Queer Politics & Policy

Political Science 346
Political Science Department | University of Wisconsin Oshkosh
T/TH 1:20—2:50 | Sage 4215 | Spring 2019 | 3 Credits

Professor Info
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Inclusion
All persons are part of the political system. Queerness transcends race, gender, sex, sexuality, socio-economic status, national origin, ethnicity, physical or learning ability, religion, veteran status, and many other characteristics with which students commonly identify. Hence, this course uses inclusive pedagogies and activities that foster input from everyone. Input from all students is valued and expected.
TEXT AND COURSE MATERIALS


This text is required. In addition to the textbook, there are a number of other required readings that will be available electronically at no additional cost to students.

COURSE OVERVIEW

What role does sexual identity play in American politics? In what ways has domestic politics shaped the U.S. LGBT community? In this course, we will debate the meaning of sexual identity and ideologies and explore how they have been viewed throughout American history. Next we will examine the impact of sexual identity on public opinion and political participants, particularly candidates and officeholders. We will look at the unique experiences of LGBT groups in the U.S., and consider the relationships between sexual identity, race, class, and gender. Finally, we will look at the relationship between sexual identity and public policy, particularly: same-sex marriage, adoption rights, anti-sodomy laws, and hate crimes legislation.

There are no prerequisites for this course.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Distinguish LGB studies from queer studies and apply respective theories to contemporary sexual politics
2. Analyze queer issues through the lenses of legal and political theory
3. Summarize main events and theories in LGBTQ political movements in the U.S. from 1969 to present
4. Identify legal and political issues in contemporary queer policymaking

This course also emphasizes several political science department learning objectives: (1) oral and written communication, (2) critical thinking, and (3) theory (political and legal)

ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

I use the 93/90/87 grading scale for this course.

A 93–100  B+ 80–82  D+ 67–69
A- 90–92  C+ 77–79  D 63–66
B+ 87–89  C 73–76  D- 60–62
B 83–86  C- 70–72  F 0–59

Participation (50%): Participation is based on student preparation for and contributions to class. Read course materials and prepare notes before coming to class. Participation comfort levels vary substantially. At one end of the spectrum, some students fear public speaking (more than death) and would prefer to remain anonymous in class. These students should work actively to overcome this fear. On the other end of the spectrum are gunners, who are eager to speak and tend to dominate conversation. These students should be mindful that learning involves active listening and should provide others an opportunity to speak. Quality of participation is as important as quantity. Students receive the best participation grades when they think critically and assimilate complex ideas, including classmates’ ideas, across a range of topics. Such participators contribute meaningfully to the learning of others, including the professor. Students help determine their participation grades at the end of the term by writing a reflection essay evaluating their own performance and learning.

Final Exam (25%): The final exam asks students to write well-informed essays about queer politics and policy. The best exams will incorporate and reference class material.

Reaction Papers (25%): Students submit ten reaction papers throughout the term. Papers should be about two pages (1.5 spacing, 12-point Times New Roman). Reactions are not summaries of the readings; they are engagements with a particular reading or concept. The purposes of reaction papers are to (1) prepare students for class discussions and (2) have students write, write, write. Reaction papers are turned in before the class period during which they are discussed. Grades are based primarily on whether students engage the material. A good paper references readings (or specific passages) and analyzes or criticizes concepts. Students submit papers without spelling or grammar errors. Excessive errors result in lower grades.
**CLASS GUIDELINES**

I have four principles I ask students to observe in class. Be **honest**, **energetic**, **reliable**, and **respectful**.

**ATTENDANCE**

Attendance is expected. I take attendance at the beginning of each class mainly to learn student names. Remember, participation is required. You cannot participate if you are absent. Absences are sometimes necessary. If you are absent, it is unnecessary to e-mail or contact me, unless it is an extended absence. Students should contact a classmate for missed notes or assignments. I do not supply notes or give one-on-one lectures. I am always happy, however, to meet with students to review unclear points.

**STUDENT CONSUMER INFORMATION**

Students are advised to see the following URL for disclosures about essential consumer protection items required by the Students Right to Know Act of 1990 available here.

**NOTE TO POLITICAL SCIENCE MAJORS**

Political Science majors should take Political Methodology (245) in either their sophomore or first semester of their junior year. PS245 is a prerequisite for the senior capstone, Political Analysis (401), and cannot be taken concurrently.

**ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES**

It is the University’s policy to provide reasonable accommodations to students who have documented disabilities that may affect their ability to participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. Accommodations are made on a flexible and individual basis. Students with disabilities must be registered with Services for Students with Disabilities or Project Success and receive an Accommodation Recommendation form. Services for Students with Disabilities is located in 125 Dempsey Hall and can be reached at 920-424-3100 or dean1@uwosh.edu. For more information, visit the Services for Students with Disabilities website here.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

I assume all students will adhere to the academic integrity policy. Personal integrity is a hallmark of citizens who study and practice law. I trust no one will compromise personal integrity.

UWO is committed to a standard of academic integrity for all students. The system guidelines state, “Students are responsible for the honest completion and representation of their work, for the appropriate citation of sources, and for respect of others’ academic endeavors.” Students are subject to disciplinary action for academic misconduct. Students on the UWO campus have been suspended from the university for academic misconduct. Students are encouraged to review the procedures related to violations of academic honesty as outlined in Chapter UWS 14, Wisconsin Administrative Code, available on the Dean of Students website at www.uwosh.edu/staff/dean/student-conduct. Specific questions regarding the code (and institutional procedures approved to implement the code) should be directed to the Dean of Students Office.

**SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS**

Changes to the schedule are inevitable and will be communicated in class or through e-mail. If substantive changes are made to the course, notification will be provided in a timely manner and a revised syllabus made available.

**Week 1 (Feb 4): Intro & Discourse**

Introductions and course overview
Labels, terms, vocabulary, pronouns: LGBTQIA and diverse SOGI
Erasure and inclusivity: Should the goal be to get rid of gender or create more genders?
Safe spaces and brave spaces
Free speech, expressive conduct, censorship, obscenity, and pushing boundaries in a public university classroom
Personal experiences

**Week 2 (Feb 11): Sex, Gender & Feminism**

Feminists: What Were They Thinking (Netflix documentary)
Discussion: feminisms (dominance, formal equality, cultural)
Week 3 (Feb 18): Queer Theory & GLB Studies
Brettschneider, Marla. 2011. “Heterosexual Political Science,” PS: Political Science and Politics 44(1) (on D2L)

Week 4 (Feb 25): Transgender & Enby Politics
Davis, Heath Fogg. 2017. “Single-Sex Colleges and Transgender Discrimination: The Politics of Checking a “Male” or “Female” Box to Get into College” in LGBTQ Politics (ch 30)
Orange is the New Black (video clip)
Discussion: Military Ban, Bathrooms, Healthcare

Week 5 (March 4): Sexual Expression
Miller test (Obscenity and SLAPs value)
Howl (passage from Allen Ginsburg) and Howl (Franco video clip)
Interior. Leather Bar. (film)

Week 6 (March 11): Equal Protection and Sexual Liberty
Romer v. Evans
Ken Sherrill testimony (expert witness) (on D2L)
Discussion: Right of Privacy (Griswold v. Connecticut, Roe v. Wade, Planned Parenthood v. Casey)
Lawrence v. Texas

Week 7 (March 18): Freedom of Association
Rumsfeld v. FAIR
Queer university groups (1980s, cases TBD)

Week 8 (March 25): Spring Break

Week 9 (Apr 1): Marriage
U.S. v. Windsor
Obergefell v. Hodges
Daum, Courtenay W. 2017. “Marriage Equality: Assimilationist Victory or Pluralist Defeat?” in LGBTQ Politics (ch 19)
Thomas, Jerry D. 2017. “Queer Sensibilities and Other Fagchild Tools” in LGBTQ Politics (ch 21)

Week 10 (Apr 8): HIV/AIDS Politics
Wojnarowicz, David (video TBD & retrospective at the Whitney Museum summer 2018)
**Week 11 (Apr 15): Queer Representation**
Discussion: Queer trending, 2016 to present: elected officials (Colorado governor and trans boom)

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Tammy Baldwin was the first (and currently the only) openly lesbian person in the United States Senate. She is the senior senator representing the state of Wisconsin.

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**Week 12 (Apr 22): Bisexuality**

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**Week 13 (Apr 29): Queer Race**
Huck & Jim (Charles Ray sculpture)

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**Week 14 (May 6): Contemporary & Future Queer Politics**
LGBTQ Politics in the Trump Era (Gender & Politics Special Issue)
**Internet and Social Media**
Young men who “need” porn, Grindr and pick-up apps, pornography, support groups and bullying *Can Drag Survive the Internet?* Thanks to the internet—and RuPaul—what was once a queer subculture has gone totally mainstream. [Here](#).

**Students**
*Fricke v. Lynch,* (491 F.Supp. 381 (1980))
*Glee,* UWO LGBTQ Resource Center, SAFE Training, Campus Student Groups
X-ref: Association cases
*Davis, Heath Fogg.* 2017. “Single-Sex Colleges and Transgender Discrimination: The Politics of Checking a “Male” or “Female” Box to Get into College” in *LGBTQ Politics* (ch. 30)

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**Week 15 (May 13): Final Assessments**
Exam, Course Evaluations, and Reflections
**OTHER TOPICS (TIME PERMITTING)**

*The Outlist* (HBO Documentary)
*Relatable*, Ellen DeGeneres (Netflix Comedy Special)
History of the Movement: After Stonewall (film)
*Milk* (film)
Queer Feminist Science Studies (on nature v. nurture, essentialism and constructivism)

**SEXUAL CITIZENSHIP**


**PUBLIC OPINION**

Flores, Andrew. (various articles TBD)

**NOTES ON PEDAGOGY**

I assume students have no prior coursework or training in queer politics and policy, although invariably some students will. Even where students have prior coursework and familiarity with these subjects, there are differences in students’ knowledge. I hope students will feel comfortable bringing to the discussion their own experiences and perspectives from other courses and life experiences. Because this course has no pre-requisites, I hope students who have prior coursework and experiences with queer subjects will be patient with those who have not.

I use the Socratic method of engagement, where instead of treating students as passive learners in an otherwise authoritarian classroom, students actively engage in conversation (democratically). Students, like citizens in a democracy, have essentially two choices: participate or not. Here, I provide incentive for students to participate by connecting the course grade to participation, knowing at the outset that requiring students to participate undermines a true democracy, which, in my view, includes the right not to participate, notwithstanding the “free-rider” problem that is pervasive in democracies. Still, I hope to foster a classroom where students not only feel comfortable participating, but also view participation as a responsibility. Student learning, like democracies, functions only when citizens participate. Therefore, while some students may view it as their right not to participate, we cannot address queer political, social, and legal issues until a sufficient number of citizens view it as our responsibility to speak, listen, raise questions, and engage sexual and gender complexities.

“Freedom of expression would not truly exist if the right could be exercised only in an area that a benevolent government has provided as a safe haven for crackpots. The Constitution says that Congress (and the States) may not abridge the right to free speech. This provision means what it says. We properly read it to permit reasonable regulation of speech-connected activities in carefully restricted circumstances. But we do not confine the permissible exercise of First Amendment rights to a telephone booth or the four corners of a pamphlet, or to supervised and ordained discussion in a school classroom.”