SAME-SEX MARRIAGE POLICY
PRE-TRIP ASSIGNMENTS

WHAT TO DO:
For all parts below, complete the assigned readings, then utilize those readings to answer the questions related to them. All assigned readings may be found on the Pre-Trip Assignments page of the trip’s Website.

HOW TO SAVE AND SEND:
Make sure to save all typed responses as an MS Word 97-03 document if at all possible. (Do not save as a .docx file, please; if MS Word is not available, save in .rtf format.) E-mail all responses to the trip address prior the day of departure. The in-trip assignments below will be re-organized along with Prof. Golden’s on a separate page with relevant due dates.

CONTENT AND LENGTH:
In constructing your responses, be brief and concise, making sure to fully answer each item. Some items only need a sentence or two, while others should need no more than a paragraph or two. As you write, be certain to demonstrate that a) you have read the assigned articles, and b) you can analyze, integrate, and evaluate the information within those sources.

PART A – BACKGROUND AND GENERAL INFORMATION

Assigned Readings:
- Various selections from NCSL Website, “Overview, timeline, and laws on same-sex marriage” National Conference of State Legislatures (www.ncsl.org), April, 2010
- Various sources, “General information on same-sex marriage”

Pre-Trip Questions:
A1. What are the major events related to the efforts to legalize same-sex marriage in the United States? Which of these events have been most influential?
A2. What is the Defense of Marriage Act, what are its provisions, and how does it affect states?
A3. Where is same-sex marriage legal, and where has same-sex marriage explicitly been prohibited? What are the laws in California and Washington state? What does federal law say?
A4. What are the differences between marriage, civil unions, and domestic partnerships? Why does this matter?
A5. What are the different ways in which proponents have tried to get same-sex measures passed, and which method has generally been most successful?
A6. What are the different ways in which opponents have tried to make same-sex marriage illegal, and which method has generally been most successful?

In-Trip Question:
A1: In presentations and in your conversations with "locals" on the West Coast, do most of them seem to support or oppose legalizing same-sex marriage? Why do you think that is?
PART B – PRO’S AND CON’S OF LEGALIZING SAME-SEX MARRIAGE

Assigned Readings:
• Various sources, “Pros and cons of same-sex marriage”
• Herek, “Legal Recognition of Same-Sex Relationships in the United States” American Psychologist 61, no. 6 (2006)

Pre-Trip Questions:
B1. List ten “pro” arguments, ranking them from strongest to weakest. Use the top three to build a strong argument in favor of legalizing same-sex marriage.
B2. List ten “con” arguments, ranking them from strongest to weakest. Use the top three to build a strong argument against legalizing same-sex marriage.
B3. Which groups seem to be in favor of legalizing same-sex marriage, and which are against it?
B4. What role does religion play in this debate, and how influential is that role?
B5. If same-sex marriage is allowed, some fear it will harm the traditional definition of marriage. Give a brief, persuasive argument one way or the other on this issue.
B6. How, if at all, do same-sex relationships differ in ways that warrant they be recognized differently under the law?
B7. Are children harmed by being raised by same-sex parents? Explain.
B8. What are the benefits of being married that those who are not married cannot enjoy?

In-Trip Questions:
B1. In presentations and in your conversations with “locals” on the West Coast, which of the “pro” arguments were used most often to argue for legalizing same-sex marriage?
B2. In presentations and in your conversations with “locals” on the West Coast, which of the “con” arguments were used most often to argue against legalizing same-sex marriage?

PART C – ATTITUDES AND PUBLIC OPINION

Assigned Readings:
• Unknown, “Pew Survey: Most Still Oppose Same-Sex Marriage” The Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life (pewforum.org), Oct. 9, 2009

Pre-Trip Questions:
C1. What is public opinion when it comes to same-sex marriage? Civil unions? Why the difference?
C2. What are the observable trends in public opinion over time on the above issues?
C3. Demographically (race, age, gender, religion, education level, etc.), who is more likely (and who is less likely) to support same-sex marriage? Civil unions? Why do certain groups lean certain ways?
C4. Among those who advocate/support same-sex marriage, on what issue are they split?
C5. How does public opinion about the morality of homosexuality fit into the same-sex marriage discussion?
C6. How is someone’s view about the preservation of marriage likely to affect their views on same-sex marriage?
C7. Overall, what might the survey results say about the likelihood of same-sex marriage being accepted in the United States in the near future? During our lifetime?
C8. What is the “gay marriage panic” in the United States, and what is happening as a result?
C9. How do Americans’ views on same-sex marriage reflect their larger views on issues of equality and discrimination based on sexual orientation?
C10. How does DOMA (and its state-level counterparts) affect larger issues of equal rights for gay, lesbian, and bisexual people in the United States?

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In-Trip Question:
C1: In presentations and in your conversations with “locals” on the West Coast, to what extent do their opinions accurately reflect the demographic trends presented in the survey material?

PART D – LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES

Assigned Readings:
- Nicol & Smith, “Legal Struggles and Political Resistance: Same-Sex Marriage in Canada and the USA” Sexualities vol.1 (6), 2008

Pre-Trip Questions:
D1. How does the debate over same-sex marriage relate to discussions of privacy?
D2. How does the debate over same-sex marriage relate to discussions of federalism?
D3. How does the debate over same-sex marriage relate to discussions of equal protection of the laws?
D4. Based on previous Supreme Court decisions, how do you think it would rule on a case dealing with the constitutionality of same-sex marriage if it appeared this year?
D5. What are the main points and conclusions that can be drawn from the Nicol & Smith reading?

In-Trip Question:
- None

PART E – DEVELOPMENT OF SAME-SEX MARRIAGE ISSUE OVER TIME

Assigned Readings:
- Various sources, “Seattle Same-Sex Marriage Timeline”
- Various sources, “California Same-Sex Marriage Timeline”

Pre-Trip Questions:
E1. What is the timeline of major events related to same-sex marriage in Seattle and Washington state?
E2. What is the current legal status of same-sex marriage in Washington state, and how was it decided?
E3. Why did the Pacific Justice Institute sue Seattle’s mayor in 2007?
E4. What is Washington state’s Referendum 71, and what is its status? What is its significance?
E5. What is the timeline of major events related to same-sex marriage in California?
E6. What is the current legal status of same-sex marriage in California?
E7. What is California Prop 22, including its history and current status?
E8. What is California Prop 8, including its history and current status?
E9. How did the California Supreme Court deal with Prop’s 22 and 8? Why were they decided that way?
E10. What is the status in California of same-sex marriages performed in other states?
E11. What are the purposes and the details of the lawsuit currently in federal court in San Francisco?
E12. What is the current status of the case now in federal court? If it ever makes it to the US Supreme Court, how do you think it would rule and why?
E13. What is the status of efforts to put an initiative on the 2010 ballot legalizing same-sex marriage in California, and what are the plans for it in the future?

In-Trip Question:
E1: In presentations and in your conversations with “locals” on the West Coast, do you feel that most would have been in favor or against a pro-same-sex marriage initiative that almost appeared on the California ballot in November?
EXTRA CREDIT OPPORTUNITY
This assignment is not required, but you will be granted extra credit for completing it.

- Surf the Web to find websites that are exclusively or primarily dedicated to either supporting or opposing same-sex marriage. Compile a list that includes the best five sites you found that support same-sex marriage, as well as the best five sites that oppose it, and rank order them from your favorite to least favorite. For each, write a couple sentences to explain what you liked and/or didn't like about each site.