

## IN-CLASS DEBATE: TRANSFORMATION VS. ASSIMILATION

*by Warren J. Blumenfeld*

Various media accounts discuss a so-called “Gay Agenda”: a supposed list of items and strategies that lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer people have initiated to change U.S. society. In actuality, depending on whom you talk with, a number of “agendas” and strategies have been and are being considered and activated.

For example, looking back to the late 1960s through the 1970s, some individuals and groups worked to “transform” or “revolutionize” completely the society and its institutions by challenging overall power inequities in terms of traditional gender and racial constructions, the economic basis on which this country rests and the massive inequities between socioeconomic groups, making links in the various forms of identity and forms of oppression, forming coalitions between various marginalized groups, etc.

Some groups, however, worked to “reform” the society with strategies to provide LGBT people access or assimilation into mainstream U.S. society and its institutions. I have labeled this focus as the “4Ms of the LGBT Movement.” These 4Ms are composed of

1. **Media** Visibility, 2. **Marriage** Rights, 3. **Military** Inclusion, 4. **Making Money**: all based on ending the negative stereotyping of LGBT people through education and by enacting anti-bias and anti-discrimination legislation.

### IN-CLASS DEBATE

The class will divide into two teams. Each side will argue different foci on the following question:

**“should LGBTQ people either work to revolutionize on one side, or assimilate on the other side into mainstream u.s. society?”**

### DEBATE FORMAT AND ROLES

Chair (1), Jury (3) Two  
Teams

1. Each team will have up to 6 minutes to make an opening statement.
2. Each team will then have up to 4 minutes to provide a rebuttal to the other teams’ opening statement.
3. Teams will alternate posing questions to the other side. Each team should prepare at least four questions. The responding team will have up to 2 minutes to deliver a response to each question.
4. Each team will have up to 3 minutes to make a closing statement.
5. Members of the jury will then prepare a written summary that identifies their vote on the debate as well as the points made during the debate that convinced them to take that stance.

## **INDIVIDUAL STUDENT GRADES**

Students will be graded by the professor on their participation in the debate, and students' grade is not dependent on whether their team won or lost the debate. Scores are rated as follows:

### **POINTS CRITERIA**

9–10 made outstanding points. Was clear, thoughtful, and engaged in critical analysis. Worked extremely effectively as part of the team. obvious high degree of effort was given in the research and execution in their debate participation.

7–8 made above-average points in terms of clarity, thoughtfulness, and critical analysis. Worked well as part of the team. Good effort was given in the research and execution in their debate participation.

5–6 made a few points. Was relatively clear, and thoughtful, but lacked some critical analysis. Worked marginally well as part of the team. not obvious high degree of effort given in the research and execution in their debate participation.

3–4 made some points, but lacked clarity, thoughtfulness, or critical analysis. did not work well as part of the team. did not convey that much effort was given to the research or execution in their debate participation

0–2 made few if any points, and lacked clarity, thoughtfulness, or critical analysis. did not work well as part of the team. little or no perceivable effort given in the research or execution in their debate participation.