

MINI-SYLLABUS: #DaddyIssues

written by Guest Contributor | January 23, 2018



Paternal trauma, often coined “daddy issues,” is a topic that makes people uncomfortable; as it should. Relating to incest, abuse, sexual assault, ignorance, obsession and in some cases, relapses in mental illness, a negative relationship between the father and the child can cause harmful psychological effects to not only the parent and child but also the strain of the relationship between the two.

A course that seeks to define, discover and analyze the variations of it, #DaddyIssues is designed to delve deeper into the cultural practice of father/child relationships and draw connections between variations of daddy issues and the psychological damages reflected in those relationships. Students will also be expected to dissect and compare the Oedipus and Electra Complexes and discover a character’s cause of trauma: is it maternal or paternal?

In reading six novels, watching five films, and closely reading five links, students will be asked to question the consequences of paternal trauma and evaluate how much of the child’s behavior is directly connected to the father’s actions. Is there a line between sexual abuse and incest? Is this trauma gender specific, and if not, how does it manifest in male relationships? Which trauma has the most severe effects? Which has the least severe effects and why? When are the children damaged: during the abuse or years after? How can we debate the blame for the damage? How do #DaddyIssues transcend genre?

In this course, students will be challenged with not only answering all of these questions but asking their own. Through academic research, critical analysis, group debate and constructed theory, this course will concentrate on topics most people choose to walk on eggshells around. Not for the faint of heart, #DaddyIssues will force students to place themselves in the shoes of those affected, from characters who are small children through characters who are damaged adults – allowing them to create theory and draw conclusions based on their almost virtual-secondhand-experience of each circumstance and experience.

Reading List:

- *Lolita* by Vladimir Nabokov

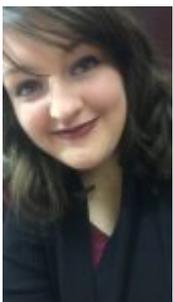
- *American Pastoral* by Philip Roth
- *Hamlet* by William Shakespeare
- *Such a Pretty Girl* by Laura Wiess
- *Buried Child* by Sam Shepard
- *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic* by Alison Bechdel

Film List:

- How to Train Your Dragon (2010)
- The Breakfast Club (1985)
- The Empire Strikes Back (1980)
- The Last Jedi (2017)
- Thor (2011)

Links:

- http://scholarworks.sjsu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=4763&context=etd_theses
- <http://www.culledculture.com/daddys-girl-the-electra-complex-in-poetry-and-fiction/>
- <http://www.isca.in/LANGUAGE/Archive/v2/i11/1.ISCA-RJLLH-2015-052.pdf>
- <http://www.uvm.edu/~jbailly/courses/tragedy/student%20second%20documents/Oedipus%20Complex.html>
- <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/jpcu.12531/full>



Casey Leming is a writer, stage manager, and concert enthusiast among other things. She is a junior English Writing Major and Technical Communications Minor at Shippensburg University of Pennsylvania. After graduation, she hopes to join the publishing field and eventually publish a memoir. Until then, she plans to place her faith in the universe, take as many naps as possible, and scoop up opportunities left and right.