

## Intersection Content Example

Areas: Family Law and Public Policy

Content: Legislative and Judicial Trends

**General:** Intersection content examples provide samples of course content from a program or discipline with suggestions about how one or more insights from the Lutheran (and, more broadly, the entire Christian faith) perspective can inform that content.

Good instructional methods are always a part of effective teaching. But the examples do not provide a formula or recipe, and their use is not about some particular teaching method, a set of criteria, or a list of rubrics for “the right Lutheran or Christian” instructional solution. (Such an approach would put us, as Lutherans say, “under the Law rather than grace.”) The examples do indicate opportunities where the instructor and student can explore and apply specific themes related to the Gospel and a biblical world view as these may relate to course content.

To use the example, simply scan or read it for content and the featured intersections. Doing so will help acquaint you with direct and indirect ways by which the instructor can carry over some of these ideas into her or his own course work. For further background on the Lutheran tradition, see the materials at <http://twokingdoms.cune.edu/> under the menu tabs for the Grad Programs, the Lutheran Tradition, and the About page. For additional content ideas see the tabs for Content Areas and for Resources.

Law and policy on civil institutions do not emerge *ex nihilo*. They are influenced by long traditions and as well as current and passing trends in cultures. We may wonder how legislative and judicial processes in a liberal democracy can manage the high-stakes concerns of multiple and often incommensurate convictions and commitments about marriage in our society today. To gain some perspective on this matter, examine the brief orientations to eight traditions in marriage and family. (These brief statements are not authoritative or complete but do provide an approximate point of reference for comparing and contrasting the traditions with each other and with views expressed in current events.)

1. **Roman Catholic:** a sacramental expression of divine grace—not to be dissolved—for one man and one woman mediated by the church.
2. **Reformed:** a covenant between man and woman reflecting God’s grace yet sustained by the requirements of temporal authorities.
3. **Lutheran:** an “estate” or “order” in our earthly (God’s left-hand kingdom) vocation, “subject to the prince, not the Pope,” in which the grace and forgiveness of God’s right-hand kingdom is exhibited for sinners.
4. **Anglican:** an earthly reflection of heavenly truths practiced within the interlocking commonwealths of state, church, and family.
5. **Secular** (distilled from Protestantism + the Enlightenment): a contract grounded in human freedom of choice to be maintained or voided as the enlightened individual sees fit.
6. **Judaism:** a contractual bond under God’s command that establishes a relationship among the man, the woman, and God.
7. **Mormon:** an ordination by God to create family, an institution central and eternal to the divine plan for God’s people.

8. **Islam:** a contract and legal bond of man and woman under *sharia* (Islamic law) that allows but does not require polygyny up to four wives.

Both religious and civil institutions generally recognize the two realms or orders of “the sacred and the secular,” “church and state,” “the temporal and the eternal,” etc., though in a variety of different ways—perhaps complementary, perhaps conflicting. This distinction is also sometimes referred to as “the two kingdoms.” In keeping with our course guidelines for written assignments, write a paper describing either

1) Your view of the proper or pragmatic or most realistic relationship of the civil order to marriage and family given the multiple traditions in our society. Be sure explain your basis for that regard, non-regard, or approach to these issues, e.g., why is this particular legal philosophy the correct or best one?

or

2) Your understanding of whether marriage-and-family is a civil institution, a religious institution, a strictly private and non-public / non-community arrangement, or is some other sort of social relationship and, based on that view, to what extent our legislative and judicial processes have any prevailing interest in governing marriage-and-family.

For background, use our reading so far in the texts, *Family Life Education: Integrating Theory and Practice* and *Family Policy Matters: How Policymaking Affects Families and What Professionals Can Do*, and any Web searches you may want to conduct.

Your paper will not be graded for any particular perspective but on how you reasonably and coherently discuss these law-and-traditions issues.

Given the current news and court decisions about same-sex marriage, many discussions related to the nature of marriage, traditions, and the public interest can be found religiously interested sites such as

[Religious News Service](#) – type “same sex marriage” into the search box.

[Christianity Today – Same-Sex Marriage](#).

[First Things](#) – type “same sex marriage” into the search box.

[Issues in Christian Education](#)