



Global Policies on LGBTQ+ Rights

Author(s): Matthew Klein, Jessa Nootbar

Subject: History

Topic: Integrated

Grade Levels: High School; 11-12

Overview

This lesson is meant to expand awareness of LGBTQ+ people in a global context and introduce both the struggles LGBTQ+ people face as well as the rights they enjoy in various parts of the world. This lesson is intended to help students understand more about the contemporary lives of LGBTQ+ individuals throughout the world, as well as connect these experiences to broader global trends.

Time: 50 minutes (or 70 minutes with full documentary)

Lesson Objectives:

Students will:

- Analyze conditions for LGBTQ+ people around the world, as well as the broader political, social, and economic processes that create and influence them
- Gain a deeper understanding of the LGBTQ+ experience the United States through comparison and contrast with that of other nations
- Identify homophobia as a global problem that affects people all over the world in different ways
- Empathize with the struggles of those across the globe

Essential Questions:

How do policies regarding sexual orientation and gender identity differ around the globe?

How does this affect the lives of LGBTQ+ people?

How can this variation of LGBTQ+ rights be understood through historical contextualization?

Standards:

CCSS SL 11-12.1. Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11–12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively

CCSS SL 11-12.3. Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, assessing the stance, premises, links among ideas, word choice, points of emphasis, and tone used.

CCSS W 11-12.1. Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

CCSS W 11-12.7. Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

CCSS R 11-12.7. Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

HSS 11.10. Students analyze the development of federal civil rights and voting rights.

HSS 11.11. Students analyze the major social problems and domestic policy issues in contemporary American society.

HSS 12.2. Students evaluate and take and defend positions on the scope and limits of rights and obligations as democratic citizens, the relationships among them, and how they are secured.

HSS 12.7. Students analyze and compare the powers and procedures of the national, state, tribal, and local governments.

HSS 12.9. Students analyze the origins, characteristics, and development of different political systems across time, with emphasis on the quest for political democracy, its advances, and its obstacles.

Vocabulary:

LGBTQ+: lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning - refers to a population of people united by having gender identities or sexual orientations that differ from the heterosexual and cisgender majority

Homophobia: the hatred and fear of, or prejudice against people who are attracted to members of the same sex

Transphobia: the hatred and fear or, or prejudice against, people who are transgender

Criminalization: the action of turning an activity into a criminal offense by making it illegal

Teacher Background: Teacher must have an understanding of geography, world history and specifically Russia's homophobic culture and government.

Materials:

- Computers
- Projector
- Speakers

Instruction:

1. Introduce the topic and inform students that you will be discussing international policies regarding sexual orientation and gender identity. Establish a culture of respect, making it clear that derogatory comments about LGBTQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and more) people will not be tolerated.
2. Map activities (15 min)
 - a. Using the projector, show students IGLA's international LGBT rights map, found at https://ilga.org/downloads/2017/ILGA_WorldMap_ENGLISH_Overview_2017.pdf. Give students a minute to process the information depicted, then ask for observations:
 - i. What is your first impression looking at this map?
 - ii. What patterns can you see? Where can you identify areas that are largely green (or have many LGBT rights) or largely pink/red (or have criminalization of LGBT people)?
 - iii. How do you think federal policy regarding LGBT rights affects the daily experience of LGBT residents of various countries?
 - b. Next, using the projector, show students the LGBT Equality map for the United States, found at <http://www.lgbtmap.org/equality-maps>. Look at the national map (Overall Policy Tally), as well as Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity-specific maps. Ask students to interpret the maps, and highlight the variation in policy from state-to-state and between sexual orientation versus gender identity policies. Make sure students also recognize that while the U.S. has taken big steps towards greater LGBTQ+ equality in recent years, there is a lot of work left to be done, especially for trans people.
 - c. Show the IGLA map again, pointing out that, while the United States is purely green on their map because of federal policies, as seen on the US LGBT equality map, there is great variation in state policies. Suggest that many countries have a similar level of regional variation, which is important to keep in mind.
3. Documentary activity (30 minutes or, for full documentary, 50 minutes)
 - a. Introduce ABC Australia's documentary, "The Iron Closet" (2013), found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2ltG3y4tTk4> (run time: 26 min). Share that the context in which this documentary was created- earlier in 2013, Russia had passed a law that prohibited condoning same-sex relationships to anyone under the age of 18. There was great international attention on Russia at the time because they were set to host the 2014 Winter Olympic games. If time permits, show full documentary. If necessary, show only the following clips: [6:37-10:37](#) (introducing a Russian lesbian mother and a Russian Christian politician); [15:55-17:17](#) (history of gay policies in Russia and excerpt of interview with a member of an anti- "pedophilia" group that targets gay men, luring them into situations where they will be physically abused); [19:30-21:12](#) (view of homosexuality as Western influence) (total selected excerpts run time: ~7 min).

- b. Have students discuss their impressions of the documentary with a partner, then share out. Provide guiding questions, such as:
 - i. What rhetoric did the Russian “gay propaganda” law and its supporters use to justify the ban? How is it similar or different to anti-LGBT rhetoric in the United States?
 - 1. (*Hint for teachers:* If previously discussed in class, much of the “protecting children” rhetoric of the Russian interviewees echoes the messages of Anita Bryant and Save Our Children from the 1970s (learn more at: <http://www.pbs.org/outofthepast/past/p5/1977.html>)
 - ii. How did various interviewees explain and justify their position regarding LGBT issues?
 - 1. (*Hint for teachers:* Politician Vitaly Milonov’s comparison of homosexuality with smoking, Occupy Pedofilyaj member Yekaterina Zigunova’s comparison of sexual orientation with music taste)
 - iii. How did the documentary position Russia’s anti-gay policies in a greater historical context? Can you think of other examples of how historical context influences the contemporary status of minority groups in different countries?
 - iv. What would you have liked to learn more about that the documentary didn’t cover? How do you think the documentary would have been different if produced by a Russian company?
 - 1. (*Hint for teachers:* Introduce the concept of cultural relativism, or examining aspects of a culture from the perspective of that culture itself, as a means of inquiry. There are pros and cons to cultural relativism in that it better situates an understanding of cultural practices but it can also be used to avoid accountability for human rights issues (e.g. “It’s just our culture.”) Encourage students to be critical about the sources of knowledge and the identities of knowledge producers.)

Assessment Ideas:

Students can choose one country to research its LGBT policies and broader social, cultural, political, religious, and economic history. (Assign groups of students to a continent so that there is sufficient variety in countries covered.) In a 2 page paper, students can give a brief overview of the country’s policies on LGBT issues (information about which can be found on the Human Rights Watch website) and propose historical factors that influenced these policies. Students can also give a brief presentation (10 mins) on their country, its policies, and its history. After presentations, lead a class discussion comparing and contrasting the countries presented on.

(*Note for teachers:* The goal of this assessment, as well as lesson, is to understand contemporary LGBTQ+ rights policies of nations as a product of their specific histories, influence from other countries, economic factors, and more instead of simply treating certain countries, like the U.S. as more “progressive” for having more federal LGBTQ+ rights policies. This assignment requires research and critical thinking, as opposed to assumptions about countries’ social climate.)

Relevant Resources:

For general information on teaching approaches for this topic:

"Global LGBT Rights." GLAAD, 25 Jan. 2016, www.glaad.org/vote/topics/global-lgbt-rights.

For student's assessment research:

"All Countries." *Office of the Historian*, U.S. Department of State, history.state.gov/countries/all.

"Global Legal Monitor- Archive for LGBT Rights." *Library of Congress*, www.loc.gov/law/foreign-news/topic/lgbt-rights/.

"LGBT Rights." *Human Rights Watch*, www.hrw.org/topic/lgbt-rights.

Author(s) Information: Matthew Klein and Jessa Nootbaar are education interns at Our Family Coalition in San Francisco, CA.