

PLSC 467: Instructions for Polygamy Essay

(Winter 2017)

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

[omitted]

ESSAY PROMPT

Format. Write an essay responding to the prompt below. Your essay must not exceed 5 typed, double-spaced pages.

J. Scalia, in his dissent in *Lawrence v. Texas* (2003), opined that legalizing same-sex marriage (SSM) might open the door to legalizing bigamy (i.e., marriage involving two spouses). Polygamy (i.e., marriage involving multiple spouses) has long been outlawed in the U.S. But in light of recent attempts to abolish anti-polygamy laws, it seems possible that the Court may revisit its ruling in *Reynolds v. U.S.* (1878), in which it upheld criminalizing polygamy.

Essay prompt. Write an essay in which you discuss to what extent the arguments used to legalize SSM can and should be applied to legalize polygamous marriages. (Assume that PM would permit both multiple husbands and multiple wives.) Be sure to do the following in your essay:

- (1) Identify and summarize the arguments used to justify legalizing SSM. (E.g., marriage involves consenting adults; on that premise, SSM is no different from opposite-sex marriage (OSM), because both involve consenting adults. Because not all OSMs produce biological offspring, SSMs are not required to produce biological offspring either.)
- (2) Discuss whether these arguments can and should be applied to legalize polygamous marriage (PM). State your reasons for your position.
- (3) Be sure to include a thesis that answers the question posed above—namely, whether you think the arguments used to justify legalizing SSM can and should also be used to justify legalizing PM.
 - a) To clarify: I do not care whether you favor legalizing PM or not. Regardless whether or not you favor legalizing PM, I want you to focus on arguing/explaining why you think the arguments used to justify legalizing SSM can or cannot also be used to justify legalizing PM.

SUBMISSION DETAILS

[omitted]