

# PS 346: QUEER POLITICS AND POLICY

University of Wisconsin, Oshkosh

Fall 2020

Class meets T/TH 1:20-2:50 on Collaborate

Ultra

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## Course Description:

What roles do sex, gender, gender identity, and sexual identity play in American politics? In what ways has domestic politics shaped the U.S. LGBT+ community? In this course, we will explore how sexual identities and ideologies 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.

## Course Objectives:

- Develop a better understanding of the many ways in which sexual identity plays a role in American politics, including: policy, public opinion, and participation.
- Connect research on sexual and gender identities to core topics in American politics, including: social movements, interest groups, legislative politics, executive-legislative relations, and federalism.
- Evaluate the state of political science literature on public opinion toward LGBTQ+ groups and public policies. What do we know, what do we only think we know?
- Develop and practice written and oral communication through presentations, classroom participation, and exams.
- Improve student research skills by developing a research design which contributes to an ongoing debate in the political science literature.
- Consider your own views on gender and sexual identities, and their relationship to politics.

## Required Text:

*LGBTQ Politics: A Critical Reader* (2017) edited by Marla Brettschneider, Susan Burgess, and Christine Keating

ISBN: 978-1-4798-3409-9

Additional course readings and resources will be available on Canvas.

## Course Requirements:

**Prior work:** The work you've already completed in this course will be *worth 15%* of your course grade. I'll receive input from Dr. Thomas on your grades to date.

**Readings Colloquium:** students will give a group presentation of 1-1.5 hours length to the class once during the course (*25% of course grade*). Each group will read four articles or book chapters, provided by the instructor, and then present that information to the class. Although group

members will need to coordinate their efforts for a successful colloquium, most of the evaluation will be individual. Further details will be provided in a separate handout.

**Reaction Papers:** Students will write 3 reaction papers, worth 15% of their course grade total. *Deadlines for these papers are listed in the course schedule.* Reaction papers should be one page, single spaced, and cover one of the two preceding week's topics (each student may choose which week they wish to write on). Reactions should engage major ideas, identify shortcomings of the literature, or attempt to synthesize what we know or don't know about the topic. While there is room to critique the authors and literature, these assignments are not pinion pieces.

**Exams:** There will be one exam in this class, worth *25% of your grade.* The exam will be distributed on December 16<sup>th</sup> and *due at 11:59pm on December 18<sup>th</sup>.* The final exam may incorporate themes or concepts covered throughout the course to make an argument about what we currently know and might expect will govern the politics and political movements of sexual identity in the U.S. over the next several decades.

**Attendance and participation:** The final portion of your grade in this class (*20% of your course grade*) is your attendance and participation. My lectures will be recorded and available to students, but the readings colloquiums may not (at the discretion of the presenters), so attending class, asking questions, and taking notes for use on the exam will be important.

For participation, I expect you to come to class prepared to work, to speak up and answer questions, and contribute substantively to class discussions. Most students come to the class with no prior experience with political science research or scholarly study of the LGBTQ+ community, therefore it is important that all students ask questions and participate in problem solving. There is no specific number of times you should talk, but you should make a concerted effort to be active and involved in the class.

If you are uncomfortable participating in class, or find it difficult to get a chance to speak, given our online format, you are welcome to participate on the discussion forums instead. For a post to "count" you should find an outside source—news article, academic article, etc. and connect it to class material, preferably for the content we are discussing that week. Does your article agree or disagree with what we're learning? Does it update or extend our knowledge? How? Be sure to include a link to your material in your post. Posts should be relevant to the week's material we are discussing. Each discussion forum will close on Sunday at 11:59pm. Students participating in class need not participate in the forums, but are welcome to.

**A note on civility:** Many of the topics in this course will lead to discussions which involve strongly held opinions or deeply personal content. Students are expected to remain respectful of others at all times in their speech and behavior. The larger goal for this class is to gain an understanding of the relationship between politics and sexuality in the U.S. all questions and comments should keep this goal in mind. Derogatory remarks will result in a reduction of the offending student's participation grade, repeat offenders will be asked to leave the class.

**Office Hours:** The Political Science Department uses Microsoft Teams (MS Teams) for holding office hours. This system is available to all UWO students. Faculty will be available during the hours noted on your syllabus.

When logging into MS Teams, look closely at the status symbols for your instructor. A green dot by the professor's icon (which may be their picture or their initials) means they are available. A red dot means they are busy.

Generally, you are able to join office hour meetings and talk openly in the forum or use the chat function freely. At times, your instructor may be in a private meeting with a student during office hours, and will mark my availability as "busy" (a red dot).

We hope that using MS Teams for office hours for all of our courses will help students become more accustomed to virtual office hours during the pandemic. *The main point to remember is that we are available to you. Please use our office hours freely and often. We are here to help.* Many faculty are also happy to set up meetings outside of my office hours if students have conflicts with the posted times.

**Expectations for Academic Honesty:** A college education is intended to develop your skills, knowledge, and confidence. Graded assignments are designed to work on these items. Thus, to gain the skills, knowledge, and confidence of a college-educated person all graded work is to be your own. When you are directed to work alone, an assignment or test must be done by you, its primary ideas are to be your own, and any outside materials should be dealt with properly (quoted when using someone's words, and cited when quoting or referencing them in any other way). When your teacher directs you to work in teams, the work is to be done by the team. More information can be found here: <https://uwosh.edu/politicalscience/wp-content/uploads/sites/14/2020/08/Academic-Honesty.pdf>

**Regrading:** I will be glad to take another look at a paper or test you feel is not graded fairly, with the following conditions: you must speak to me about it during my office hours or by appointment, you must wait 24 hours after the paper or exam is handed back, and you must tell me in writing why you think you deserved more points before the meeting. The reason for this is I would like for you to take the paper/exam home and carefully read and think over comments before we talk. If I feel your paper was graded unfairly, I'll change the grade in your favor, but I also reserve the right to lower your grade upon rereading the paper, if, after reevaluation, I think you received too high a grade.

**Note to Political Science Majors:** Political Science majors should take Political Methodology (245) in either their sophomore year or the first semester of their junior year. Political Science 245 is a prerequisite for the senior capstone, Political analysis (401), and cannot be taken concurrently. If you are currently a political science major or if you think you will be one of our majors in the future, it is important that you save your graded coursework from this class. If you have questions, please see me or any faculty member after class.

**Grievance statement:** The Department of Political Science is committed to offering you a high-quality classroom experience, and we take your feedback very seriously. If you have concerns about anything related to this course, assignments, or teaching method, you are encouraged to first speak with your instructor directly. If you are not comfortable speaking with the instructor, you are invited to speak with the Chair of the Department of Political Science, Dr. James Krueger. He can be reached at [kruegerj@uwosh.edu](mailto:kruegerj@uwosh.edu). Should he be unable to resolve your concerns, he will guide you to appropriate resources within the College of Letters and Science.

**Disclosure statement:** “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: <https://uwosh.edu/financialaid/consumer-information/>.”

**Other policies:** I check my email often, and I am happy to answer questions via email. However, please use proper grammar, punctuation, and communication when emailing your professor. Also, I am not able to answer questions about grades unless you are using your Oshkosh email address. All class announcements will be sent to your Oshkosh address.

**Reading Assignments:** Reading assignments are given in the course calendar in this syllabus (below). Assigned reading for each class day is listed below the topic for the class, and should be completed **before** class. I expect you to complete all of the readings in order to facilitate class discussion on that day’s topic. I reserve the right to quiz you if I feel you are not doing the reading ahead of time. Reading assignments are subject to change, and any change will be announced in class and on D2L.

### Course Calendar:

- Week 7: T, Oct. 20<sup>th</sup>: *(Re)Introduction to the course*
- Reading assignment: new syllabus, take stock of where you are
- TH, Oct. 24<sup>th</sup>: *History of LGB Life in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century*
- Reading assignment: : Pierceson chapter 2, Murib “GLBT as a Political Category”
  - Major Questions: How have the strategies and goals of LGBT movements changed over time? What were the major achievements and setbacks the movement faced?
- Week 8: T, Oct. 27<sup>th</sup>: *LGBTQ+ Identity and Quantitative Political Science*
- Reading assignment: Tadlock and Taylor “LGBTQ Research in Political Science”
- TH, Oct. 29<sup>th</sup> Colloquium 1: Voters and Morality Politics
- Reading assignment: 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)
  - **Thomas Papers Due by 5pm, Oct. 30<sup>th</sup>.**
  - Major Questions: What factors are necessary for creating a cohesive political identity? How do political scientists study the LGBTQ+ community? Do we have any confidence that a coherent political identity which encompasses the LGBTQ+ community exists?
- Week 9: T, Nov. 3<sup>rd</sup>: *Direct Action and Congressional Politics*
- Reading assignment: Pierceson, 61-5, Snell, Paul. 2017. “Equality in the House: The Congressional LGBT Equality Caucus and the Substantive Representation of LGBTQ Interests” in *LGBTQ Politics* (ch 17)
  - Major Questions: What is direct democracy? What has been the traditional role of the initiative with regard to LGBT rights?
- TH Nov. 5<sup>th</sup> Colloquium 2: Congress and Public Policy

- Reading assignment: Smith et al, “The B Isn’t Silent: Bisexual Communities and Political Activism”

Week 10: T, Nov. 10<sup>th</sup>: *LGBTQ+ Candidates for Public Office*

- Reading assignment: Pierceson Chapter 4 (65-78)
- Colloquium 3: Candidates and Elected Officials
- Major Questions: What are the possible effects of LGBT office holders on representation and public policy? How do LGBT legislators understand their role in educating others? What strategies do they employ to pass legislation? What about backlash and coalition-building?

TH, Nov. 12<sup>th</sup>: No Class – Social Science Division

- **Reaction Paper 1 due Sunday at 11:59pm.**

Week 11: T, Nov. 17<sup>th</sup>: *LGBTQ+ Rights and the Supreme Court*

- Reading assignment: Pierceson Chapter 5, Pew “Support for Same-sex Marriage grows”, Gallup “Same-sex couple adoption”
- Major Questions: What role has the Supreme Court played in influencing LGBT rights? What precedents did the Court use in reaching the *Bowers* decision? How has the Supreme Court’s attitude toward privacy, anti-sodomy laws changed since *Bowers*? Does this decision indicate a fundament shift in favor of LGBT rights by the Court? Why or why not?

TH, Nov. 19<sup>th</sup>: Colloquium 4: Marriage and Adoption

Reading assignment:

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2020/10/19/chase-strangios-victories-for-transgender-rights> (to listen), if link doesn’t work see Canvas for written version

Week 1B T, Nov. 24<sup>th</sup> Colloquium 5: *HIV/AIDS Crisis and Politics*

- Reading assignment: Price, Ricky J. 2017. “The Treatment and Prevention of HIV Bodies: The Contemporary Politics and Science of a Thirty-Year-Old Epidemic” in *LGBTQ Politics* (ch. 4), Kramer, “1,112 and Counting”
- Major Questions: How did the federal government and LGBT community respond to the AIDS crisis? What is the ‘new normal’ for those living with AIDS? What is the current state of U.S. AIDS policy?

- **Reaction paper 2 due Sunday at 11:59pm.**

**Thanksgiving Break November 25<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup>**

Week 12: T, Dec. 1<sup>st</sup>: *LGBT Issues at the State and Local and Global Levels*

- Reading assignment: Pierceson, Chapter 8, Fay “State Constitutional Amendments”, Riverstone-Newell “States block local policy innovation”, ILGA-RIWI Global Attitudes Survey 2017 pp. 6-12
- Major Questions: Which actors are most relevant to setting LGBT policies at the state level? How has the relationship between state and local governments evolved on LGBT issues?

TH, Dec. 3<sup>rd</sup> Colloquium 6: State and Local Politics

- Reading assignment: Fenway Institute “State Policies on Religious Exemption Brief”

- Week 13: T, Dec. 8<sup>th</sup>: *Intersectionality, Complicating our Understanding*
- Reading assignment: McIntosh “Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack”
  - Colloquium 7: Intersectionality
  - Major Questions: What is intersectionality? What does it mean for a multiplicity of identities to create overlapping privilege or marginalization? What examples have we seen throughout the course?

TH, Dec. 10<sup>th</sup>: No Class – Social Science Division

- **Reaction Paper 3 due Sunday at 11:59pm.**

- Week 14: T, Dec. 15<sup>th</sup>: *Evaluating LGBT+ Politics and Research 2018 and looking ahead*
- Reading assignment: Murib, “Trumpism, Citizenship, and the Future of the LGBTQ Movement”
  - Major Questions: What have we learned? What questions remain? What are the major needs for the LGBTQ+ community politically? In terms of research?
  - **Exam distributed Wednesday, Dec. 16<sup>th</sup>, Due Friday Dec. 18<sup>th</sup> by 11:59pm**