Chapter 5

Discussion Questions.

1. The nature versus nurture approach to understanding sexual orientation ranges from genetic predispositions to learned behavior. It appears that most of the scientific community supports the notion that homosexuality has a genetic component while those that oppose gay rights believe it is learned behavior (therefore it can be unlearned or changed). Hold a discussion about how those that oppose gay rights might, if at all, change their position if indeed unquestionable evident is found that supports sexual orientation is genetically driven (It should be noted that many biologists believe that confirmation of the genetic link to sexual orientation has been found through comparative studies of identical and fraternal twins but this information has not been widely accepted among skeptics).
2. National laws do not include sexual orientation as a protected category against societal discrimination (e.g., workplace discrimination) as they do for other categories such as race and ethnicity, religion, sex, etc. Should sexual orientation be added as a protected category? Why or why not?
3. Historically, laws have been created to extend equal rights for minority groups not to limit or reduce rights. The Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), signed into law in 1996, denies homosexuals the right to a marriage that is legalized recognized in all fifty U.S. states. Should the government have the right to create laws that limit rights for one group that other groups benefit from?
4. Homophobia is defined as the irrational fear or intolerance of homosexuals. Discuss why anyone would be homophobic.
5. Discuss with the class why some individuals may want to try and hide their sexual orientation. Discuss with the class if they think, in the future, more people will feel more comfortable expressing their sexual orientation with others. Why or why not?
6. DADT was repealed in 2010. Discuss with the class how institutions may change in the future to acknowledge the rights of gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgendered individuals.