



# YALE NATIONAL INITIATIVE

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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative  
2009 Volume II: American Voices: Listening to Fiction, Poetry, and Prose

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## **That's My Right, too: Punishment for Being Different**

Guide for Curriculum Unit 09.02.07, published September 2009

by Joseph A. Corsetti

Genuine legal equality: a simple phrase, but tied up in these three words is the impetus for the Gay Rights Movement for this is the very basis of democracy in the United States. Of course, the ultimate goal of any liberation movement would be social acceptance; but, ultimately, the Constitution can only protect the legal rights of the citizenry. However, the United States Government does not protect the rights of gays and lesbian, and in many ways, punishes and prevents this population from enjoying full equality. This unit will explore the five particular moments in the Gay Rights Crusade: the Stonewall Riots; Anita Bryant's Crusade; Decriminalization of Homosexuality; Don't Ask Don't Tell; and the battle for same-sex marriage. These moments have been chosen not because they represent the entire story of the Gay Rights campaign, but because the gay population was punished for their sexual orientation by an official government agency. In some cases, the government agency has made redress and this redress will be explored. In the end the overarching goal will be to have students explore the tension between government and the individual. This unit is primarily designed for 11th and 12th graders.

(Developed for Crime, Punishment, and Justice, grades 11-12; recommended for Civics and U.S. History, grades 11-12)

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