

## Organizing for Gay and Lesbian Rights

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Welcome to Organizing for Gay and Lesbian Rights. This short course will provide a broad overview of the current state of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender rights in the United States, and organizing to achieve those rights. We will focus on legal rights particularly, and will use videos, outside speakers, lecture, and discussion to guide our investigation.

**Course Expectations:** Come to class having read the syllabi and all assigned readings.

### Course Requirements:

(1) Attendance at every session. You must be in class by 9 a.m. each day.

(2) Read the following:

Homophobia: A Weapon of Sexism, Suzanne Pharr, pages 1-26, 53-64

Read My Lips: Sexual Subversion and the End of Gender, Riki Anne Wilchins, Foreword, pages 63-71, 79-89, 201-221

Sexual Orientation and the Law, The Editors of the Harvard Law Review, pages 1-30, 93-150

(2) You have the option of completing one of two assignments:

A. **The Paper Option.** After completing all of the assigned reading and listening to the speakers, you may elect to write a 7 to 10 page paper on a topic selected by consultation with the professor

B. **The Web Option.** You may work individually or in groups of up to four to create a web page to help other students learn more about the topics that we have discussed in class. Your pages should be graphically engaging and contain information on one or more issues that were considered in the course. You must consult with the professor on your page.

All assignments must be handed in to me by 5:00 p.m. on April 1, 2001. There will be no exceptions. If you hand in your assignment past this date and time, you will receive one lower grade for each week past the due date.

### Additional Paper/Project Instructions

A. **The paper option** - A paper is a presentation of yourself and your ideas and one of the major ways that you will earn your grade in this class. Thus, I expect this paper to be researched thoroughly, well written, grammatically correct and SPELL CHECKED. After you do one draft of your paper, put it down, go outside for a walk, read a book. Then go back and read your paper aloud. What seems awkward to you will also seem awkward to me. Watch the length of your sentences and paragraphs. As a general rule, a three line sentence and full page paragraph are too long.

Pay attention to the flow of your paper. Include headings, if necessary, to guide the reader. Make sure that you adequately credit material that you get from other sources. Err on the side of over citing. Lifting someone's ideas, or their words, is plagiarism.

Watch out for common grammatical errors. My pet peeves are which/that and its/it's. If you don't know the difference, find out.

Form of paper:

Cover page

Body of Paper - Include Introductions and Conclusions

References - You should have at least 10 references to outside academic material. Newsweek, Time, and the like are not considered academic material, and should not be referenced unless you are making a point about mainstream culture.

You are to use standard 12 point font and one inch margins. References should be in standard form.

**B. The project option** - There are no guidelines for the project. Use your imagination. Your project must look like it took significant effort, and it must have my approval. If you have questions as you go along, please contact me either by telephone or email.

**Women and Politics Institute  
Organizing for Gay and Lesbian Rights**

**Saturday, February 24<sup>th</sup>**

9:00 - 9:30 Introduction to course

9:30 - 11:00 View movie "Before Stonewall"

11:00 - 12:00 The Science of Sexual Orientation

Speaker, Dean Hamer, geneticist at the National Institutes of Health, author of The Science of Desire, and Living With Our Genes, discoverer of "the gay gene"

12:00 - 12:15 Break

12:15 - 1:15 The Early Years

Speaker, Frank Kameny, long-time gay activist, founder of the local gay activist movement in 1961, coined the phrase "Gay is Good," instrumental in creating gay activism and militancy nationally

1:15 - 1:45 Lunch

1:45 - 2:45 The Current State of GLBT Politics Nationwide

Speaker, Tim McFeeley, Political Director, National Gay and Lesbian Task Force

2:45 - 3:00 Break

3:00 - 4:15 Legal Overview

4:15 - 4:30 Break

4:30 - 5:30 Legal Overview

**Sunday, February 25<sup>th</sup>**

9:00 - 9:45 Discussion of GLBT Organizations

9:45 - 10:45 The Current State of GLBT - related Federal Legislation  
Nancy Buermeyer, Deputy Director for Legislation, Human Rights Campaign

10:45 - 11:00 Break

11:00 - 12:00 Organizing Around Gender  
Speaker, Gina Reiss, Managing Director, Gender Pac, former Action Vice President  
for NJ NOW, and former Executive Director of NJ Lesbian & Gay Coalition

12:00 - 1:00 Lunch, view video, "For Love and For Life," by JEB (Joan E. Biren)

1:00 - 2:00 Organizing in Communities of Color and Faith Organizations  
Speaker, Jannette Williams, current Chair of the Board of Directors of the Whitman-Walker  
Clinic, former Co-Chair of the National Black Gay & Lesbian Leadership Forum, President of  
the Black Lesbian Support Group, member of the Board of Directors of the Mautner Project  
for Lesbians with Cancer

2:00 - 2:15 Break

2:15 - 3:15 Organizing in Communities of Color  
Speaker, Letitia Gomez, former Executive Director of National Latina/o Lesbian, Gay,  
Bisexual, and Transgender Organization (tentative)

3:15 - 3:30 Break

3:30 - 5:00 Legal Overview