Case Study #2: Kant, Vladimir Putin & Homosexuality in Russia

Read the section on Kant in our text and the attached articles from CBS News, The Guardian and Bloomberg News, then answer the following questions. The completed assignment should be two pages long, using 12 pt. fonts and single spacing with one inch margins. Each answer should be proportionate to the number of points possible and supporting quotes should be no longer than one or two short sentences. Quotes must be cited and if pulled from our text all you need do is indicate the page – if not from our text, a full citation is required. Please separate and number each response as shown in the example attached. This study is worth a total of 60 points.

Your completed assignment is due on the 14th of April. Keep scrolling down after the background for further instructions, general suggestions, grading rubrics, and a sample completed assignment!

1. Paraphrase the argument made by Vladimir Putin in the first attached article from CBS News defending Russia’s stance on homosexuality. (5 points)

2. Fact-finding & Background Research: Prior to determining whether Russia’s position is morally justifiable, what facts do you need to know about his case? Note that these should include questions regarding Russia’s legislation, populations of Russian homosexuals & their current treatment in Russia, comparisons to other countries, etc., but not questions about Kant. Provide as a bulleted list and pose in question form. For this assignment, you do not have to do the research but you need to raise the kind of questions that would drive such a project. These should be research questions and as such should be concrete and answerable. No bias or prejudice should be evident and the questions should be non-normative. Think about facts that, if known might help determine how one should or could respond to the case. (15 points)

3. Pending the acquisition of this information, would Kant regard Putin’s argument as morally acceptable? Be sure to provide citations from Kant (primary source =Kant’s writings and does not include secondary commentary from Rosenstand or from me) to support your answer. In citing the quote, all you need do is indicate the page from the text (see example). Note that this question carries the highest weight in points. (20 points)

4. Identify some key counter considerations or objections to the argument you’ve made in section 3. This can include not only existing practical conditions that might prevent one from following up on those recommendations made in section 3 above, but also the cost or potential negative impact if one acted on those conclusions. Provide as a bulleted list. (10 points)

5. Reply to the counter-considerations/objections identified in #4. There should be no repetition of arguments previously made in section 3. Provide as a bulleted list. (10 points)
Background\(^1\): Case Study #2

**PUTIN: RUSSIA MUST “CLEANSE” ITSELF OF HOMOSEXUALITY\(^2\)**

Russian President Vladimir Putin meets with Olympic volunteers in the Black Sea resort of Sochi, Russia, Friday, Jan. 17, 2014. AP

Putin: Russia must "cleanse" itself of homosexuality if it wants to increase its birth rate.

Putin's comments in a TV interview broadcast Sunday still show the wide gulf between the perception of homosexuality in Russia versus the West. A Russian law passed last year banning "propaganda of nontraditional sexual relations" among minors has caused an international outcry.

**Sochi's gay culture**

Putin refused to answer a question on whether he believes that people are born gay or become gay. The Russian law, however, suggests that information about homosexuality can influence a child's sexual orientation.

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1 Please note that you are not limited to the background offered. It is expected that you will do a bit more in-depth reading to develop your thesis. You may feel free to use any credible/reliable source as evidence for your arguments. Additionally you may use additional material from Mill to defend your answers. Please provide full citation for all research.

The Russian president has found himself frequently discussing his country’s anti-gay laws, as the world’s attention shifts Russia’s way ahead of the Olympics. Putin has identified himself closely with the $50-billion event. Calls for a mass boycott of the games due to the laws have failed, but the row has clouded the build-up to the event.

Critics say the law is discriminatory and part of a rolling back of human rights and democratic freedoms under Putin, who has taken a more conservative course on social issues since returning to the presidency in mid-2012.

On Friday, Putin insisted Russia is not "going after" gays, according to Reuters.

"There is no ban on non-traditional forms of sexual interaction between people. We have a ban on propaganda of homosexuality," Putin told a meeting with young volunteers preparing for the games. "We ban nothing, we aren't going after anyone, we have no responsibility for such contacts."

Putin said some U.S. states had laws envisaging criminal responsibility for gay sexual intercourse.

"We have no such thing, people can feel free and at ease but please leave the children in peace," he said.

Putin did not elaborate. In a victory for gay rights activists, the U.S. Supreme Court in 2003 invalidated any remaining anti-sodomy laws that prohibited sex between adults of the same gender.

In a clear message to Moscow, U.S. President Barack Obama included three openly gay athletes in his Olympic delegation and Britain said it would sent to Sochi a minister responsible for the country's same-sex marriage laws.

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Vladimir Putin: gay people at Winter Olympics must 'leave children alone'

Russian president vows no discrimination but says gay people must observe law banning 'homosexual propaganda'

Russian president Vladimir Putin has said that gay people will be not be subjected to harassment at the Winter Olympics in Sochi, as long as they stay away from children.

Putin is currently in Sochi reviewing preparations for the Games, which begin in three weeks. During a meeting with some of the thousands of volunteers who will work during the Olympics, he was asked why their uniforms were rainbow coloured, given the recent Kremlin anti-gay initiatives.

"We do not have a ban on non-traditional sexual relationships," said Putin in comments reported by Russian agencies. "We have a ban on the propaganda of homosexuality and paedophilia. I want to underline this. Propaganda among children. These are absolutely different things – a ban on something or a ban on the propaganda of that thing."

Putin also added that Russia was more liberal than some other countries, claiming that in certain US states homosexuality was still punishable by law. "We are not forbidding anything and nobody is being grabbed off the street, and there is no punishment for such kinds of relations," said Putin. "You can feel relaxed and calm [in Russia], but leave children alone please," said Putin.

Since the law on "homosexual propaganda" came into force last year, Russia's gay community has reported an upturn in homophobic violence and threats. Gay rights rallies are also banned in Russia, and there has been much discussion over whether athletes or spectators displaying rainbow flags or gay rights placards could be arrested during the Olympics.

Earlier this week, Putin said the Games would be held "without discrimination on any grounds". But he added on Friday that Russia was a traditional country, and refused to accept European values on sexual orientation, claiming that some countries were even discussing the legalisation of paedophilia. He declined to specify which countries, saying it was easy to find out about such things on the internet.

Putin said: "What, are we supposed to follow along like obedient lapdogs, towards whatever consequences await? We have our own traditions, our own culture. We have respect for all of our international partners and ask that they also respect our own traditions and culture."
Putin Signs Law Banning Gay ‘Propaganda’ Among Children

By Scott Rose

Jun 30, 2013 4:00 PM PT

Photographer: Olga Maltseva/AFP via Getty Images

Activists take part in a gay pride event in St. Petersburg on June 29, 2013.

Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a law fining people who “propagate” homosexuality to children, a day after dozens of people were detained following a gay-pride parade in St. Petersburg.

The law introduces fines of 4,000 rubles ($122) to 5,000 rubles for individuals and 10 times those figures for public officials found guilty, according to a copy of the legislation posted to a government website yesterday. Fines for individuals who use mass media or the Internet to propagate homosexuality to minors rise to as much as 100,000 rubles.

Putin, who returned to the Kremlin for a third term as president last year, said in April that same-sex marriages don’t produce children and that Russia and Europe face demographic challenges from lower birth rates, though it’s his duty to protect the rights of people with “non-traditional” sexual orientations. The decision comes days after the U.S. Supreme Court struck down a law that denied benefits to same-sex couples and removed obstacles for gay weddings to resume in California.

Putin violated Russia’s international obligations by signing the law, which will be challenged at Russia’s Constitutional Court and the European Court of Human Rights, Nikolai Alexeyev, a Russian gay-rights activist, wrote in a statement on GayRussia.eu.

‘Under-educated Electorate’

“By signing the law banning gay propaganda, President Putin may have won a local battle for the votes of his under-educated electorate,” Alexeyev wrote. “He lost the historical battle. History will prove that he committed a mistake that future generations won’t likely forgive.”

Opinion polls have shown limited tolerance among Russians for homosexuality. Last year, Moscow City Court upheld the city’s decision to ban gay-pride parades for the next 100 years.

The federal bill follows a similar ban on “propaganda” instituted last year in St. Petersburg, which was used two days ago in Russia’s second-largest city. The 58 people detained in St. Petersburg included eight who were opponents of same-sex marriages, the local Fontanka.ru news portal reported, citing city police. A leader of the event, Yury Gavrikov, was held overnight and will face administrative charges on July 4, the news service said.

The St. Petersburg law drew international outrage. American singer Madonna faced a 333 million-ruble fine earlier this year, later thrown out by a city court, after saying at a concert last year that gays and lesbians should be treated with dignity and tolerance.

Defended Record

Putin has defended Russia’s record on gay rights amid criticism from European countries. The bill Putin signed yesterday stigmatizes homosexuals and breaches the spirit of Russia’s commitments, including to the European Convention on Human Rights, Steffen Seibert, German Chancellor Angela Merkel’s chief spokesman, told reporters in Berlin last month.

“I want everyone to understand that in Russia there are no infringements on sexual minorities’ rights,” Putin said in Amsterdam in April. “They’re people, just like everyone else, and they enjoy full rights and freedoms.”
The federal amendments expanded on a law that protects children from pornography and other “harmful information.” The bill prohibits the distribution of information intended to promote or spread “non-traditional sexual orientations” among minors, or a “distorted conception of the equivalence between traditional and non-traditional sexual relationships.”

The bill also prohibits the “obtrusive spreading of information about non-traditional sexual relationships that may arouse interest in such relationships.”

**Russian ‘Mood’**

Foreign citizens charged under the law face administrative arrests for as long as 15 days and deportation from Russia.

The federal government wasn’t behind regional initiatives to ban material promoting homosexuality, Putin said in April. They “reflect the mood of Russian society,” he said.

Some 48 percent of Russians believe the government should “definitely” prevent public displays or justifications of homosexuality, the independent Levada Center said May 17, citing a poll of 1,601 people conducted in April. The Moscow-based polling firm found 25 percent said the state should “probably” do so.

The same survey found 13 percent of people think homosexuals should face prosecution, while 38 percent said they should be “treated” for their homosexuality. Some 31 percent said gays and lesbians should be left alone.

**Pussy Riot**

Putin also signed a bill yesterday implementing jail terms of as much as three years for people convicted of intentionally offending religious sensibilities at places of worship. Offenses committed elsewhere are punishable by as much as a year in jail, according to a copy of the amendments posted to a government website.
The bill was a response to the “punk prayer” performed by the all-female Pussy Riot group in Moscow’s Christ the Savior Cathedral, the main place of worship of Russia’s Orthodox Christians, in February 2012. Three women were sentenced to two years in jail for singing an anti-Putin song while clad in short dresses and masks. One was later freed after the term was commuted to a suspended sentence.

Members of the group appealed their case to the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg, France, arguing that the charges of inciting religious hatred and hooliganism violated their rights to freedom of expression.

The Levada Center polled Russians on the Pussy Riot incident, with 56 percent of respondents saying the two-year sentences were “reasonable” and 26 percent calling them excessive. Nine percent said the Pussy Riot members shouldn’t have been prosecuted.

To contact the reporter on this story: Scott Rose in Moscow at rrose10@bloomberg.net

To contact the editor responsible for this story: Balazs Penz at bpenz@bloomberg.net

Keep scrolling down for rubrics and a sample completed assignment!
I. **Focus & Relevance**

Be sure that you understand the assignment and have understood each question. Your responses should be focused on the questions I’ve asked & not the questions you wish I had asked! It is important to weed out all irrelevant considerations or concerns that an economist or historian or political scientist might have but are not strictly speaking, ethical concerns. Look at the completed sample case study for some ideas.

II. **Format**

You should copy & paste or re-type only the first part of the question (the portion in bold type). Please number each response corresponding to the assigned questions. Papers should be 2 pages, using 12pt. fonts and 1 inch margins all around. There should be an extra space separating your responses to each question. Again, please reference the completed sample case study and follow the format exemplified.

III. **Tone/Voice**

Ever since George Carlin pointed out that “using your own words” would result in a private and hence meaningless expressions, I’ve had to give up on the phrase, however a certain degree of originality is still important. Your task is to explain a concept as if you were the Teaching Assistant for this class. If you simply repeat the text or my lecture, you haven’t helped your imaginary student. You need to clarify the argument/concept in a way that demonstrates that you really understand it and can express the same ideas in a way that is different than has already been explained by the text or by me.

IV. **Adequate and Balanced Defense of Your Argument**

In question three, you are asked to make an argument using the philosopher we’re studying. You should be clear in your thesis early in the paragraph. It is important

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5 Please note that these guidelines are for my class assignments. Individual instructors may have other format preferences and you should consult with your teacher for the details before completing your assignment.
to ensure that your application is consistent with the philosopher’s theory and that you support that application with a well-thought-out defense. You should include counter-considerations that are relevant to that theory and could impact the philosopher’s conclusions.

V. Quotes
Quoting is a way of supporting your interpretation of an argument or theory. Relevance to your response and to the question asked is critical. Quotes can be edited but be careful not to take the quote out of context, thus altering the intent of the author. The length of the quote must be appropriate to the length of the assignment: short papers require shorter quotes. All quotes must come from the original author’s works, neither from the secondary commentary of the author of our text nor from my lectures or power points. Quotes need only be cited with the page in our text where it was found (see sample completed assignment).

VI. Length
Part of the criteria for success is efficient use of the space allowed. If you write a single sentence for a one/third page assignment, you have not satisfied this criterion. However, this is not an invitation to use the additional space for stream-of-consciousness or irrelevant information not pertinent to the assigned issue. If you are having difficulties with the length, it is usually because you have not recognized or developed sufficiently the various issues involved. Conversely, if your draft is too long, you need to whittle it down to just the relevant essentials, perhaps editing out the anecdotes or redundancies; more is not always better! I am very willing to help if you submit drafts sufficiently before the due date.

VII. Rough Drafts
I have invited all of you to bring rough drafts of your completed assignment in for a preview reading. I do not offer re-writes after I have graded your papers. Rough drafts are brought in during my office hours or by appointment and I only read them in person - with the student present. Please do not submit rough drafts electronically nor should you drop them off in my box.

I support pro-active measures that encourage preparation and thought and with rough draft readings, both the student and I should benefit with the end result being a better final draft. If your work satisfies my criteria (see rubrics following) for “A” level work, and if the draft is formatted and printed in final draft format, I will sign off on the draft, guaranteeing those students somewhere between 100% and 90% of the points possible for this assignment. Your cut-off for rough draft submissions is 24 hours prior to the due date; I will read no rough drafts the day of or the day prior to the due date.

*Keep scrolling down for rubrics and a sample completed assignment!*
Standards (Rubrics) for Grading Case Studies

The excellent paper (100-90% of points) will exhibit the following qualities:

**Question 1:**
- Conclusion is clearly identified
- Major supporting premises are identified
- Relevant and critical minor supporting premises are identified.
- Argument has been presented with good logical flow.
- Paraphrase has eliminated all irrelevant or unnecessary information.
- Paraphrase is original and not merely a verbatim repetition of original argument
- Argument is clearly understood and consistent with the author’s intent.
- No critique, analysis or irrelevant commentary is provided.

**Question 2:**
- All items are listed as normatively neutral questions. No immediate bias is evidenced.
- All critical questions have been raised given the space allowed.
- Questions are relevant to the case and would be likely to be relevant to the philosopher/theory being applied to the case.
- Questions are likely to drive effective and informative research. The questions should be factual and answerable (at least in terms of probabilities or projections backed up with historical data).
- Questions are not phrased in terms of what will happen or should happen but what has happened; remember one cannot gather data from events that have yet to occur.
- Questions are grammatically correct and are presented in a bulleted list.

**Question 3:**
- A clear thesis statement is made at the beginning of the response.
- Argument is focused on the key issues.
- Argument is clear and well organized.
- Argument is consistent with the assigned philosopher’s theory.
- Argument is effectively supported with relevant reasons.
- Sufficient detail from the philosopher’s theory is provided.
- Argument is effectively supported with relevant quotes from the philosopher’s primary work & all quotes are cited properly.
- Responses reflect thoughtful and detailed consideration of background material provided.
- No immediate personal bias is evidenced.

**Question 4:**
- Core counter-considerations are identified.
- All critical barriers raised are reflective of real-world practical considerations.
• Objections are directly relevant to the case made in response to question three.
• Objections/counter-considerations are presented succinctly in a bulleted list.

**Question 5:**
• All objections or counter-considerations raised in the fourth section have responses.
• Solutions proposed should be reasonably and humanly applicable (e.g. not asking for divine intervention).
• Solutions proposed should be well supported given the space allowed.
• Responses should be consistent with the target philosopher's theory.
• Responses are presented succinctly in a bulleted list which parallels those objections/counter-considerations offered in section 4.

**Overall Impressions:**
• Study presents evidence of a thoughtful and deliberative approach.
• Language is clear and explanations/arguments are original
• Effective use has been made of space allowed
• Study reflects careful consideration of background material provided.
• There is good logic flow from one response to another – issues raised in earlier questions must link logically with responses to later questions.
• The study is scholarly, with effective use of the essays and relevant philosophical theory. All quotes and references are properly cited.
• Assignment format has been followed.

**Good (89-80% points)**
The good paper will demonstrate all the above qualities but perhaps to a lesser degree or, will demonstrate some of the above qualities excellently, but not all of the qualities will be presented at a consistently high level.

**Satisfactory (79-70% points)**
The satisfactory paper will present all of the above qualities but not as strongly as the good paper or, some qualities may be stronger with some not as strong. Insight is not usually present.

**Needs Work (69-60% points)**
This paper is weak on many of the desired qualities.

**Really Needs Work – Pretty Much Unacceptable (59-0% points)**
This paper presents few if any of the desired qualities.

*Keep scrolling down for a sample completed assignment!*
1. **Paraphrase the argument presented in the film, “Precious Knowledge.”** This film presents a clear condemnation of AZ House Bill 2281 which the makers of the film charge as targeting the teaching of ethnic studies in AZ high schools. The film argues that the funding of ethnic studies in the high schools is a critical and significant contributor to student success and fulfills the needs of underrepresented students that are not otherwise met in the conventional curriculum. Further it is argued that those supporting AZ HB2281 are motivated by a poor understanding of the ethnic studies program and if not out and out racism, at the very least a callous indifference to the needs of those underrepresented students. Lastly, it is argued that AZ HB2281 is tantamount to censorship.

2. **What sort of further information would assist you in formulating a response to these issues?**
   - What was the drop-out rate for AZ Latino students before vs. during the program? How did the drop-out rate of students who participated in the program compare to the overall drop-out rates of the school district?
   - Are there statistical correlations between drop-out rates and unemployment, homelessness and crime?
   - How have the students in the ethnic studies program performed on standardized tests as compared to the general population of students in the district?
   - Was there an increase in school violence or public disturbances linked to racial tension during the period the program was taught?
   - Have any studies been performed to link diversity of curriculum to student success?
   - What was the racial background of the students in the program?
   - Is the public funding of AZ schools very limited or decreasing? How does AZ per student spending compare to other states in the US?
   - How much does the ethnic studies program cost per student compared to the general courses taught and how many students as a percent of the total school district population does it serve?
   - In other states/cities/districts what impact has the institution of ethnic studies programs had on the students who participate?

3. **Pending the acquisition of this information, how do you think Mill would respond to this case?**
   There are three main reasons why Mill would have rejected Arizona’s House Bill 2281. First, Mill was a utilitarian and thus would weigh the moral worth of this bill in terms of outcomes and the number of people affected. From such a cost-benefit analysis, it appears that though the ethnic studies programs may have been more expensive and served a smaller population of students, the outcomes were significant in terms of greater retention and graduation rates, better scores on standardized exams, higher transfers to colleges, and a significantly more motivated student body who felt empowered to work towards issues of social justice and equal opportunities for Latinos. Under the old system, one must consider the cost of educating students who fail or drop-out. The waste of finite public resources, combined with the social cost of high school drop-outs in terms of quality of life, higher incidences of crime, unrealized potential and lost productivity cannot be disregarded. Secondly, Mill held there is a connection between education, a just society and the greatest good or ‘happiness’ as he called it. For Mill, happiness involved free will,

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empowered action, a sense of pride and most importantly, a kind of higher rational dignity. (p.266) He argued, “The present wretched education and wretched social arrangements are the only real hindrance to its being attainable by almost all.” (p.267) If it can be adequately shown that the ethnic studies do contribute to such qualities for a significant number of students – and anecdotal evidence supports this – then this is just the sort of program of which Mill would most approve. Many of the participants reported a significant change in their understanding of how their ancestors contributed to this country and that they had gained a real sense of empowerment and optimism about their own future. Finally, as a classic libertarian, Mill was opposed to excessive government intervention. (p.256) He wrote, “The only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilized community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others.” (p255) There appears to be little evidence to support that there was an active harm incurred through the teaching of ethnic studies. Contrarily, there is good evidence that an ethnically diverse curriculum is pedagogically defensible. The Arizona state legislators’ move has effectively curbed a cherished practice of academic freedom which is clearly consistent with Mill’s position on governmental overreach. Encyclopedia Britannica defines academic freedom as, “…the freedom of teachers and students to teach, study, and pursue knowledge and research without unreasonable interference or restriction from law, institutional regulations, or public pressure.” In order to justify this Bill, the legislators needed to demonstrate positive harms such as proving a clear link between an increase in racially motivated violence and the program. Mill argued strenuously against censorship in On Liberty, “If all mankind minus one, were of one opinion, and only one person were of the contrary opinion, mankind would be no more justified in silencing that one person, than he, if he had the power, would be justified in silencing mankind.” It seems clear that, in this case, there are greater harms in censorship and the erosion of freedom than there are gains made in the name of consistency and standardization. When one includes the books that were also banned, this looks like a bad Bill likely to result in worse consequences.

4. **Identify counter considerations or objections to the argument you’ve made in section 3**
   - Some believe that tailoring district curriculum to reflect the ethnicity of local populations would impede the perceived need for consistency - ensuring that all students graduate with the same basic skill sets.
   - Public school funds are always limited and special programs do tend to cost more per student and serve fewer students as a whole.
   - The Latino population is traditionally underrepresented both in terms of voter turn-out and in campaign contributions; the representatives are consequently not as motivated to see Latinos as an important part of their constituency.

5. **Reply to the counter-considerations identified in section 4.**
   - Further studies are needed to document how the institution of ethnic studies programs impact students’ performance on standardized tests or other outcomes based assessment tools.
   - A set of standardized criteria need to be developed to evaluate the consequences of investment in public education and in ethnic studies in particular. These outcomes should include the impact of graduation rates on social costs such as employment rates, productivity, tax revenue, crime rates, etc. Overall, it appears that school funding also needs to be increased as AZ is one of the lowest states in per student spending.
   - Latino voters & politicians need to become more active with voter registration and turnout among the interested constituency. They can also work for campaign finance reform to reduce bias.