

EDUC 318 / WS 318 / PSY 480
Spring 2006 / 3 Units

Gay & Lesbian Issues in K-12 Schools

Eric Rofes
Associate Professor of Education

Location of Class	UANX 150
Class Date & Time	Tuesdays: 4:00-6:50 p.m.
Professor's Office	HGH 209
Office Hours	By appointment; also Tuesdays & Wednesdays, 1:30-3:00
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Postal Address	Dept. of Education, HSU, 1 Harpst Street, Arcata 95521

Class Requirements, Deadlines & Grading

Your final grade in this class will be determined by assessments in four key areas:

1. **Class Attendance and Participation** (20%)

You are expected to attend every class session, including the weekend field trip to San Francisco. You are expected to arrive in class on time and depart class only when the session is completed. You are permitted one absence without your grade being affected. Each additional absence moves your grade in this category down 1/3 of a grade (for example, from B+ to B). Three late arrivals or early departures equal one absence. Please notify the professor in writing or by email (not in a face-to-face conversation) that you will have to miss a class or arrive late / leave early, so he might plan accordingly. Please consult other students--your peers--to find out what you missed in class and to photocopy any handouts. If additional questions emerge after this consultation, see the professor. This portion of the grade also will evaluate the frequency and quality of your participation in class and your ability to demonstrate significant recall and analysis of the class readings.

2. **Book Presentation** (20%)

You will choose one additional book to read that focuses on the topics highlighted in this course. In most cases this book will come from a recommended list distributed by the professor. You will be asked to work with a small group of students to prepare

a 40-minute lesson that you will teach to our class during the second half of the semester. The team's work will be evaluated and graded based on four factors: (1) the team's ability to convey key information or "learning" from the book to our class; (2) The team's ability to link the book to other themes, readings, and issues discussed in the class; (3) The team's ability to engage and motivate students to participate in the lesson. A worksheet will be distributed about this assignment.

3. **Conference Journal (20%)**

You will be expected to register for one of the three conferences below and attend three workshops related to LGBT issues at it:

- North Coast Education Summit (February 2-5)
- HSU Diversity Conference (March 3-4)
- Q-Fest: Multicultural Queer Film Festival (March 23-25)

You will be asked to record your reflections on these three workshops/events in journal format and link them whenever possible to our course readings and class discussions. A specific instruction sheet will be distributed for this assignment. The length of your journal should be 5-7 pages. Due date: two weeks after the conference

4. **Final Examination (40%)**

There will be a final examination for this class that will focus on the course lessons, readings, videotapes, and discussions. You will receive a study sheet several weeks prior to the exam. Please note that the final exam will be one of the primary tools I will use to assess whether you have understood and retained our course readings.

Overview

This class digs into the policy and pedagogical issues related to the full participation of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people of diverse races, classes, and ethnicities in K-12 schools in America.

- In what ways are schools in different communities and locations responding to openly LGBT students, some coming out as early as the fourth grade?
- What happens when LGBT teachers assert the right to be openly LGBT in the classroom?
- What arguments are made by conservative groups that aim to keep LGBT people and issues out of public classrooms?
- At what age is it okay to talk to children about LGBT issues? What factors do you consider when answering this question?
- In what ways have queer communities organized to participate in public education?

This course will tackle a range of issues, including the harassment of openly LGBT students and gender nonconforming children; the formation of gay-straight alliances in

schools; coming out strategies of teachers; inclusive curricular materials; and ways

today's LGBT youth might be different from an earlier generation of youth. While the issues discussed may be of a controversial policy nature, one of the aims of this class is to support people who are preparing to become teachers as they create inclusive classrooms, supportive schools, and cultures that truly value participatory democracy.

The course is focused on K-12 public schools, however the assignments might be adapted to fit with institutions of higher education, outdoor and environmental education, private and parochial schools, and popular education.

Course Readings

This course has six required texts (3 are small books which are quick reads) plus a course reader. Most of these are hard-to-find small press books, so please begin your search now at our bookstore, but also consult Amazon.com and other online sources. Additional readings may be handed out, put on reserve, or assigned in class.

Bottom line--> Students are expected to be prepared to discuss the week's assignment in class. The required texts are:

- *In the Time of the Right: Reflections on Liberation*, by Suzanne Pharr (Chardon Press, 1996)
- *Homophobia: A Weapon of Sexism*, by Suzanne Pharr (Chardon Press, 1997 or Women's Project, 1988)
- *Socrates, Plato and Guys Like Me: Confessions of a Gay Schoolteacher*, by Eric Rofes (Alyson, 1985)--This book will be available on Mooglee for you.
- *Troubling Intersections of Race and Sexuality: Queer Students of Color and Anti-Oppressive Education*, by Kevin Kumashiro (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2001)
- *The New Gay Teenager*, by Rich Savin-Williams (Harvard University Press, 2005)
- *Revolutionary Voices*, edited by Amy Sonnie (Alyson, 2000)

There will also be a course reader prepared for the class with additional articles and academic studies.

A copy of each of the required texts will be placed on reserve in the library if requested.

Websites of Interest

Journals:

- Journals in the field of education: <http://www.library.upenn.edu/resources/ej/ej-education.html> (remove space after http:)
- *Education Week*: <http://www.edweek.org> (remove space)
- *Rethinking Schools*: <http://www.rethinkingschools.org>
- *Teaching Tolerance*: <http://www.splcenter.org/teachingtolerance/tt-index.html>

Websites (Oppositional):

- Family Research Council: www.frc.org
- Heritage Foundation: www.heritage.org
- Traditional Values Coalition: www.traditionalvalues.org
- Concerned Women of America: www.cwfa.org
- Family Research Institute: www.familyresearchinst.org
- Fred Phelps & God Hates Fags: www.godhatesfags.com

Websites (Supportive):

- Lambda Legal Defense & Education Fund: www.lambdalegal.org → issues → youth & schools
- Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Educators Network: www.glsen.org
- Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays: www.pflag.org
- Gay-Straight Alliance Network: www.gsanetwork.org
- National Lesbian and Gay Task Force: www.ngltf.org → issues → schools
- Children's National Medical Center: www.dcchildrens.com/gendervariance
- National Center for Lesbian Rights: www.nclrights.org
- Harvey Milk School & Hetrick-Martin Institute: www.hmi.org

Special Notes

- An e-mail list will be created for this class. Students are expected to check their e-mail accounts at least once every two days. This is a course requirement.
- The use of personal cell phones and beepers while class is in session is discouraged. If an emergency arises and you must have your technology turned on, please notify the class during opening announcement period of potential disturbance.
- The use of standard, grammatically correct English in your writing and speaking is key to your success in this course. If you need assistance with your writing, please visit the university's Writing Center, seek help from classmates and friends, or visit the instructor during office hours. Please take seriously this emphasis on English-language skills. Any paper that includes many errors or is not carefully proofread and edited will receive a maximum grade of C.

- Students are urged to attend office hours throughout the semester to discuss topics raised in the class, or seek help with assignments, study skills, academic or other matters. If scheduled times are not convenient, I am happy to schedule additional times to fit your schedule.
- Students with disabilities who will be taking this course and may need disability-related classroom accommodations are encouraged to check-in with me as soon as possible.
- Students are responsible for information about academic dishonesty and plagiarism as stated in the HSU Catalogue.
- Visitors are welcome to this class. Food and beverages are welcome. If you have friends who might benefit from joining us for a specific session, please bring them along and introduce them during the opening announcements.

Assignments are due on the announced date unless alternate arrangements have been made at least 48 hours in advance of the due date. Otherwise, late assignments will have a full grade deducted for every two days they are late.

Diversity and Common Ground Objectives

This course qualifies as a Diversity and Common Ground course at HSU. It includes the following core objectives and is designed for students to:

- Study how various cultural groups have defined their visions of self and other, and of the relationships between self and other;
- Evaluate the complexity and fluidity of social identities, particularly with respect to the intersections of class, ethnicity, disability, gender, nationality, and so on;
- Understand how cultural differences and identities founded in such categories as age, race, sexuality and so on are produced and perpetuated through a variety of social, cultural, and disciplinary discourses (e.g. literature, popular culture, science, law, etc.);
- Become aware of the causes and effects of structured inequalities and prejudicial exclusion rooted in race, class, gender, etc., and to elucidate broader questions of bias and discrimination as they relate to the exercise and distribution of material and cultural power and privilege.

This course is also an elective in the Multicultural Queer Studies minor, and has been used as a capstone class for Psychology.

Gay & Lesbian Issues in School

Schedule of Topics and Readings

Date	Topic	Assignments
January 17	Course Orientation: The Basics: Homophobia	Pharr: <i>Homophobia: A Weapon of Sexism</i>
January 24	Homophobia & the Right	Pharr: <i>In a Time of the Right</i> : TBA
January 31	Critiquing Teacher Narratives #1	Pharr: <i>In a Time of the Right</i> : TBA Rofes: <i>Socrates</i> : TBA Reader, Article A & B
February 2-5		North Coast Education Summit 2006
February 7	Critiquing Teacher Narratives #2	Rofes: <i>Socrates</i> : TBA Reader, Article C & D
February 14	Anti-Gay Activism in Schools #1	Website Reading #1
February 21	Anti-Gay Activism in Schools #2	Website Reading #2
February 28	<i>Movie Night!</i>	Reader, Article E & F
March 3-4		Diversity Conference
March 7	Queer Youth Narratives	Savin-Williams: ix-120
March 14		Spring Break
March 21	Critiquing Queer Youth Narratives	Savin-Williams: 121-248 Reader, Article G & H
March 23-25		Queer Film Festival
March 28	Queer Youth of Color & Multicultural Education	Kumashiro: ix-104
April 4*	Race, Gender, Sexual Orientation in Schools	Kumashiro: 105-214
April 11	Books for Children with LGBT Parents	<i>Revolutionary Voices</i> : ix-90 Reader, Article I & J
April 18	Gay-Straight Alliances	<i>Revolutionary Voices</i> : 91-158 Reader, Article K & :L
April 25	Q-Focused Schools	<i>Revolutionary Voices</i> : 159-236; Reader, Article M & N
May 2	Course Wrap-Up	Final Examination

*Extended Class: Movie Night till 9:00 p.m. Makes up for May 9th class: no meeting.

