

IST 2047 – Social Justice and Ethics Praxis: Implementing Institutional Social Change

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Course Description: During his Presidential campaign in 1991, Bill Clinton campaigned on a promise to eliminate the ban prohibiting “homosexuals” from serving in the U.S. military. Following the election, a long and contentious public debate on the issue ensued and that campaign promise never came to fruition. Instead, a compromise law formally titled “Policy Concerning Homosexuality in the Armed Forces” but commonly known as “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” (DADT) was enacted by Congress and signed into law by President Clinton in 1993. The law stated that a member of the armed forces shall be separated from the armed forces if it is found that he or she:

1. “has engaged in, attempted to engage in, or solicited another to engage in a homosexual act or acts,” unless the member demonstrates, among other things, that “such conduct is a departure from the member’s usual and customary behavior” and “under all the circumstances, is unlikely to recur”;
2. “has stated that he or she is a homosexual or bisexual, or words to that effect,” unless the member demonstrates that “he or she is not a person who engages in, attempts to engage in, has a propensity to engage in, or intends to engage in homosexual acts”; or
3. “has married or attempted to marry a person known to be of the same biological sex.”¹

Seventeen years later, President Barack Obama stated in his 2010 State of the Union Address, “This year, I will work with Congress and our military to finally repeal the law that denies gay Americans the right to serve the country they love because of who they are. It’s the right thing to do.”²

While the campaign promise of Presidential hopeful Clinton in 1991 and the State of the Union commitment by President Obama in 2010 were strikingly similar, the outcomes were dramatically different. Why?

In this course we will explore two main issues: First, we will discuss the process of institutional change in the U.S. military that led to the repeal of Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell. Second, we will examine how such a social change process occurs from the viewpoint of person who is working inside the organization and

¹ Report of the Comprehensive Review of the Issues Associated with a Repeal of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell.” (2010) Dept. of Defense, Washington, DC.

² <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/remarks-president-state-union-address>.

how we can apply these lessons to current social change issues of importance to you. We will discuss questions such as:

- Why was the effort unsuccessful in 1993 but successful in 2010? What changed?
- What role did activists, scientists, politicians, the military, the press, and the public play in the process?
- What can we learn from this process that informs social change in large institutions today?
- How does social change occur within large organizations?
- What can social change activists learn about working with allies who are a part of the organization they want to change?
- How can a better understanding of organizational change relate to your dreams, aspirations, and goals related social change?

Roles and Responsibilities: My role and responsibility to you and the institution is to share my personal experiences in social change processes, provide a view of social change from the perspective of working within the organization, and facilitate a productive learning environment where you can explore your personal journey. Your role and responsibility is to be prepared and come ready to participate equally with your classmates so we all can grow in our ability to create the change we want to see in the world.

Course Objectives: Students in this course will:

- Understand some of the forces in play that led to the Don't Ask, Don't Tell Compromise in 1993
- Understand the 2010 DoD study recommending to the Secretary of Defense that repeal could happen without significant disruption to the force
- Critically analyze lessons learned from the repeal of Don't Ask, Don't Tell in light of the social, institutional, and political forces between 1993 and 2010 and apply these lessons to your aspirations about social change
- Develop critical thinking and reflective judgment around the practical issues related to institutional impediments to social change
- Practice strategy development for ethical and sustainable social change goals

Learning Goals:

- Different approaches, theories, and assessments of social change
- Operational understanding of institutional change
- What are some of the best practice, successes, and struggles in social change in large organizations?
- How is success defined for you?

MASC Degree Program Learning Goals: Students will...

- Develop and practice an inclusive and collaborative approach to social change leadership;

- Demonstrate the cultural capacity and organizational skills necessary for civic agency and efficacy in diverse social, political, and educational contexts; and
- Critically engage complex interdisciplinary analysis of historical and contemporary social change strategies and movements.

Pre-Course Preparation

Course Media:

Following is a resource list of readings/media/activities to help you prepare for our time together. I have selected a variety of activities for you to explore in order for us to have a rich discussion during our class time. Please complete the required readings, watch one film/video from the media section, and complete one activity from the activity section prior to class. You are always welcome to do additional work, but this should be considered the minimum preparation required to make your experience as meaningful as possible. You should be able to complete all required work with little or no cost to you.

Readings:

There are four readings that will prepare you for our discussions. All readings are available in Canvas as pdf's or as free, on-line downloads.

- The first reading is selected to provide background knowledge about the repeal of Don't Ask, Don't Tell and the recommendations for implementation of the change.
 - Support Plan for Implementation to Report of the Comprehensive Review of the Issues Associated with a Repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell." (2010) Dept. of Defense, Washington, DC. Available as a pdf in the files link on the course Canvas.
- The second reading is a model of institutional change proposed by Myerson (2001). This reading is designed to generate discussion around how social change happens from inside institutions.
 - Myerson, D. (2001). Radical change the quiet way. *Harvard Business Review*. Available on-line at <https://hbr.org/2001/10/radical-change-the-quiet-way/ar/>.
- The third reading is a report on the impact of DADT repeal published by the Michael D. Palm Center in 2012. The first academic study of the effects of repealing "don't ask, don't tell" found that the new policy of open service had no overall negative impact on military readiness, unit cohesion, recruitment, retention or morale.
 - Belkin, A., et al. (2012). *One Year Out: An Assessment of DADT Repeal's Impact on Military Readiness*. Available on-line at http://www.palmcenter.org/publications/dadt/one_year_out.
- The fourth reading is a short article from the Palm Center on the importance of leadership in social change in the Federal Government. As the military faces further transition on the issue of Transgender Military Service, this paper highlights why "leadership matters most"
 - Belkin, A., & Mazur, D. (2015). *Presidential Leadership and Military Discrimination*. Available on-line at

http://www.palmcenter.org/publications/dadt/presidential_leadership_and_military_discrimination.

Media: Documentaries and Hollywood films provide a perspective on organizational change. Choose one of the following media activities to give a different perspective on social change in institutions. While watching your media of choice, take notes on the institutional and societal impediments to change portrayed in the film. You do not have to stick to the suggestions below and are encouraged to look for other films on social change of interest to you. On Saturday we will make a list for the class of the films we watched in preparation for the course. Choose at least one of the following:

- Watch a documentary on social change. Some suggestions could include:
 - *The Invisible War* – Directed by Kirby Dick. Investigative documentary about the epidemic of rape within the U.S. military. (available on Netflix and Amazon Video)
 - *Chocolate City – The Documentary* - In this 45 minute-long documentary film-makers Sam Wild and Ellie Walton address the issue of gentrification of Washington, DC. (available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P1NkfATQvj4>)
 - *The Strange History of Don't Ask Don't Tell* – HBO documentary directed by Fenton Bailey and Randy Barato (available on HBO Go or HBO Now)
- Watch a Hollywood feature about social change such as *Milk* starring Sean Penn, *Norma Rae* starring Sally Field, or *The Green Mile* starring Tom Hanks.
- Search the archives of T.V. news shows such as 20/20 or 60 Minutes for episodes depicting social change struggles in large organizations.
 - If you are interested in the issue of Transgender Military Service, I recommend viewing the Australian News Program *One plus One's* interview with transgender Australian officer Catherine McGregor on abuse & support in the Australian Army. (available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wPsYWN-mW-s>)

Activities: Observing or participating in an organizational process can help us understand the complexities of change in a large organization. While participating in one of the activities below, take notes on the institutional and societal impediments to change that you observe.

- Attend or watch on CSPAN or Local access T.V. a government meeting (city council, school board, etc.), legislative session (state or national), or corporate discussion (board meeting) related to a social change issue. Take notes on the different perspectives and the ways leaders within the organization respond to the debate.
- Interview a person who has participated in social change as a leader or member of the organization undergoing change. What was their experience like? Possible ideas could include interviewing a woman or person of color who was one of the first leaders in their field, talking to a CEO or senior business leader about how change happens in their organization, or interviewing a politician about how they managed to find compromise when opinions on an issue widely vary.

Course Expectations

Your active participation is of primary importance to your learning in a Seminar course structure and environment. In addition to learning about organizational change through course readings, activities and lectures, you will have opportunities to participate in personal reflection and growth, reflective group discussions, and the development of a personal action plan. Your active participation will improve your understanding of how change can occur from within an organization and will help you and your classmates gain a better understanding of how to work with allies inside the organization.

Academic Integrity and Community Covenant: All students are expected to abide by Iliff's statement on Academic Integrity, as published in the Masters Student Handbook, or the Joint PhD Statement on Academic Honesty, as published in the Joint PhD Student Handbook, as appropriate. All participants in this class are expected to be familiar with Iliff's Community Covenant.

Accommodations: Iliff engages in a collaborative effort with students with disabilities to reasonably accommodate student needs. Students are encouraged to contact their assigned advisor to initiate the process of requesting accommodations. The advising center can be contacted at advising@iliff.edu or by phone at 303-765-1146.

Writing Lab: Grammar and organization are important for all written assignments. Additional help is available from the Iliff Writing Lab, which is available for students of any level who need help beginning an assignment, organizing thoughts, or reviewing a final draft.

Inclusive Language: It is expected that all course participants will use inclusive language in speaking and writing, and will use terms that do not create barriers to classroom community.

Evaluation: You will be completing a Self-Evaluation and Grading rubric at the end of the last day of the Seminar, Saturday, October 24. Below are my suggestions for how to evaluate your learning and performance. I will provide a grading rubric to help you with the self-grading process, which is open to your revision. Evaluation of your learning and performance should look at both the quality and quantity of your engagement with course content and classroom community. Here are some example questions to keep in mind as you think about evaluating your learning and performance:

1. Did I actively engage with course content: preparatory reading/media/activities, course lectures, and group discussions?
2. Did I reflect on my personal goals, agendas, and aspirations? Did I use those reflections to develop a personal action plan related to organizational change?
3. Did I remain open to new ways of thinking about working with allies, especially allies within the organization?
4. Was my effort genuine and my engagement meaningful?

Seminar Agenda

Friday, October 23, 2015: 1pm - 4:30pm

1:00 – 2:00 pm: Introductions, Expectations, and Course Outline:

Why did you choose this course and what do you hope to learn? Who are you and what are your goals related to social change?

2:00 – 2:45 pm: Don't Ask, Don't Tell 1991 – 2010

What were the forces in society and in government that led to the compromise known as Don't Ask, Don't Tell? What was the subsequent impact on the military?

2:45 – 3:00 pm: Break

3:00 – 4:00 pm: The Repeal Process 2010 – 2013

What were the events that led to the DoD study on repeal in 2010? How was the study conducted and what were the findings? How has the military been impacted by the repeal of DADT?

4:00 – 4:30 pm: Class Discussion & Critical Reflection

Saturday, Oct 24, 2015: 9:00am - 4:30pm

9:00 – 10:00 am: Organizational Change Theories and Shared Leadership Theory (Note: We will use the films you watched and observations you made during our discussions Sat morning.)

Can theories related to organizational change improve my effectiveness as a social change agent?

10:00 – 11:00 am: Tempered Radicalism – A Theory of Social Change from within the organization

Am I able to be open to the perspective of someone inside the organization?

11:00 – 12:30 pm: Personal Reflection, Journaling, and Lunch

During lunch, students may choose to participate in an optional lunch conversation on the spiritual and religious issues related to social justice and social change. In what ways does the community of faith struggle with change? In what ways does faith both impede and facilitate social change?

12:30 – 1:30 pm: Small Group Discussions, Critical Reflection & Evaluation

1:30 – 2:45 pm: Developing your personal action plan

2:45 – 3:00 pm: Break

2:45 - 4:30 pm: Final Class Discussion & Grading