**SOC 3: Marriage & Family Relations**

**Supreme Court Decision: Obergefell vs. Hodges**

On June 26th, 2015, the United States Supreme Court rendered a decision regarding the legality of same-sex unions.  Justice Kennedy wrote that under the 14th Amendment's equal protection provision, "couples of the same-sex may not be deprived of that right and liberty."  This is a historic decision that many civil liberties experts compare to Brown vs. Board of Education and Roe vs. Wade.

In light of our discussions this semester regarding the definition of marriage and legal restrictions based on these concepts, it is pertinent for you to read a portion of the majority opinion written by Justice Kennedy. The opinion is intended to reflect the reasoning and legal precedence behind this historic decision. While the entire document is over 100 pages long, read pages 1 - 25 and answer the following questions:

1. State the "four principles and traditions which demonstrate that the reasons marriage is fundamental under the Constitution apply with equal force to same-sex couples" (Kennedy, 2015: 1-5). (8 points)

a)

b)

c)

d)

2.Fill-in-the-blank: (2 points)

The right of same-sex couples to marry is also derived from the Fourteenth Amendment's guarantee of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

3. The lead plaintiff in the case, Jim Obergefell, who challenged Ohio's ban on same-sex marriage, stated that the ruling "affirms what millions across this country already know to be true in their hearts - that our love is equal." Throughout the written opinion by Kennedy many different couples stories were described. Which story resonated the most with you and why? What hardships were endured as cause for their case before the court? (5 points)

4. How does this decision affect your view of civil liberties and freedom as it relates to marriage? (5 points)