

**COURSE TITLE:** LGBTQ STUDENTS: Creating a Supportive School Environment

**WA CLOCK HRS:** 3 0

**NO. OF CREDITS:** 3 QUARTER CREDITS  
[semester equivalent = 2.00 credits]

**OREGON PDUs:** 3 0

**PENNSYLVANIA ACT 48:** 3 0

**INSTRUCTOR:** Brian Long  
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**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

Most lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer/questioning (LGBTQ) students don't feel safe in our schools. Although progress has been made, a recent study by GLSEN shows that 85.2% of LGBTQ students experienced verbal harassment and over 65% of this group avoid school functions and extra-curricular activities. This new online course will open communication lines between K-12 educators to share techniques and strategies to build safe, effective learning environments for students of all genders and sexual orientations. The LGBTQ Student class assignments will help educators build vocabulary, communication and advocacy skills that will be reflected in the confidence of their students to not only feel safe, but to thrive in school.

This course is appropriate for teachers of all subjects, grades K-12. Internet access is required, along with course text book; *Safe is Not Enough: Better Schools for LGBTQ Students*. (available on Amazon.com for \$20, used.)

**LEARNING OUTCOMES:** Upon completion of this course, participants will have:

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1. Greater awareness for the importance of LGBTQ-inclusive schools
2. Enhanced knowledge and understanding of LGBTQ issues facing today's students.
3. Analyze state-specific statistics on LGBTQ issues such as bullying, absenteeism and participation in extra-curricular activities.
4. Compare and contrast the effectiveness of interventions such as "Safe Spaces" and LGBTQ-friendly schools.
5. Enhance communication with students regarding LGBTQ issues.
6. Develop effective LGBTQ-inclusive lessons & curricula
7. Identify federal laws and school policies new and relevant to bullying and LGBTQ issues.
8. Identify online and community resources available to enhance the education of teachers, students, parents and administrators.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

Completion of all specified assignments is required for issuance of hours or credit. The Heritage Institute does not award partial credit.

The use of artificial intelligence is not permitted. Assignment responses found to be generated by AI will not be accepted.

**HOURS EARNED:**

Completing the basic assignments (Section A. Information Acquisition) for this course automatically earns participants their choice of CEUs (Continuing Education Units), Washington State Clock Hours, Oregon PDUs, or Pennsylvania ACT 48 Hours. The Heritage Institute offers CEUs and is an approved provider of Washington State Clock Hours, Oregon PDUs, and Pennsylvania ACT 48 Hours.

**UNIVERSITY QUARTER CREDIT INFORMATION**

**REQUIREMENTS FOR UNIVERSITY QUARTER CREDIT**

Continuing Education Quarter credits are awarded by Antioch University Seattle (AUS). AUS requires 75% or better for credit at the 400 level and 85% or better to issue credit at the 500 level. These criteria refer both to the amount and quality of work submitted.

1. Completion of Information Acquisition assignments 30%
2. Completion of Learning Application assignments 40%
3. Completion of Integration Paper assignment 30%

### CREDIT/NO CREDIT (No Letter Grades or Numeric Equivalents on Transcripts)

Antioch University Seattle (AUS) Continuing Education Quarter credit is offered on a Credit/No Credit basis; neither letter grades nor numeric equivalents are on a transcript. 400 level credit is equal to a "C" or better, 500 level credit is equal to a "B" or better. This information is on the back of the transcript.

AUS Continuing Education quarter credits may or may not be accepted into degree programs. Prior to registering, determine with your district personnel, department head, or state education office the acceptability of these credits for your purpose.

### ADDITIONAL COURSE INFORMATION

#### REQUIRED TEXT

**Sadowski, Michael** *Safe is Not Enough: Better Schools for LGBTQ Students*. 232p. (Youth Development & Education Series). Harvard Education. 2016 ISBN-13: 978-1612509426

- ***Safe Is Not Enough: Better Schools for LGBTQ Students (Youth Development and Education Series)***  
ISBN# 1612509428  
by Sadowski, Michael, Jennings, Kevin  
Harvard Education PR

[Buy from Amazon](#)

#### MATERIALS FEE

Text, *Safe is Not Enough: Better Schools for LGBTQ Students*, cost approximately \$20 on Amazon.com.

### ASSIGNMENTS REQUIRED FOR HOURS OR UNIVERSITY QUARTER CREDIT

#### A. INFORMATION ACQUISITION

Assignments done in a course forum will show responses from all educators who have or are taking the course independently. Feel free to read and respond to others' comments.

Group participants can only view and respond to their group members in the Forum.

#### Assignment #1: COURSE FORUM: Introduction

- In 250-500 words, provide some background information on your area of expertise and experience using the field below.
- Describe your thoughts on the need for LGBTQ awareness at your current or potential workplace and what you hope to gain from this class.
- Feel free to elaborate on any experiences involving LGBTQ issues.
- Read and post a reply to at least 1 other response in this assignment space.

#### Assignment #2: Victims of the LGBTQ Community

*In this movement and in our culture, it sometimes takes horror to create momentum for change and that's a difficult contradiction to live with.*

—Eliza Byard,

GLSEN.

Choose one victim from the LGBTQ community listed below. You may choose a different victim with the instructors prior approval. Read, watch and listen to their stories about being bullied. Use your own resources to learn about these individuals in order to prepare your reflection using the questions below.

Jamie Rodemeyer  
Alcorn?????????????  
Tyler Clementi  
Josh Pacheco

????????????????? Leelah

Tyrone Unsworth  
Ronin Shimizu  
Matthew Shepard??????  
*Your choice*

Post a 250-500 word reflection in the field below describing what you learned, being sure to include the following:

- Summarize the person's story.
- Specific hardships this person had to face.
- Describe how this person attempted to reach out for help and what help was offered or given.
- The impact this individual had on his community or society as a whole (eg. educational programs, laws or acts passed as a response to the incident(s)).

### Assignment #3: Know the Issues

Read pages 1-8 of *The Safe Space Kit: Guide to Supporting Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Students In Your School*. (Linked below)

[GLSEN's The Safe Space Kit](#)

In an interview-style, you will be answering questions 1-8 under "Check Yourself: Understanding Your Own Beliefs" on page 7 and 8.

**QUESTIONS 9 or 10 ARE COMPLETELY OPTIONAL - you do not have to answer them.** In 250-500 words post your answers in the field below.

### Assignment #4: Understanding Terminology & Etiquette

Part I: "Core Vocabulary"

Review the assignment "Vocabulary Extravaganza" from the website [thesafezoneproject.com](http://thesafezoneproject.com) using the link below. Feel free to use this as a resource in your classroom and edit according to your age group and their needs. Write a 1/2-1 page response reflecting on terms you knew, ones you had heard of but didn't know the meaning of and terms you never heard of before. You may choose to tally up words for each category (known, heard of but don't know, don't know/never heard of) or select a few specific terms and elaborate on your knowledge, or lack thereof!

<https://thesafezoneproject.com/activities/vocab-extravaganza/>

Part II: The Genderbread Person

"The Genderbread Person" from the blog "itspronouncedmetrosexual" has received a lot of attention from the media. Reviews are mixed. Read the blog post on The Genderbread Person v3.3 to learn how this diagram can be used to describe the not-so-easy-to-understand four characteristics of gender: biology, identity, sexual orientation and expression.

<http://itspronouncedmetrosexual.com/2015/03/the-genderbread-person-v3/>

For additional information: watch any videos under "Additional Resources" (below) that catch your attention.

In the comment section, post your thoughts in 250+ words and respond to at least one other response about "*The Genderbread Person* v3.3".

Additional Resources:

*What does the Q in LGBTQ mean?*

<https://www.youtube.com/embed/PjndUPXu7Tg?autohide=1&controls=1&showinfo=0>

*Sam Killermann's Ted Talk: Understanding the Complexities of Gender*

<https://www.youtube.com/embed/NRcPXtqdKjE?autohide=1&controls=1&showinfo=0>

### Assignment #5: How to Deal with LGBT Issues in School

Listen to the podcast “*How to Deal with LGBT Issues in School*” (available to stream or download for free on iTunes or SoundCloud or by using the link below) by Harvard EdCast.

<https://www.gse.harvard.edu/news/11/03/harvard-ed-cast-how-deal-lgbt-issues-school>

After listening to the podcast and taking notes; answer the following review questions:

1. What does GLSEN stand for?
  2. What are the 4 pillars of the school experience?
  3. What are some of the school-targeted interventions or campaigns designed by GLSEN?
  4. What percent of LGBT students have reported (to GLSEN) experiencing physical, verbal or sexual harassment at school in the past year?
  5. What is the school that has been set up to be LGBTQ-friendly in New York City?
  6. While speaking about “highs and lows”, Eliza states that “some of the greatest opportunities for advancement comes from our greatest moments of \_\_\_\_\_”.
  7. What led to a tremendous spike in the number of Gay-Straight Alliance student clubs across the country that GLSEN was in contact with?
  8. What led President Barack Obama to share his message of hope and support in the YouTube video, created by Dan Savage, called “It Gets Better Project”?
  9. What are some action steps that teachers can take to support LGBT students?
- 10) What is the Safe Schools Improvement Act?

### **Assignment #6: GLSEN’s School Climate Survey**

#### **CHOICE A -National School Climate Survey**

Use the link to the GLSEN (Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network) *School Climate Survey* below:

<https://www.glsen.org/sites/default/files/2022-10/NSCS-2021-Full-Report.pdf>

Describe in 250-500 words your feelings in relation to the statistics shown (ie. if you feel it is accurate or reflective of the school you teach at and whether it met your expectations or not) for the following categories:

- School Safety
- Hearing Anti-LGBT Remarks from Other Students
- Identity-Based Harassment & Assault
- Discrimination Against LGBTQ students
- Availability of LGBTQ Resources & Supports

Conclude with your opinion about the quality of the *National School Climate Survey* (Full Report) for LGBTQ students and how it has changed over time. Cite statistics from “*Part Four: Indicators of School Climate Over Time*” to support your view.

**OR**

#### **CHOICE B - Local School Climate Survey**

If you prefer, you may choose to conduct a survey at your own school. GLSEN has great resources (linked below) to help you do this. You may want to speak to students, parents and administrators beforehand.

#### **GLSEN’s LOCAL SCHOOL CLIMATE SURVEY**

Describe in 250-500 words your feelings in relation to the statistics you gathered (ie. if you feel it is accurate or reflective of the school you teach at and whether it met your expectations or not) for the following categories:

- School Safety
- Hearing Anti-LGBT Remarks from Other Students
- Identity-Based Harassment & Assault
- Discrimination Against LGBTQ students
- Availability of LGBTQ Resources & Supports

### **Assignment #7: The Power of the Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA)**

In the text Read Chapter 3, “Turning Adversity into Activism”.

Describe the importance of GSA in schools across the country today

- Why are they needed and what problems do they address?
- What age groups are GSA’s appropriate for? Did your opinion on this change after reading Chapter 3?

- What are some common misconceptions about GSAs?
- What are some topics that *should* be covered at GSAs?

You may choose to read more about the GSA at Jericho Middle School (as mentioned in “*Safe is Not Enough*”) on Long Island through the blog of principal Donald F. Gately or through his “Ted Talk” (YouTube link below). Also included is a link to Paul V. Poteat’s “*Gay Straight Alliances: Promoting Student Resilience and Safer School Climates*”, from American Educator.

<https://dfgately.wordpress.com/2013/11/14/why-our-middle-school-has-a-gay-straight-alliance/>

<http://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/ae-winter2016poteat.pdf>

<https://www.youtube.com/embed/WQZKpnLLZwg?autoplay=1&controls=1&showinfo=0>

## ADDITIONAL ASSIGNMENTS REQUIRED FOR UNIVERSITY QUARTER CREDIT

### B. LEARNING APPLICATION

In this section, you will apply your learning to your professional situation. This course assumes that most participants are classroom teachers who have access to students. If you do not have a classroom available to you, please contact the instructor for course modifications. Assignments done in a course forum will show responses from all educators who have or are taking the course independently. ?Feel free to read and respond to others' comments. Group participants can only view and respond to their group members in the Forum.

#### Assignment #8: Transgender Students

- Read Chapter 5 “Respecting the T in LGBTQ”
- What are some challenges that are unique to transgender students?
- Describe several techniques you can use to help your transgender students overcome these challenges.
- Choose at least 2 of Sadowski’s recommendations and describe whether or not you believe they are needed in your school if you think these changes would be successful
- Read and post a 250+ word response below. Also, be sure to reply to any other responses in this assignment space.

#### Assignment #9: Annotated Bibliography

- Develop an annotated bibliography of at least 10 web sites that will provide students & parents with safe, reliable and age-appropriate resources for LGBTQ inclusion, awareness and education.
- Use sources different than those used in this class.
- Include links to local support systems (domestic violence, suicide prevention hotlines and help centers) as well as general LGBTQ information.
- Write a title and a one (1) sentence description, along with an annotation, for each resource or website.

#### Assignment #10: Create An Educational Resource

Create an LGBTQ educational resource for students, parents, colleagues, administrators or the general public. This resource should outline challenges the LGBTQ community faces today (you may choose to refer statistics you learned about in Assignment #6), what can be done at school, home or in the community to allow LGBTQ students to thrive and provide at least 3 links to local resources for support with LGBTQ issues. This resource may be in the form of a brochure, PowerPoint (or similar) presentation, video or a form of media. Some themes may include.

- *How to Talk to your LGBTQ Child/Student*
- *How to Start a GSA*
- *How to Create A Gay-Straight Agenda*
- *Creating a “Safe Space” for LGBTQ Students*

### **Assignment #11: (500 Level ONLY) Advocacy**

#### **Option A): "Attend a GSA Meeting"**

Attend a GSA meeting at your school. If your school does not have a club, hold a meeting of your own. Resources can be found at <http://www.glsen.org/jumpstart> Post a 250-500 word reflection on your experience.

OR

#### **Option B): "Conduct an Anonymous School Climate Survey"**

Conduct a survey (in coordination with your school district's policy) on LGBTQ issues in your school using GLSEN's Local Survey. (Available free at <http://localsurvey.glsen.org/>). A step-by-step guide is available as well. Share the results of the survey with your class. Note the student's (as well as your own) expectations before sharing the results. Follow up with your own questions to see if students were surprised with the results. Ask your students what they hope to see in the future of their school.

Describe your findings in 250+ words.

OR

#### **Option C): "Interview A Student Who Identifies As LGBTQ"**

Interview a student or several students (in coordination with your school district's policy) who openly identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or questioning. The interview should focus on obstacles that the student faces (because of their gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, etc.), pros and cons of your school, things teachers and/or administrators can do to improve the school experience for LGBTQ students. Summarize your findings in 250-500 words using the space below.

OR

#### **Option D):**

Another assignment of your own choice with the instructor's prior approval.

### **C. INTEGRATION PAPER**

Assignment #12: (Required for 400 and 500 Level)

#### **SELF REFLECTION & INTEGRATION PAPER**

**(Please do not write this paper until you've completed all of your other assignments)**

Write a 400-500 word Integration Paper answering these 5 questions:

1. What did you learn vs. what you expected to learn from this course?
2. What aspects of the course were most helpful and why?
3. What further knowledge and skills in this general area do you feel you need?
4. How, when and where will you use what you have learned?
5. How and with what other school or community members might you share what you learned?

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#### **INSTRUCTOR COMMENTS ON YOUR WORK:**

Instructors will comment on each assignment. If you do not hear from the instructor within a few days of posting your assignment, please get in touch with them immediately.

#### **QUALIFICATIONS FOR TEACHING THIS COURSE:**

Brian Long, M.A. is a teacher at a public high school. He has earned his B.S.E. in Physical Education as well as his M.A. in health education from the State University of New York at Cortland.

He has served as a member of the C.A.R.E. (Character Alliance Reaches Everyone) Committee and Drug Awareness Coalition in his school district. Brian has created in-service workshops in computer programs and has developed extra curricular intramural programs at his school.

In 2008, Brian was the recipient of the Middle Country Central School Districts SPARC (Special Performance/ Achievement Recognition & Commendation Award) as well as NYSUT's Community Service Award in 2009. He is currently in his 20th year as a health education teacher.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### **LGBTQ STUDENTS: Creating a Supportive School Environment**

Byard, Eliza. "How to Deal With LGBT Issues in Schools", Audio blog post. Harvard EdCast. Harvard Graduate School of Education. January 25, 2013.

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<https://dfgately.wordpress.com/2013/11/14/why-our-middle-school-has-a-gay-straight-alliance/>

GLSEN. (2013) *The GLSEN Jump Start Guide: Building and Activating Your GSA or Similar Student Club*. New York

Kosciw, J. G., Greytak, E. A., Giga, N. M., Villenas, C. & Danischewski, D. J. (2016). The 2015 National School Climate Survey: The experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer youth in our nation's schools. New York: GLSEN.

Poteat, Paul, V. *Gay Straight Alliances: Promoting Student Resilience and Safer School Climates*. American Educator, Winter 2016-2017

Rizga, Kristina. *Coming Out In High School: How One Gay-Straight Alliance Supports Students*. American Educator, Winter 2016-2017