Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) issues in public policy

Fall 2011

Adjunct Assistant Professor Sean Cahill
Monday 6:20-9:00pm
Location: 145 Fourth Avenue, Room 204

Office hours: Monday 4:30-5:30pm, Puck Building 3049; and by request (sc173@nyu.edu)

Course description

LGBT people experience inequality and exclusion in a wide range of state and federal policy arenas. However, public policies and attitudes are changing, as we saw recently with the repeal of Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell and the extension of marriage equality in New York State. This course examines the recent history of the pro- and anti-gay political movements in the U.S. since the 1950s-1970s; the current debate over marriage, parenting, and family recognition; demographics of LGBT community, including race and gender differences among same-sex couples, and the particular experiences of LGBT people of color; the major policy issues affecting LGBT people, including health policy; how the Christian right shapes U.S. domestic and foreign policy, and its activities in other countries and international fora; and how LGBT policy controversies play out in U.S. electoral politics and public opinion.

Course requirements/grading

One brief paper (5 pages for undergraduates, 10 pages for graduate students) will be assigned, and there is a mid-term and final exam. Students will also prepare one in-class presentation on a topic to be agreed upon with the lecturer. Students are also expected to participate in class discussions which are based on the assigned readings. The paper is worth 25% of the final grade, the mid-term exam 25%, the final 25%, and in-class participation, including the in-class presentation, 25%.

An in-class mid-term exam will be given Monday, October 24th. A final take-home exam will be due Monday December 19th.

Paper topics should be agreed to with the instructor by Monday, November 7th, and are due in class Monday, November 28th.

Students should sign up to do a presentation by Monday September 26th. Presentations will start October 3rd and continue through the last class, Monday, December 12th.
Please adhere to NYU’s Academic Honesty policy. For more information see http://wagner.nyu.edu/current/policies/

There are three required texts for the class and many journal articles and book chapters. All articles and single book chapters will be available from the Bobst Library ejournal site or posted on Blackboard. All materials, including the three texts and the book chapters, will be placed on reserve at Bobst Library. While the readings appear substantial, they average about 100 pages per week. Many articles are very short. The texts are:


In-class video clips will also complement readings and discussions.

**Part I: Historical context**

**Week 1, September 12, 2010: The 1950s to 1980**
The homophile movement, Mattachine Society, Daughters of Bilitis, and pre-Stonewall activism; Stonewall (June 1969) and the first “gay pride” protests; the first pro-gay policy innovations in the early 1970s and the birth of the anti-gay movement in 1974; the polarization of U.S. party politics starting in 1980.

Required reading:


**Week 2, September 19: 1980-the 1990s**
The rise of the Christian right and the deployment of the “special rights” claim; AIDS and the emergence of a gay institutional infrastructure, radical street politics (ACT-UP); organizing re: AIDS, hate violence and the military ban

Required reading:


**Week 3, September 26: The current debate over marriage equality and gay families**

Required reading:


http://www.nationformarriage.org/site/c.omL2KeN0LzH/b.4475595/k.566A/Marriage_Talking_Points.htm


**Part II: Demographics of the LGBT community**

**Week 4, October 3: How many LGBT people are there?**

Required reading:
Gates, G., How many people are lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender? Los Angeles: UCLA Williams Institute, April 2011.


***October 10 Columbus Day, no class***

**Week 5, October 17: LGBT people of color**

Required reading:


**Part III: Key policy issues**

**Week 6, October 24: Discrimination, income, the justice system**

Required reading:


http://escholarship.org/uc/item/5h3731xr


Both at:


**Week 7, October 31: Parenting**

**Required reading:**


**Week 8, November 7: Elder and youth/education issues**

**Required reading:**


**Week 9, November 14: LGBT health**

Required reading:


Appelbaum, J., “Late adulthood and aging: Clinical approaches,” in Makadon et al, pp. 135-156.


Song, Y. et al., “Substance use and abuse,” in Makadon et al., pp. 209-248.


http://www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record_id=13128


**Week 10, November 21: HIV**
Required reading:


Week 11, November 28: Government institutions and LGBT equality

Required reading:


Part IV: What the U.S. public thinks and how they vote on gay issues

Week 12, December 5: Public opinion and voting behavior; the functions of anti-gay ballot measures

Required reading:


to the Legal Status of Same-Sex Marriage, Civil Unions, and Other Partnerships, Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 2007, pp. 119-140.

**Week 13, December 12: The global context of LGBT rights and health**

**Required reading:**


[http://www.hrw.org/en/reports/2008/10/06/these-everyday-humiliations-0](http://www.hrw.org/en/reports/2008/10/06/these-everyday-humiliations-0)