



Same-sex Marriage: From Europe to the Global Arena

with David Paternotte, Free University of Brussels

Tuesday, March 18, 4 p.m., 4500 Wesley W. Posvar Hall

While same-sex marriage was long regarded as the privilege of a few “enlightened” countries in Western Europe and North America, debates are now spreading to all parts of the world, and an increasing number of states are moving towards full legal recognition of LGBT people.

This talk examines this process of global diffusion, highlighting the specific role played by European activists. Given the diversity of countries where same-sex marriage is currently under discussion, structural causes once put forward to explain the emergence of same-sex marriage in Western societies must now be challenged. This talk thus argues that more complex explanations are now necessary, and suggests two new factors that must be taken into account: first, the insertion of same-sex marriage

within global politics (which also explains Putin’s resistance to LGBT rights), and, second, the increasingly legal nature of marriage claims compared to earlier claims to civil or domestic partnership. Although debates on same-sex marriage are now global, this talk also discusses Europe’s specific role in the globalization of this debate, as the continent remains the main region where same-sex couples are allowed to marry.

Responses to the lecture will be given by Dr. Helma de Vries-Jordan, assistant professor, Department of Political Science, University of Pittsburgh at Bradford and Anthony C. Infanti, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and professor of law, University of Pittsburgh.

