

Fine Arts 114 – Tuesday and Thursday 10.15-11.35am

**Course Description:**

The course will require each student to develop a thesis, collect evidence supporting and refuting the thesis, and argue the thesis to its logical conclusion. As part of this, each student will develop ONE RESEARCH PAPER and REVISE IT TWICE in response to critiques offered by other students and the class instructor. The overall topic is marriage with a special consideration of the historical background and the changing political forces that generated the current debate in the 50 US states over same sex marriage and civil unions.

**Contacting Me:**

My e-mail is [s.barclay@albany.edu](mailto:s.barclay@albany.edu)

**Grading and Requirements:**

*Note: Assignments submitted after the due date will simply be graded as zero unless prior arrangements have been agreed to in writing by Prof. Barclay. Even if an assignment is graded zero, it still must be completed or you will be failed for all future assignments.*

<b>Requirement</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Work to Submit</b>	<b>Length</b>
Class begins		January 24 at 10.15am	None	
Area of Study	5%	January 29 by 10.15am	Email Message	1-2 Sentences
Thesis Statement 1	5%	February 5 by 10.15am	Attached Paper	2-5 paragraphs
Literature Review – Complete with all References	10%	February 26 by 10.15am	Attached Paper	3-7 pages
Thesis Statement 2 -- Revised	5%	February 28 by 10.15am	Attached Paper	2-5 paragraphs
<i>Power Point Presentation 1: Thesis and Literature</i>	5%	<i>February 28 or March 4 or March 6 (as scheduled)</i>	Attached PP File & Present in Class	<i>5-10 slides</i>
Critique of Two Students' Thesis Statement -- anonymous peer review	5%	March 2 by 10.15am or March 6 by 10.15am or March 8 by 10.15am (as scheduled)	Two Separate Attached Papers	1-2 pages each
<i>Power Point Presentation 2 Evidence for &amp; against thesis</i>	10%	<i>March 18 by 10.15am</i>	Attached PP File	<i>12-15 slides</i>
First Paper Submission – Complete Paper with all References	20%	April 1 by 10.15am	Attached Paper (Word, WP, RTF, or PDF)	20-30 pages
Written Critique of Two Students' First Paper -- anonymous peer review	10%	April 8 by 10.15am	Two Separate Attached Papers	2-3 pages each
Revised Paper Submission 1: Complete Paper with all References after 1 <sup>st</sup> Revision	10%	April 18 by 10.15am	Attached Paper (Word, WP, RTF, or PDF)	20-30 pages
Written Critique of Two Students' Revised Paper-- anonymous peer review	10%	April 29 by 10.15am	Two Separate Attached Papers	1-2 pages each
Revised Paper Submission 2: Complete Paper with all References after 2 <sup>nd</sup> Revision	5%	May 15 – 3pm	Attached Paper (Word, WP, RTF, or PDF)	20-30 pages

**Class Meetings:**

There will be a limited number of class meetings throughout the semester. The list of required classes and their purpose is below.

On days not listed as a required class, the instructor will be available at the scheduled class time in Humanities 016.

*Note: If you miss two required classes OR you fail to show prepared for your scheduled presentation, your course grade will be an automatic failure unless you have a formal Doctor's note or similar excused absence.*

<b>Purpose of Class</b>	<b>Classes REQUIRED for ALL Students to Attend</b>
Introduction	January 24
	January 29
Area of Study & Discussion of a Thesis	January 31
Discussion of Thesis Statement 1	February 5
Discussion of Literature Review	February 7
Discussion of References & Citations	February 11
	February 28
Power Point Presentations of Thesis and Literature	March 4 March 6
Discussion of Evidence	March 11
Discussion of Requirements of First Paper	March 13
Discussion of Critique	April 1
Discussion of Requirements of Revised Paper	April 8
Discussion of Requirements of Final Paper	April 29

**Cheating and Plagiarism:**

You are free to work with other students in preparing and thinking about material on the same or similar areas of study. You can even divide up the workload in reading articles and book. BUT, each student must submit their own original paper on their chosen thesis.

Another student cannot write or copy all or part of your submitted papers unless so acknowledged. Such incidents will be defined as cheating.

Similarly, **any** example of copying of material or ideas belonging to another person without correct reference to the original author by citation (and quotation marks, if directly quoting) will be treated as plagiarism.

All work submitted in the class must also be submitted to *turnitin.com* in order to be awarded a grade.

In any case of cheating or plagiarism, you will be failed for the entire course and your case will be forwarded to Judicial Affairs with a request for the maximum sanction as allowed by the rules of the University (which currently is an automatic one year suspension and a permanent note on your academic transcript). Under the University rules, any incident of plagiarism **MUST** be reported to the Dean and the respective faculty member is required to render a punishment.

**Paper Topic:**

The topic is same sex marriage and civil unions, but there are many areas of potential study within that topic. Each student must select **one** area of study from the list below. This area of study will be the focus of their final research paper in the class and they will be required to present their findings in an oral presentation before the class. ***Please note that these areas of study are not thesis statements in themselves and there are many possibly theses within each area of study. IT is up to you to choose an appropriate thesis within your chosen area of study.***

*Areas of Study:*

- a) HISTORY:
  - a. Historical role of the federal government (including courts) in marriage
  - b. Historical changes in coverture and marriage in the states
  - c. Racial miscegenation and marriage in the states
  - d. Polygamous religious marriages in the states
  - e. The changing public support for pre-marital sex
- b) FEDERAL GOVERNMENT:
  - a. The Federal Government and the “resolution” of polygamous marriage issue
  - b. The Federal Defense of Marriage Act of 1996
- c) STATE POPULAR ACTIONS
  - a. Statewide popular propositions, initiatives, and same sex marriage
  - b. Constitutional Amendments on same sex marriage – state and federal
- d) LOCAL LAW
  - a. The Power of Mayors and Local Officials over marriage
- e) MARRIAGE:
  - a. Marriage and state residency rules in the 50 states
  - b. Marriage and
  - c. Marriage and state health requirements in the 50 states
  - d. Explaining the declining position of heterosexual marriage in the 50 states: 1970-2007
  - e. The social status accorded marriage 1960-2007
  - f. The social role of legal alternatives to marriage
  - g. The impact of changing adoption and custody standards on same sex marriage
- f) COURT CASES:
  - a. Explaining the first wave of same sex marriage litigation: 1970-1980
  - b. Explaining the second wave of same sex marriage litigation: 1991-2006
- g) STATES:
  - a. Explaining the changing legal position of each state re same sex marriage in their own state
  - b. Explaining the changing legal position of each state re same sex marriage celebrated in state
  - c. The changing relationship of conjugality, impotence, and procreation to marriage in the states
  - d. Explaining changing patterns of co-parenting adoption, general adoption, and sexual orientation
  - e. Marriage and desired/undesired reproduction
  - f. Explaining changing patterns of the legal discussion of family structure and marriage
  - g. Explaining the removal of consensual sodomy statutes
  - h. Domestic partnerships as the steps to marriage
- h) LGBT ISSUES:
  - a. Explaining the division over same sex marriage in the lesbian and gay rights groups
  - b. Changing demographics in the lesbian and gay communities
  - c. Changing political power in the lesbian and gay communities
- i) SOCIAL FORCES:
  - a. State population demographics and same sex marriage: 1970-2006
  - b. Public opinion and same sex marriage (state and federal over time)
  - c. Changing interest group tactics by lesbian and gay rights groups
  - d. Changing media coverage of same sex marriage
- j) LAWYERS:
  - a. LAMBDA, GLAD, other groups, private lawyers and same sex marriage
  - b. Alliance Defense Fund and same sex marriage

- k) SUPPORT:
  - a. Interest groups support for same sex marriage
  - b. Partisan support for same sex marriage and civil unions
- l) OPPOSITION:
  - a. The political impact of religious groups' opposition to same sex marriage
  - b. The electoral impact of religious groups' opposition to same sex marriage
  - c. The legal impact of religious groups' opposition to same sex marriage
- m) RELATED ACTIONS:
  - a. Domestic Partnerships and same sex marriage: 1970-2006
  - b. Anti-Discrimination and same sex marriage: 1970-2006
- n) EXTERNAL FACTORS:
  - a. Same sex marriage in the Canadian provinces
  - b. Same sex marriage in the EU
  - c. Same sex marriage in South Africa
- o) IMMIGRATION
  - a. The status of same sex marriage partners in matters of migration
- p) ELECTIONS:
  - a. The impact of same sex marriage as a federal election issue 1990-2006
  - b. The political impact of same sex marriage as a state election issue 1990-2006

## **Structuring Your Thesis Paper:**

### **A) Short Introduction (up to 2.5 pages)**

In this section, you are simply introducing the main ideas in a very, very brief format in order to offer the reader a glimpse of the topic, what you intend to argue, how it differs from the way it has been approached in the past, how you intend to do that, and why they should care. You are basically outlining your paper in brief with a “roadmap” to both entice the reader to read further in your paper plus offering the reader reasons for taking the time to read the paper.

- a. Very Briefly
  - i. Outline the current approach to the topic
  - ii. Outline your thesis (or primary argument)
    1. How it differs from how we currently approach topic
    2. How you will show your approach is better
  - iii. Incorporate the reason that the reader should care about the topic you are writing on.
    1. Maybe use a striking example

### **B) Traditional Argument (up to 5 pages)**

In this section, outline the approach to the topic by other authors (or, if you are using court cases, the judge’s court opinions). You should reference these works (with appropriate citations) based on the dominant themes across these authors or cases, rather than simply outlining one author after another. Several authors may address a single theme. Using the various authors who have contributed ideas in this area, try to show how each theme has developed intellectually to the present and the range of approaches to it. Rather than give every idea offered by each author, use only the parts of the literature that are relevant to your argument (including if they challenge it in any way). Some themes might be about the various assumptions or ideas inherent in current aspects of the literature (as in the academic articles or court opinions) on this topic. Approach the ideas in this section as though the reader begins with no prior knowledge of the topic.

- a. Lay out the 4 or 5 key themes in the current academic literature or cases
  - i. To find these themes
    1. Think about the assumptions in the current approach
    2. Think about the main arguments used by several authors
    3. Think about different ways they offer evidence for their arguments and why
  - ii. Lay the themes out in logical steps
- b. Link these themes together to reveal the traditional way that prior authors (or judges if using cases) have approached your topic.

### **C) Your Thesis (up to 3 pages)**

In this section, outline your thesis (or primary arguments) in detail. Divide your larger arguments into the smaller arguments that compose it. Show how these come together to build your argument. Demonstrate how it differs from the traditional approach to this topic. Show how our understanding would change if we subsequently used your approach to consider the topic.

- a. Lay out your thesis
  - i. For thesis
    1. Think about the primary argument you are making
      - a. What are the components of that argument
        - i. Think about the assumptions of your argument
        - ii. Think about the consequences of your argument
      - b. Break it down into these secondary arguments
        - i. Think how they differ from traditional argument on this topic
    2. Build these together into a coherent discussion of your approach to the topic
- b. Show how it changes our overall understanding of the topic

### **D) Evidence (up to 14 pages)**

In this section, with direct reference to your thesis and the traditional argument, reveal evidence that supports and challenges your thesis. And then argue how this evidence should convince us that your thesis is more consistent with the evidence than is the traditional argument. Evidence may come in many forms from historical evidence, judges’ words in cases, statistical evidence etc. If the evidence supports your thesis, explain how it supports the arguments in your thesis. If the evidence challenges your thesis, explain in detail why it does not reject your thesis – that is, explain how this evidence can exist yet not simply convince me that the traditional argument is a better explanation of the topic. If it could support either your thesis or the traditional approach, tell the reader that and explain why you think it offers support for your idea. Remember, you must also deal with possible explanations for the same evidence that equally explain the result – known as alternative rival hypotheses.

- a. Lay out the evidence in detail
  - i. Use
    1. Historical evidence (including chronology of events) and/or
    2. judge’s words in court opinions and/or
    3. words of laws, legislative bills, and/or
    4. words of legal, political, or social actors and/or
    5. behavior of legal, political, or social actors and/or
    6. actions of legal, political, or social actors and/or
    7. comparison across events or times or places and/or
    8. statistical comparisons and/or
    9. case studies
    10. etc.....

- ii. Consistently relate it back to
  - 1. the smaller arguments that together constitute your thesis
  - 2. the smaller arguments that together constitute the traditional approach
    - a. Show how it supports or challenges your thesis
      - i. If supports, how it supports
      - ii. If challenges,
        - 1. explain how it does not reject your thesis (usually through distinguishing its focus or methodology) or
        - 2. offer explanation why it is really consistent with your argument (usually based on assumptions)
    - iii. If supports both your argument and traditional argument,
      - 1. explain how to the reader
      - 2. explain why it offers support for your argument despite this
- 3. Deal with alternative rival hypotheses
  - a. Alternative explanations that fit same evidence
  - b. Explain why your thesis fits evidence better

**E) Why your thesis is a better general explanation than the traditional argument (up to 4 pages)**

In this section, step back from the details and lay out in a general way the various ways, based on the results of looking at the evidence, that your thesis offers a better means to understand the topic. You are moving your reader from the details and sub-arguments to the larger ideas in your thesis. Think about the consequences of your thesis if adopted as the dominant understanding by scholars looking at this topic. Your argument is why we should adopt your approach.

- a. Lay out the various reasons that the reader should adopt your understanding of the topic
  - i. Think about
    - 1. Your arguments in the original sections
    - 2. How it better explains the evidence
  - ii. Recognize and respond effectively to the theoretical or evidentiary weaknesses in your theory
- b. Lay out the consequences of your thesis
  - i. Explain how it would change our approach to the topic
  - ii. Tell us why we should consider this difference important

**F) Conclusion (up to 2 pages)**

In this section, you should return to the ideas raised in the introduction and lay out in very, very brief how you have created a better understanding of the topic. Highlight any major consequences of such action. Offer insight into any aspects left unexplained by the current available evidence. Finally, propose future research in this area to support your findings.