

POLITICAL SCIENCE 202
THE POLITICS OF SAME-SEX MARRIAGE
JANUARY 2008
M-F 12:30-2:20 in OLD MAIN 06

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OFFICE HOURS:
Mondays and Tuesdays 2:20-3:30 or by appointment
Old Main 204-A

Same-sex marriage is one of the most contentious political issues in contemporary American politics. In this course, we will examine this issue in depth as we wrestle with legal, political, and moral questions surrounding the debate. This course will provide a historical overview of the quest for legalized same-sex marriages and a framework for understanding the variety of opinions on this topic.

Warning: This course covers a topic that is a sensitive area to many people, and you will likely be offended at some point in the next four weeks. We will read, watch, and talk to people that have strong policy preferences regarding same-sex marriage. The purpose of this class, however, is not to argue for or against the legalization of same-sex marriage. Rather, the purpose of this class is to learn about the history of same-sex marriage policy in the U.S., to understand and evaluate the arguments surrounding the debate, and, most importantly, to use the topic of same-sex marriage to gain insight into institutional and political factors in American politics that impact the policymaking process. While you certainly do not have to agree with every argument raised in this class, I do expect you to be respectful towards the beliefs, experiences, and worldviews of those who hold a different opinion than you.

TEXTBOOKS & COURSE MATERIAL

- George Chauncey. Why Marriage? 2004.
- Craig Rimmerman and Clyde Wilcox. The Politics of Same Sex Marriage. 2007.
- Various readings available on Moodle on-line reserve (moodle.gac.edu)

GRADES AND ASSIGNMENTS

Daily Response Essays (50%): Each day before class, you will write a 1-2 page typed essay in response to the assigned readings. The purpose of these essays is to facilitate your engagement with the reading material and to help prepare you for the day's discussion. I will collect your essays each week to review and will also periodically ask to see them during class to ensure that you are prepared for the day. This means that 1) you should print out your essay each day and bring it with you to class and 2) that you will need to bundle your essays for the week to submit to me at the end of each week. Each essay should address the following three areas:

1. Provide a summary of the assigned readings. What was/were the main point/s? What argument/s did the author/s raise? To what thematic area of political science does the reading apply? This should comprise approximately one paragraph of your essay. If there are multiple readings for a particular day, you should summarize them in separate paragraphs.

2. Provide a critical analysis of the assigned readings. You may want to think about ways in which the readings fit together, ways in which the readings relate to current events you read or hear about in the news, ways in which the readings relate to films or speakers from class, or ways in which the readings relate to personal experiences you have had. I will also provide you with an optional writing prompt each day to help guide your analysis of the readings if you are stuck. This should comprise approximately two to four paragraphs of your essay. If there are multiple readings for a particular day, you should discuss the ways in which the readings relate to or contradict each other.
3. Raise questions for discussion or outline aspects of the readings or topics that were unclear. Identify concepts or arguments that were not clear. Formulate questions about the reading or about how the reading relates to other readings for the class to discuss. You should develop a minimum of one specific question for each reading assigned.

Your grade for these essays is based on 1) the thoughtfulness of your writing (you put time and thought into the essays), 2) your understanding of the arguments raised in the readings (you can correctly identify the main points made by the authors), 3) your ability to connect the arguments raised in the readings with other course material (you can show how the arguments fit complement or conflict with one another), 4) your ability to draw connections between current events and the readings (you are able to apply the information), 5) your willingness to fully engage in the questions raised in this course (you show evidence of challenging your own assumptions about the topic), and 6) the mechanics of your essays including presentation, spelling, grammar, etc. Assignments turned in after the deadline will be penalized 10% for each day or portion thereof they are late.

Group Project (30%): Along with a group of your choosing (within some limits discussed in class) you will propose, plan, and carry out a group project related to a topic raised in the course during the term. You have a great deal of freedom in selecting your project and the only guidelines are that the project must involve a public audience (i.e. people outside our class), must include some sort of public awareness, education, consciousness-raising, and/or dialogue, and can not solely advocate for or against the legalization of same-sex marriage. I am open to many different types of proposals so feel free to think creatively and to draw upon the strengths and experiences of your group members.

At the end of the term, your group will also be responsible for leading 50 minutes of class time. During that time your group should present an overview of your project (i.e. explain what you did and why), provide a critical assessment of your project (did the project accomplish the goals you laid out? Why or why not? Were there consequences you didn't anticipate?), and lead the class in a discussion and/or activity pertaining to the topic of your project.

Your grade for this project is based on 1) the thoughtfulness of your project in terms of audience, message, and impact; 2) the complexity and/or sophistication of your project; 3) the extent to which your project met the goals of the assignment; 4) the creativity of your project in terms of communicating your desired message and engaging your audience in the message; and 5) your final presentation and ability to involve the class in a lively and informative discussion and/or activity. Although I intend to award grades as a group, in the event there are significant variations in the amount of work some members of the group contribute compared with others, I reserve the right to award individual grades to reflect such activity.

Class Participation (20%): Your participation is an integral part of this class. Participation includes attending class on time (obviously, you can't participate if you're not here), completing the assigned

readings, contributing to class discussions with thoughtful comments, and listening attentively to everyone in the class. Here's what these things mean to me.

- I consider your completion of the assigned readings and daily response essays to be your ticket of admittance to class. You cannot participate meaningfully in a discussion of the readings if you have not completed them. In the event that you have not completed the readings and your daily response essay, I may ask you to leave and you will be counted as absent for the day.
- Your contribution to class discussion may come in many forms: active participation (leadership) in small group activities, asking questions about the course material in class, contributing meaningful comments and observations in large group discussions, answering questions I pose to the class, etc. If you are shy or intimidated about speaking in class, you will need to look for other ways you can contribute to the class discussion. You may also want to come and talk to me about this during my office hours so that I can give you suggestions for ways you can contribute to the class discussion.
- Listening is a valuable, and often underrated, skill. It is important that you learn to hear and respond to the comments made by your classmates as well as to my comments so you can look for ways you can engage with comments from a previous speaker. This means that you should not be talking when other people are making a comment. In this class, in particular, because of the nature of the subject matter, it is especially important that you are open to listening to ideas and arguments that you may disagree with. I certainly do not expect you to agree with every argument you hear in class, but I do expect you to listen with an open mind and to show respect to the speaker or author in both your verbal and nonverbal communication.

Your grade for this portion of the class is based on 1) your regular (i.e. more than once a day) contribution to class discussions, 2) the quality of your contributions to class discussions (making rude or obnoxious comments, even if you make them on a regular basis, will not positively affect your participation grade, 3) your regular attendance in class, and 4) your willingness to listen to your classmates and engage with ideas that may differ from your own.

COURSE POLICIES & GUIDELINES

Attendance: Attendance is mandatory and missing class will negatively affect your participation grade regardless of the reasons for the absence.

Academic Honesty: Gustavus Adolphus College standards for academic honesty apply in this class. If you have questions about these standards, please consult the College Honor Code. Your decision to remain enrolled in this class will serve as your agreement to abide by the following statement for each assignment you submit: *“On my honor, I pledge that I have not given, received, or tolerated others’ use of unauthorized aid in completing this work.”* Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Any thoughts or ideas that are not your own, even if you are not directly quoting a source must be attributed to their source through in text citations. Plagiarized work will be given a zero and cases will be reported to the dean.

Cell Phones: Please turn off your cell phone before class. If a cell phones rings during class time, the owner will be asked to bring a treat to share with the entire class during our next meeting to compensate us for the distraction.



Special Accommodations: If you have a physical, psychiatric/emotional, medical, or learning disability that may have an effect on your ability to complete assigned course work, please contact Laurie Bickett, the Disability Services Coordinator, in the Advising Center. She will review your concerns and decide with you what accommodations are necessary. I will be happy to work with you, upon receipt of documentation from her.

COURSE SCHEDULE

How to Read this Schedule: Each day of the term is listed below along with the topics we'll discuss and assignments. You'll notice a few categories of information listed below such as:

- **Topics:** The readings selected for this day are designed to help us gain a better understanding of these structures and features of American politics. This listing is designed to help you connect the issue of same-sex marriage with larger themes in American politics.
- **Read:** This section lists the chapters and/or articles that are required reading for the day. You should read these articles before class and include a summary and analysis of them in your daily response essay. (M) indicates that the article is on electronic reserve through Moodle.
- **In Class:** This section provides you with a sneak peak at some of the things we will do during class over the course of the term.
- **Prompt:** This section provides you with a question you can respond to in the analysis section of your response essay. You do not need to answer this question in your essay, but you are welcome to use it if you are having trouble finding something about which to write.
- **Due:** This section reminds you of assignments that are due to me by the end of that class period. Late assignments will be docked 10% for each day or portion thereof they are late.

Monday, January 7

Introduction and welcome

Tuesday, January 8: The politics of same-sex marriage

Topics: Public opinion, interest groups, elected officials, policymaking

Read: Rom, "The Politics of Same-Sex Marriage"

Prompt: Why is same-sex marriage such a controversial political issue?

In Class: Same-Sex Marriage: What Gusties Think (202 Alum)

Wednesday, January 9: Venues of policymaking in American politics

Topics: Federalism, judicial vs. legislative policymaking

Read: Worthen, "Who Decides and What Difference Does it Make? Defining Marriage in 'Our Democratic, Federal Republic'" (M); Chauncey, Preface

Prompt: Which of the venues is most appropriate for policymaking on same-sex marriage?

Thursday, January 10: Beginnings of the gay rights movement

Topics: Social movements, interest groups, civil rights

Read: Chauncey, Chapter 2

Prompt: In what ways does the gay rights movement resemble other civil rights movements?

Due: Reflection essays for week 1

Friday, January 11: Group project work day

Monday, January 14: The evolution of marriage

Topics: Morality policy

Read: Chauncey, Chapter 3; Jones “A Marriage Proposal: Privatize It” (M); Campbell and Robinson, “Religious Coalitions For and Against Gay Marriage”

Prompt: What do you view to be the most significant changes to the institution of marriage?

Tuesday, January 15: Marriage as a goal in the gay rights movement

Topics: Social movements, interest groups, civil rights

Read: Chauncey, Chapter 4; Ettlbrick, “Since When is Marriage a Path to Liberation?” (M); D’Emilio, “The Marriage Fight is Setting Us Back,” (M); Lopez “The Case Against Gay Marriage” (M)

Prompt: In what ways is the value of marriage as a goal contested?

In Class: “Tying the Knot”

Wednesday, January 16: An overview of same-sex marriage policymaking in the US

Topics: Same-sex marriage policy

Read: Chauncey, Chapter 5; Same-Sex Marriage Timeline (M)

Prompt: What do you see as the most significant events in the battle over same-sex marriage?

In Class: “Tying the Knot”

Due: Group project proposals (oral presentation to the class (5 minutes) and one page proposal to me)

Thursday, January 17: Same-sex marriage in the courts

Topics: State courts, judicial policymaking

Read: O’Connor and Yanus, “Till Death—Or the Supreme Court—Do Us Part;” D’Emilio, “Will the Courts Set Us Free?”

Prompt: Why did same-sex couples focus on achieving their goals of marriage through the courts rather than through legislation?

Due: Reflection essays for week 2

Friday, January 18: Group project work day

Monday, January 21: The Defense of Marriage Act

Topics: Congress, federalism, public opinion

Read: “The Defense of Marriage Act,” (M); Sekulow and Sunstein, “Same-Sex Marriage: Pro and Con” (M); Rimmerman, “The Presidency, Congress, and Same-Sex Marriage;” Wilcox, Brewer, Shames, and Lake, “If I Bend This Far I Will Break?”

Prompt: Does the DOMA violate the full faith and credit clause of the U.S. Constitution?

Tuesday, January 22: State legislation to ban same-sex marriage

Topics: Federalism, state and local politics, full faith and credit clause

Read: Collett, “Should Marriage Be Privileged?” (M); “Minnesota for Marriage Talking Points” (M); OutFront Minnesota, “The Debate About Marriage for Same-Sex Couples in the US and in Minnesota” (M); Lucas, “Same-Sex Marriage in the 2004 Election”

Prompt: How does the political debate over same-sex marriage in Minnesota resemble the response of other states?

Wednesday, January 23: Elections and state-level constitutional amendments

Topics: Campaigns, elections, voting, state and local politics

Read: Research on a state-level constitutional amendment and campaign (AL, AK, AR, CO, GA, ID, KS, KY, LA, MI, MS, MO, MT, NE, NV, ND, OH, OK, OR, SC, SD, TN, TX, UT, VA, or WI)

Prompt: How did the presence of the constitutional amendment on the ballot affect the election in the state you researched?

Due: 5 minute presentation (and visual aid) of a campaign related to a state-level law or constitutional amendment concerning same-sex marriage.

Thursday, January 24: Debating the federal marriage amendment

Topics: Constitution, Congress, federalism

Read: The Federal Marriage Amendment (M); President Bush, “President Discusses Marriage Protection Amendment,” (M); George and Tubbs, “Why We Need a Marriage Amendment” (M); Carpenter, “The Federal Marriage Amendment: Unnecessary, Anti-Federalist, and Anti-Democratic,” (M)

Prompt: What is the most and least persuasive argument about why we do or do not need a federal amendment defining marriage?

Due: Reflection essays for week 3

Friday, January 25: Group project work day

Monday, January 28: The mobilization of interest groups and political parties

Topics: Interest groups, political parties

Read: Shaiko, “Same-Sex Marriage, GLBT Organizations, and the Lack of Spirited Political Engagement;” Cahill, “The Anti-Gay Marriage Movement;” Website and argument of one of the interest groups involved in the debate over same-sex marriage

Prompt: What strategies used by the interest group you researched are most and least effective in helping them to achieve their policy goals?

Due: 5 minute presentation (and visual aid) related to an interest group involved in the debate over same-sex marriage

Tuesday, January 29: Rhetoric and framing in the same-sex marriage debate

Topics: Argument frames, agenda-setting, priming

Read: Tadlock, Gordon, and Popp, “Framing the Issue of Same-Sex Marriage;” Stanton and Maier, “Marriage on Trial” (M)

Prompt: What are the dominant argument frames in the debate over same-sex marriage?

Wednesday, January 30: Group presentations (Groups 1 & 2)

Thursday, January 31: Group presentations (Groups 3 & 4)

Friday, February 1: Concluding reflections

Due: Reflection essays for week 4