

Professor Ron Buckmire
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Course Description

Beginning with the era of Barack Obama's birth in the early 60s, we will focus specifically on how notions of WHO can marry as well as the cultural, religious, legal and societal significance of marriage, have changed as the country enters the era of President Obama. We shall examine the fight for equal citizenship and equal marriage rights for LGBT Americans, commonly known as the "gay rights movement." This course is also an introduction to the concept that gender, race, sex and sexuality (among other aspects of one's identity) are not biological but are *social* constructions. Our texts will include academic articles, court cases, popular media pieces and moving images. All students in this class will be using Web 2.0 tools such as Blogger and Twitter to facilitate their development as both consumers and producers of intellectual content. A learning outcome of the course will be the development of elementary web publishing skills. No previous knowledge is required and technological support will be provided

Course Objectives

- 1) Students shall become proficient with basic web 2.0 tools (Blogger, Twitter), including the ability to produce web content themselves
- 2) Students shall be able to make evidence-based written arguments on topics related to gender, race and gay rights (broadly defined).
- 3) Students shall become familiar and conversant with the recent history and current news about the struggles for equal rights based on race, gender, sexual orientation and gender identity in the United States.

Course Requirements

The First Year Core Seminar standardized requirements are distributed as follows:

Four position papers 3-4 pages max	(40 points)
Participation (Online & Offline)	(15 points)
One final 5 page position paper worth 20 points	(20 points)
One Mid-Term Exam	(10 points)
One (cumulative) Final Exam	<u>(15 points)</u>
	Total = 100 points

Grading Scale: for A= 93 %; B= 83-86 %; C =73-76%; D= 63-66%

Participation:

A central aspect of this course is participation, in class and online. The minimum level of online participation that I expect is by the end of the semester you will have:

100 posts to Twitter (called “tweets”) using the “#csp19” hashtag
50 posts to your blog (at least 50 words long)
50 comments to your class colleagues’ blogs

In order to participate fully in class you need to attend regularly, and be prepared to discuss the readings when you are in class. Although class attendance is not mandatory, I will notice if you are not there and evaluate your participation grade accordingly!

Extra Credit Opportunities: Students can obtain up to a maximum 5 points of extra credit in the online component by exceeding the minimum number of tweets and blog posts by 100%. There may also be extra credit available on Exams.

The Papers:

The papers in this class are analytical. They must all have a thesis (position/analysis/argument) that persuades the reader with evidence. You offer evidence by including (and citing) facts from various sources, such as the readings, lectures, visual media observations and The Web. The point of your thesis is to persuade the reader with evidence. I will not accept late papers unless you have made an arrangement with me *prior* to the due date or you have a written medical excuse. Late papers will be docked one letter grade per day. Failure to hand-in a required paper will result in a failing grade in the class.

Plagiarism:

Occidental College students have a long tradition of upholding the highest standards of academic integrity. Increasingly, however, students are either purposely or accidentally plagiarizing works that they find on the web. As an Occidental College faculty member, I am required to report any suspected cases of plagiarism to the judicial examiner and will not hesitate to do so.

For more information on plagiarism please see this link: <http://www.oxy.edu/x8000.xml>

Students with Disabilities:

It is the policy of Occidental College to make all possible reasonable accommodations to allow students with disabilities to participate fully in all classes. If you feel that you have specific disabilities that may impact your participation in the course feel free to discuss these issues with me, or Magen Todd (Disabilities Specialist) at the Center for Academic Excellence, 323-259-2849. These discussions will remain confidential.

Required Text:

Diane Hacker’s, *A Writer’s Reference* is required by the First-Year Core program. You are in college now, and so it is up to you to read it and use it independently of my lectures. I will go over only C5. Use Hacker when you are drafting and writing your papers, and when you are trying to understand my written comments.

Most of the readings for the course will be from articles available electronically (on the Moodle site)

Exams:

There will be a mid-term exam scheduled on Wednesday October 28 and a Final Exam scheduled on Monday December 14 (1-4pm).