GSWS 330-4: MASCULINITIES: “BAD DADS”

Professor: Dr. Lucas Crawford
Email: lccrawfo@sfu.ca
Office: AQ 5095
Office hours: TBA
Lecture: Wednesdays 9:30-12:20; AQ 4130

Course Description:
In the many subfields of gender, sexuality, and women’s studies, we often refer to the complex notion of “patriarchy” as a monolithic entity that we understand easily and completely. Yet, we rarely talk about patriarchs – ie. fathers. How do cultural notions of fatherhood shape the possibilities and constraints of masculinity? If “good fatherhood” is often part and parcel of heteronormative culture, then how might men who eschew those norms teach us something about alternative masculinities and their potential? In this course, we will look to “bad dads” in particular, in the hopes of finding masculine gestures/ideas we may wish to remake and recycle (and some we may want to throw out, of course). Students can expect to read about incestuous dads, molesting dads, absent dads, melancholic dads, closeted queer dads, suicidal dads, dead dads, abusive dads, academic dads, mafia dads, murderous dads, etc. While this may sound grim, we will look for new and creative ideas about fatherhood and masculinity, both within and beyond these particular dad behaviours. Students can also expect the class to function in a seminar-type mode with much discussion and regular student presentations.

Educational Goals:
- fuller understanding of how masculinity circulates as a system of value, discipline, constraint, and reward
- improved critical skills with regard to popular culture, literature, politics, and the embodied lives thereof
- increased curiosity and confidence as a viewer, creator, critic, and witness of culture
- ability to form highly unique, rigorous, imaginative, and relevant arguments

Course Evaluation and Assignments:
Participation 25%
Seminar Presentation 25%
Writing Assignment, TBD 25%
Final Exam 25%

Prerequisite: 15 units
Course Texts and Courseware:
6. Several of the following films (TBD), none of which students need to buy: The Godfather; The Shining; Lolita; Broken Flowers; American Beauty.

Students may purchase any edition of the above books, used or new.

Special note: Paul Auster’s City of Glass is the first novel in what is usually sold as a trilogy (called The New York Trilogy). It is easier to find the trilogy, and it will not cost more than what the single book would cost, so feel free to buy the trilogy. Also, beware: there is a graphic novel (comic/illustrated) version of City of Glass. This is a neat text, but it is not our text for this class. Please make sure to buy the actual novel.

If a student buys all of the books brand new, then the cost for this course will be approximately $70.