

**Graduate Seminar:  
GECD 660  
Gender and Identity in  
Discourse: Tentative Syllabus**



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Description:**

This graduate course explores the ideas of gender and identity and the standards of behavior for men and women via different forms of media: scientific/literary texts, visual aids, adverts, “growing up manuals,” and short stories and novels. We will investigate ancient to modern culture and discourses which serves to construct, reify, or challenge gender identities and examine the obsession and prescripts in history of not only wanting a feminine and masculine ideal, but achieving only a masculine sense of perfection. Men’s identity is/was caught up in certain strict ideals: “He is courage personified, born protector of the weaker sex . . . he alone has the right to carry on the family name. A son is the symbol of family continuity, high success and national security” (*Understanding Boys* 1954). And throughout history, gender discourse for women as taught us that women identity mirrors pleasing men or being *feminine*: “Men like women. Don’t act like a man,

even if you are head of your own company. Let him open the door. Be feminine” (*Mr. Right* 1995). As we explore these discourses on gender via these different forms of media, students will also be required to do a “field research” project about these ideas so that we could investigate these constructs and find out whether past/present societies have challenged some of these prescripts for gender identities.

**Tentative Reading List:  
Growing up Manuals - 40s to  
70s:**

*Think Pink: Becoming a Woman in Many  
Uneasy Lessons* – Lynn Peril

**Novels:**

*Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* – James Joyce

*The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* – Muriel Spark

**Rhetoric:**

*A Return to Modesty: Discovering the Lost  
Virtue*: Wendy Shalit

*Feminist Futures: Re-Imagining Women,  
Culture and Development*: Kum-Kum  
Bhavnani

**Early readings in Early  
Medicine**

**Masculinity/Femininity-  
Library reserve:**

Readings from *Sex Society and History* by  
Vern Bullough (1 -2 articles)

Readings from *Making Sex: Body and Gender  
from the Greeks to Freud* (1 article)

by Thomas Laqueur

The Beauty Myth: How images of beauty are  
used against women ( 1 or 2 Chapters)

**Movies: (Some Ideas?)**

*Memoirs of a Geisha*