Note: THIS IS A SAMPLE FIRST PARAGRAPH WRITTEN BY A STUDENT FOR A SIMILAR EXHIBIT ON MARRIAGE. THE SAMPLE ILLUSTRATES A TONE APPROPRIATE FOR A MUSEUM EXHIBIT. HOWEVER, I DO NOT EXPECT YOU TO MODEL YOUR PROSE EXACTLY ON THIS PARAGRAPH. BELOW THE PARAGRAPH IS A LIST OF EXHIBIT ARTIFACTS. THE BOLDED SENTENCE IS A “MAPPING STATEMENT” OR “INFORMATIONAL THESIS STATEMENT”.

THE POLITICS OF MARRIAGE: A MUSEUM EXHIBIT

How do we view marriage—as a lifelong contract to stay together “in sickness and in health” or a more flexible commitment to remain wedded as “long as we both shall love”? Do we envision marriage as including same-sex unions as well as partnerships between women and men? Does marriage have a primary purpose such as the rearing of children or the happiness of the spouses? How does the ideology of romantic love influence attitudes toward marriage and divorce? How does a “love marriage” contrast with an arranged marriage? This exhibit examines these and other questions through exploring the changing face of American marriage in light of transformations in: law and gender roles, marriage patterns, divorce rates and attitudes toward sexuality and same-sex unions.

ARTIFACTS INCLUDE:
Examples of old (promising wife’s obedience) and new (egalitarian) marriage vows

Excerpt from New York Times article on arranged marriages in the U.S.

Excerpt from the 2003 Massachusetts Goodridge decision establishing legal right to same-sex marriage in the state

Advertisements for wedding wear for same-sex and male/female marriages

Current newspaper wedding announcements (illustrating female/male and same-sex couples, variety in races/ethnicities/ages of couples and different choices of last name)

Charts of marriage, divorce and remarriage statistics in the U.S. over the 20th century

Photos of individuals in different types of marriages/families:
Marriages without children (husband/wife and same-sex unions)
Marriages with children (husband/wife and same-sex unions)
Blended marriages—couples with children from previous marriage(s)
Polygamous marriage—husband/multiple wives