

36-149

Fall '07

**From Ten Percent to Couples per County:
The Statistics of the Gay and Lesbian Population**
Freshman Seminar

COURSE SYLLABUS

INSTRUCTOR: Michele DiPietro
Cyert Hall 108
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OFFICE HOURS: Monday, 3:00-5:00 or by appointment

TEACHING ASSISTANT: Jacob Wilcock
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OFFICE HOURS:

WEB PAGE: <http://www.cmu.edu/blackboard>

UNITS: 9

CLASS MEETINGS: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 3:00-4:20 PM, PH226B.

TEXTBOOK: There is no textbook for this course; we will use published articles and I will complement the relevant information with handouts

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OVERVIEW

What percentage of the population is gay? What causes homosexuality? Can gay people change their sexual orientation? Is it true that gay men are more effeminate and lesbians are butch? Is it true that gay people have “gaydar?” The answer to all these questions and related ones is not absolute but *statistical* – it involves gathering data from a sample, counting or measuring, synthesizing the information using a relevant statistic (e.g., a percentage, an average), drawing a conclusion from the sample, and generalizing to a larger population to the extent possible.

The motivation behind this course is to equip you with the statistical and critical thinking tools you need in order to take an informed position on the ongoing debates about LGBT[†] issues. By taking a *research-based, scientific* perspective, this course will allow you to clearly articulate competing theories and hypothesis about the LGBT population, and evaluate the strength of the evidence in favor or against each theory.

[†] Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgendered