answers could lead to the possible loss of opportunities or their position due to their forthright answers. This retaliation stemmed from both the active ability to challenge what was happening in their class meetings and the students' responses in opposition to the instructor. Additionally, the instructors were nervous about talking about their students because of their access to the instructors supervisor, being student affairs professionals and not having tenure. For three of my participants, TJ, JJ, and Professor Glass, before we started and then confirmed at the end of their interview, how the information would be shared to which I confirmed my research ethics and provided space for all participants to create their own pseudonym for themselves and their higher

education institution. This practice helped me recognize the unique power relations happening in the interview that were inherent in their positions. I was uniquely attuned to these dynamics of politics within higher education, so I understood it was vital for me to use pseudonyms in my writing. Traditionally, the discourse of masculinity has instructed men to disguise their emotions or remain silent when it comes to their true impressions and feelings (Kilmartin and Smiler, 2013). From a power relations standpoint, if my research exposes certain connections, power relations, and decision making positions, the participants could be removed or threatened to be removed from their positions, therefore losing decision making power within their organization. Even if not physically removed from a position, an instructor's options to participate in meetings or decision-making processes may be altered. In terms of position loss, higher education needs to be taken into account because there may be teachers that teach men and masculinities who are adjunct professors who can be fired at any point because they do not benefit from tenure protections. I strove to create a situation that would not hinder their employment, livelihood and future positional options within and without the education system. By shielding the participants' identities, the participants gained a layer of confidentiality that helped to guard the participants from retaliatory acts, although this was never guaranteed.

Reflexivity

In addition to feminist ethics, recognition of reflexivity was essential to my research process. Reflexivity allows the researcher to "account for their personal biases [and] recognize, examine, and understand how their social background, location, and assumptions can influence research" (Hesse-Biber, 2014, p. 3). During my research, I consistently reflected and challenged what I thought I saw in the research, as my knowledge of the community led me to assume things that may not have been there. For example, one participant, JJ, is the acting Director of the Student

Wellness Center on his campus. His positionality and the discourses that he holds and employs throughout his class shape his responses. I had to challenge myself not to impart my recollection of what a "Student Wellness Center" signified, as I had only one experience working with that office on a former campus. I had to ask myself if I was substituting my experience of this office with his experience and inferring possible productions from this substitution, i.e. imagining that it was the same size of office, had the same importance amongst institutional culture, and provided the same services that I was used to. In this challenge to my subjectivities, I reflected, asked more and different questions throughout the interview, and followed up on reviewing his institution's website to help further clarify my thoughts.

Chris Weedon (1997) writes about power relations and control. "Power is relation … it is a dynamic of control, compliance and lack of control between discourses and subjects constituted by discourse" (p. 110). I recognized the lack of control I had in regard to how I was seen by the participants as part of or not a part of the community. I also recognize and trouble the idea that I have the ability to step out of the community for some time to study it. I believe researchers are so entangled in everyday actions that we can never really take a step out of a community that we have been so previously steeped in, especially when subjective locations are always changing with each interaction. This is something that I continually reflected on throughout my research. Being so connected to my course, the construction of its syllabus, and the activities and homework I assign, I had to consistently remind myself that others did not have the ability to choose what they were teaching, how to teach it, or what activities were available in the course. Most of the participants' courses were originally created by others and allowed to change incrementally over time, but not without the scrutiny of an academic board or review panel. The institutional control and compliance that the instructors held in terms of their power to change

their curriculums and having been constituted by the institutional instructional discourse at the collegiate level while trying to subvert it at the same time demonstrates the relational power that Weedon references. The power that the institution uses to strengthen its hold is its process for changing its internal system of curriculum. Over and over, I questioned the data, read it alongside theory, and interrogated my subjectivities while questioning the instructors' physical and emotional responses in the reflections in order to interrogate what was constituting those feelings.

With regard to the reflexivity of my research, I need to acknowledge one final element: the interrogation of my access to information. Because I identify as male in a male-dominated world, and as an instructor in a class about men and masculinities, I can be considered an insider. But in my daily interactions and interests, I do not conform to the idea of, and I consistently push against, the traditional masculine male, thus making me an outsider to traditional, hegemonic masculinity, something I found in common with the participants. My navigation of networks, access, and exploration was important for me to reflect on throughout the facilitation of my research. A goal of my course was to have my students question what it means to be male in America and also understand how we got to the place that we have in American society regarding male dominance in institutions throughout our country. I continuously explained to my students how individuals who identify as traditionally masculine navigate this patriarchal system, benefitting from both their privilege and the people in power who came before them. I explained that we now have an academic avenue to discuss men and masculinities because of the women's movement in the 1960s. I described how women voiced their experiences, challenged research, and troubled how their actions affected the disruption of gender roles. I am a firm believer that men and masculinities instructors do this gendered, academic work in conjunction with, not in

spite of or separate from, the women's movement. As the participants in my study shared their experiences about teaching how feminist movements informed and helped to craft men and masculinities courses, sexuality, gender, and sex linguistic delineations, I began to notice that they were not as familiar with these concepts as I thought they would be. They demonstrated this by providing wrong answers in the interview or actively working against them by overtly not mentioning the terms, gender or feminism in their classes. The instructors even passing over the terms by actively not addressing their connection to feminist teaching and quickly moving on to the next topic. Recognizing their responses activated my reflexivity to check if I had the "right" answers in the first place. In checking and confirming that I was aware of these common definitions, I realized that the instructors' lack of knowledge was something I needed to include in my research.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I introduced and discussed the methodology for my dissertation. Furthermore, I discussed the purpose of theory and how it is enmeshed with methodology and the methods chosen to complete my dissertation project. Feminist poststructuralism has been used previously to open up knowledge and "rattle" strongly held concepts and structures in order to question and interrogate their meanings and productions. This "rattling" provides a path to a new way of seeing and new knowledge production that previously was not part of the men and masculinities discourse in the scholarly literature on the experiences of men who teach men and masculinities courses in a higher education setting. In Chapter 5, I utilize Jackson's and Mazzei's (2012) strategy of "thinking with theory" to analyze crystallizations formed from the data in

order to deconstruct the participants' experience instructing men and masculinities courses and challenge and re-think the men and masculinities classroom.

Chapter 5: Analysis

In this chapter, I remind the reader of the purpose of the study which is to use the framework of feminist poststructuralism and Derrida's ongoing process of deconstruction to examine how men who teach men and masculinities courses negotiated their own masculinity while teaching their course. In doing this deconstruction, I exposed the fragility of meaning in the men and masculinities classroom and the fluidity of the instructor's complicity and disruption with traditional, hegemonic masculinity.

In order to fulfill my purpose for this dissertation project, my goal for this chapter is to address the following research questions that have been a focus throughout:

> Research Question 1: What are the discourses and instructor histories that produce the privileged meanings of masculinities in a higher education course pertaining to men and masculinities?
>
> Research Question 2: How do the practices of instructors who teach a men and masculinities course disrupt and comply with traditional, hegemonic masculinity?

In order to examine these questions, I interviewed five cisgender men who teach men and masculinities courses at four-year public institutions. To remind the reader about the participants, I provide the chart below showing their chosen names and institutional pseudonyms.

Name	Institution
Montag	Public Ivy
Havoc	Homestead State University
Professor Glass	Brewster College
TJ	Barstow College
JJ	South Atlantic University

I began my analytic adventure of thinking with theory by "plugging in" (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012), Derrida's (1976) concept of deconstruction, and Spivak's (1976) and Caputo's (1997) discussion and interpretation of deconstruction, in order to examine my research questions and to demonstrate which discourses of masculinities are privileged in the men and masculinities classrooms. I used deconstruction to explore the language, discourses, moments of disruptions, and tensions within/against the deconstructive happenings, as well as the hidden meanings and privileges in interviews with male-identified instructors who teach men and masculinities courses. Many crystallizations occurred within my research. In the following pages, my analysis will be situated in what Richardson and St. Pierre (2005) call crystallizations.

As I discussed in Chapter 4, Richardson and St. Pierre (2005) describe crystallizations as a new way of seeing data. In their work, crystals come in an infinite variety of shapes and grow and change over time. What is important is these crystals are prisms that refract the light that enters and exits. In my research, the refraction, the perspective of the person deconstructing the data or the theory being used, directs how light emerges on the other side, proliferating ways of seeing data, theory, and participant responses. Looking at topics from different angles allows for different perspectives that may have different meanings for different people, pushing toward multiple truths for the same set of data.

I also employ Jackson and Mazzei's (2012) thinking with theory to deconstruct meaning, both apparent and hidden, within the interviews. Through co-reading, I demonstrate how theory informs my thinking throughout this dissertation. I adhere to the poststructural tenets that there is not one truth and that perspectives are multiple and subjectively located.

Keeping in mind that there is no single truth in poststructural theory, I describe the crystallizations formed within my research through meticulous analysis of the places where the

crystal bends light, where patterns and rays are cast off through thinking with theory. This is merely one of multiple ways to view the research. Looking through these crystals allows knowledge not to be closed off, but cast in multiple refractions which permit the opening of knowledge. I have used this methodology in order to analyze the three crystallizations that began to form throughout my research: 1) instructing while trying to construct and deconstruct concepts at the same time; 2) questioning authority in the classroom; and 3) disrupting traditional practices of teaching.

Research Questions

My first research question focuses on the discourses and instructor histories that produce privileged meanings in a men and masculinities classroom. My second question asks how the practices of instructors who teach a men and masculinities course challenge masculinity's grand narrative and discourse by disrupting and complying with traditional, hegemonic masculinity. My two questions came to fruition during my thinking with Derrida, Spivak's introduction to and Caputo's interpretations of Derrida's work. Their work helped me employ ways to continue to dismantle, disrupt, and destabilize masculinities in higher education, as well as to explore the experiences of the men who teach men and masculinities courses. By dismantling, disrupting, and destabilizing masculinities in the classroom, I expose the signifier(s), masculinity/ies, and their fragile meanings. I also challenge long-held definitions, trouble the perspectives of masculinities, and problematize the structures that have created it. For example, dismantling the traditional concept of gender, where gender equates to the binary of boy/girl, demonstrates that the practices and performance of being masculine can be challenged and opened up to all genders, creating new meanings for students who may not connect with traditionally held practices and performances of gender. In order to provide inclusive excellence to all genders

along the gender continuum, and in order to include all types of men in the discussion, deconstruction reveals the Lacanian structure/structuralism of language, which does not fit and is weak. In turn, deconstruction demonstrates that if one concept can be challenged, others can be challenged as well. I continue this challenging and interrogating throughout my analysis.

As I worked through interview transcripts, using Jackson and Mazzei's (2012) work to think with theory, I let the following questions continuously linger in my mind:

- What is most apparent and what is being elided?
- What are the crystallizations showing up in the text?
- What structures are instructors working within and against?

"Plugging in" theory with my research questions and the lingering questions above expose the men and masculinities classroom as fragile. In exposing this fragility, I can recognize the experiences of instructors, how certain discourses are privileged in the classroom, and where instructors remain complicit and disruptive. Through examination of these experiences, the men and masculinities courses can be rebuilt to be a space that is stronger in community with and for others, more open and inclusive in language, and with a wider perspective and understanding of masculinities courses.

Finally, I chose to use the ever-ongoing process of deconstruction to explore "a way out of the closure of knowledge" (Spivak, 1976). The closure of knowledge, life's finite definitions and immutable boundaries put forth through language and its self-imposed brick-walling qualities that define what we sense in the world around us, is important to recognize. By highlighting tensions between the masculinities classroom and the male instructors of the courses, my aim is to open up new meanings and de-center privileged discourses that have long held court in the lives of men and those who particularly benefit from traditional, hegemonic

masculinity. I also endeavor to open up knowledge and thought around teaching masculinities in higher education by focusing on the deconstructive events already happening to and performed by instructors in men and masculinities classrooms. I perform my deconstruction by addressing and examining the instructor histories that produce privileged discourses within their men and masculinities classrooms as well as where the instructors demonstrate where they are disrupting or complicit with traditional, hegemonic masculinity.

Crystallizations

Derrida (1997) said:

> One should not have an absolute guarantee, an absolute norm; we have to invent the rules...that is what deconstruction is made of, not the tension between memory, fidelity, the preservation of something that has been given to us and at the same time heterogeneity; something absolutely new and a break. (as cited by Caputo, p. 6).

In presenting my research through the following crystallizations, I am not merely reproducing the "memory" of the participants, challenging the "fidelity" of their answers and highlighting the inseparable entanglement of theory and data. I am not trying to preserve something that has been given to us but to provide something new, a "break" from what was done before. I demonstrate this in three crystallizations from tensions in the data: 1) instructing while trying to construct and deconstruct concepts at the same time; 2) questioning authority in the classroom; and 3) disrupting traditional practices of teaching.

Crystallization One: Instructing by Constructing and Deconstructing

The Beginning of the Tightrope

A key issue in the act of problematizing something that benefits the majority is that there is a tightrope of performance to walk upon. The instructors who participated in my study, although open to sharing much about themselves and their personal experiences, (a very feminist-oriented teaching method) still mentioned throughout their interviews there were times where they felt they could not be as forthright or direct in their language for fear that their students would lose respect for them, would not "hear them," and/or would refuse to understand what the instructors were teaching. The instructors' fear of the students not wanting to hear them eventually led to the students only wanting to complete their prescribed studies and move on to their next classes, not wanting to think critically about what was being taught in the course, or, in some cases, challenging what the instructors were teaching. Participants spoke about students doing the minimum amount of work to get through their course so they did not have to think about the concepts that challenged them and their thinking. To me, what this reveals is that for students, there is a safe place "out there" where they "don't have to think about what is happening" in the course. In other words, the male students' avoidance of course materials, and their continuation of previously held masculinity norms at some predominantly white institutions, does not affect the students when they leave the classroom. This action demonstrates that the meaning privileged by the world outside of the men and masculinities classroom is white, heterosexual, and male and that these perspectives are already defined and associated with traditional, hegemonic masculinity. Confrontation between the classroom curriculum and the outside world creates a dissonance that leads to the students eventually dismissing the course content. This type of confrontation is observed in many classrooms throughout higher education, but it is important to understand within the men and masculinities

context, as it connects directly to traditional, hegemonic masculinity and is in direct opposition to the purpose of the men and masculinities course.

Challenging and Supporting Students in the Men and Masculinities Classroom

Another tension that most of my participants discussed was the double-bind of being male in a predominantly male space (for most participants) and a teacher of a men and masculinities course that critiqued being male in America. The precarious positionality of the instructor created meaning and revealed that both complicity and disruption needed to happen in order for students to learn, question, and challenge what happened outside of the classroom. Because many of the topics being explored in class were counter to what many male students were raised with or constructed to be in society, the instructors had to perform in ways that were always wavering between challenge and support, and even complicity and disruption, playing into some stereotypes to earn the male students' respect in order for them to *want* to listen to what was being said. Professor Glass demonstrated this when he said:

> I think these classes are different because in one sense we know that some of these people jumping in this class are, like, Trump supporters but people on the other side of this are like, 'You're going to make me sit around and hear this man talk?' So it's a balance of challenge and support in this role with each topic.

Professor Glass's words illustrate how the instructor had to navigate different subjectivities in the course in order to create learning moments on many sides of every issue raised within the course; navigating working with those students who supported our former president was just an example.

Additionally, the instructors simultaneously displayed both support for and opposition to traditional, hegemonic masculinity. For instance, if a classroom conversation was viewed by the students as coming from an outsider, someone who was not like them, the students may place the instructors into a social group in which their opinion no longer mattered; thus, little or no learning would happen. Counter to this, when the research participants mentioned that they were connecting to the students in the course and were considered an insider, "one of the guys who gets it" or who understood the students in the course, each student tended to take in more information and thought more critically and deeply.

Similarly, bringing attention to these discourses and their intermingling demonstrates that political and cultural discourses affect the way a class is taught and how a topic is approached, which may affect whether a topic is discussed at all in the classroom. Also, taking into account the reverberation of how an instructor approaches a topic can affect and dictate how deeply a topic is discussed, due to how much a topic affects the classroom dynamic. By speaking on some topics and not speaking of others, instructors can produce perceived perspectives that become privileged discourses in the classroom.

Reinventing the Men and Masculinities Classroom through Deconstruction

Specifically, my first analytic crystallization, instructing by constructing while deconstructing, formed while co-reading Caputo's *Deconstruction in a Nutshell* (1997). Within Caputo's work, Derrida expresses that "a judge, if he wants to be just cannot content himself with applying the law. He has to reinvent the law each time," (p. 17). The same can be said for the men and masculinities classrooms and the way that instructors construct and instruct their courses, each providing and infusing a personal history, knowledge of specific discourses in higher education, and awareness of their subjectivities into their delivery of the course. As

society is ever changing and each academic term is politically more charged, the classes and instructors examined are more compelled to follow Caputo's (1997) method of deconstructive reading. They need to do this in order to self-reflect and challenge the messages they are telling their students while simultaneously constituting them as subjective individuals. This deconstructive perspective provides college students with the ability to not only see how power circulates within the classroom but also that power produces certain outcomes when mandated as potentially essentialist, transcendental truths about masculinity. Also, this deconstructive perspective allows students to take this deconstructive skill to other higher educational courses and interrogate discourses, the circulation of power, and perhaps even the structure of higher education itself. This is an approach that I and most of the research participants took in order to make sure that the class content and critiquing skills lived on past the classroom. We took the deconstructive approach in order to not simply go through the sometimes departmentally-mandated lesson plans like automatons, without interrogation. We continued to question and interrogate why those lesson plans were created in the beginning and what those lesson plans were intended to produce all within the structure of higher education. During their interviews, three participants told me about their processes of receiving the syllabus from the department, looking over each topic, becoming familiar with each topic, and then, after teaching each lesson or within the lesson while teaching, asking the students, "So what does this mean for society/the bigger picture?" From this question, the instructors would extrapolate the lesson to a real-life example. For example, if the instructor's lesson was on "Men and Violence" they would talk about how anger is one of the only emotions that men are allowed to show, then take it one step further and ask, "If anger is the only emotion men can show, what does that mean for men as teachers, men as leaders in business, or men as caregivers?" Caputo (1997) writes that deconstruction is

being “scrupulous, gravely in earnest, [and] deadly serious” (p. 79) in examining the text’s meaning. This practice helps the instructor get “deadly serious” about the content they teach in the course and challenge themselves to see the many productions that could come from such instruction, whether they create the syllabus or not. In this dissertation, I focus on the instructors’ personal histories, their experiences in the men and masculinities classroom, and aspects shared throughout the interview process that revealed complicity and disruption of traditional, hegemonic masculinity in order to examine their interview transcripts through a “deadly serious” lens, reading with an increasingly sincere conviction.

Caputo (1997) reaffirms that Derrida's vision of deconstruction was not destruction but a “way of releasing and responding, listening and opening up,” (p. 57). The participants in my study provided many comments, mannerisms, and personal thoughts that enabled me to pull information out of the interview transcript, to “release,” analyze, discuss, and “respond.” I began my deconstructive journey into the interviews with Havoc, a teaching assistant finishing a masters program at a university located in the American Great Plains.

Instructors and Their Binaries

Because of their positions as instructors, Havoc and the other participants in my study are placed in the hierarchical power structure of the instructor/student binary. Students maintaining the authoritarian value that the instructor knows everything while taking their thoughts, actions, and productions without question tends to allow students to think that there are right/wrong answers. Only through challenging and disrupting the instructors’ position in the classroom as well as their thoughts and actions, can meanings and privileged truths be revealed and interrogated. For example, Havoc, a teaching assistant at Homestead University and Montag, a doctoral student at Public Ivy University, wanted to connect with their students outside of the

classroom to provide vulnerability in their answers to classroom questions, as well as provide disclosure of personal stories. These practices interrupted what participants perceived as professional behavior dictated by classroom culture. Thinking with deconstruction, the instructors were fighting the "tension between memory, fidelity, the preservation of something that has been given to us" (Caputo, 1997, p. 6). Students expected the instructors to conform to the signifier of the instructor: the old, white man at the head of the class, providing instruction on high. Yet the deconstruction that is happening is that the subjectivities of the instructors being younger students themselves, open to discussions and conversations with students were "at the same time ...something new, and a break" (Caputo, 1997, p. 6). The instructors of the examined men and masculinities courses, simply by discussing masculinity in society, provided "something new...a break," as well as how and where they spoke of it. This "break" from the normalization of silence regarding masculinity in the classroom and in higher education provides a space that is open to new ideas, ready to challenge long held stereotypes of masculinity, and disrupts the construction of stereotypes.

When constructing and instructing their courses, participants TJ and Professor Glass took similar paths. As instructors working within the discourse of student success and fraternity and sorority leadership, respectively, they attempted to provide discursive environments that invited more connective, empathic approaches to the material than those of typical lectures. Each participant not only tried to connect the lessons of their courses back to the discourse of the departmental discipline that the courses were housed within, they also wanted the students to understand where the their immediate answers were coming from: prior discourses known by the student, the socially constructed formation of masculine identity from television and social

media, as well as demonstrations of how other genders respond to those who step out of the immutable boundaries of traditional, hegemonic masculinity.

To take it one step further, Professor Glass stated that one of his goals in his course was that he needed to show his students that the binary of leader/follower in fraternal discourse is not in itself good/bad and that there are times when acting in both ways works well in collaboration. Professor Glass's experience reminded me of how Spivak (1976) summarizes Derrida's assemblage of "non-rules" regarding deconstruction (p. lxxvii). Spivak (1976) elevates the hierarchy in the binary opposition, writing, "locate the marginal text...to reverse the resident hierarchy, only to displace it; to dismantle in order to reconstitute what is always already inscribed" (p. lxxvii). In other words, the original hierarchy carries baggage that is and has always been inside the text/transcript. This baggage, this structural domination (though it may change a little in the reversal), still exists within the hierarchy of the switch, eventually only switching who or what dominates in the new hierarchy. For Professor Glass, this is best evidenced by the leadership within and without Greek Life on campus. Furthermore, I found that it was not as much Greek vs. non-Greek, but the internal binary of fraternity/sorority. As Professor Glass instructed his course, he was complicit in the construction of a stereotypical fraternity member while also disruptive when offering suggestions about how to be not only a better *male* colleague to the women in the sorority system but how to be a better leader in general. While I am not aware whether Professor Glass was familiar with Spivak's discussion of binaries, his experience demonstrates that flipping the binary reveals that if sororities held the highest recognition on campus instead of the fraternities, it allowed for domination by women over their male counterparts, but still did not remove the hierarchical power. By displacing the hierarchy of fraternity/sorority, Professor Glass reconstituted his instruction to show better leadership skills in general, revealing that all genders in the course could benefit from the

instruction, therefore not privileging one group over the other.

Havoc described to me how he tried to dismantle hierarchies in his class as well. By displacing the dominating structure of authoritarian learning in the course with the construction of an environment for peer-to-peer discussions on masculinity and its real world implications, Havoc allowed power to circulate and information to be challenged. Thus, his practices reconstituted the relationship between the instructor and student as a mutually beneficial co-learning situation, instead of the opposite case: the instructor filling the mind of the student. Without using the word "deconstruction" to describe how he adapted his teaching style, Havoc challenged his traditional role in the classroom in order to provide his students with an example of a professor who rejects the "sage on stage" process, disrupting classroom dynamics and destabilizing the instructor/student dynamic. This practice permits students to construct knowledge as well and for new knowledge to emerge from its co-construction with the instructor.

While many seem to think that this practice is merely a linguistic exercise, I have found from my study of Derrida that the action of placing one category or answer in direct binary opposition of the other produces real, tangibly-felt, and politically-enacted outcomes which not only affect the person in their direct path but also is felt through societal reverberation. The first crystallization of the instructors' constructing in order to deconstruct masculinity is felt in the binaries. These binaries are felt because instructors, whether they are aware or not, set up binaries as they teach: masculine/feminine and instructor/student, for example. Students, in order to fit into what is taught in the course, may feel forced to choose a side of the binary that best suits them. Recognizing the compulsion a student feels to decide which side of the binary works

best for them is important to recognize because this places strain on the student. Additionally, this compulsion informs how the course is taught. If the binary is deconstructed, an instructor can exhibit that gender is not an either/or concept but is, instead, a continuum and can help \students see that the categories of "masculine" and "feminine" are also based on arbitrary traits and concepts. If these actions are not taken, and students conform to either one part of the binary or the other, the students may feel less than or that they do not measure up. This could lead the students to no longer questioning the definitions of male/female or masculine/feminine beyond the classroom, thus complying with traditional, hegemonic masculinity. When Montag addressed the binaries as they arose in his course, deconstruction happened, aiding the student's understanding of masculinity by recognizing how labeling something masculine simultaneously labels it not feminine. However when TJ chose not to address the binaries that arose, or if he did not realize that something was a binary and did not address it, he was compliant within traditional, hegemonic masculinity, thus reinforcing its effects producing feelings of frustration, disappointment, and possibly anger from those in the course that are identify with the right side of the binary.

Teaching From a Feminist Discourse

Havoc provided insight into teaching men and masculinities that fits most with instructing masculinity(ies) from a feminist discourse. Havoc, a self-identified white, bisexual man, taught his course while fulfilling degree requirements for Homestead State University, a research one institution located in the American Great Plains. Here is a piece of his personal history:

> Me as a practitioner … gender influences the way that I think and understand absolutely everything around me. I'm constantly thinking through, you know, a

> gendered lens. I'm constantly thinking out of the back of my head. Oh, what would Judith Butler say? Things like that. That's definitely because I spent so much time in the gender realm that is, that shapes my lens in the way that I think about the world around me and that can be really challenging for some students that I work with because they have never had to think about gender in their life.

Interestingly, Havoc's positionality as a teaching assistant only gave him the opportunity to be an instructor during most, but not all, of the course, yet he still expressed a desire to unsettle the hegemonic system of the research-intensive institution that he was working within.

Furthermore, the language that Havoc used placed him immediately within the transparent realm of gender identity/gender expression work. Using words and terms like patriarchy, feminist, multiple identities, and masculinities versus masculinity, signified and situated him with the moniker of a feminist masculinities instructor. It also labeled him as knowledgeable and aware by those aware of gender and identity scholarship and signals and signified that he was open to differing identities, whether that be implicit or explicit. His language also contributed to the unsettling of traditional institutions, another key assumption of deconstruction. His language led me to assume he had an implied activist nature and that he was passionate about the work that he was doing. As an instructor, it exhibited that he was actively trying to get his students not only to *think* differently but *act* differently as well. Havoc continued:

> And you know, when I ask, "What does it mean to be a man?" The number of blank looks that I get is because, usually, why I don't do things like that. They know right away or they had no idea because they've either had to think about it

> and thought deeply about it or hadn't had to think about it at all. There's all sorts of privilege that gets tied to those sights.

I include the above quote because Havoc was one of three participants to specifically mention the privilege of the men in the course not having to think about their gender. His awareness of this at the forefront of the course allowed for further interrogation as the class continued, and this awareness enabled Havoc to talk more about certain areas of the syllabus over others, thus privileging certain discourses in the classroom. Havoc alludes to this privileging when describing his instructional lens for the course:

> I'm very critical, a scholar and practitioner. Everything that I do I'm thinking about what it is to interrupt systems of oppression, and how we can use education and emotional intelligence to make the world better for everybody, especially those who are most disadvantaged...And here's the thing: I'm not going to sugarcoat it because people are suffering and we need to understand and recognize and have empathy with that; you can't do that if I am not telling you the truth.

Havoc's perspective informs his instruction and how he is constructing what masculinity should be in America. While I am in agreement with Havoc and the message that he is working to convey, I do trouble his use of the concept of Truth. Once again, Havoc is wavering between both the ability to be complicit with traditional, hegemonic masculinity and disruptive of it at the same time. He is disruptive because he is trying help the students in his course think critically about traditional, even toxic, forms of masculinity, yet at the same time he is fervent in his perspective, coming from a pivotal position on high, teaching the one and "most important truth about masculinity" and how it should be viewed in this one, critical way, as mentioned in the

interview. In this way, he is complicit in hegemonic thinking and fortifies finite walls and boundaries for masculinity to live within.

Likewise, by recognizing the identities and subjectivities held by the students already in the classroom space, Havoc chooses to disrupt traditional boundaries of what an instructor does and can do in the course. He also challenges what can be said within the boundaries of a classroom. He does this by being aware of how oppression works not only conceptually but within the course as well. He is viewing the course material through this lens, constructing the conversations in the classroom, aware of its productions and what can be produced if critical concepts are not mentioned. He sees adding to the discourse of the classroom these critical paradigm phrases and topics in order to push against the confines of the classroom, the person that created the syllabus. He also demonstrates to the students in the class who identify as other than that of a traditionally, hegemonic masculine male, that they do not have to worry, because these long held grand narratives will be challenged and interrogated in his classroom. Using this discourse also puts those who do identify as a traditionally, hegemonic male, who capitalize from their privilege in society on a minute to minute basis, on notice that they will need to become aware of their privilege in order to be successful in the course.

Difference in Learning Objectives

Havoc's reactions to and assumptions about his work in masculinities molds him to be seen as an activist, a challenger, and someone with an awareness of social justice. Havoc was the only participant to describe himself as feminist and as actively trying to adjust his students' perspectives to encourage them to think differently. While many participants wanted to impart knowledge to their students in order to spark change, Havoc was the only instructor who seemed

to do this through clear and direct instruction within the course. This difference is evidenced in their class syllabi, with Havoc's syllabi listing the following goals :

- "Learn about the history of the discipline of masculinity studies and its connection to feminism.
- Critically interrogate the way various cultures construct ideas of masculinity and manhood.
- Be able to articulate the relation of masculinities to larger structures of power, privilege, and oppression."

This is in direct contrast to what Professor Glasses outcomes are on his syllabus. Here are a few learning objectives for comparison:

- "Gain a better understanding of masculinity and its role in fraternity and sorority life.
- Develop a strategy for having difficult conversations about manhood and masculinity in their chapter and their communities.
- Understand how common gender roles and norms persist in our fraternity and sorority communities."

TJ's syllabus was also not seen as activist in nature. Here are some learning outcomes from his syllabus:

- "Students will develop critical thinking, writing, and research skills.
- Students will understand the requirements for earning a bachelor's degree.
- Students will develop an appreciation for diversity and male masculinity."

Professor Glass and TJ's syllabus show distinct differences from Havoc's syllabus, demonstrating that Havoc's syllabus is more acclimated for social change and activism while the others are not.

However, Havoc mentioned that he still needed to set limits for the discussion through essentialism, just as men, in general, participate in the hegemonic, patriarchal structure simply by being men in society in America. He set these limits in order to get his students to challenge the essentialist claims. This provided a limit to the conversation and a place that he, as the instructor, could hopefully deconstruct with his students so they became aware of these limits and could then challenge these concepts outside of the classroom.

Deconstructing Language

As I thought with Caputo, Derrida, and Spivak, I also thought with Williams (2005) when I canvassed my participants' responses. Williams writes that poststructuralism takes an essentialized, hegemonic belief and is able to "deconstruct it, transform it, show its exclusions," which then unsettles its assumptions "about purity (in morals), about essences (in terms of race, gender, and backgrounds), about values (in art and politics), about truth (in law and philosophy)" (p. 4). The possibility to "deconstruct" and "transform" in order to highlight exclusions provided the avenue I needed to establish once again that the men and masculinities classroom is fragile and ready for an opening of knowledge. One of my participants, TJ, connected the concept of hegemonic masculinity with viability in the workforce, stating that being a man was "the pursuance and capture of a job or position." His interview demonstrated not only the hegemonic beliefs encapsulated in our conversation, it also exhibited a use of language that is very hunter-esque. TJ did not recognize how he was using masculine language to describe a masculine concept.

Most of the participants openly discussed their experiences throughout the men and masculinities course but did not provide their experiences as the only way to be a man. TJ, coming from a military background, talked about his experiences growing up on a military base,

a subjectivity that other Americans may not have experienced yet might have been aware of through its discourse presented in the media. The discourse surrounding the military, as well as the untroubled norms of that discourse, did not provide space for TJ to be what he truly wanted to be when he was growing up and formed a mold that he was expected to fit into in order to be a proper military man. While TJ's actions and life choices did not necessarily fight back against this discourse and the male behavioral norms aiding his compliance of hegemonic masculinity, TJ chose to teach a men and masculinities course to highlight that men can be who they want to be and that there are multiple ways of being a man. TJ mentioned that those that he was around growing up and the culture of the military was hyper-masculine. He mentioned that his interest in men and masculinities came from growing up in a hyper masculine environment and as he "learned a little in undergrad, and especially in Grad school in student affairs that masculinity was a thing." TJ's recognition of the influence of the military on his concept of masculinities also reminded him of the question that got him thinking about masculinity and its productions when he asked himself "How am I masculine? How does that affect other people? How does that affect my relationships, you know, I'm married and I have a son now, so that certainly will raise my awareness of what type of boy and man I am raising." TJ's interrogation of how masculinity affects those around him was seen in the interview as his miniature, overt and subversive rebellion to the rigidity of the military discourse. TJ felt this subversive rebellion was necessary in order for the students to do what he felt that he could not do or was not aware he could do during his youth. Teaching a men and masculinities course allowed him to help others identify and challenge norms outside of his class and disrupt traditional, hegemonic masculinity.

Furthermore, in his interview, TJ said his class was housed under the banner of student success. Not once did the words feminism, patriarchy, or power ever enter my conversation with

TJ. However, as TJ spoke about his course, I saw evidence that through the traits of a "good man" the concepts were at least touched upon. As I was thinking with feminist theory to crystalize thoughts and reactions to his interview questions, I began to think also with deconstruction. Why were these words elided? Was there a power in not using them? And if TJ was intentionally omitting those words, I had to ask myself, why? This crystallization demonstrates and embodies the tightrope that instructors need to walk upon in order to be disruptive for new learning to happen, yet be complicit in order to remain in the good graces of the male students who have been socialized to fear, and possibly hate these words. It seemed for many participants that the ends justify the means if learning can continue in the classroom.

In the crystallization of instructing by constructing while deconstructing, it is important to indicate how instructors comply with and disrupt hegemonic masculinity. Additionally, in addressing research question one, we can see that the discourses of feminism, student success, military, and student health brought forth by the instructors in their courses privileged some discourses over the others and used these discourses to center and privilege others. It is through demonstrations of instructing by constructing while deconstructing that we also can see the walking of the tightrope, balancing what to bring forth and what to hold back in regard to discourse within the classroom as an example of how the instructors are trying to negotiate their own masculinity and how the instructor histories influence their instruction.

Crystallization Two: The Questioning of Authority

During the course of my research, questioning authority emerged as a crystallization in the form of instructors challenging who gets to make decisions, where knowledge comes from, and where knowledge is located. This second crystallization arose and began to form when I became further interwoven in Caputo's work and in thinking with the theory of deconstruction.

In deconstruction, whenever a limit to knowledge or action is seen or felt, it needs to be challenged and recognized for its structural and linguistic tensions. Additionally, in Caputo's discussion with Derrida, Caputo (1997) writes, "Derrida is not arguing that 'anything goes' [in deconstruction] nor is he turning truth over to caprice, but he is arguing strongly for a democratic, open-endedness that makes those who have appointed themselves the Guardians of Truth nervous" (p. 58). Caputo shows Derrida recognizing that sometimes it is seen that deconstruction can elicit a feeling that if all limits are challenged and said to be fragile or false, then there is no order, meaning, or authority on a concept at all. Further, Derrida asserts that meaning or authority or, specifically, Truth, is not simply complicit with a sudden mood change or change of behavior of those in authority; there are real tangibly felt repercussions for changes in meaning, language, and authority. He agrees that meaning, language, and authority exists to be challenged but also to challenge those who are the "Guardians of Truth." Hence, those claiming authority over a concept or subject, such as the case of this dissertation, instructors of the men and masculinities classroom, need to be troubled in order to disrupt them as their own "Guardians of Truth" jostling the authority of the college instructor.

Challenging authority connects directly to the crystallization that formed throughout my research when the participants challenged their own authority questioning what is right/wrong to teach in the men and masculinities classroom as well as externally by their students in the courses. Focusing on authority allowed my analysis to zero in on what authoritative structures and discourses the participants were working within and what constituted them throughout my research process. This crystallization also provided the opportunity for me to address an aspect of my research questions: the instructor histories and discourses that were mentioned in the interviews and how the instructors were negotiating their own masculinity through the teaching

of their course. One participant, JJ, spoke about navigating different discourses as an instructor who identifies as African-American/Black Diaspora and teaching a class about masculinity that was made up predominantly of women. Women also have traditional, hegemonic masculinity ingrained in them through the discourses taught in their family, discourses that are reinforced through their own familial actions, media, schools, and myriad other ways. Some of these discourses include that men need to take care of their families by being the breadwinner, that it is the "women's job to take care of the child" and that it is "important to have children at a young age," as mentioned by some of his students. JJ's course was housed in the Student Wellness department of his university and was constituted by the academic/university discourse connected to his positionality as the Director of Student Wellness. Enmeshed in this discourse were competing thoughts, ideas, and practices that JJ mentioned needed to be watched, not only to accomplish the goals of the course, but also to meet the needs of the students taking the course. For example, JJ worked in an education department that promotes wellness on many different levels. Because JJ is in a director position at his university, he was not only aware of the discourses surrounding Student Wellness and his department but also of the larger university-wide narrative. By recognizing the discourses he operated within, JJ was well equipped to navigate these discourses with his students so they could be more successful than those who did not have an instructor with JJ's knowledge and authority. However, JJ's position as the Director of Student Wellness may inhibit him from speaking his truth in the classroom because his truth regarding parts of the men and masculinity curriculum may be in opposition to that of his department, or "too political to discuss with students," as he mentioned in the interview. Also in his interview, JJ alluded to having to hold his thoughts back for fear of repercussions throughout the department from upper administration. Additionally, if he were to challenge the notions of

the students and push them to think beyond traditional gender roles in the course, the students may reject his thoughts and instruction in order to exist in a world where they feel safe with what they have been taught and continue to enact gender-related roles within their households and their societal interactions. This is another example of JJ's negotiation of balancing the tightrope between the students' traditionally hegemonic values and his progressive outlook pushing students to think in new ways.

Not only was there a moment of recognition of the discourses that constituted JJ, a recognition of how these discourses were interacting in the classroom when dialoguing with his students was a light refracted as well. Reading Caputo helped guide how I interpreted (textually) JJ's interactions with students. Caputo argues that "deconstruction is respect, respect for the other, a respectful, responsible affirmation of the other, a way if not to efface at least to delimit the narcissism of the self...and to make some space to let the other be" (Caputo, 1997, p. 44). JJ showed his students respect, even if they were visibly against what he was teaching and or did not understand the concepts being discussed in the course. JJ mentioned in his interview that he would take extra time to walk through each concept as well as look through the papers and assigned homework in order to re-address concepts that did not seem to connect with his students. For all my participants, there had to be a sense of respect in the course in order to question what was considered respectful and what that language meant when referring to gender and its productions.

The Instructor as Authority

At times, the participants made themselves authority figures, and, subsequently, their students questioned that authority. Throughout my interviews, I looked for moments that troubled society's processes, systems, and referent language associated with masculinities. Some

participants raised concerns that there was no “hard and fast answer" or positivist science to know if what they were teaching was part of the binary of right/wrong. The instructors worried that they were not teaching their students the “correct” way to be a man in America. This positivist approach left instructors searching for one answer, when poststructuralism reaches for answers that are multiple, unstable, and not fixed. Havoc struggled with what to teach as he spoke about how he would prefer to destabilize masculinity and society’s concept of what a man should be, basically upending the system altogether. Another participant, Montag, mentioned frustrated students reminding him that the class was about men, not women, when discussing gender. Montag also talked about how his male students did not think learning about the feminist movement’s influence on the creation of Men’s Studies was necessary. Montag’s experience demonstrates how instructors had to navigate the great divide of the binary: instructor/student and its hierarchical dimensions of authority. As I have previously argued, binaries are fragile, always already undone, and “do not hold true” (Belsey, 2002). As seen in the example from Montag, the hierarchy in the binary demonstrates power on the side of the instructor, but by not having a hard and fast answer we see that the instructor is powerless to provide the one right answer, as that answer does not exist. The binary is “already undone” because it does not function as it is supposed; the answer is not out there to find. Also, as the instructors navigate the binary, at different times the power in the classroom shifts from instructors to students and back again, once again demonstrating that the binaries do not hold true.

An interesting connection between all the participants is that they all spoke with authority about their individual male experiences and were conscious of ways that they may have been complicit with or disruptive of traditionally, hegemonic male behavior. Yet when I asked each participant if they were an expert in the field, they all either alluded to or directly said they were

not scholars but were working to get there, however they defined "there." That being said, the participants mentioned that the students looked to them to have all the answers and expected their instructors to have the authority in the student-teacher relationship.

Challenging the Authority of Students

Montag provided even more insight into challenging the authority of students. When asked what he considered the hardest element of teaching his course, Montag answered that in studying to become better in the scholarship of men and masculinities, he found it difficult when students would derail the conversation and he had to take up time from the classroom to catch someone up to speed with concepts or language use that the class was unfamiliar with. Montag's experience reaffirms that these questions asked within this exchange, the instructor is seen as the authoritative figure in the class and expected to regulate what is spoken of, talked about, and addressed within the classroom.

A tenet of poststructuralism is the idea of de-centering the author and where ultimate meaning/truth comes from. Belsey (2002) reiterates that in traditional criticism, ultimate authority comes from the author, meaning that if the author wrote the text, it is the meaning that the author intended that is Truth. Poststructuralism demonstrates that "language is not ours to possess" (p. 18), as language opens itself up to interpretation. The author may have one meaning that was intended, but I, as a subjective person and a person with subjectivity, may read the same text and extract an entirely new meaning.

Deconstruction works within/against to challenge privileged spaces and subjectivities that each of the instructors holds within their individual space. As male instructors in the United States of America, the participants in my dissertation research exist within and profit from the

patriarchal system but are teaching concepts that are there to reveal and actively disrupt said structures within that same patriarchy. Some concepts the instructors taught were power and privilege, sexual orientation, intersectionality as connected to masculinity, and gender performance. Furthermore, the instructor's subjectivities either reinforced and were complicit with traditional, hegemonic masculinity, or they appeared to disrupt it. For example, the participants in my study were only allowed to teach men and masculinities courses because they had or were working toward earning master's degrees in higher education or closely related fields, had previously worked with student groups within student affairs, or were currently working with men and masculinities communities on campus or in higher education. In interviews, three out of the five participants admitted they had been asked by colleagues if they would like to help teach a course, thereby associating course instruction ability with the idea that "it's not what you know, it's who you know," a common sentiment upheld by patriarchal systems that limit opportunities to a small groups and allow some instructors to receive opportunities that others, while qualified, do not even have the opportunity to apply for. And in turn this provides men with the incentive to keep participating in and conforming to that patriarchal system.

Deconstruction also calls for a questioning of authority and its productions. Montag, who works within a public institution called Public Ivy University, provided a purposeful example when describing working with a much older male student and his reactions to class discussions:

> I would say [the most challenging part] probably [is] the one student that I had referenced, the one who had audited the class. I don't know how old he is exactly, but I would guess he's in his mid 60's probably around my parents' age. He and I met for coffee before the class started because he emailed me and he said, hey,

> you know, I'm interested in auditing this class...I kind of wanted to feel it out a little bit and get a sense of him.

Montag was apprehensive about having this person in his course and questioned why the student was there in the first place. Montag's apprehension stemmed from the student's subjectivity, age, and desire to audit and not fully commit to taking the course. Montag correlated what the student's possible perspective may be due to the student's relation to his parent's age and their perspectives. Montag based his future interactions with the student on his preconceived interactions with students of similar ages and assumed the student would be confused about topics and discussions the class would produce. Additionally, Montag was concerned the older student would hinder the learning of the other students in the course. I believe Montag was also navigating the awkwardness and different life experiences of this older student and those of a traditionally college-aged student, thus creating a sense that the authority of who gets to learn in the course sits within the instructor. However, Montag explained, after meeting the student for coffee and getting to know him:

> I think one of the most just impressive qualities about him is that whenever he was faced with information and content that he didn't agree with, he was always very open to exploring it...I think that's why he took the class. It was because he didn't really understand what it was about yet he wanted to.

Montag eventually saw his interaction with the potential student as hopeful and a place where he could see that learning would take place for this student throughout the course. This is another example that shows that subjectivities matter when trying to learn about masculinities. The privileged discourse of feminism in Montag's class, a discourse that his student was not aware of, initially caused a bit of a division between them, which underscores the idea that subjectivity is locationally based and shifts with each moment and interaction.

Also, within the traditional structure of higher education, the instructor is the one with the authority to teach and to designate who is allowed to participate in the class and who does not. Interestingly, Montag followed up with an example of how he had to navigate teaching the older student as well as teaching the other students in the course:

> He would say things that, you know, I think the average educator who focuses on gender and feminism would probably label as problematic....He just had lots of questions around sexual assault and how our procedures and processes work at [Public Ivy] which is an understandable thing to have questions about. And also that's not exactly what the class was about.

From the older student's language use, Montag viewed the conversation as problematic. The student's jarring use of language use forced Montag to make the decision about whether to stick to the discussion for that day's class or address the language use by the student:

> There were many times in the class when he would really take the class off on a tangent that was sort of related, but what he would say was triggering enough for many people in the class that a tangential comment wouldn't just be a tangential comment. It would result in this sort of long discussion to try and help him understand how what he said was problematic, even though what he said wasn't really relevant to the conversation.

Montag chose to address the language issue due to how that language may be affecting the other students within the course. Montag felt trepidation about addressing the older student's language because, at times, Montag was not sure if the student was trying to sabotage the course or if he

was genuinely unaware of terms other than antiquated and/or offensive ones. However, despite his hesitation, Montag ultimately demonstrated his authority over not only class control but on what was and was not spoken of in class. Montag chose to speak with the student about his language after class or during coffee outings, which enabled Montag to control the classroom better, organize and promote what was on the syllabus, and privilege Montag's view of masculinity versus the disruption of thought by the non-traditionally aged male in the course. Montag's discursive practices of working with the older student allowed him to push through the curricula schedule for his classes, provided time for him and the student to connect at a later time, and avoided derailing the learning experience for the other students in the course. Therefore, I view Montag's actions as compliant with hegemonic masculinity; he did not divert his authority to the student and remained in control of the classroom and the lesson for the day.

Finally, Montag reflected on his experience in struggling with what felt right from his perspective:

> I think part of my challenge is, and this goes back to what I'm good at and what came easy is that I think I'm good at providing space where people can share what they want to share, but sometimes that isn't always appropriate or, or even just on track, for the conversation where everybody else is. And so that proved to be really challenging.

I include Montag's data not only to create a context for the instructor/student binary opposition, but also to show how providing space for tangents can create a deconstructive moment. Even in such a short response, Montag provides an example of the tension he felt with a good, possibly well-meaning, but problematic student. In this instructor/student binary, it shows that during this student's tenure in the classroom, providing a space for him to consistently derail the conversation to a topic that the class as a whole was not ready for, already knew, and/or was

not receptive to because of "problematic" language, is a rupture in traditional expectations of course delivery. Through Montag's response, I perceived that he was genuinely ready to work with this student by providing space for him in and out of the classroom, despite the other students' dismay. However, Montage had hoped that addressing the language in class would help the student learn or think critically, thereby meeting one of the goals of Montag's course.

When Montag taught about what it meant to be a man in the United States of America, the older student actively worked to divert the discussion, and the rest of the class noticed. Montag, aware of the learning space the older student occupied, was able to challenge and support him by both providing ways to think differently about masculinity and addressing the problematic behavior of the student. Montag had to walk the tightrope of staying true to his pedagogy and handling multiple, competing, sometimes binary-inducing discourses that caused some students to be immediately defensive and counter the arguments being presented. It is this linear, binary thinking by the students that deconstruction finds precarious and eager to interrogate: If I identify as a man and a man is supposed to_____, then I am not a man if I do the opposite. Montag disrupted that type of binary thinking by providing multiple, competing discourses and showing the class that ambiguities of language and contradictions of language are all around them, that masculinities are expressed in multiple ways and provide multiple truths, and that meaning is fragile.

That being said, there were ways that Montag, as well as many other participants, were complicit in traditional, hegemonic masculinity, especially as shown through the structure of their course delivery. Many times throughout my interviews, the instructors mentioned that they felt they needed to give voice to the students in the room who disagreed, even to the extent that

students would either divert the conversation away from what was originally discussed or be vocally derogatory to other identities, including women, most of whom were an identity group present in the course. In letting this happen, time and energy were devoted to problematic, provoked discussions without benefit for others in the course. The behavior of toxic derailing, a somewhat abusive test to determine how far the instructor would go, once again demonstrated that even when the instructor tried to create positive pedagogical spaces, if he did not address the negative behavior of a student, he remained complicit in hegemonic masculinity.

Alternatively, Montag disrupted his own traditional, hegemonic masculinity, as well as traditional teaching methods, by continuing his relationship with the older student beyond the classroom. Usually, when the construction of knowledge within the course's parameters is finished at the end of the semester, the learning ceases. Montag, however, described continuing to work with/talk to the older student later in the interview:

> I still continue to talk with him. He and I met several times for coffee afterwards and I think he had a pretty decent experience in the class or so he says. I don't know if I necessarily got through to him about any of the masculinity stuff, but I also don't know if that's necessarily what my goal is anymore, you know...he'll send me articles that he finds in the newspaper and he literally cuts them out and mails them to me. And they are all gender related, like so, you know, a lot of stuff about sexual assault, Title IX, but also not just about gender roles in the media. And so even though I think part of him sending those things is to try and argue against what I'm doing, I still kind of see it as a win because he's thinking about it.

Ultimately, authority is an essential part of the discussion of men and masculinities courses, as well as the complicity and disruption of traditional, hegemonic masculinity. Caputo

(1997) writes, “Deconstruction is responsibility itself...whenever something is deconstructed, deconstruction reserves the right to ask any question, to think any thought, to wonder aloud about any probability…” (p. 51). This demonstrates that authority is never final, never solidified, and always in flux.

Overall, the crystallization of questioning authority in the men and masculinities classroom was most apparent when the instructors were introspective and when they worked with their students. This crystallization helped expose and clarify that authority in the men and masculinities classroom revealed which discourses and meanings within those discourses were privileged.

Crystallization Three: Disruption of Traditional Practices

When I write the word “disruptive” I challenge myself not to think of it as destructive; deconstruction is not destructive. Yet in listening to and reading the interview transcripts, I saw and heard moments that provided a way of viewing the data that showed the instructors pushing against tradition so strongly that there was a break and a change in traditional instruction so great, I am not sure that I can see the men and masculinities classroom in the same way ever again. Their interviews highlighted moments of deconstruction that cracked the men and masculinities classroom open to reveal new and beneficial ways of teaching. Yet intertwined with the new possibilities were disruptive moments that were not as positive and progressive.

Answering my second research question, these disruptive moments challenged my thinking and challenged how I saw the participants’ being complicit or disruptive in enacting traditional, hegemonic masculinity. Initially, these disruptive moments challenged my thoughts so much in the interviews, that I was worried about the content in the course and if I needed to intervene in order to attend to my ethics as a researcher and the ethic of care that I espoused in

my methodology for this research. For example, one of the instructors, when asked about the definition of gender, couldn't give one, suggesting that what his students were learning was nothing more than a boy's club masquerading as a class.

I began the process of analyzing the crystallization of the disruption of traditional practices by thinking again with Caputo. Caputo's (1997) commentary on deconstruction was symbiotic in this endeavor. He writes, "Deconstruction is an analytic operation aimed at keeping thinking and writing alive, keeping them open to surprise, by keeping on the alert to institutions in which they are housed" (pp. 61-62). Below, I establish moments where instructors' used deconstruction to keep their classrooms, their students, and their institutions alive, on alert, and open to surprise through disruptive practices, whether those disruptive practices were complicit in hegemonic masculinity or truly disruptive to the men and masculinities classroom and traditional, hegemonic masculinity.

First, a moment about traditional classroom instructional practices:

> The very meaning and mission of deconstruction is to show that things - texts, institutions, traditions, societies, beliefs and practices of whatever size and sort you need - do not have definable meanings and determinable missions, that they are always more than any mission would impose, that they exceed the boundaries they currently occupy. (Caputo, 1997, p. 31)

While I would like to define traditional practices for the sake of this dissertation, traditional practices, as stated above, are always more than what they espouse. Some traditional classroom practices include the idea that there is one instructor in front of the classroom, the instructor speaks from objective experiences with a well-researched, well-planned curriculum, and the instructor teaches from a subjectively knowledgeable space. For instance, if I am teaching about

masculinity, then I, myself, need to be masculine or highly knowledgeable about masculinity, and the instructor's main purpose to teach is for knowledge acquisition, mostly producing the output by tests, assignments, and quizzes alone as measurement. Below, I work to show that instructor histories bring forth the privileged meanings in their work. I also focus on who is disrupting traditional practices or complying with traditional, hegemonic masculinity.

Teaching As Part of Your Position, Not All of Your Position

What is both helpful and a hindrance to research is that deconstruction is always in process and ongoing, meaning that for an instructor, there is no defined end and no final, right answer when trying to deconstruct or encourage students to deconstruct large concepts. For instructors, who teach students at different developmental stages, many who show signs of dualistic, binary behavior, there sometimes is an underlying, programmatic impulse of wanting to provide an answer to the students' questions. In those students craving that "right" answer, most of the instructors that I interviewed provided positive answers that could contribute to society and to the conversation, but still not one right answer. I now highlight one participant whose position, through the construction of his course, worked within and against dualism and provided his students with ways to think through the multiplicity of answers. Currently, this participant, Professor Glass, a staff member at Brewster College in the Southeast United States of America, works within the Greek system, a system that, by design, creates its own binaries: fraternities/sororities and being an insider/outsider to the Greek system on campus. Within these institutional binaries, and because his office is a newer department on this institution's campus, Professor Glass works with and alongside very traditional, hegemonically masculine, fraternalistic mindsets. Working within this discourse, Glass strives to teach fraternity and sorority members about masculinity and gender through his leadership class, "Men, Masculinity,

and Male Privilege." Remarkably, this course is available only to those within the Greek system but is not mandatory; instead it is provided via a list of approved courses for leadership recognition denoted on a student's academic/co-curricular record. In addition, this class could also be used for a leadership credit at the university to obtain a specific leadership certificate, something to further define and delineate the student's collegiate experience. Men predominantly take the course, but sorority women are also encouraged to take it for credit. Many students initially take the course because it appeals to students looking for a course with less academic rigor, and the idea of talking about masculinity is provocative to some.

During his interview, Professor Glass spoke about his double-bind of entry into the masculinity classroom space and his positionality in the student affairs environment:

> [This class] is part of my job so, to be transparent, I think it makes it interesting because, you know, it's this weird dichotomy because between this [position] and my class, I should have academic freedom. I should have these different things to be able to teach the way I want to or whatever that looks like. Then also, this is a program out of our office, and I have supervisors that I report to and you're like,... it's just an interesting dynamic in that way.

For Professor Glass, building connections with his co-workers and students is a unique challenge because they are one and the same; his students are also his co-workers who, therefore, see Professor Glass in two different, subjective ways. He has to walk the fine line of not challenging or disrupting so much in the classroom because this could affect his influence over the work his students/colleagues contribute to their fraternities and sororities outside the classroom, the work that he is evaluated on by his supervisors and which his salary and job security. Professor Glass' subjectivity places him in a position with his leadership that straddles

two worlds: one where his subjectivity of being a past fraternity member and the other where his subjectivity of a student affairs professional who now understands what students need to do and produce in order to make sure that as a community we live in a more inclusive and just society meet and are in conflict.

Professor Glass also works to navigate the flawed system of having to waver between his two roles. He does not have the ability to integrate his two roles due to his own prioritization of student affairs, which pays his salary, over teaching. However, in his interview, Professor Glass shared that he felt compelled to continue to teach his course to try as best as he could to challenge his student's traditional, hegemonic masculinity consistently and fervently; therefore, he was always walking on the divide.

Professor Glass even alluded to the possibility of his eventual homelessness and joblessness because his student affairs discourse and his academic discourse were an opposing binary. If he were to lean too far one way or the other, for example, teaching in a more progressively political way, he may lose his position due to his perspective. Indeed, each of the participants in one way or the other questioned, jostled, and challenged "[his] relation to the world" with each question asked throughout the interview. Professor Glass' interview also offered a moment of clarity and realism that I, as a teacher, needed to recognize: the competition between his use of his time and his attention to getting ready for and instructing the course. Professor Glass was still trying to complete all that he needed to in order to fulfill his requirements for his student affairs role, while also being an instructor. Even though it did connect with me, my ambition during the instruction of my course did not want to allow me to stay after hours for fear of burnout. Professor Glass reminded me that there are limitations to the time and energy that can be put into a course, and even though there are multiple meanings for

all concepts proposed in the course which need to be explored, there are finite boundaries that need to be taken into consideration by instructors. These boundaries include class length, class size, subjectivities in the course, and the academic discipline within which the course is housed compete with one's intentions to pour his heart and soul into a course; yet the finite time, energy, and effort are limits that define the space and accomplishments that can be completed in the classroom. Professor Glass had only recently obtained his role in student affairs at Brewster College and had little social capital to upend the whole system and change the course, thus again privileging traditional, hegemonic masculinity in the men and masculinities classroom.

"Not a Feminist or Anything"

While it was never a specific goal of mine to indoctrinate students in my courses to become feminists who protest for the rights of others (although that would be great), I did want them to challenge their perceptions of that concept to look at power and gendered practices with a closer eye. I was motivated by my desire for my students to have choices about how to live their gendered lives and to be informed of what those choices were and why they needed to be open to others' choices and perspectives, and even to recognize what those ideas produce. What challenged my thinking was the deconstructive moment of what *feminist* meant to these instructors and, in this case, what Professor Glass thought. When discussing his expectations for the course, Professor Glass said, "I don't expect them to be feminists or anything…" The "or anything" gave me pause. His tone of "or anything" was dismissive and inferred a laugh, meaning anything associated with "feminist" was negative and/or humorous, and his comment exposed power relations that were shaped by that interplay with me as the interviewer. Because he was not as aware of where I was coming with my research, I felt he wanted to make sure after saying many things positively and progressively about masculinity(ies), he wanted to posture

that he was still masculine enough to fit within the discourse of traditional, hegemonic masculinity and because through the *differánce* of meanings, feminism is feminine because it is not masculine, thus not connected to masculinity. Professor Glass defined masculinities and leadership by positing that it was not inherently feminine. In his syllabi, there was very little mention of feminism, LGBTQ+ issues, or intersectional masculinities, and even the word masculinities was said in the interviews but rarely shown on the syllabi that I dissected.

Lastly, some of the participants in my study felt an undercurrent of how their classes were fused with their positions at their institutions and were not separate from their role as student affairs administrators. Some instructors were not allowed to stop teaching the course if they wanted to because their salary was dependent upon teaching the class. Professor Glass was an example of this fusion. For Glass, I see this being a product of working within the collegiate privileged discourse of fraternal politics on a college campus and having to navigate the specific locations that Professor Glass mentioned: connecting with fraternity and sorority members while also educating them about different, perhaps better, ways of navigating the Greek System with their gender expression and identity, always balancing and not falling too far one way or the other politically.

The implication for this action is that he was discrediting all the work that he was doing in his classroom: acknowledging feminist concepts of privilege and power, adjusting and discussing fraternity and sororities impactful behavior on campus as campus leaders, and what is produced from those impactful actions.

Differing Genders Teaching Masculinities Simultaneously

An additional disruption worth noting is the idea that one participant, along with myself, chose to have differing genders help teach the course. In each case, the other instructor was a

master's student that identified as a female. This disruption of the course helped to provide a more inclusive classroom environment by providing a not all encompassing perspective, but alternative meanings and experiences that at some times were counter to but also alongside with some men in the course, even if there was some frustration from the teaching partner. Professor Glass said:

> The woman who was the TA for me the next year, she found herself [explaining her perspective] all the time. She was getting extremely frustrated because she felt that she had to be the voice of [black women]...she shouldn't be that person. And so she had conversations throughout the class ...she speaks from a very intersectional standpoint of these areas where [the class] has no idea and I have no idea, but I was like, you don't need to be a martyr for your gender and your race all the time because you know, this is what you're doing. And she's like, 'I don't know, I feel I have to. And it's so frustrating.' And we've had some talks where I said, 'Moving forward, ….the hope is that this is not frustrating for you, that this is a teaching opportunity for you, that you don't have to find yourself in those conversations all the time. But instead, helping to facilitate them.' And I think she'll appreciate that because there were times that she was getting so frustrated because she felt that she was the only person that was combating 20 or so people. For me it was difficult because I don't want to ever pin it on somebody's identity to have to educate everybody else. At the same time, I didn't want her to be the instructor that was educating everybody. I'm like, y'all are peers. Y'all go to the same parties. Have the conversation.

While, at the end of the quote, there is encouragement to shut down the hierarchy of power in the classroom and allow for peer to peer conversation to facilitate dialogue, allowing the students to guide the conversation, there are still moments of complicity with traditional, hegemonic masculinity in this exchange. There seem to be places where Professor Glass is not taking into account the subjectivity of his teaching assistant (TA) and what she can and cannot "turn off" in working through the discourse of the classroom. The TA mentions that she feels compelled to address any and all situations where the students seem to be wrong about masculinity and their interactions with people in the course who identify as female, yet Professor Glass seems to encourage her to just stop and return to facilitation of the conversation. Granted this is coming from a place of care for his TA, in his guidance, but he is not taking into account many of her identities. On the side of disruption, it can be said that peer-to-peer learning and education is seen as disruptive of traditional classroom practices of the sage on the stage rhetoric and allowing for learning moments amongst the students of the course, thus creating a power relation that is more circulating instead of top down. Another way to read this conversation is that the subjectivity of the TA, as well as the hierarchical power operating in the classroom, creates an expectation that as a co-instructor, each instructor should do equal work in offering feedback to problematic students or students needing to understand the course material better. It is a type of privilege to choose which misunderstandings to address instead of addressing them all.

Having two instructors in a classroom is in itself a disruption to traditional teaching, but this is also due to their gender subjectivities providing similar and at times differing experiences about each concept. Professor Glass acknowledges that providing multiple responses, experiences, and perspectives has helped students navigate the previously dualistic behavior of

right and wrong and get them to think relativistically, with multiplistic intentions, and provides perspectives that have been elided in the classroom previously. The difficult discussion is the cost to the person providing the perspective, thus privileging the white male discourse in the classroom. He can go home and not think about his teaching, but the TA, with her subjectivities, is not able to do this.

Actively teaching with your own subjectivity in mind

Another participant, TJ, who self-identified as a son of a military family, was exposed to a form of masculinity that was very rigid, hierarchical, and immovable in its determined meanings. Because of this, TJ, simply by teaching a men and masculinities course designed with multiple perspectives in mind, is a disruption, even if at times only to himself. What I appreciate most from his interview is that he described the non-plurality of the military masculinity that he grew up with while showing his progress in developing a more evolved, nuanced view. Yet while recognizing the deconstructive moment of a gender-aware military masculinities instructor is a positive contribution, I noticed that throughout his interview, gender differentiation and the concept of biological sex go hand in hand for him, which is problematic. The evolved nature of his masculinity did not match his un-evolved knowledge about gender identity or gender expression. This participant began to equate masculinity specifically with being a leader and obtaining a job or position to which a man can maintain a successful family life. While much research attaches itself to masculine traits being connected with the breadwinner of the household (Brannon & Juni, 1985), masculinity has been expanded to include more (but not all) ways of being signified as masculine. It is in this moment that TJ is complicit with hegemonic masculinity, furthering a positivistic, measured determination of masculine, while not being aware of how that understanding has opened up to create more of an inclusive aspect and less of

specific characteristics needing to be obtained. In hearing this in TJ's interview, I was worried about the students and what discourse was being privileged in that course, basically negating the men and masculinities classroom's purpose. TJ connecting gender to job attainment causes places of pause and worry for me about what is being deemed as teachable in this course and what is being further privileged as gendered behavior and characteristics to those students matriculating. Implicated in this is his position as Director of Student Success and its connection to its discourse dictating: if you do_____as a student, you will be successful. If TJ is promoting and privileging being successful as a man equates to a good job and acknowledging no differentiation between gender expression or gender identity, it is worrisome to see what the course is producing. From my vantage point, it is producing complicity with traditional, hegemonic masculinity.

Summary of Crystallizations

In summary, the crystallizations that formed provided new ways to view the instructors teaching the course, pushed against and challenged long-held definitions of masculinity, troubled classroom concepts of authority, and showed the complicity of instructors as well as their disruptive practices. In crystallization one, I demonstrated the balancing act that instructors needed to perform in order to instruct while constructing what it means to be masculine in America, but also disrupting the narrow and limited definitions. I worked to answer my first research question by highlighting the instructors' personal histories and where the privileging of certain discourses came into play. Because of this crystallization, there is a new understanding of the precarious construction of the men and masculinities classroom as well as the social construction happening in the course. In crystallization two, authority as a concept formed and

was eventually challenged through the words and actions of the instructors. This authority was seen challenged not just by the instructors but also by the students themselves. The refraction that was focused on how authority in the men and masculinities classroom allows the instructors to privilege one discourse of masculinity over another. Through this crystallization, my first research questions were again answered as well as my second in regard to how the instructors responded to the students' challenges of who holds the authority of course content. Finally, in crystallization three, I examined the disruptive practices that were happening in the men and masculinities classroom. Here, the refractions showed how holding positionality in two different discourses (academia and student affairs) allowed for different discourses to be privileged at different times, each working to disrupt the other through adherence to its boundaries with too much troubling leading to a loss of position and possible homelessness. Also, the disruptive practices of different genders teaching at the same time and actively teaching with one's own subjectivity in mind allows for the ability to recognize compliance and disrupt traditional, hegemonic masculinity, eventually working to change not only the class but higher education itself.

Conclusion

Throughout this chapter, I used Richardson and St. Pierre's (2005) concept of crystallizations to reveal the formation of three crystallizations: instructing by constructing and deconstructing, the questioning of authority, and the disruption of traditional classroom practices. These crystallizations, when cast with different lights (or theory) reveal a proliferation of discourses and subjectivities that circulate in a men and masculinities course. The crystallizations provide refractions that are not either/or but both/and. Examining the experiences of men and

masculinities instructors has demonstrated that discourse matters in the men and masculinity course. Fueled by the discourses known and felt by the instructors, the instructors have privileged discourses of masculinity, job attainment, student success, student wellness, and feminism in the classroom. These are taught through actual assignments, activities, and, more covertly, through behavior regulations and normative classroom expectations. Even the instructor's ability to choose what to include and what to leave out demonstrates authority circulating. Looking at how the instructors negotiated their own masculinity in the course expresses that masculinity is not stable and immovable, but is enacted in each practice. Fundamentally, the instructors were not good or bad instructors; they taught from multiple perspectives with experiences informed by their histories and the discourses they were aware of. The instructors' histories and the discourses available to them showed that while negotiating their own masculinity throughout the course, they were both complicit with and disruptive of traditional, hegemonic masculinity. These experiences and crystallizations matter because *what* they teach about masculinities and *how* they teach masculinities informs how masculinity moves, acts, and refracts in the world. I place these crystallizations here so that others can see my refractions, to better understand masculinities and further trouble the category. I also present this research so instructors can have ways of instruction that push against the structures holding society back from ending sexism, patriarchy, chauvinism, and misogyny.

In the final chapter of this dissertation, I will review my theoretical framework, provide a quick assessment of the effectiveness of my methodology, and present my findings. I also contribute further theoretical and practical implications for higher education and make recommendations for future men and masculinities educators.

Chapter 6 - Conclusion

Having reached the conclusion of my study, I consider the implications for instructors of men and masculinities courses and the precarious balancing act they have to navigate in order to teach gender. While negotiating their own masculinity in a world where gender discourse is becoming increasingly volatile, this examination is more vital than ever. These thoughts endure because the discourse of traditional, hegemonic masculinity works thoroughly and effectively due to its ability to be overt and covert, showing itself in the privileged discourses available in the men and masculinities classroom and then experienced beyond the classroom. In order to move forward and trouble the grand narratives of masculinity, challenge the space higher education calls the men and masculinities classroom, and open up new pedagogical practices for teaching masculinities, I argue that what is taught in the men and masculinities classroom, as well as who is teaching the course, matters. The complexity of subjectivity, fragility of meaning, and challenging of language are crucial to acknowledge in any conversation about gender and must be factored into the men and masculinities classroom. The defining measurements of masculinity highlighted in Chapter 2 and the discourses operating through those arbitrary measurements, have manifested seemingly immutable walls of behavior and specific subjectivities. To push against the walls, men and masculinities instructors will have to create a space that challenges and troubles these boundaries. My research shows that instructors need to understand not only the strong influence they have on students through their privileging of masculine discourse but also the areas in which they are complicit with or disruptive of traditional, hegemonic masculinity. Not until instructors can practice self reflection, can they move forward with the knowledge and the goal of understanding masculinity in new ways to push against sexism, patriarchy, misogyny, and chauvinism.

My hope for this chapter is to provide higher education gender instructors with an awareness of pedagogical practices and a demonstration of how they affect what is taught in the men and masculinities classroom. I provide this awareness and demonstration to invite instructors to think about how their use of language and how understanding where they comply and disrupt traditional, hegemonic masculinity can help them teach about gender.

I also want to inspire instructors to look at their courses and see where they may teach through a feminist lens. Centering gender, power, language, and discourse can make space for feminism as a larger part of the classroom discussion so that when students leave the course they can begin to challenge the world around them. Moreover, centering will help instructors search for concepts and language to jostle long-upheld definitions, actively push against dominant grand narratives, and work toward a better, more gender-inclusive future. This is all so they can eventually rebuild to be a space that is stronger in community with and for others and more open and inclusive in their language and offer a wider perspective and understanding of masculinities that can be taught in higher education. In the sections below, I summarize my research's key findings and describe their significance. I revisit both my theory and my methodological framework to demonstrate their capabilities and implications. Additionally, I provide the limitations of my study and conclude with recommendations for future research and practice as well as personal reflections on higher education.

Summary of Key Findings

Before discussing what emerged from my research by utilizing the research questions below, I remind the reader of definitions integral to this dissertation: *discourse* and *subjectivity*. *Discourse* is described by Stuart Hall (1997) as:

> Ways of referring to or constructing knowledge about a particular topic of practice: a cluster (or formation) of ideas, images and practices, which provide ways of talking about forms of knowledge and conduct associated with a particular topic, social activity, or institutional site in society. (p. 6)

Because of the structural process operating through and around us, discourse makes space for and produces not only the formation of the images associated with but also the practices performed in service to masculinity. This production is all so that we can "talk about forms of knowledge" as in the case of this dissertation: masculinity and masculine subjectivity.

Subjectivity is another definition that needs to be highlighted again before I describe my key findings. As defined by Weedon (1997), "Subjectivity is used to refer to the conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions of the individual, [his] sense of [him]self and [his] ways of understanding [his] relation to the world" (p. 32). In other words, discourse produces masculine subjectivity by recognizing how someone deemed masculine sees the world and their place in it. This applies to both conscious and unconscious thoughts and how people talk about and experience language-informed practices that construct knowledge about masculinity.

Research Question 1: What are the discourses and instructor histories that produce the privileged meanings of masculinities in a higher education course pertaining to men and masculinities?

During their interviews, the participants' were not as forthcoming about their personal histories as I would have preferred. I believe their reticence to open up was due not only to having just met me but also to masculinity playing itself out. Within the discourse of traditional, hegemonic masculinity, vulnerability is dangerous, and revealing too much about oneself can

invite harm. Similarly, giving out too much information can hurt, referenced by Brannon and Juni's (1985) stoicism coupled with his image of being a "sturdy oak" as well as Bem's (1987) measurement of masculinity. In Bem's research, the revealing of feelings and connections to relationships and other humans was deemed more feminine and not masculine, revealing anti-femininity operating within this discourse of masculinity. I find it concerning that Bem's research was done 33 years ago and is still circulating as a discourse today. Additionally, this demonstrates the continued complicity of the instructors in my present study and how ingrained traditional, hegemonic masculinity really is, meaning that even though the instructors' knew that my research was about masculinity and its effects in the classroom, as well as about their experiences teaching masculinity, the instructors were still nervous about sharing with me their thoughts about individual teaching styles and interactions with students. To share and be seen as "less than" or as doing something "wrong" with regard to masculinity also positions the instructor in the place of not being knowledgeable, which, in turn, places them outside of Brannon's and Juni's (1985) *Man Box* of being the "big wheel" (or all knowing) in their work or life perspectives. I believe that with more interviews and chances to build rapport, some instructors' answers may have had fuller, more vulnerable offerings. However, in all honesty, I think the masculinity that the instructor was negotiating would still prohibit him from sharing.

Discourses of Masculinity and Personal Histories

Throughout their interviews, the participants revealed bits and pieces about their personal histories and the discourses that produced their subjectivities. For example, one participant who grew up in the military informed me about how he saw himself in relation to the types of masculinity he taught in his course and thus imparted his conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions onto his course, privileging certain discourses over others. Other discourses that

were revealed throughout my study were those of inner-city and rural politics and practices, feminist and activist discourses, and leadership and the discourse of student wellness and student success on campus. Because of the instructors' senses of themselves and their ways of understanding how they relate to the world, the instructors used their subjectivities to talk more about certain types of masculinity over others, even involving their professional positionality. For example, one participant's position as a Director of Student Success provided a hidden assumption that the Director of that department knows what it means to be successful, so in honoring his authoritative position, his discourse of masculinity may be been deemed more viable or useful to college students as they wanted to be "successful" in college. This was counter to his subjectivity, because when interviewed, he was not as forward thinking or inclusive as others were.

Additionally, the discourses of inner-city and rural politics showed up in the discourses of the institutions in which some of the instructors were working. Havoc mentioned that working at Homestead University, he was involved in teaching students from all over the Great Plains state who either came from the large urban city where the school was located or from the rural areas surrounding the city. Through Havoc's subjectivity, he compared himself to his students. Being from the rural part of the state, Havoc felt he knew what the rural students needed to know in terms of masculinity discourse. He assumed that inner-city youth were more knowledgeable about or aware of how masculinity operates as a discourse. Of course, this is a false comparison because of the fragility of the labels "rural" and "inner-city." For Havoc, "rural" held hidden meanings of "unaware," and "inner-city" meaning "street smart," a binary opposition based on his own personal history. By negotiating between his own masculine experience growing up in the same state in which he was teaching, thinking that rural students were unaware, and this

institution having a high population of rural students, he felt like he could connect with the students better and understand their experiences as well. Furthermore, as an instructor imparting knowledge gained through his education in graduate school, Havoc privileged his new knowledge of masculinity discourse and demonstrated to his students how to be open to all forms of masculinities. Havoc privileged inner-city discourse as more knowledgeable and aware than rural discourse. Students who identify as rural may be negatively affected due to the cracks in the language used within this discourse. The cracks in language attribute a geographical location to knowledge and awareness of masculine discourse. Rural and Inner-City are categories that need to be challenged; what is "rural" is not monolithic but complex. Negative effects that may come from this are those who inhabit the rural student subjectivity are positioned in masculinity discourse as foolish, less intelligent. Also, if a rural student is actually very aware of masculinity and is treated as if he is not, the student may attribute further distance and less recognition of the instructor's authority of knowledge.

Two instructors who participated in my study, Havoc and Montag, worked at research-one institutions, and, therefore, the discourse of academia and higher education shaped their responses to my interview questions. I recognized the academia discourse informing their instruction when they discussed how personal attainment could be gained by teaching, turning Brannon and Juni's "Big Wheel" (1985). At the time they taught their men and masculinities classes, Havoc and Montag were pursuing a master's degree and doctoral degree, respectively. Matriculating for further education while teaching caused negotiation of their masculinity when they were vulnerable with me and admitted they were nervous to teach but did not want to show weakness. This is associated with masculinity because, at times, the instructors privileged the discourse of the all-knowing, the "sage-on-stage" teacher in order to rise to the top of their

academic hierarchies. Their personal histories of their being current students shows masculinity playing out in this way: the leader who is strong and never-wavering when it comes to pressure, even though they admitted that they were unsettled.

TJ's personal history with the military exposed negotiations with his masculinity the most overtly within my research. Being a part of the military discourse that had informed his subjectivity, TJ strove to provide structure and tangible outcomes regarding order and leadership for his class. This intermingled with the discourse of student success because TJ was the acting Director of Student Success at the time. This all informs what masculinity means to TJ and privileges the military discourse in the creation of his course as well as how it was taught. Even though each discourse relies on order, rules, and leadership, these discourses are at odds with each other. In the military discourse, order, policy and rules happen in a top down manner, while student success is happening as mutually beneficial, i.e. if a student is successful, the institution is successful as well. Additionally, in student success, if help is needed, there are specific programs and resources that guide students to be more successful in class and on campus. This is shown through student success' demonstration of care, meaning tutoring, granting of resources and looking at the student holistically. When I asked TJ about his definition of gender and its relation to masculinity, he provided answers related to job attainment and being able to find a position after graduation. The meaning of TJ's masculinity is something slightly different from the standard definition yet is still a practice found within masculinity discourse.

This is an example of how meaning is fragile: TJ's meaning of masculinity is partial and conflicts with the purpose of the men and masculinities course by complying with traditional, hegemonic masculinity and being judged on one's status as a provider, rather than how they treat others.

Feminist and activist discourses were also privileged in certain classrooms. These discourses showed up in how the class was taught, both philosophically and practically. Philosophically, I saw the discourse of feminism operating within the classrooms through instructors' language use and through the topics, such as male privilege and power in society, laid out in their syllabi. Practically, the discourse of a feminist classroom environment worked through the instructors' privileged feminist pedagogical practices in the course as well, examples including furniture placement in a circle to encourage dialogue, centering power and privilege, and the instructor sharing their experiences of masculinity alongside and in relation to the students.

Finally, leadership discourse worked its way through the instructors' teaching by serving as almost a north star for four of the participants. While not direct in their commentary, the four instructors focused on teaching leadership skills that could benefit the students in their courses and beyond. Through these leadership lessons, the instructors worked to show what being a "leader" was while also being gender-aware. These enabled privileged meanings of masculinity because it was included in a class that housed many genders and was taught from a feminist point of view. It was not male leadership skills, but college student leadership skills. Because of the awareness of traditional, hegemonic masculinity's discourse of saying the men should lead because of their inherent "masculine leadership qualities." Using language purposefully in this way demonstrates how this discourse disrupts hegemonic masculinity and is privileged in this classroom. Talking about the grand narrative of leadership also brought awareness to what masculinity produces: the production of men as leaders, showing how it is deeply embedded with images of men in the front managing the situations that arise, happens both overtly through

specific gendered practices and covertly through veiled behaviors and every day micro-decisions. This focus in pedagogy leads into my next section, job positions and discourse of student affairs.

Job Positions and Discourses of Student Affairs

Other personal and professional histories shaped the subjectivities of the participants. Each either held positions within student affairs departments or had held roles in student affairs prior to their positions, and they used that experience to inform their teaching styles. Two held director positions in departments at their institutions (Student Wellness and Student Success), one was an Assistant Director of Greek Life, and two were finishing a doctorate and master's degree with at least a year prior working in student affairs. Each participant was immersed in discourses of student affairs that helped to inform what they taught, whether indirectly or directly. For example, Professor Glass, in working with students in the Greek system at his institution, could not and did not shy away from leadership discourse because this discourse colored every interaction between instructor and student. The privileged meaning of masculinity that comes from the discourse circulating in Professor Glass' course was that in order to be a leader you needed to obtain the ability to guide your group through processes, have a vision for the future and a focus on the legacy of the fraternity, and make sure that the fraternity "worked well with other groups." Added to this was understanding the power and privilege of what it means to be a fraternity member on campus. Professor Glass was constantly negotiating between his roles of Assistant Director of Greek Life and the instructor of a men and masculinities course. On one side, his subjectivity he complied with traditional hegemonic masculinity and tried to get to know the fraternity men he supervised, but he also navigated having an instructor/student relationship with them during class time. Discourses of masculinity and student affairs circulated: in the time that he was their instructor, he was working against stereotypes and

pushing for equity among men and other genders. However, when it was time to be in the role of supervisor, he would cajole and be more lackadaisical in addressing problematic behavior. Professor Glass knew this was problematic, but his student affairs role paid his salary; effective evaluations allowed him to keep his job, classroom evaluations did not. Therefore, he shifted his subjectivities in order to keep his position.

JJ and TJ both held director positions in their respective departments. The discourses of student success and student wellness privilege meanings of masculinity that say in order to be read as masculine, a male student needs to get good grades, obtain a job or profession after graduation, and be aware of and know how to use college resources. JJ privileged discourses of wellness less in his course, but his association with the discourse of student wellness maintained that in order to be "well" as a masculine person, men had to be emotionally connected to themselves and others, understand relationships, and be able to work through conflict. Both instructors holding director positions fostered the discursive belief that the instructor knew everything or was at least highly knowledgeable on the topic. Because their students were aware of JJ and TJ's director titles, the students assumed that if they listened to the instructors, they would know what it meant to be successful or "well" students. In masculine discourse, authority of language and practices is important as well as role modeling. When a student hears the Director of Student Success teach that the most important thing about gender is getting a job or professional position upon graduation (as I noted in his interview transcript), suddenly the discourse of masculinity loses its meaning and is further deferred but is still privileged in his classroom.

Privileged Feminist Discourse

In analyzing the interview transcripts, I noticed feminist concepts and ideas circulating throughout the classes, but most of the participants did not have the language to state that this specific discourse was functioning in practice, even though it was visible in the actions, topics, and construction of the course. Significantly, some participants admittedly chose not to use the word "feminist." This was, perhaps, in order to not scare potential students away from the course. Sadly, masculine discourse encourages anti-femininity, and feminism still has a trace to women and women's liberation, even though it has expanded far beyond this early sentiment. This also shows partial knowledge of the concept by some instructors, thus confirming sexist association with the word. As I concluded from one participant, he made it seem that the word and concept of a "feminist" is often misunderstood and laden with stereotypes deemed negative by patriarchal participation.

However, when the word "feminist" was used in the course, it was privileged above all else in order to make sure that gender equality and equity were large portions of the curriculum and a motivating factor of the instructor. For example, during his interview, Havoc repeatedly reminded me how his classroom affected power and privilege through gender. This overt through line in his course and his instruction privileged the feminist discourse. He mentioned that he wanted to be direct because he "didn't want to sugarcoat it because people were dying," thus showing not only his passion for the work but the privileging of this discourse throughout his class.

When feminist discourse was not initially a large part of the interview, it was always elided or never mentioned at all. I understood this as either the instructor did not have as much familiarity with the topic or was disappointingly unaware of how feminism and the history of

women's studies helped to form the men and masculinities classroom. Placing this concept in the background privileges other discourses that do not focus on how gender and power relations produce practices of compulsory hegemonic masculine behavior.

Summary and Conclusion

My first research question addressed the discourses and personal histories that produce privileged meanings in the men and masculinities classroom. The discourses that circulated in the instructors' classrooms were feminism, student success, student wellness, military, and inner city vs. rural. The privileged meanings of masculinities can be summed up as classes that address power and privilege in regards to gender, feminism and feminist pedagogical practices are the guiding discourses to understand masculinity and how it operates. Another privileged discourse was that of geographical upbringing. Being from the inner-city is related to being smarter or more socially aware than people raised in rural America. While this is not always true, it did emerge in the research. The next discourses that arose were those of student success and student wellness. Because these courses were housed under the disciplines of Student Success and Student Wellness, the privileged meaning of masculinity in these courses were that students must be successful by getting the best grades, must know and utilize all campus resources, and must strive only for the best. A final discourse that emerged was the discourse of the military. During my interview with TJ, I saw how he negotiated how much he was willing to share about his experience and how he worked against the military discourse in his teaching. TJ provided a positive perspective of his experiences that highlighted a subjectivity that was always moving and in context.

Analyzing the privileged meanings of masculinities in higher education matters because it shows that teaching in the men and masculinities classroom is motivated and informed by the discourses that are brought to the space. These could be the discourses circulating throughout in the men and masculinities classroom or the discourses brought forth by the instructors' personal histories. The way discourse produces knowledge about masculinity has implications far beyond just the classroom. Investigating the instructors' personal histories and privileged meanings help show how masculinity is constructed and what it produces. When an educational leader understands how masculinity is constructed, they can begin to see how to disrupt it by pushing against its grand narratives and troubling long-held definitions. Through confrontation with traditional narratives and definitions, the educational leader can look to see where masculinities' boundaries have been set up in regard to gender, sexism, patriarchal practices, misogynistic traits, or chauvinistic behaviors and eventually work to remove them or re-create practices to provide more inclusive ways of being. The men and masculinities classroom can be used as a vehicle to challenge those new constructions in order to keep "thinking and writing alive" (Caputo, 1997, pp. 61-62).

One of the purposes of my study is to expose the fragility of meaning in the men and masculinities classroom. When certain discourses are privileged, they shape and confine the language and practices associated with that discourse, thereby assigning value to the privileged discourse and devaluing others. However, when privileged discourses are challenged, the fragility of language becomes apparent. For example, if instructors are privileging job attainment, being a provider for the family unit, or remaining emotionless, they are communicating that there are only specific ways to be a man in America. If these prescriptions for masculinity go unchallenged, over time the discourse will stay structurally bound and

constrained and will not make space for new ideas to emerge. Yet when challenged, masculinity gets seen in new ways by asking the question "masculinity for whom, by whom?" In making these inquiries, masculinity's meaning slips and is further deferred down the chain of signification.

Research Question 2: How do the practices of instructors who teach a men and masculinities course disrupt and comply with traditional, hegemonic masculinity?

My second research question was the question that changed the most throughout my research. Originally, the question read "disrupt *or* comply," but through the interviews I realized that in itself was a binary, and participants' responses to discourse were not as clearly divided as I initially thought. I then adjusted the questions to read, "disrupt *and* comply" to recognize this complexity and fluidity.

Instructors' Compliance with Traditional, Hegemonic Masculinity

Throughout my research, I found that the instructors had to both comply and disrupt traditional, hegemonic masculinity in order to negotiate their own masculinity during their courses. I recognized that the instructors complied with traditional masculinity in three specific ways: building rapport with students, asserting and validating their authority in the classroom, and using problematic language. These practices were in compliance with traditional, hegemonic masculinity because they coincided with and reaffirmed masculinity's grand narratives and played into its associated myths. These myths were that boys will be boys, only men can teach men and masculinities courses, and that there is a need for compliance with traditional teaching methods in order to teach objectively. First, building rapport with students produces the "boys will be boys" myth because the behaviors that traditional, hegemonic masculinity produces allow these behaviors to be brushed off and remain unaddressed. The behaviors seen as always being

there are assumed to have happened or will happen. They may also become an expectation and, in some cases, even a point of pride for men, i.e., getting into their first fight and having an interest in hunting and guns or an obsession with video games. Second, validating the instructor's authority in the classroom constructs the myth "only men can teach masculinity." This myth is associated with traditional, hegemonic masculinity because traditional, hegemonic masculinity assumes that only men understand the masculine experience in America, which is untrue and confining. Lastly, compliance with traditional teaching methods of having a teacher teach objectively, share no personal stories, and follow the curriculum as if it were formulaic and rote is another myth. This myth applies to the all-knowing, must be the most knowledgeable in the room, practice of masculinity.

Most of the instructors worked to gain credibility and build rapport in the beginning of their courses by enacting a subject position as one of the "guys who gets it" and who is "in the know." Traditional, hegemonic masculine practices circulated in the men and masculinities space in order to build these relationships. Practices like laughing at the class clown, making comments about partners that only referenced heteronormative couplings, and connecting with the students over male stereotypes like racing cars, barbequing, and watching action movies were all ways the instructors revealed their compliance with traditional, hegemonic masculinity. Two participants mentioned that the reason they needed to build relationships with their students was so that the students would *want* to hear the possibly dissonant information that was to come. By dissonant information I mean that in general, at the predominately white institutions that make up the settings for my research, the students in their classroom privileging white, male, and heterosexual, may not have heard the discourses of masculinity that counter traditional,

hegemonic masculinity. Some of the instructors thought the students needed to believe first that the instructor understood them before they would be introduced to the counter discourse of how masculinity is flawed, sometimes hurtful to all, and problematic when deconstructed in the course. Some participants said that this compliance was a needed step in order for the students to accept the challenging information and dissonance that was to come.

Two of the participants used more of a sage-on-stage model of gender instruction and validated having the instructor be "all-knowing," a common trait of masculinity (Brannon & Juni, 1985; Irvine, 1990). Fostering this perspective and cultivating this discourse in the classroom bends toward compliance with the hegemonic masculinities trait of being what Brannon and Juni call "the Big Wheel." Also, a few participants chose to not share as many personal stories in order to maintain authority in the space and worked to show no emotion as they taught. Their stoicism and refusal of vulnerability embodies the idea of the "Sturdy Oak" of Brannon and Juni's *Man Box* as well (1985). With this refusal comes the absence of being able to make a mistake or do something wrong, as this reveals weakness. Therefore, the instructors continued on the traditional, hegemonic masculinity path, providing an example of compliance that instructors do, privileging traditional, hegemonic masculinity and staying within the *Man Box*. This practice further sustains the compulsory behavior that the class is working against.

Throughout the interview process, I found it disheartening to hear instructors speak so progressively about gender and hear and feel their excitement of teaching this work to students while they also used language that was worrisome. One participant provided an overview of his course showing many aspects leaning toward teaching from a feminist lens. However, when we spoke of the ultimate goals of the course, he mentioned that he was not trying to "turn his students into feminists or anything." This was accompanied with a tone that invited me to laugh

along and cosign with his disdain for feminism, which I did not. His compliance with traditional masculinity gave me pause and demonstrated his negotiation of his masculinity: he taught a course that espoused feminist values but felt the need to rebuke that word and concept in order to maintain a traditionally masculine presence in the interview. This gave me pause and worry about what discourses or themes were elided in his course. Moreover, I was worried about who was being hurt or harmed because of it, especially because he worked with the discourse of college leadership in the Greek system on campus and had access to campus leaders who were very integrated into the collegiate social scene and highly influential. It worried me that this effect of language and division was far reaching and fostered an ever-present campus sentiment that feminists were bad. This also showed the word "feminist" had nuance and in him reacting this way pushed learning about this into omission. Here I am also reminded of bell hooks' (2000) definition of feminism, which states that a feminist is someone who is part of the movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression. Again, I found it disheartening to interact with someone who is working actively against patriarchal structures in the work that he does, yet who also, in one phrase, revealed that he is working against feminism's possibilities. As I mentioned before, our language constitutes our subjectivity, and if we are creating instructors, students, and institutions that shy away from using words like feminism or in other words working toward the end of sexism and patriarchy, we are doing a huge disservice and causing harm. This is in compliance with hegemonic masculinity because it was done to still "check-in" that we both thought that being a feminist was too radical, or ridiculous to ask of college men. In terms of the interview, he was both working against traditional, hegemonic masculinity and reifying the practices at the same time. This reification provided an unstable example by adopting one way of viewing masculinity in class and another in the interview.

Lastly, and most disappointingly, throughout my research I found that some of the instructors had partial knowledge about the course that they were teaching and did not commit to teaching from a feminist lens with feminist pedagogy. What is disheartening is that two of the participants were enacting a subject position of teaching a course simply because it was connected to their position on the student affairs side of the institution. At times, the discourse of student affairs was privileged over that of academia and its scholarly goals and expectations. The desire to teach students to be gender aware, reduced only to learn a few leadership lessons. This desire to teach students to be gender aware is vital because if instructors do not challenge masculinity, then they are fulfilling traditional, hegemonic masculinity's grand narrative. By not questioning the current masculine practices and not critiquing what is produced because of masculinity discourse, instructors are complying instead of disrupting.

Overall, compliance with traditional, hegemonic masculinity matters because it further perpetuates the patriarchal system that the men and masculinities classroom is working against. With a goal of equality and equity for all genders as well as examining how masculinity and its productions operate through discourse. Instructor's compliance in the traditional narratives signals they are confining behavior, limiting definitions, and essentializing masculine traits instead of opening them up.

Instructors' Disruption of Traditional Hegemonic Masculinity

The disruption of traditional, hegemonic masculinity is one of the largest practices by the participants. In the interviews, there were individual disruptions from the participants that they directly explained, even though "disruption" was not a word that they necessarily used. Compellingly, it was when the participant *actively* chose to disrupt traditional teaching practices that he formed the largest newness or "something new and a break" as Derrida (as cited in

Caputo, 1997, p. 6) said. Not only are these disruptions worthy of discussion, but they also inform most of my recommendations for future educational practices that will be discussed further on in this chapter. The ways that disruption happened were through the instructors inhabiting a teaching or academic role while holding a student affairs role on campus, differing genders choosing to teach simultaneously, and actively teaching with their subjectivities in mind.

Teaching as Part of Their Position, Not all of Their Position. One large disruption was inhabiting a teaching or academic role while holding a student affairs role on campus. When teaching or academic affairs is attached to a student affairs position, each pedagogical style privileges certain discourses as well as show a break from traditional, hegemonic masculinity. The privileged discourses are those within the college student development field that prioritize the holistic, knowledgeable, and learned students. The participants shared in their interviews that they had trouble balancing teaching with their roles in student affairs, which were always viewed as separate to the position and an additional role. They also added that this process of teaching in conjunction with a role in student affairs disrupts the traditional way of being a collegiate or university instructor. This is significant because the instructors mentioned that in their evaluations, the students experienced more active learning and more personal connection, thus seeing the instructor as more committed to caring for them as a whole person. This worked against the stoicism practice in regard to masculine discourse as mentioned before. The instructor is in the mix, interacting with and facilitating active learning through activities where students move about the room, participate in deeper dialogue, and have a sense that the instructor really cared about them. Furthermore, the instructors who saw the opportunity of teaching as a gateway of supporting their subjectivity

through the student affairs discourses available to them and pushing against the schools through the academic side of the institution felt that there was a real benefit to being able to teach. This allowed them to not have to be all knowing, troubling masculinity's discursive need to know everything and be Brannon and Juni's "Big Wheel" (1985).

Differing genders teaching masculinities simultaneously. Another disruption of traditional hegemonic masculinity that was shared in the interviews was enacted by the instructors who chose to team teach with differing genders. Traditional practice has mostly dictated that there is one teacher, and for a class that is about men and masculinities, that teacher must be a male teacher in order to "understand" the male experience, even in instances where the instructor who identifies as female is extremely knowledgeable about masculinity. It is important to recognize that the disruption of including a female teacher or a teacher of a marginalized gender in the course makes space for how the discourse of masculinity's productions affect students who do not identify as masculine. Involving this new subjectivity in the course begins to proliferate masculinity's meanings when the new teacher offers their perspectives and life experiences. In seeing the effects of traditional, hegemonic masculinity, it helps to see the causes clearer. If the causes are clearer they can become easier to disrupt. This provides an opening to look at masculinity from the different subject positions within the course on how the male experience is experienced by other genders in America. This also disrupts the all-knowing male, sage-on-stage instructor in the front of the class. With two instructors circulating in the class, it shows that someone who is not male-identified can teach the course.

Actively teaching with their own subjectivity in mind. Many of the participants understood their subjectivities and what bringing them into the classroom signified. For example, JJ said that understanding his positionality as well as how his race played a part in the classroom.

Identifying as African American/ Black diaspora, JJ knew that his sense of himself and his understanding of his relation to the world, disrupted traditional, hegemonic masculinity simply by being male. JJ as an example of a quiet, caring, empathetic, man who saw his students holistically and his students, most predominantly women in his class, is something that rebukes masculinity's fragile definitions. This practice makes space for opening up knowledge, experiencing a deeper understanding of multiple perspectives, and bringing forth discourses that may not have been traditionally privileged into the classroom space. Most participants talked about their subjectivities and how understanding them in turn informs how they see the world. For example, Havoc said that he deeply believes in critical research and critiquing society in order to make it better for people like him. He brings his whole self to his teaching, providing stories and anecdotes on how he relates to each topic. This is an invocation and invitation for students to do the same. Havoc's practice is a disruption of traditional masculinity, as openness is not always shown by instructors because hegemonic masculinity is always working against an offering of personal connections and vulnerability in teaching a men and masculinities course.

Summary and Conclusion

My second research question addresses how the practices of men and masculinities instructors disrupt and comply with traditional hegemonic masculinities. Instructors' practices of compliance were building rapport with students, asserting and validation of authority in the classroom, and using problematic language. By complying with hegemonic masculinity, the instructors maintained traditional hegemonic masculinity's grand narratives and fortified its boundaries. On the other hand, instructors disrupted traditional masculinity by inhabiting a student affairs position while teaching, teaming up with instructors of different genders, and

actively teaching with their subjectivities in mind. Overall, these disruptions demonstrate fluidity of the instructors negotiating their own masculinity. These disruptions also expose fragility of meaning in men and masculinities courses by challenging what it means to be in both student affairs and academia, choosing to trouble the signifier of instructors with two differing genders, and showing the disruption and complicity of traditional hegemonic masculinity by the instructors.

Significance and Relations to Previous Literature

I conducted this study to demonstrate how using a feminist poststructural framework and Derrida's ongoing process of deconstruction can interrogate how men who teach men and masculinities courses negotiated their own masculinity. In doing this deconstruction, I exposed the fragility of meaning in the men and masculinities classroom and the fluidity of the instructor's complicity with and disruption of traditional, hegemonic masculinity.

In the introduction of my study, I wrote that there is a need to examine traditional, hegemonic masculinity in America and demonstrate how it plays out in the men and masculinities classroom. I stated that the problem of teaching masculinities is that it can produce and reinforce compulsory behavior through language and instruction, depending on what discourses are privileged in the men and masculinities classroom. This is made additionally complex because instructors are simultaneously negotiating their own masculinity while instructing others on what masculinity means in America today. What is complex about the negotiation of subjectivity is that instructors are always shifting their understanding of their relation to the world, showing that everything is temporary. So when educating others on the meaning of masculinity, it can be seen that what they teach is short-lived and always changing. It

also demonstrates the constant negotiating that instructors need to do in order to navigate a course that is constructing what masculinity means while deconstructing it at the same time.

Much of masculinities work in the early days relied on positivist quantitative and qualitative measurements, defining behavior as masculine or feminine and creating a binary that still exists to this day, though it is now being challenged by different demarcations of gender. As I explained in Chapter 2, previous masculinity research used a primarily quantitative perspective, attempting to understand when men were meeting or not meeting the expectations of masculine behavior in relation to the scale of masculinity. My research disrupts this and provides a new way of seeing masculinity by analyzing masculine subjectivities as fluid and complex as they comply with and disrupt traditional hegemonic masculinity, specifically in higher education classrooms. My research is different because through the complicities and disruptions I reveal the cracks in language, authority, and long-held grand narratives. Some of the narratives instructors were complicit with were enacting the all-knowing sage on stage and the stoicism of showing no emotion while teaching, each an integral part of the masculinity discourse (Brannon & Juni, 1985; Irvine, 1990). However, subjectivity is complex. Disruptions abound in moments refuting masculinity's grand narratives and revealing multiple ways of working to open up what masculinity means for college men. Some examples of topics that, if included or extended beyond one or two class sessions in the course, would disrupt traditional, hegemonic masculinity include discussing men of color, men with sexual preferences other than heterosexual, trans*men, and men with differing abilities.

Also, I was not able to find research surrounding the experiences of men who teach men and masculinities courses and detailing what produced their subjectivities and how they experienced their own subjectivities in the contexts of the course. My research addresses not

necessarily a gap in a particular line of research, but additional subjectivities and hidden discourses that have been a part of previous research. Within masculinities research, there are more alternative truths that have not been centered. In demonstrating what discourses are at work in the men and masculinities classroom and addressing how they inform the pedagogical practices and motivations of which discourse was privileged, it helps to illuminate the experiences of men who teach men and masculinities courses as they negotiate their own masculinity in the course. In adding these perspectives, I am adding multiple truths that may have been previously hidden; and in including those multiple ways of experiencing masculinity, I have shown that masculinity is a constantly negotiated process that is never finalized and is always in tension. The consequences of this are that nothing is settled nor finished. This means that there is not an answer out there to find to solve its problems. Each problem needs to be addressed in the context of the moment as a practice of subjectivity. This is also a process that is constantly repeated over and over, never ending, which could be frustrating to individuals wanting strong definitions and hard and fast rules to live by.

Lastly, we need this research in order to address and trouble the way traditional, hegemonic masculinity and its embeddedness in societal structures have formed higher education and the men and masculinities classroom. The urgency of this work is unparalleled, as those who are teaching against hegemonic masculinity are sometimes perpetuating the closure of knowledge instead of opening up thought. The students in higher education classrooms are already a part of other communities, so if instructors are presenting a way of knowing that is beneficial to gender equity, then that is positive action and it matters for social change.

Also, this research is needed from a gendered point of view because male-identifying instructors sometimes create and further compulsory behavior simply because of the language

used (or not used) and the discourses not fully revealed within the course. This was demonstrated throughout my study by the use of the word feminist and the discourse of feminism. Only two participants actually used the word and chose to talk about the origins of the men and masculinities course. The other participants, by omitting this genealogy of scholarship, privileged the men and masculinities courses as its own entity and not a product of other practices, pedagogy, and scholarship. My dissertation is also needed to be from a gendered point of view because sexism, misogyny, and chauvinism do, in fact, harm all genders. In making the discourse of gender and its productions apparent in the classroom, and by using deconstruction in the classroom to provide "something new and a break" (Caputo, 1997, pp. 61-62) it demonstrates how instructors perpetuate or disrupt these effects allowing for disruption and how they can contribute to the problems of sexism, misogyny, and chauvinism or work against them and, perhaps, society at large. Also, a male talking candidly about gender, about how other men are both complicit with and disruptive of hegemonic masculinity and about masculinity's implications, is in itself a disruption. This is a disruption because it goes against the original research of "what a man does." This is crucial because male genders tend to be so privileged that they are invisible, and knowing and discussing gender destabilizes and begins to dismantle traditional, hegemonic masculinity.

Doing research on the fragility of meaning is critical because deconstructing a concept's meaning, showing where it fails or breaks apart, reveals where it can grow and change. The recognition of this frailty provides an opening for deconstruction to challenge large grand narratives and trouble long-held definitions so that new ways of looking at a concept can happen. This is imperative to my research because in demonstrating the frailty of masculinity, a concept that routinely walls-in and creates boundaries that are not allowed to be crossed, we can push

against those walls and surpass those boundaries in order to provide a space that is inclusive and welcoming to all who want to be a part of it. Specifically, regarding the instructors, my research shows what fragility of language produces as it is taught in a higher education course. Discussing what happens when instructors expose the weak meanings in the men and masculinities classroom, or when I expose those meanings, the research has made space for me to challenge masculinity's meanings and trouble masculinity's productions. This matters because through exposing the weak language, we can see where masculinity can grow and change in order to be more inclusive.

Also significant to my research is the complexity of subjectivity. Doing research that highlights this complexity demonstrates that subjectivities need to be taken into account when recognizing the experiences of research participants. Particularly for my research, recognizing the experiences of men and masculinities instructors, their conscious and unconscious thoughts, and how the instructors see themselves in relation to the world affects how the class is taught and what is included in the course. Their subjectivity also provides the contours for what they choose to reveal in the interviews about their teaching. My research is important because it demonstrates how subjectivity shapes teaching and which discourses become privileged in a course. If subjectivity is contextually located, partial, and always changing, then teaching a course such as men and masculinities may not be as straightforward in terms of curriculum and strategies, which I discuss next.

Curricular Considerations

Another area that needs to be part of the research discussion is the curriculum of the men and masculinities classroom. The topics usually included in the men and masculinities

curriculum are the social construction of masculinity, masculinity and its connection to culture, men and violence, men and sexuality, men in groups/friendship, and men in college. Taking into consideration discourse and subjectivity in association with the men and masculinities curriculum will have a large impact on what is taught in the classroom and how. First, each topic is its own discourse *and* part of a larger masculinities discourse. Framing the curriculum as the discourse of masculinity, could provide a way for instructors to show how masculinity goes beyond just the classroom. Additionally, this could provide an opportunity to show how masculinity is tangibly seen and enacted through actual practices, conversations, rules, and regulations in society, not just contextually located in the classroom. Then, if there is compliance with traditional, hegemonic masculinity within the course, the curriculum would not hold up and the basis for the class would not be fulfilled. Instructors teaching about men and violence, if complying with traditional, hegemonic masculinity, would be espousing that it is okay for a man to display anger and frustration any time he does not get his way. Furthermore, the common topic of men as the sexual aggressor in only heterosexual couplings would be maintained, not leaving space for differing sexualities or different types of relationships that men can be a part of in society. This aggression would also be seen as commonplace and may reinforce common discourses, countering the active bystander discourse on college campuses instead of working against them. For example, phrases of this counter discourse are "only women are sexually assaulted," or "it was the woman's fault for wearing what she was wearing" and "she shouldn't have been walking alone at night." On the other hand, if these topics were taught in order for disruption to happen, the discourse of masculinity would have a real chance of changing to be more positive and act in ways that are more social justice oriented. Relating to social

construction, it presents a way of showing masculinity is constructed so that during the course it can be deconstructed.

Limitations

This study was formed around pushing boundaries, interrogating definitions, and challenging transcendental Truths. The *thinking with theor*y analysis performed was constructed and centered around men who teach men and masculinities courses. I centered male-identified participants in order to examine how their privileged classroom and personal histories and discourses shape their interactions with students and instruction in their classrooms while they were negotiating their own masculinity throughout the teaching of their course. Rather than a limitation, this research makes space for the experiences of men who teach men and masculinities courses to be included in the research. Given this particular focus in my dissertation, I look at what was out of my control, and I acknowledge that I was at times oblivious to all of the hidden discourses happening in the interviews. This acknowledgement was due to not having the institutional, departmental, and geographically connected contexts of the participants' institutions and was unaware of what they were working within and against at those institutions. Also, I did not have exposure to certain discourses, such as student success, pan-African studies, and student wellness, so they remained somewhat unrecognizable in the space. Lastly, many discourses were occurring simultaneously, and my awareness at the time of the interview or during the analysis may have not recognized all of them. Michel Foucault (1977, 1980) warned that there are always hidden discourses or discourses that may be difficult to uncover. Knowing that there are always hidden discourses, control over them is an illusion and needs to be recognized.

Lastly, throughout this dissertation and the interviews I conducted, many discursive threads remain unaddressed, have gone unanswered, or have not been fully explored. Time and institutional deadlines have dictated the constraints allowing the research to be locally-operated and partial in its completion. This echoes in my theoretical framework and provides opportunity for others to pick up where my work left off and interrogate this collection of data further.

Another limitation that I want to recognize is that in purposely recruiting participants who teach men and masculinities courses, I specifically selected those who did not identify as faculty. As a person who is not faculty, I wanted to identify with and understand the external pressures that my participants were going through in their daily work. This helped me understand their day-to-day interactions with students, the general expectations of their departments and their supervisors, their approximate collegiate cultures, and their current goals of working with students. Additionally, a limitation of my research is that these participants had partial knowledge about the subject matter, meaning that they did not specifically study masculinities in any of their coursework but were familiar with it as their lived experience. Montag was the only participant who identified as having a scholar-teacher identity and had a background in masculinities scholarship. The rest of the participants' limitations were that they either were hired for a position in student affairs, where part of their role dictated that they taught a course, or being a TA was a requirement of the degree they were pursuing, and their knowledge base of the course content was limited. In general, being a scholar of the curricular content was not necessarily a priority when participants other than Montag described themselves in the interview. This matters as this is a difference between staff and faculty. These interactions demonstrate how power is navigated through which conversations are had when, with whom, and for what benefit. I also chose only participants who worked at public four-year institutions because these are the

settings I had spent 14 years working within. My intimacy with similar institutions is a strength because I am uniquely set up to recognize and, thus, critique many discourses that circulate within this type of institution, discourses such as student affairs, leadership, education for public good, and grant-framed institutions.

Having said that, my familiarity with public institutions is also limiting because this is but one type of institution and men and masculinities courses are happening in many types of institutions. Because of the focus being on four-year, public higher education institutions, I am limited on knowing what may happen when a school is private, for-profit, religiously-based, or framed with the purpose of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Hispanic-serving institutions (HSIs), or tribal colleges and universities. This is important to note as each of these locations provide contexts and collegiate missions that create their own discourses and subjectivities that need to be studied as well.

Implications for Higher Education

My study offers a number of implications for the instructors of men and masculinities courses as well as for the men and masculinities classroom. In order to work toward a result that benefits the instructors and the teaching of masculinity, my study reveals the complexity of subjectivity, the fragility of meaning in the men and masculinities classroom, and the challenging of language. Also revealed are what discourses are being privileged in the classroom while the instructors are negotiating their own masculinity as well as where they are complicit with and disruptive of traditional, hegemonic masculinity. Some instructors are unaware of how their teaching affects the course and students within it, or why discourses they privilege in the classroom matter. Others are working hard to trouble discourses by challenging language and long-held grand narratives of masculinities. Similarly, some deconstruct and trouble traditional, hegemonic masculinity in their courses, revealing hidden discourses, covert power structures,

and overt sexist, misogynistic, chauvinistic behavior, while other instructors are complying with and perpetuating traditional, hegemonic masculinity. Ultimately, the goal of my study, and in particular this chapter, is to elucidate the implications of the study and give recommendations for future research. My hope is to contribute ideas and lend compelling knowledge in order to begin thinking with this awareness in order to "think differently" and motivate instructors to continue to think about how and what they teach and how to further disrupt traditional, hegemonic masculinity. Here I provide implications for practice on the following topics: the complexity of subjectivities, the fragility of meaning in the men and masculinities classroom, and the challenging of language.

The Complexity of Subjectivity

As I have demonstrated throughout my dissertation, the subjectivities of instructors of men and masculinities courses are complex. As a reminder, subjectivity is "the conscious and unconscious emotions of the individual, [his] sense of the world and [his] ways of understanding [his] relations to the world" (Weedon, 1997, p. 32). Instructors need to be aware of how their subjectivities influence the discourses that are working in the classroom. A complication of subjectivity is that it is always changing, inconsistent, and always in process. Through recognizing the complexity of subjectivities, I realize that my subjectivities change each time I think and speak. Each time an instructor teaches a course, engages with a student, or constructs an assignment, their subjectivities shift. Each adjustment can be wide-ranging or very intricate with both minute and large ramifications. This constant shifting allows the instructor to view/examine/understand teaching and curriculum from many sides, yet these many sides maybe in conflict with the class's purpose. This also allows for the instructor to not be stagnant, looking at each topic in context to the moment.

The Fragility of Meaning in the Men and Masculinities Classroom

Another implication of my research is that meaning in the men and masculinities classroom is fragile. Weedon (1987) wrote that meaning is partial, contradictory, and conflicts with interests depending on what discursive location I inhabit at that moment. The men and masculinities class is a precarious place because it tries to present meaning through education and provide definitions of what is and what is not masculinity. Most of the instructors who participated in my study worked to show that the meaning of masculinities was partial and not inclusive of all, but, as Derrida (2016) and St. Pierre (2000) reaffirm, meaning cannot be pinned down. I mention this example because men and masculinities classes can serve as microcosms of the courses housed within the higher education system. Taking a thoughtful moment and looking at the curriculum that exists within the higher education system shows that every class and its meaning is fragile. If other courses are frail and meaning in higher education is fragile, why even bother with curriculum? To this, I argue we have to recognize that even though information is partial and we can never really know something, this gives a common place to start from, allowing for a framework of discussion to construct and deconstruct ideas so we can have an exploration of new ideas that, in turn, need to be interrogated.

The Challenging of Language Matters

The last and most important focus of my research is that challenging language matters. we need to challenge the structural language that makes up the higher education experience. We need to challenge the concepts that we have a collective understanding of so we can begin to think of them differently. First, we need to challenge the concept of instructor. As I previously

mentioned, if we challenge what an instructor is, we refute its stereotypical version and create new examples. We will get to see those whom identify as women, transgender, gender non-conforming, and others use their subjectivity to see masculinity in a new way and present that to the class. It is beneficial if we open this up for the classes on masculinity, we can do this for disciplines as well. More language that needs to be challenged is the term college student. Much research has been done using "college students," but really it is centering on college-aged white men. But what if that student is a different gender, race, or ethnicity? If we push against the label "college student" and think about the individual subjectivities of college students, we can begin to see the college student and the college experience in a new way. Another word that we need to trouble is leadership. I ask, what is a leader? A leader for whom? Who determines what a leader is? And what does that choice produce? In challenging these definitions and overarching narratives, we could include new subjective locations, such as new instructors, new versions of college students, and new types of leaders, in higher education and new ways to lead, only if we open up these concepts instead of limiting them to their old definitions. Overall, this troubling of language demonstrates that language use is important and pushes against the covert nature of masculinity. In naming it and showing how language works in the course, the covert becomes overt, and the ability to recognize how language works in other areas of the classroom or higher education allows for expanding learning.

Recommendations for Educators and Educational Leaders

Although a single study cannot solve the precarious and sometimes problematic ways in which masculinities can be taught in higher education, several perspectives could provide new ways of seeing what is operating in the class and different pedagogical practices that could benefit the instructors as well as the students. In fact, at the end of this research, a question I

know I will receive is, “What should an instructor of men and masculinities courses do to ensure they fulfill the purpose of the course, however it has been defined?” and “How might I, as an educational leader, support instructors who are doing this work?” In poststructural fashion, I would say, “There is not one way. Think in multiple. And challenge each conclusion.” In other words, I would endeavor to do the following: First, challenge the definitions and predefined boxes we are put in due to the gender that we express or identify as. In challenging the definitions, we open up the possibilities for new, more inclusive experiences for all human beings. Second, structurally demand a curriculum of a men and masculinities class or gender studies early on in education in order to question the said structures that placed this class here in the first place. Is higher education the first place to begin this conversation? Emphatically, no. It needs to happen much earlier, as the construction of gender happens even before we are born. But, if this course was missing in prior education, look for ways to add this class as its own curriculum or impart this discourse throughout other courses. Third, teach gender with feminist content and feminist teaching practices. Feminism’s connection to centering gender and its productions, providing an ethic of care in research and in the classroom and bringing hidden discourses to the forefront allows for new and more fully developed conversations to happen. Feminism’s mission to address power relations can only provide new, more inclusive ways of being. Fourth, recognize that subjectivity is active, productive, and always changing. The idea that our conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions are always adjusting and always trying to understand reminds us that nothing is solidified, nothing is immovable, and this in itself provides hope for social change. Fifth, challenge and interrogate the differentiations between the student affairs and the academic affairs binary. There is value in instructors teaching these

courses, as was demonstrated through their interviews and the crystallizations that formed. The blurring of student affairs and academic affairs may bring about new and interconnected ideas that could push against strongly held grand narratives of what an instructor is, what a class should be, and how students should look and act. Sixth, instructors should practice self-reflection and continuously deconstruct what is happening in the course, asking themselves "Why is that? What does that create/produce? How does that work when others identify as other than men?" These questions reveal, dive deep, and provide a discussion that can illuminate, trouble, and challenge many discourses. Next, instructors should examine their language. The language we use creates us. The university that is poststructural creates subjectivities and binaries that in turn it challenges, all depending on which courses you take. It assigns definitions then provides ways of problem solving, methods of inquiry, and interrogation of those truth claims. Reflect these skills to your class. Remind students at the end of the course that all learning is partial, and they will never know anything fully. Challenge anything that is fully formed. Remind them that they are in the institutional system and the systems they will operate in are defined by similar laws/boundaries/definitions and subjectivities. From there, we encourage interruption and interrogation, challenging not only the men and masculinities course, but the entire university system and then we, in the end, promote social change and champion new knowledge, new inquiry, in order to ultimately think differently.

As a leader, I would encourage instructors to critique structuralist approaches when it comes to gender. Masculinity is socially constructed, but that does not mean the student is only left with finite, immutable definitions. As an educational leader, I would encourage instructors to push to problematize the structures that create their subjectivities and create the space they occupy as well as the content they are assigned to teach. Lastly, when I would push other

educational leaders to interrogate a concept or a discourse to a point where it may feel that there is nowhere else to go. From there, push yourself to try one more time, fall further into *différance* and defer meaning. This may reveal more hidden discourses and subjectivities affected and bring them to the surface. Overall, deconstruction has shown that teaching masculinities in the higher education environment can be precarious, unsettling, and fragile. However, in challenging meanings and providing multiple truths through multiple discourses, new ways of knowing can be gleaned. This can continue as long as the new productions are continually going through the process of deconstruction in order to find even newer meanings, newer thoughts that have not been explored. Instructors should teach this not to scare students but to prepare them for the world they will be entering after undergraduate coursework.

Higher education leaders need to know about this as well. We need to think about our different trainings, our workshops, and our facilitated conversations. We need to look at the concepts and content we train our professional and student staff on. Are we interrogating why this is a topic that we need? Is this topic creating further definition, walling off our colleagues, or are we using language that opens up our groups and communities and inviting them in to have powerful conversations? If we are not doing this, we soon should so that we are not relegating this discourse or our colleagues' subjectivities to the background.

In general, we also need to look at our interactions with students who come to us for help or guidance. We need to deconstruct our conversations and think through these questions: “What am I bringing to the forefront of the conversation? What am I not bringing up in the conversation and why am I doing this? Am I merely reinforcing the definitions and assumptions that I think this student experiences without asking about their subjectivities?” Ultimately, leading colleagues and other departmental leaders into this type of consciousness would make space for

us to have deeper, more thoughtful conversations that could be disruptive to the day-to-day processes and structures that we endure every day, opening up conversation and connection in order to see where we can make social change.

Suggestions for Additional Research

Particular to this dissertation, a future area of research which may add to the discourse surrounding men and masculinities could center around interviewing academic affairs instructors and seeing their perspectives on instructing a men and masculinities course. A difference that may be revealed from additional research would be examining how having a more formal background in pedagogy, curriculum, and classroom teaching techniques influence what discourses are circulating in the space. Additionally, research about instructors working within a student affairs context and how knowledge of student affairs has informed their teaching would show which leadership or facilitation techniques invite more discussion about scholarly topics. This is important because at moments throughout listening to the participants describe their experiences, I associated lessons learned from my time spent in students affairs with what they were telling me, not necessarily from academic affairs. Also, because student affairs and academic affairs sometimes have different approaches to student learning, such as pedagogical practices and facilitation techniques, they are each working toward reaching the same goals of belongingness and knowledge attainment. By opening up the knowledge around this, I think that the binary between academic affairs and student affairs can further be blurred or removed altogether. Similarly, through my comparative research, I believe that each part of higher education can learn ways of knowledge attainment, student interaction, and pedagogical practices that could benefit the other. Other research projects could attempt to deconstruct the large discourses mentioned by the instructors during the interviews, namely “leadership,”

"wellness," and "success," to determine specifically how these discourses operate within the higher education setting.

Learning about masculinities with colleagues

Another suggestion for future research could be implementing men and masculinities courses for faculty and staff. TJ, the participant instructing at Barstow College, provided an answer to a question that I would like to highlight here in order to continue the process of deconstruction and the disruption of traditional practices. TJ reflects, "I would really like to take the class I am teaching with colleagues of mine and see how they would react." In that simple remark, there are levels of deconstruction that are happening in order to provide explanation and possible new insights that may not have been seen without breaking apart his language use. His words demonstrate an uneasiness he has about addressing the ways in which his colleagues are performing their masculinity in their everyday interactions with him and, possibly, with students. In this deconstructive moment, TJ's response resonates with me, the researcher, as there have been many times I have felt the instructor/student binary in full force when discussing more progressive topics like masculinities. In a leadership capacity, I, too, could lead a course like the one TJ wants for his colleagues in order to reconstitute and disrupt the strongly upheld hegemonic structures of higher education. If invited to teach such a course and if colleagues took advantage of said course, destabilization of hierarchical higher educational systems could occur. Individual learning about masculinities could disrupt their instructors in all disciplines and all academic departments. It is through thinking with the theory of deconstruction that we know there needs to be "a reading / doing / thinking that requires the continuous opening and exploration of the spaces, passions, and the meanings not yet understood" (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012, p. 28). These openings of learning at the instructor level, where instructors may be able to

create a more inclusive environment for themselves, for the students of the course, and for those at higher levels of the higher education system, would be beneficial even beyond the classroom.

To speculate why this is not already happening, I think that traditional, hegemonic masculinity is the culprit. Before instructors from multiple disciplines and departments could come together to learn about masculinity through a thoughtful, feminist curriculum, a colleague would have to first recognize that there is a problem, a realization which traditional, hegemonic masculinity's actions and compulsory behavior work and act against. In other words, the pervasive feeling in higher education is "There is no problem, the structures in action here are working for us, why change it?" One of the largest areas of masculinity research that is needed is on the topic of people who identify as transgender and adopt a predominantly masculine identity. A question that I would ask is, "Do people who transition to identify as men have similar experiences with masculinity as those who have always identified as men? If not, how is it different? If so, what aspects are similar?" I think this vein of research is important because it not only positions masculinity as socially constructed in a new way, but it may also provide a space to investigate and disrupt historical forms for gender.

Finally, more research on men with differing abilities, such physical disability or even different neurodiversities, is essential, as much of masculine identity is wrapped up in discourses of ableism, physical prowess, and mental acuity. This is important because it challenges the discourse of traditional masculinity by offering new ways of performing masculinity and pushes back against what physical prowess and mental mastery excludes. Ultimately, more research on this topic may lead to more inclusion within the masculinities discourse and inform the pedagogical practices and curricular topics of the men and masculinities classroom, as well as all parts of higher education. These pedagogical practices would be different because they include

and normalize inclusion of this and future identities in the men and masculinities classroom instead of excluding and relegating them to the background. Also, it would challenge what "physical prowess," "mental mastery," and "be able to…" means, opening up knowledge about this topic and changing the curriculum to show more subjectivities instead of confining the curriculum to what it has always been.

Conclusion and Final Reflections

As a poststructural researcher, one of my favorite colloquialisms is that the beginning is always the hardest. This doctoral degree has caused me to question *everything*, even to my poststructural detriment. My mind floods, producing rebuttals such as, "What do you mean by the beginning? Isn't a beginning really an ending? What is an ending? Isn't that in itself a privileged binary opposition? And even, who *defines* the beginning?" My instinct for inquiry has materialized into my constant dismantling and unsettling of the world around me. My knowledge has increased, but each new concept now needs to be troubled to produce new knowledge, arriving at a constant struggle for information, while still providing new vision, new ideas, and new ways of thinking about concepts long held by dominant, privileged groups, each shaped by their own discourses and power structures.

Because my dissertation challenges the language we use and how on its surface it is seen as a determinant of who we are, I feel the need to emphasize the following statement: When all is said and done, nothing is finished. I love this phrase because it demonstrates the fragility of language. If everything is done then it is finished, yet the phrase still holds true in masculinities work. When we have said everything that needs to be said about masculinities and the experiences of the men who teach them, deconstruction encourages us to see that we are not finished and we need to take another look at the happenings that occur.

I began this dissertation with the story of how Donald Trump and how his traditionally hegemonic ways frightened me as an instructor of a men and masculinities class because Trump was the leader of the United States and the *ipso facto* role model for those looking to lead. I would now like to bookend the discussion with him. For the four years I have worked on this dissertation, I hoped for his removal from office, as this man and his traditionally, hegemonic male behavior, which was informing and privileging a version of masculinity, was harming all genders, whether through rhetoric, actions, or policies. I was relieved, overjoyed, and ecstatic that he did not secure a second term and was proud of the people who used their votes to rebuke his behavior, culminating in Trump leaving the office of the presidency in January of 2021. This dissertation has taught that even though he is gone, the structures that made him are still in place. And without saying it, his traditionally, hegemonic actions will be an absent presence in the discourses of our lives for years, possibly decades, to come. Trump's effect on masculinities discourses and the structures that created his form of masculinity have long been there and will exist long after his residency in the White House. This makes challenging traditionally, hegemonic masculine behavior urgent, and to challenge this type of behavior we need to interrogate this behavior overtly in our collegiate study. We need to talk about gender, our subjectivities, and our societal constructions to show how they work to comply with and disrupt traditional, hegemonic masculinity. Does it have to be a specific men and masculinities course? As we have seen, that is a precarious place. That would be a great start, but a larger disruption would be to talk about masculinities and gender in *every* course.

Harper and Harris (2010) wrote:

> A man who graduates from college without having benefitted from a well-guided exploration of his gender identity is likely to find himself stranded on a

> destructive pathway of confusion and self-doubt...Those who work at colleges and universities have a professional responsibility to aid women and men alike in productively resolving identity conflicts and transitioning into a version of adulthood where patriarchy, sexism, homophobia, misogyny, misandry, sexual harassment, and all forms of abuse and oppression ends with them. (p. 10)

The powerful call to action above invites all members of society to enter into this conversation. We are not post-gender, but thinking about masculinities with poststructuralism can start us in that direction. Ultimately, instructors have been pointing this out, whether complicit with traditional, hegemonic masculinity or not, this entire time whether they knew it or not.

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Appendix A: Interview Guide

STUDENT AFFAIRS PROFESSIONALS TEACHING IN HIGHER EDUCATION: A DECONSTRUCTION OF A *MEN AND MASCULINITIES* COURSE

Interview Guide
Matt Zalman
College of Education - Educational Leadership
Appalachian State University

Opening Statement:

I am very interested in what it is like to be a person that identifies as male teaching a men and masculinities course at a 4-year, public institution. I would like to ask you questions about your experience in teaching these courses, why you chose to teach this course, and how you got to where you are. Although I will be asking questions and seeking answers from you, I want you to feel free to take your time in answering the questions. Feel free at any time to refuse to answer any questions. My intention is to learn about you and your story. I am also a male who also has taught a men and masculinities course who loves to understand people's motivations for their actions as well as hear their story. My hope is that this will be fun and enjoyable for us both.

Interview Questions:

Interview #1

- Tell me about yourself and what led you to be an instructor of a masculinities course.
- Describe the institution in which you work.
- What are your day to day tasks in your role as instructor?
- What parts of your role are the easiest for you? The hardest?
- What parts of your role hold the most meaning for you?
- How are you compensated for doing your job?
- What is your definition of gender?
- What is your definition of masculinity(ies)?
- Describe your syllabus for me. Did you create it or was it created for you?
- What are the identified genders of those that you instruct in your classroom?
- In what ways does gender play a role in your everyday role within the masculinities classroom?
- Do you think conversations about masculinity are needed in society? Why or why not?
- If you could change anything about your role as the instructor, what would you change?
- What is one area regarding masculinity/ies that you think should be spoken of more?
- Anything else about your experience as an instructor you would like to share?

Plan of Interviewing:

One interview with additional interviews, if needed:

- First - Get to know the participant, learn about the structure of their department and then learn about their views of gender, masculinity, and their experience being an instructor of a men and masculinities course
- Second (if needed) - Follow-up questions from the first round

Closing:

Thank you for being a part of this interview process. Your contributions and time are valuable so I am thankful. Please know that once completed, I will return to you to make sure that I have accurately recorded your statements and that the research was done in a way that protects your ideas and thoughts. If you have any more questions at this time, please let me know.

Here is the best way to reach me:

Matt Zalman
zalmanma@appstate.edu

Appendix B: My Course Syllabus

Men and Masculinities in America
Time: 2:00 – 3:15PM,
Tuesdays and Thursdays
Appalachian Hall 085
Fall Semester UCO 1200 - 116

Matt Zalman
214 Locust Street
App Hall 074
828-262-8594
zalmanma@appstate.edu

Blair Berry
287 Rivers Street
John E. Thomas Building
828-262-6111
berrybm@appstate.edu

Office Hours: Please email us to set up an appointment, happy to meet with you!

Course Description:

This course is an introduction to the idea of what it means to be a man in America today. We will touch on the history of men's issues while talking about power and privilege simply because of gender. We will also discuss stereotypes of masculinity and the continuum that exists in terms of what it means to be a man. Drawing from multiple disciplines and perspectives, we will examine how America defines masculinity through perspectives of identity using race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender performance, age, and other characteristics as markers on the journey. Class will include readings and discussion, films, guest speakers, and other experiential/contemplative activities. Requirements include reading, discussing, active participation, a service learning project, a weekly reflective journal, three observation assignments, and a possible final research paper.

Course Goals and Objectives:

1. To examine the development of men's studies and men's movements from the 1970's to the present.
2. To develop an understanding of masculine identity development from social, cultural, psychological, and biological perspectives.
3. To develop a gender lens through which to observe, analyze, critique and understand the intersections of masculine identity with race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender performance, age, and othercharacteristics.
4. To reflect on personal experiences of masculinity through dialogue and written construction.

Methods of Teaching:

We will view and discuss films, have small group and full class discussions, and engage in group activities, reports, and other experiential activities. *You must be an active, engaged participant in this class.*

Expectations:

As your instructors you can expect us to create and maintain a classroom environment that is respectful of individual experiences and that requires all participants to listen and learn from each other. I will provide feedback about your participation in class and about your grades in a timely

and confidential manner. As a member of my class I expect that you will attend and participate actively, will leave your cell phone and laptops off while in class, and that you will treat your classmates and me with respect. I expect rigorous study, intellectual growth, and lifelong learning.

Required Texts:

- hooks, bell. (2004). *The Will to Change: Men, Masculinity, and Love.* Washington Square Press.
- The ASU Summer Reading Selection: *So You've Been Publically Shamed (2015)* by Jon Ronson.

There will also be some required reading of articles, chapters, and websites available through ASULearn.

Requirements:

1. Regular, Punctual Attendance. Each class period's activities are the foundation of later class sessions, so if you miss class you will reduce your ability to achieve our learning objectives. However, I realize that some absences are unavoidable. You are allowed two absences without any impact on your final grade. Beyond that you will lose that day's attendance points and points for any assignments not turned in. It is your responsibility to catch up in the course and find out what you missed.

2. Careful, engaged reading of all the assigned works. There is a lot to read in this course. Complete each day's reading before you come to class and come to class ready to engage in discussion and dialogue.

3. Active participation in group and class discussions and activities. Your participation in small and large group discussions and class activities should show that you have read the material, thought about it, and can engage with others concerning the topics and questions that arise from it. We expect each person to participate actively in each classsession.

4. Assignment/Paper Standards. You will complete four assignments and a service learning project designed to demonstrate your ability to use a gendered lens to observe and report on a specific topic. You will write a 2-3 page response, double-spaced, in 12 point Times New Roman font and 1 in. margins, unless otherwise noted. Theassignments will be distributed approximately every three weeks.

5. Service Learning Project. You will select a community agency or campus organization that provides support services, mentoring, or other resources to those who identify as men or boys. You will complete a 3-5 hour service project for this agency over the course of the semester. A list of potential agencies/organizations will be presented via the ACT Office who have the contact information listed. Alternative projects must be approved by the instructor before you commit to the project. You will provide a 4 - 5 minute presentation with pictures from the service project to the class during finals week.

6. Reflective Journals. You will answer online questions on the class ASULearn site reflecting your experiences with the class material and activities, posting at least one entry each week (when asked). You will not be graded on your opinions, as I expect we will disagree from time to time about the course material. You will receive full points if your writing demonstrates an understanding of the material, a thoughtful analysis of the topics, and honest discussion of your thoughts and feelings about your experiences related to the course. Everyone's response will be public to other class members, so you are encouraged to read and *respond respectfully* to each other'scomments.

7. Extra Credit. You will receive extra points for attending presentations/events on men's issues as approved by the instructors during the semester. Upcoming presentations will be shared on the class ASULearn site and/or announced in class. You can also join the Red Flag Campaign, participate in Ally Training through the LGBT Center, and/or Men on the Mountain on campus as a means of obtaining extra credit. Max 10pts. extra credit.

Grading Summary:

Grades will be based on:

Attendance and Participation	174 points (6 per class meeting X 29)
Library Tutorial Completion	50
Service Learning Topic	10
Service Learning Project	200 (150 points for service, 50 for presentation)
Assignments	300 (100 per assignment X 3 assignments)
Reflective Blog	90 (9 weekly entries, 10 possible points each)
Class 1:1 Meeting	10
Final Research Paper	100
Mapworks Completion	16
Pop Quizzes	50

GRADING SCALE

Appalachian State University does not have an A+

A	930-1000 points
A-	900-920 points
B+	870-890 points
B	830-860 points
B-	800-820 points
C+	770-790 points
C	730-760 points
C-	700-720 points
D+	670-690 points
D	630-660 points
D-	600-620 points
F	below 600 points

Weekly Schedule:

Assignments may be added at any time.

Date	Class Topic	Assignments For Next Class
August 16th	• Introductions • Class and Discussion Expectations • Syllabus Overview • What do you know? Activity • ASULearn Access Overview	• **Journal Question:** Go on ASULearn and post a response to introduce yourself to the rest of the class. • Begin reading the Common Reading Book: "So You've Been Publically Shamed" by Jon Ronson

August 18th	• What is Masculinity? • Gender Overview • What is Men's Studies? What is it not? • Walkthrough of Online Resources • Preview Assignment #1	• Read Chapter 4 – "The Masculine Self" posted on ASULearn • Begin Assignment #1: *Interview a Male Role model about Masculinity*
August 23rd	• In class assignment: One page written responses to "The Masculine Self" Chapter • Discussion of Chapter • Showing of "The Mask We Live In" Film	• Be reading "So You've Been Publically Shamed" for Tuesday, Sept. 1st – Reading Quiz
August 25th	• Finish "The Mask We Live In" and Discussion of the Film	• Read "So You've Been Publically Shamed" for reading quiz at the end of the class on Tuesday
August 30th	• "So You've Been Publically Shamed" Discussion and Reading Quiz	• **Journal Question:** What was your favorite part of the book and why?
September 1st	• Topic TBA	• **Journal Question:** What has been the one thing that you have connected with so far about Men? What point is still a little muddy?
September 6th	• ACT Office: How to sign up for Service and a preview of the year in the ACT Office	• **Journal Question**: Create a list of your top places that you would like to go and do service in Boone or surrounding areas, submit to Matt by class on September 8th • Assignment #1 due by class on ASULearn on September 8th
September 8th	• Reader's Theatre – What my role model thinks of Masculinity… • **Assignment #1 Due**	• **Journal Question:** What did you think of Reader's Theatre? Positives and Negatives? • Make sure to have purchased *A Will to Change* by bell hooks. Read Preface and Chapter 1
September 13th	• Preface and Chapter 1 Discussion	• Read about "Genderperson" on ASULearn • **Journal Question:** What parts of bell hook's work so far to connect with?
September 15th	• Gender Identity and LGBTQIA	• Read "Invisible Knapsack" on ASULearn
September 20th	• Power and Privilege • Discussion of "Invisible Knapsack"	• Read Chapter 2 in TWTC
September 22nd	• Power and Privilege Continued • Discuss Chapter 2 – Understanding Patriarchy	• **Journal Question:** Watch the video online and write a paragraph about how it applies to masculinity.
September 27th	• Male Identity and Intersectionality	• Begin work on Assignment #2: Observance of Men in Groups
September 29th	• Men and Violence – Tough Guise II Film Viewing	• Read Chapter 4 of TWTC
October 4th	• Finish Tough Guise II • Discussion of Chapter 4	• Read James Lorello's Article on ASULearn • Read other article on ASULearn

October 6th	• Men and Violence – Red Flag Educators and Stopping Violence on Campus and Understanding Consent • **Assignment#2 due**	• No Assignment
October 11th	• My Masculinity Helps Film and Discussion	• **Journal Question**: What intrigued you about this film? What questions do you have after watching the film?
October 13th	• **No Class– Fall Break**	• Hammock, Slackline, and spend some well-earned time outside and with friends!
October 18th	• Men in Groups – Fraternities, Cliques, Teams, Sports	• **Journal Question:** Have you experienced a positive group on campus? What made it positive?
October 20th	• Men and Spirituality • Discussion on the definition of Spirituality	• **Journal Question**: What is your favorite quote when it comes to perseverance in times of struggle (resiliency)?
October 25th	• **Module #1** – Library – Begin thinking about a Final Research Paper Topic	• Read Chapter 10 of TWTC
October 27th	• Chapter 10 of TWTC Discussion • **Module#2** - Library	• No Assignment
November 1st	• Resiliency at Appalachian – What is it? • **Module#3** - Library	• Use next class period for your Service Hours
November 3rd	• Time for Service Hours	• No Assignment
November 8th	• Men and Masculinities on a Global Scale • **Module #4** – Library and Final Quiz	• Read Chapter 7 in TWTC
November 10th	• Chapter 7 Discussion	• Read Chapter 8 in TWTC
November 15th	• Men in Fashion, Film, Music, and Media • Chapter 8 Discussion	• Begin Assignment 3: Media Watching
November 17th	• Class 1:1 Meetings / Service Hours Time	• Begin Final Papers
November 22nd	• Class 1:1 Meetings / Service Hours Time • **Assignment#3 due**: Media Watching	• Continue Working on Final Papers
November 24th	• **Thanksgiving**	• Spend time with loved ones and/or recharge for the final push of the semester!
November 29th	• Chapter 9 Discussion	• Work on Final Papers and Presentations
	• The Power of Touch and Connection	
December 1st	• Wrap-up Overview of Class / Final Prep Review • What Have You Learned? Activity • **Final Papers Due Today**	• Finish Service Presentations
December 6th	• Class Final: **Service Presentations** • 3:00 – 5:30PM	• Be awesome individuals!

Assignments posted on ASULearn

Assignment 1: Inter-generational Interview

Interview an adult male who has played a significant role in your life about the following topics: What does it mean to be a man? Where and how did he learn that? How has his definition of manhood or masculinity changed at different stages of your life? If it hasn't changed, why do think that may be?

Follow the Assignment/Paper Standards outlined above.

Assignment 2: Observation of Men in groups

Identify an opportunity when you will be around a group of men. Observe the group for at least one hour using the following framework as a guide, then write a 2-4 page paper using the assignment/paper standards.

1) Describe the group and the purpose of the gathering.
2) Reflecting on what we've learned about hegemonic masculinity and hyper-masculinity, what did you see?
    a. Who defies the stereotypical masculine role and how? What is their role in the group?
    b. Who follows the hegemonic masculinity rules? What is their role in the group?
    c. How does the rest of the group respond to each of these men?
    d. Female observers: How do you think your presence changed the dynamics of the group? Give examples.
    e. Male observers: What is your role in the group? How do you feel as a participant-observer? How would you describe how the other men in the group respond to your role?

Assignment 3: Media Watch

Watch a show you frequently watch (not a favorite show, I don't want this activity to ruin it for you!), or listen to a radio station or stream a song for its duration. Create an electronic graphic timeline of the program showing how gender is portrayed or described, and explain how what we've read and discussed relates to these images. Also, please include a 1- 2 page summary of what you've seen.

Assignment #4: Final Research Paper.

Identify a topic that you would like to know more about, that maybe we didn't talk about in class. I would like you to write 2-4 pages, have 3 peer-reviewed sources, all done in APA format.

Service Learning Project:

See Above.

Reminders of some University Policies:

Academic Integrity

As a community of learners at Appalachian State University, we must create an atmosphere of honesty, fairness, and responsibility, without which we cannot earn the trust and respect of each other. Furthermore, we recognize that academic dishonesty detracts from the value of an Appalachian degree. Therefore, we shall not tolerate lying, cheating, or stealing in any form and will oppose any instance of academic dishonesty. This course will follow the provisions of the Academic Integrity Code, which can be found on the Office of Student Conduct Web Site: www.studentconduct.appstate.edu.

Statement on Student Engagement with Courses

In its mission statement, Appalachian State University aims at "providing undergraduate students a rigorous liberal education that emphasizes transferable skills and preparation for professional careers" as well as "maintaining a faculty whose members serve as excellent teachers and scholarly mentors for their students." Such rigor means that the foremost activity of Appalachian students is an intense engagement with their courses. In practical terms, students should expect to spend two to three hours of studying for every hour of class time. Hence, a fifteen hour academic load might reasonably require between 30 and 45 hours per week of out-of-class work.

Disability Services

Appalachian State University is committed to making reasonable accommodations for individuals with documented qualifying disabilities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Those seeking accommodations based on a substantially limiting disability must contact and register with The Office of Disability Services (ODS) at http://www.ods.appstate.edu/ or 828-262-3056. Once registration is complete, individuals will meet with ODS staff to discuss eligibility and appropriate accommodations.

Religious Observances Policy

Faculty members are required to make reasonable accommodations for students requesting to miss class due to the observance of religious holidays. All ASU students are allowed a minimum of two absences per year for religious observances. Up to two absences for such observances will be excused, without penalty to the student, provided that the student has informed the instructor in the manner specified in the syllabus. Notice must be given by the student to the instructor before the absence occurs and no later than three weeks after the start of the semester in which the absence(s) will occur. Arrangements will be made to make up work missed by these religious observances, without penalty to the student. For the purposes of this policy, ASU defines the term "religious observance" to include religious holidays, holy days, or similar observances associated with a student's faith that require absence from class. Faculty, at their discretion, may include class attendance as a criterion in determining a student's final grade in the course. On the first day of class, faculty must inform students of their class attendance policy and the effect of that policy on their final grade; both policies must be clearly stated in the class syllabus.

Contemplative Practices Statement:

During this course we will be doing many activities that will explore the spirit within and will push you to think differently. These spiritual activities are made to foster positive inner spirit and not meant to reflect on any religion and/or any organized spiritual institution. All activities are challenge by choice.

Other Resources

First Year Seminar Blog:
http://thisblogisnotrequired.wordpress.com/ Common Reading Information:
http://commonreading.appstate.edu/ Library Information:
http://www.library.appstate.edu/UCO1200Tutorial
AppSync Portal for First Year Seminar:
https://orgsync.com/138389/chapter First Year Seminar:
http://firstyearseminar.appstate.edu/

Vita

Matt Zalman was born in Hastings, Nebraska, a small community with a large spirit. After graduating from Hastings Senior High, Matt attended the University of Nebraska - Lincoln in Lincoln, NE. There, Matt graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Film Studies with a minor in Business, all the while working in student affairs as a Desk Assistant (DA), Summer Conference Assistant (CA), and Resident Assistant (RA) in the residence halls.

After graduating, Matt attended the University of Nebraska - Omaha and obtained a Master's degree in English with a focus on Creative Non-Fiction and an Advanced Writing Certificate where he produced and submitted a portfolio of writings including personal, travel, historical and place-based essays.

While finishing his Master of English degree, Matt obtained a position back at the University of Nebraska - Lincoln as a Residence Director of a first-year hall, Schramm Residence Hall; a hall that Matt lived in as a student and a place that utilized his DA, CA, and RA skills. Matt stayed in Schramm for two years and then transitioned to the recently created Village Residence Hall, an apartment-style building on UNL's campus. While working in this position Matt was given the opportunity to work with many Resident Assistants and Hall Council members fulfilling his love of working with students. In his last two years at UNL, Matt obtained another Master's degree, this time in Education Administration with a focus in Student Affairs.

From this position and with a new Master's degree in hand, Matt moved across the country to take on the opportunity of being the Coordinator for Academic Initiatives and Residential Learning Communities at Appalachian State University. Here is where Matt learned to love the idea of student affairs practitioners as educators and scholars. During this time, Matt had the opportunity to create and teach a first-year seminar on Men and Masculinities in

America. This experience led him to decide to apply for and enter Appalachian's Educational Leadership Doctoral program in order to further look into those questions and to ask questions about men and society that later turned into the focus of this dissertation.

Following the love of his life to Cincinnati, OH, Matt left Appalachian State University and found the first job that he could find in higher education and became an Academic Advisor for "Undecided" students at Northern Kentucky University just across the Ohio River in Kentucky. A short while later, Matt applied and was promoted to a position at Xavier University where he currently resides as the Assistant Director of Residence Life.

Matt's publications include topics on men and masculinities, leadership, solitude in student affairs, academic initiatives, and mentoring. Matt has presented at NASPA, ACUHO-I, multiple regional workshops, and within his department for multiple professional staff training sessions.

Matt hopes to continue his work in higher education in some way shape or form until he retires to read copious amounts of whodunits and to listen to historical and true crime podcasts to his heart's content.