

1980

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Women's Studies Program Staff

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**WOMEN'S STUDIES PROGRAM
NORTHEASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY**

Vol. 5 No. 3

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PROGRAM NOTES

THE WOMEN'S STUDIES UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM:

WHAT IT OFFERS AND WHAT IT MEANS

The strength and reputation of an academic program depends on several factors: the standards it upholds, the qualifications and expertise of its faculty and the performance of its students certainly must be foremost among them. Most of us in women's studies programs throughout the country are especially sensitive to the challenge faced by non-traditional educators to demonstrate the validity of their methodologies and the pertinacity of their subject areas, and, consequently, we make conscious efforts to earn and maintain a reputation for academic excellence while we explore different pedagogical approaches that accord with feminist principles and goals.

During the 1970's UNI's Women's Studies Program has successfully accomplished these two aims of quality and innovation. Its faculty has distinguished itself by the achievements of its members, each of whom has the respect of her colleagues and the high regard of her students, and, over the years, these women have made significant contributions to the growing body of knowledge on women.

In addition, we can recognize their success in the classroom from their generally excellent student evaluations and from the high quality of student work that they inspire. Most of the student papers that have been presented in WSP symposia or submitted for inclusion in our anthologies were written to fulfill assignments in women's studies courses. Collectively these papers represent a rich source of valuable material on and by women, the potential for more serious research, and the value of the multidisciplinary structure of our program. The Program must continue its role as a conduit for the dissemination of the knowledge and information as it is investigated and compiled by our women's studies students in our established departmental courses.

At the same time, with the help of its board members, teaching faculty and students, continues to work toward its dual goals of integrating new knowledge about women into the academic curricula and a non-sexist perspective into all areas of the university community by examining different pedagogical approaches. With the addition of the two courses, Introduction to Women's Studies (since 1977) and the Senior Seminar in Women's Studies (1979-80) work that integrates disciplinary methodologies in an interdisciplinary way is now being produced by our students.

The direction given to the students in the Fall, 1979 Introduction to Women's Studies course presented by Jane Hawley (Sec. Educ.) offers an example of the potential for creativity and innovation inherent in these new women's studies courses. After an exposure to selected readings that highlighted feminist issues, and to presentations given by seven women's studies faculty from different academic areas, the students were asked to apply their understanding of what it means to be a woman in our society to an oral history of a close but older female relative.

Taking such a history undoubtedly promoted a greater awareness of women's experiences. At the same time it could not but foster a greater intimacy between women of different generations. The papers written for Hawley's course are both instructive to the reader and very moving. Methodologically they suggest a model for introducing students to the impact of women's studies on all our lives.

A very different approach was taken in the Senior Seminar (Winter, 1980) that gave a maximum amount of responsibility to the students for determining their own topics of study within a thematic frame work. It was decided to investigate the relationship between suggested or actual incidents of sexual activity and implied or overt acts of violence as presented in popular media. Students surveyed TV commercials and shows, music album covers and children's literature to see if there were statistical correlations between examples of sexual violence. Their results may not be considered conclusive, but the project refined their research techniques while it alerted them to the (often) covert messages of the popular media.

Our women's studies courses, then, provide students with varied learning experiences in methodology as well as subject matter or content. These students are the ones who, through their own work and in their own words, can best testify to the richness of those experiences and the intellectual opportunities that our multidisciplinary program with its interdisciplinary courses, taught by a faculty of accomplished scholars, offers all North-eastern students.

FROM ONE WOMEN'S STUDIES GRADUATE STUDENT:
HER PROJECT, ITS PROGRESS AND PURPOSE

Developing an appropriate project to fulfill the final requirements for a Master of Arts degree in Social Science/Women's Studies has been a challenging and frustrating experience. Challenging in that I am researching a topic that has not been examined before and one in which I have a deep personal and professional interest. Frustrating because obtaining the data, setting up the computer program, analyzing the data, etc. is a very time-consuming process and it has been difficult to keep the project from mushrooming out of manageable proportions.

The purpose of the study is to determine what effects participation in women's studies courses has on older female students returning to school. It will examine whether the fact that a university has a Women's Studies Program and courses affected the re-entry woman's decision to return to college, the choice of academic major and to remain in school. The study also seeks to determine whether women's studies courses significantly affect the self-confidence, feminist consciousness and goals of the re-entry women who take them.

To do this, I designed a questionnaire and distributed it in women's studies courses at Roosevelt University over a period of two terms. The computer program to be used for data analysis has been set up and the questionnaires are ready to be fed into the computer. Once programmed and run, the real work of data analysis begins. I'm looking forward to completing this phase of the study.

Preliminary review of the responses seems to indicate that awareness of women's studies programs does not significantly affect the decision to return to school but, once enrolled, the course content, instructors and other women's studies students have some effect on personal attitude and goals of re-entry women. It will be interesting to see if the computer results bear out this assessment.

After completing the project for my masters degree I plan to do a comparative study of women's studies students at Roosevelt and those at Northeastern (Phase 2), and to compare the responses of re-entry women with those of traditional aged women's studies students at both universities. Given the differences in UNI's and Roosevelt's Women's Studies Programs some significant data should result.

Valli J. Opsahl
Graduate Student - Women's Studies
Teacher/Counselor - BOG/BA Program

UNI WOMEN AT THE NWSA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

"Women Educating for Change" was the theme of the Second Annual Conference of the National Women's Studies Association held in Bloomington, Indiana, May 16-20. The Conference opened Friday evening with a panel on "Sexual Politics: Ten Years Later."

Over the next four days the convention program included 283 sessions on different aspects of women's studies education in addition to meetings, theater, concerts, poetry readings, films, and exhibits on women and feminism. On Monday and Tuesday the National Women's Studies Association Delegate Assembly met to conduct the business of the Association.

Northeastern was well represented at the Conference. UNI participants included: Marcia Benzuly, Women's Studies student; Ellen Cannon, Political Science; Sarah Hoagland, Philosophy (presenter at the conference); Leslie Honey, Women's Studies student (presenter); Dee Dee Iazzetto, University Without Walls Program (presenter); Nancy Katz, Criminal Justice; Sue Michmerhuizen, Women's Studies student; Debbie Moore, Women's Studies student (Women's Studies Program delegate); Valli Opsahl, Board of Governors Program; Jill Omansky, Women's Services (presenter); Sandry Styer, Early Childhood Education (presenter and delegate); Martha Thompson, Sociology (presenter); Marge Witty, Women's Services. Joan Berman, and Paula Wolf, two past Women's Studies Board members no longer at UNI, also participated in the Conference.

The National Women's Studies Association is open to individuals involved in women's studies education at every level (K-12; community; higher education). Contact the Women's Studies Program office for information; C-523; X423.

Martha Thompson
Chair, Women's Studies Board

WOMEN'S STUDIES COURSES^{for} FALL 1980

C WSP 101-31 INTRODUCTION TO WOMEN'S STUDIES 3.0 5:40-8:20PM R HERSH, B.

THE FOLLOWING COURSES OFFERED THROUGH OTHER DEPARTMENTS MAY BE OF INTEREST TO STUDENTS IN THE WOMEN'S STUDIES PROGRAM. SEE APPROPRIATE DEPARTMENTAL LISTINGS FOR MORE INFORMATION.

ART	303	IMAGES OF WOMEN IN ART	5:30-8:15PM W	J. Gillies
B&MG/MNGT	382	CHANGING ROLE OF WOMEN IN BUSINESS	11:00-11:50 MWF	E. Helman
ECED	336	NON-SEXIST STRATEGY FOR PARENTS & TEACHERS OF YOUNG CHILDREN	4:15-6:55PM T	S. Styer
ENG	450	STUDIES IN ENGLISH LITERATURE: IMAGES OF WOMEN		J. Krump
HPER/PEMA	152	JUDO & SELF DEFENSE	5:30-6:45PM M	E. Jacobs
HPER/PEMA	250	JUDO & SELF DEFENSE INTERMEDIATE	7:00-8:40PM M	E. Jacobs
HPER/PEMA	350	JUDO & SELF DEFENSE ADVANCED	7:00-8:40PM M	E. Jacobs
HIST	464A	GRADUATE READINGS IN U. S. HISTORY: AMERICAN WOMEN		J. Sochen
PHIL	105	FEMINIST PHILOSOPHY		S. Hoagland
PHIL	351	SEXISM & PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE		S. Hoagland
PSYCH	320-31	PSYCHO-SEXUAL DEVELOPMENT	7:05-9:45PM W	TBA
PSCI/AMER	321W	PRO-SEMINAR IN AMERICAN POLITICAL PROCESS: WOMEN & PUBLIC POLICY		E. Cannon
SOC	214-01	SOCIOLOGY OF MARRIAGE & THE FAMILY	2:00-2:50 MTR	M. Schwartz
SOC	340-01	SOCIOLOGY OF SEXUALITY	3:00-3:50 MTR	V. Milam
SOC	357V-31	PRO-SEMINAR IN SOCIOLOGY: "WOMEN AND THEORY"	8:30-9:45PM TR	M. Thompson
SOC	376-31	SOCIOLOGY OF WORKING WOMEN	7:05-8:20PM TR	D. Iven-Qureshi

COURSES of SPECIAL INTEREST TO WOMEN

CAREER AND LIFE PLANNING

Valerie Gallagher/R. Matteson

IMPACT OF PUBLIC POLICY ON WOMEN

Ellen Cannon

ASSERTIVENESS TRAINING FOR WOMEN

Marge Witty

WOMEN THROUGH LITERATURE: ETHNOGRAPHY

Ayana Johnson

INTRODUCTION TO INTERNATIONAL/
INTERCULTURAL STUDIES

Valerie Simms

WOMAN RETURNING TO SCHOOL:
STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

Dorothe Weinberg

WOMAN RETURNING TO SCHOOL:
STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

Ulestine Watson

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT P.I.E. OFFICE, C-533, X424.

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PROGRAM NOTES
WOMEN'S STUDIES PROGRAM
Northeastern Illinois University
Bryn Mawr at St. Louis Avenue
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