Anthropology 164

Research Seminar on Global Gay Rights Issues

Department of Anthropology
Pomona College

Instructor: Ralph Bolton Fall Semester 2000
Class: W. 6:30-9:00 p.m. Classroom: Hahn 214
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Course Description

This course deals with the movement for gay and lesbian rights during the Twentieth Century in the United States and abroad. For most of the past one hundred years, the claim to equal rights for homosexuals took a back seat to the larger struggles for civil rights based on race, ethnicity and sex. But in recent years, the gay rights movement has emerged as a major force in Western cultures, even displacing the other civil rights movements from center stage in the battle for civil and human rights. This course offers an examination of the birth and growth of the gay rights movement. Intermingled throughout the course will be attention to contemporary sites of contention, such as gays in the military, the right to marry, freedom from discrimination in employment and family formation, and protection against hate crimes and more subtle forms of gay-bashing. Current issues will be placed in their historical context. The political, legal, and sociocultural dimensions of the struggle will be addressed.

Textbooks

Loughery, John, The Other Side of Silence: Men's Lives & Gay Identities [$12.76]
Rimmerman, Craig A., ed., Gay Rights, Military Wrongs: Political Perspectives on Lesbians and Gays in the Military [$15.96]
Lumsden, Ian, Machos, Maricones, and Gays: Cuba and Homosexuality [$18.36]
Gross, Larry, Contested Closets: The Politics and Ethics of Outing [
Shilts, Randy, The Mayor of Castro Street: The Life and Times of Harvey Milk [$11.16]
Chasin, Alexandra, Selling Out: The Gay & Lesbian Movement Goes to Market
Mixner, David, Stranger Among Friends [$11.16]

Books are listed above in the order in which they are read during the course. All textbooks are available in paperback editions at Huntley Bookstore. Used copies of most of the texts are available. The books may also be purchased, of course, from an online book seller. The prices given above are those on Amazon.com. To cut costs, the instructor recommends that students consider purchasing books on a
shared basis, although many students will want copies of these books to retain for their personal libraries. The instructor will place copies of all required readings on two-hour reserve in Honnold Library.

Although the textbook readings in the course are extensive, students will be expected to go beyond the assigned readings to seek out information pertinent to the topics under consideration, for example by surfing the web.

Course Organization

As noted above, this is a reading intensive course. Students will be expected to read and be ready to discuss approximately one book per week. In addition, we will read some pertinent articles throughout the semester. The instructor will hand out these materials. Most weeks we will also see and discuss one or more films dealing with that week's topic. The course follows a seminar format, and most discussions will be student led. During the semester, each student will be responsible for leading one or more class discussions.

Each student will write a 12-page term paper which presents the results of an analysis of some issue dealing with gay rights. The paper topic is to be selected in consultation with the instructor. Students should select a topic no later than September 20 and not wait to begin research on the paper until the final weeks of the semester. Students will make a 10-minute oral presentation on their analysis to the class at the last meeting of the semester (December 6). Final drafts of the term paper will be due on November 15. Grade penalties will apply to papers turned in after this date.

Each student will be expected to write a review of one of the textbooks for posting on Amazon.com. The review should be submitted to the instructor before being sent out for publication. To count, the review must be posted on Amazon.com prior to December 1.

In addition, during the semester several short written exercises may be required, usually 1-3 pages and generally based on explorations on the web. Since considerable information on homosexualities and gay rights is now widely available on the World Wide Web, each student will be expected to browse on a regular (weekly) basis GLBT sites which provide news on gay communities around the world. Students should be prepared to report on such news in class each week. The Web may be an important resource, also, for obtaining information for the term paper.

Exams & Grades

There will be two mid-term exams in this course, one toward the middle and one near the end of the semester. These exams will include both objective questions (true-false, multiple-choice, and fill-in-the-blanks) and essays. Quizzes on the readings may be given if the instructor detects that students are not preparing adequately for class discussions. There is no final exam during exam week in this course.

In calculating grades in this course, the various components will count as follows:

25% First mid-term examination
25% Second mid-term examination
25% Term paper-written and oral presentations
25% Reports, quizzes, exercises and class participation

Student-Faculty Contact

Please note that the instructor welcomes interaction with students. He encourages students to take advantage of his office hours to meet with him, or, if that's not convenient, to make an appointment outside office hours. Communications via email or phone are also welcome. He will attempt to respond promptly to email messages.

The instructor may email information to students in the course. Students should check their email regularly. To construct his course address book, each student should send a message to the instructor the next time they log on to a computer. Put "Gay Rights" in the subject line and send to:

ProfessorBolton@aol.com

Websites of Major Human Rights Organizations

Dealing with Gay Issues:

The instructor will email these links to students. They should consider bookmarking them for future reference.

www.aclu.org American Civil Liberties Union
www.amnesty-usa.org Amnesty International USA
www.glaad.org Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation
www.victoryfund.org Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund
www.glsen.org Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network
www.hrc.org Human Rights Campaign
www.iglhrc.org Int'l Gay & Lesbian Human Rights Commission
www.ilga.org International Lesbian and Gay Association
www.lambdalegal.org Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund
www.nclrights.org National Center for Lesbian Rights
www.nglftf.org National Gay and Lesbian Task Force
www.now.org National Organization for Women
www.pflag.org Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays
www.pfaw.org People for the American Way
www.sldn.org Servicemembers Legal Defense Network

Anti-Gay Rights Websites:

wwwafa.net

American Family Association
www.americansfortruth.org Americans for Truth about Homosexuality
www.cwfa.org Concerned Women for America
www.eagleforum.org Eagle Forum
www.falwell.com Jerry Falwell Ministries
Course Outline: Topics & Assignments

Session 1. August 30 A Century of Oppression & Resistance: The Case of Oscar Wilde

Films: A Question of Equality: Hardwick Vs Bowers Case [20 min.]

The Trials of Oscar Wilde [123 min.]

Session 2. September 6 Repression on the Right: The Nazi Holocaust

Films: Bent [104 min.]

The Pink Triangle [33 min.]

Required Readings:

A. Richard Plant, The Pink Triangle: The Nazi War Against Homosexuals [entire volume].


E. Center for Constitutional Rights, "Promoting Lesbian and


Assignment: Go to the Web. Find a copy of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations). Read it and consider its implications for gay rights.

Session 3. September 13 The Birth of the Movement in America

Films: Before Stonewall [87 min.]
Silent Pioneers [30 min.]

Required Readings:
A. John Loughery, The Other Side of Silence (Introduction; 1-302). B.

Assignment: Go to the Web. Study the website of the gay rights organization assigned to you. Each student will be assigned a different organization. Write a 3-page summary statement on the goals and activities of the organization based on all the information you can find. Double-spaced. Be prepared to give a three- to five-minute oral presentation to the class.

Session 4. September 20 The Gay Rights Struggle: Strategies & Issues from Stonewall to the Present

Films: Out Rage '69 [55 min.]
Out of the Past [70 min.]

Required Readings:
A. Urvashi Vaid, Virtual Equality [entire volume]. B.
C. John Loughery, The Other Side of Silence (303-388). D.

Session 5. September 27 The Right to Serve in the Military

Films: Coming Out Under Fire [71 min.]
Hollow Liberty: U.S. Navy/Don't Ask, Don't Tell [25 min.]

Required Readings:
A. Craig Rimmerman, ed., Gay Rights, Military Wrongs [entire volume].

Session 6. October 4 Repression on the Left: Castro's Cuba

Films: Improper Conduct [110 min.]

Looking for a Space: Lesbians & Gay Men in Cuba [38 min.]

Required Readings:

A. Ian Lumsden, Machos, Maricones, and Gays: Cuba and Homosexuality [entire volume].


Session 7. October 11 The Outing Controversy

Required Readings:

A. Larry Gross, Contested Closets: The Politics & Ethics of Outing [entire volume].

B. GLP, Ch. 6, "The Lesbian and Gay Movement in Britain: Schisms, Solidarities, and Social Worlds," pp. 133-157

FIRST M I D - T E R M E X A M I N A T I O N

This examination will cover all of the readings, films and discussions in the course to date. 75 minutes

Session 8. October 18 Militancy & Community in San Francisco:

The 1970s and the Growth of Gay Power

Films: The Castro [86 min.]

The Times of Harvey Milk [87 min.]

Required Readings:

A. Randy Shilts, The Mayor of Castro Street [entire volume].
B. John Loughery, The Other Side of Silence (389-449).


Session 9. October 25 Representations/Misrepresentations:

Gays & the Media

Films: The Celluloid Closet [102 min.]

Off the Straight & Narrow [63 min.]

Seen Anything Good Lately?

Required Readings:


B. GLP, Ch. 8, "Gay and Lesbian Activism in France," pp. 184-213.


Session 10. November 1 Hate Crimes and Homophobia

Films: Assault on Gay America: Frontline [60 min.]

Culture Wars: Julio Rivera Murder [20 min.]

Required Readings: Explore the web for information on hate crimes and homophobia. No textbook readings.

Come prepared to discuss theories about the causes of homophobia and hate crime and one specific anti-gay hate crime.


Films: One Nation Under God [82 min.]
A Gospel of Hate: 20/20 on Fred Phelps [20 min.]

Culture Wars: Oregon Ballot Measure 9 [20 min.]

Required Readings:

A. Jack Nichols, The Gay Agenda [entire volume].


Session 12. November 15 The Right to Marry

Films: For Better or For Worse: Same-Sex Marriages in America [50 mins.] Because This Is About Love: A Portrait of Gay & Lesbian Marriage [28 min.]

Required Readings:


Assignment: Go to the Web. Explore sites that deal with gay marriage.

Learn all that you can about the topic.

Session 13. November 22 Gay Politics in the 1990's and Beyond

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NO CLASS MEETING ----THANKSGIVING

Required Readings:

A. Alexandra Chasin, Selling Out [entire volume].


Session 14. November 29 Second Mid-Term Examination

Discussion: We will discuss the readings for last week and this week during the first hour of class. The second hour will be devoted to the Second Mid-Term Examination.

Required Readings:


DUE DATES: EXAMS, WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS & ORAL REPORTS

13 September Web exercise on gay rights organization
20 September Selection of term paper topic
11 October First mid-term examination
15 November Term paper, final draft
29 November Second mid-term examination
1 December Book review posted on Amazon.com (allow 2 weeks)
6 December Oral report on research for term paper