



Mansfield Institute For Social Justice

11/04 Newsletter

Sexuality and Social Justice

Contact Us:

**THE MANSFIELD
INSTITUTE FOR
SOCIAL JUSTICE**

Roosevelt
University
430 South Michigan
Avenue
Chicago, Illinois
60605-1394
[www.roosevelt.edu/
misj](http://www.roosevelt.edu/misj)

Heather Dalmage
Director of the
Mansfield
Institute for
Social Justice
[hdalmage@roosevelt.
edu](mailto:hdalmage@roosevelt.edu)
(312) 341-3692

Just four years ago, the Supreme Court of the United States ruled that the Boy Scouts of America are allowed to ban homosexuals from becoming troop leaders. Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual military personnel must follow the command of the former president and not speak or act in ways that affirm their sexual orientation. Heterosexual military personnel are not required to hide their sexual orientation.

We live in a society in which the civil rights of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered (LGBT) people are trampled because of pervasive heterosexism and hatred. Heterosexism is part of the way larger social structures function and the way many heterosexual people think about themselves and the world. Entrenched and enacted homophobia led to Matthew Sheppard's brutal slaying on October 12, 1998. On that infamous day, Matthew Shepard was beaten, pistol whipped, and left for dead. This brutality was instigated, in part, because his attackers hated homosexuals.

Six years later, George W. Bush called for a Constitutional Amendment to block gays and lesbians right to marry. Steeped in heterosexist ideology he argued that. . . some activist judges and local officials have made an aggressive attempt to redefine marriage.... After more than two centuries of American jurisprudence, and millennia of human experience, a few judges and local authorities are presuming to change the most fundamental institution of civilization. Their actions have created confusion on an issue that requires clarity. On a matter of such importance, the voice of the people must be heard. Activist courts have left the people with one recourse. If we are to prevent the meaning of marriage from being changed forever, our nation must enact a constitutional amendment to protect marriage in America.

While Bush and others are out to uphold "marriage as the union of a man and a woman", many gays and lesbians are demanding the right to marry. They point out that civil unions and even state sanctioned gay marriages do not extend all the federal rights and privileges of marriage. For instance, three major rights are still denied through most civil unions and state sanctioned marriages: partners cannot file taxes jointly; social security benefits cannot be collected by the surviving partner; and in the case of an undocumented partner, the rights of citizenship are not extended.

And yet, to say that the debate is clear cut, with homophobes on one side and LGBT communities on the other is problematic. In fact, for many in LGBT communities the idea of marriage is outdated, anti-feminist, and conservative. The issues are complex and we will spend this month exploring the subtle and not-so subtle outcomes of heterosexism in society. This month we will be exploring many questions including:

What are the stakes for LGBT people with regard to the marriage debate?

What do the opponents of gay marriage have at stake?

Why does silence exist around LGBT opposition to marriage?

Why has Gay marriage debate moved to the forefront at this point in history?

Why are judges and local officials who oppose DOMA (Defense of Marriage Act) referred to as "activist" judges, while conservatives maintain they are upholding the constitution in their actions?

This Month At Mansfield

Friday, November 5th

Join the Mansfield Institute for Social Justice as we showcase "**The Laramie Project**" by Moishes Kaufman and the Tectonic Project. Presented by The Theatre Conservatory at the O'Malley Theatre, 431 S. Wabash Ave., Miller Studio Theatre-9th floor. Show Time: 7:30pm.

The brutal murder of Matthew Shepard, a student at University of Wyoming, launched our nation into a dialogue about sexuality, class, violence and the difference between tolerance and acceptance. As author Moishes Kaufman wrote in the introduction to this play documenting responses to Shepard's death: "What can we as theatre artists do as a response to this incident? And, more concretely: Is theatre a medium that can contribute to the national dialogue on current events?"

Find out answers to these questions and many more when you join us. After the production, we will continue over to the Artists Café for discussion over coffee. There is no cost to attend this event, we only ask that you bring with you an active will to participate in a lively discussion. Seating is very limited and will fill up fast, please RSVP to Heather Dalmage via email at hdalmage@roosevelt.edu.

Wednesday, November 10th

Join us for a screening of "**If These Walls Could Talk 2**" in the University Center at 7pm.

The three stories of *If These Walls Could Talk 2* are uneven. Far and away the most powerful and moving story is the first, taking place in 1961, starring Vanessa Redgrave as a woman "widowed" when her partner of 50 years suddenly dies. Redgrave is phenomenal, and her piece alone makes this sequel worth watching. The 1972 portion stars Michelle Williams, who finds dealing with the sexual politics of the gay community increasingly more complex when she falls in love with a boyish woman (played by Chloë Sevigny). The most modern piece, taking place in 2000, portrays a contemporary lesbian couple (Sharon Stone and Ellen DeGeneres) determined to have a baby. The light nature of the story detracts from the more serious issues of the earlier segments. Despite the mixed fare, HBO once again proves itself on the cutting edge of moviemaking, with this rather daring film that will both provoke and entertain. --*Jenny Brown*

Popcorn and light refreshments will be served. This screening is open to all Roosevelt students and requires those not residing in the University Center to be signed in. We ask that if you are planning to attend, RSVP to Heather Dalmage at hdalmage@roosevelt.edu.

Monday, November 15th

The Mansfield Institute for Social Justice presents:

Race & Criminal Justice: Conversations about the System

8:30am-10:30am The Old Faculty Lounge, Room 244

National Crime rates are down, yet incarceration rates are up. Several factors contribute to this dynamic including federal and local policy, economic instability, police and community relations, and sentencing requirements. Join us as we discuss one potential contributing and interrelated factor: Racial Profiling.

Co-Sponsored By Human Relations Foundation and Jane Addams Policy Initiative. Guest Speaker: **Dr. David Harris** Author of *Profiles in Injustice: Why Racial Profiling Cannot Work* and the forthcoming, *Good Cops: The Case for Preventive Policing*.

Friday, November 19th

Join us for our inaugural MISJ dinner discussion at Maggianos Little Italy, 516 N Clark. Enjoy a five course meal served promptly at 7pm while partaking in what will surely be great conversation! We will be recapping the month and opening up a unique dialogue on the topic of "Sexuality and Social Justice".

We are planning on making this dinner a regular monthly event so help us kick it off right! The cost is \$10 and space is limited, please RSVP to Heather Dalmage at hdalmage@roosevelt.edu. Business casual attire and a desire to participate in and enjoy great discussion are required.

See You There!

This Month at MISJ

November 5th:
The Laramie Project
7:30pm. RSVP
required.

November 10th:
If These Walls Could
Talk 2 7pm. University
Center, all those
needing to be signed in
RSVP required.

November 15th:
Racial Profiling
8:30am-10:30am. Old
Faculty Lounge, Room
244. Guest Speaker Dr.
David Harris.

November 19th:
MISJ Dinner at
Maggianos 7pm. RSVP
required. Cost \$10
