
WOMEN'S STUDIES

A Brochure Prepared
by the
Ad Hoc Committee on Women's Studies
Academic Affairs
University of Saskatchewan

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WOMEN'S STUDIES

BACKGROUND:

In 1970 the Royal Commission on the Status of Women recognized education for and about women as an important vehicle to improve the status of women. While education for women concerns mechanisms to improve the accessibility of all levels of education to women, education about women refers to the inclusion of materials regarding women's lives and experiences in the educational curriculum. One of the most important outcomes of the Commission's report within the academic community has been the emergence of Women's Studies as a legitimate and vital aspect of curriculum development. In North America generally, interest in the intellectual pursuit of topics concerning women involved 3,000 faculty teaching more than 4,600 Women's Studies courses in close to 900 institutions by 1974. Similar courses appeared at almost all major Canadian Universities, and five Chairs have been established. Included in this expansion is an endowed Chair for the Prairie Region and the Northwest Territories, located at the University of Manitoba.

WHAT IS "WOMEN'S STUDIES?"

Historically, women have not been participants in higher education, whether as students or as teachers. Until very recently this meant that the formal pursuit of knowledge has been carried on almost exclusively by men, so much so that the perspectives and experiences of women have been and remain invisible. Similarly, contributions made by women have not appeared on the academic agenda. To address this situation Women's Studies has emerged as two-pronged. On the one hand, it includes the "study of women"; on the other, it involves "women in studies".

The study of women refers to the inclusion in academic curricula of materials about women and materials by women. To fulfill this mandate, Women's Studies introduces new courses which have as their objective the study of all aspects of the roles which women fulfill in the development of the social world. Women's Studies gives visibility and significance not only to women's lives and their experiences as members of society, but also to their contributions to society. Using academically rigorous methods, Women's Studies enables women and men to understand better the lives of women as important to social development, while at the same time it searches for solutions to the inequities which exist for women.

While Women's Studies originally was initiated to fill the vacuum within existing bodies of empirical and theoretical knowledge, the extension of traditional tools into this new terrain soon revealed that new approaches and new methods of

investigation needed to be developed. Thus Women's Studies is more than incorporating women's experiences into established courses. It also includes the development of new courses from new perspectives. In many ways, Women's Studies represents a challenge to the traditional disciplines. It questions their underlying assumptions, re-interprets "received doctrines", uncovers neglected material, and raises new questions. As the study of women, Women's Studies encourages a rejuvenation and expansion of disciplines through the discovery of different perspectives and ideas.

Women in study refers to education for women and their participation therein. While the enrolment of women has increased exponentially over the past decade, as students (and as teachers) women remain concentrated in a small number of disciplines and colleges, often in the lower ranks. Thus it is imperative that ways are identified and developed whereby higher education generally, and non-traditional fields specifically, can become more accessible to women. This includes the development of scholarships, counselling, flexible program schedules, day care, support and networking systems, and so forth.

In summary, Women's Studies involves adding materials by and about women into the academic agenda as well as encouraging women toward greater involvement in academic studies. Through its two-fold objective, Women's Studies makes women visible participants in the social world by treating them as subjects and by documenting their contributions as significant. It transforms knowledge about the world and about ourselves as women and men. Finally, it seeks solutions to social inequities.

WHAT DISCIPLINES DOES WOMEN'S STUDIES APPLY TO?

From the above description it can be seen that Women's Studies is not only interdisciplinary, but multidisciplinary. Its scope includes the Social Sciences and Humanities - sociology, psychology, philosophy, history, art, political science, religious studies, literature, etc - but also the Natural and Physical Sciences as well as professional schools such as Home Economics, Education, Law, and Medicine.

INITIATIVES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN

In keeping current developments, a number of initiatives have been undertaken by the University of Saskatchewan. Of long term standing is the Women and Education Summer Institute which addresses the academic and non-academic needs of Saskatchewan women. An important recent development is the establishment of a Women's Studies Research Unit. Founded in the Fall of 1986, the mandate of this Unit is to promote scholarly research in the area of Women's Studies. Objectives include the development of an inter-disciplinary network in order to facilitate collective as well as individual research projects.

In order to examine the ways in which Women's Studies initiatives can be coordinated and promoted at the University of Saskatchewan, in October 1985 the Academic Affairs Committee recommended that a sub-committee on Women's Studies be formed. The membership of this sub-committee is interdisciplinary, and its terms of reference include the co-ordination and stimulation of academic activity and excellence in Women's Studies. Specifically, the mandate of this group includes:

- 1 the gathering of information on the existing initiatives in the area of Women's Studies;
- 2 the dissemination of information about Women's Studies to faculty and students;
- 3 the identification of gaps in current activities in this area;
- 4 the co-ordination and development of new and existing activities and the promotion of excellence in the area of Women's Studies;
- 5 the advising of Academic Affairs on further appropriate means for promoting Women's Studies.

CONSTITUTION OF THE WOMEN'S STUDIES RESEARCH UNIT

OBJECTIVE

1. The objective of the Women's Studies Research Unit is to promote scholarly research in Women's Studies. Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, the objective includes:

- a) Assistance to researchers in obtaining research grants.
- b) The promotion of interdisciplinary research.
- c) Assistance to researchers in developing joint research proposals.
- d) The facilitation of exchange of information among researchers in Women's Studies.
- e) The promotion of a feminist perspective in scholarly work.
- f) The provision of a network of support for researchers.

ACTIVITIES

2. The activities of the Women's Studies Research Unit may encompass any action in furtherance of the objective in section 1, and without limiting the generality of the foregoing, may include:

- a) The organization of seminar presentations by researchers involved in Women's Studies.
- b) The production of a newsletter to provide information pertinent to researchers in Women's Studies.
- c) The sponsoring of lectures and visits by Women's Studies scholars from outside the University.

- d) The vetting and approval of research proposals by Unit members.
- e) The publication of papers on Women's Studies.

MEMBERSHIP

3. Membership shall be open to all persons associated with the University of Saskatchewan and affiliated and federated colleges, who are committed to the objective of promoting scholarly research in Women's Studies. Each member shall be in one of the following two categories:

- a) Faculty members shall be full-time faculty members, including full-time librarians, of the University of Saskatchewan and affiliated and federated colleges.
- b) Associated members shall be any person not within 3(a), including part-time faculty and librarians, sessional lectures, and graduate students of the University of Saskatchewan and affiliated and federated colleges.

STRUCTURE

- 4. (a) An annual general meeting open to all members shall be held each September or October.
- (b) The Executive Committee of the Unit shall be comprised of at least seven members, the number each year to be determined by

majority vote of Faculty members present at the annual general meeting.

(c) The Executive Committee shall be selected by secret ballot of Faculty members present at a general meeting, or by any method approved by the majority of Faculty members present at a general meeting, with the number of votes cast by each Faculty member equal to the number of Executive Committee positions determined in accordance with subsection (b); the seven or more persons, as the case may be, receiving the greatest number of votes to comprise the Executive Committee.

(d) The Executive Committee shall be charged with the operation of the Unit, and has all the powers necessary to fulfill the objective of the Unit.

(e) The Executive Committee shall design one or two of its members as the Chair (or Co-chairs, as the case may be) of the Unit, and may delegate whatever tasks it sees fit to the Chair (or co-chairs).

AMENDMENT

5. Any provision of the Constitution may be amended by a resolution passed by a majority of Faculty members present at the annual general meeting or at a special general meeting called by the Executive Committee.

* Dawn Currie Sociology England
Donna Greschner Law Cr. Chair

9 ± → 35 members.

W S R U

**WOMEN'S STUDIES RESEARCH UNIT
UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN**

**NEWSLETTER
JUNE 1987**

WOMEN IN EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

Connie Phenix-Burrows and Rita Bouvier of the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation (STF), along with Pat Renihan and Bill Stodolka of the Saskatchewan Educational Leadership Unit (SELU), recently sponsored a one-day seminar which examined the position of women in educational administration in Saskatchewan schools. Glenis Joyce interviewed Pat Renihan about the day.

GJ: Many of us are aware of the work of the STF, but SELU, which is housed in the College of Education, is relatively new. What does it do?

PR: The Unit was created a year ago by a grant from the provincial government. We serve as a communication link among the various stakeholders in education in the province, we provide research and studies on matters of educational and administrative significance, and provide professional development opportunities to our clientele who are involved in some aspect of educational administration.

GJ: How did this particular seminar come about?

PR: Well, the STF has for some time been concerned about women in educational administration. I was involved in a study, which was finished in 1985, on school principalship in Saskatchewan. One of the big points that came from that study was the utilization of human resources in recruiting and selecting

administrators in the province, school principals specifically. We found that, though over 50% of our teaching force were women, only 11-12% of school principals were women. We perceived this as being an underutilization of human resources in the province. It's not unique to the Saskatchewan context, but it provided an opportunity to do something, to raise awareness levels related to women in administration. So, we planned this seminar with the STF. The day focused on the concerns, and we worked on how we might improve the utilization of human resources in the best possible way.

GJ: What were some of the major themes that participants identified in terms of improving the situation?

PR: Well, 15 threads came out from our deliberations. The most important, in terms of the rankings that participants gave to them, fell into four categories. The first was concerned with employment policies and practices that recognize and support women. Opportunities

for skill development was the second thread that was identified. Many initiatives, such as workshops on the principalship, assertiveness and communication skills, university courses emphasizing, in part, women in administration and internships, utilizing the apprenticeship model, were suggested. The third area that came out was the provision of opportunities for leadership experiences in the school and school system context. They felt that giving people the opportunity to chair committees and encouraging leadership among the ranks would help. The final area, and this was a theme that came out throughout the day, was that we should re-examine our traditional understanding of organizational theory and leadership, with a view that there is more than one way to lead, that moving toward non-hierarchical co-operative methods of decision-making is desirable. We should select, perhaps, pilot schools to try out new ways emphasizing equal administrative policies and structures.

GJ: Have you made any plans for the future?

PR: One of the fairly successful thrusts of the leadership unit has been the Saturday workshop. We identify themes which are of general interest in the province, and we invite individuals in the area to resource the sessions. With reference to women in educational administration, the participants gave us suggestions of meaningful things that could be done. We hope to hold a similar session such as this in the fall, but broaden it to a wider forum.

GJ: Is there a need for more research in this area?

PR: I think there is, but I'd caution against research which does what we've done before. We know now, with a large degree of confidence, the nature of the problem, so we need studies that can push the perimeters a little bit further. That needs discussion.

NEW RESOURCES

Learning From Our History: Community Development by Immigrant Women in Ontario, 1958-1986, by Tania Das Gupta. This book is both a history of immigrant women's organizations in Ontario as well as a tool for future action. In the broad analysis of this history, 55 different organizations and programs and their contributions are documented. Issues such as employment, working in collective structures, racism, the refugee experience, labelling, and funding in relation to immigrant women are covered. Cost: \$8.00.

Making Changes: Employment Orientation for Immigrant Women by M. Kainola. This is a course for immigrant women who want to learn how to make changes and gain more control over their lives. Students book: \$7.00; Teacher's Guide: \$8.00.

Order the above from Cross Cultural Communication Centre, 965 Bloor Street West, Toronto, M6H 1L7.

ISSUES AND OPTIONS

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On April 21 several members of the executive of the WSRU met with staff from the Issues and Options project to discuss some of the issues affecting women in the University community which should be considered in laying out future directions for the development of this institution. Representing the WSRU Executive were Donna Greschner (Law) and Dawn Currie (Sociology), co-chairs of the Unit, Anthony Harding (English), Beth Bilson (Administration), and Michael Hayden (History), who is a member of the Issues and Options steering committee. David Male, Director of the project, and Marj Benson, of the University Studies Group, were present on behalf of Issues and Options.

Discussion was not limited to topics strictly within the mandate of the WSRU, but ranged over a wide variety of issues relevant to the position of women within the academic community. There was some discussion, for example, of whether there has been sufficient progress towards the development of course offerings in women's studies. This arose from a brief review of the work of the committee on the prairie region chair in women's studies, and from mention of work of the Ad Hoc Committee on Women's Studies.

The meeting also considered various means for redressing the under-representation of women in faculty positions, especially in the sciences and in some of the professional colleges. It was suggested that the absence of women in such positions has the effect of discouraging female students in those disciplines from pursuing graduate study, and thus perpetuates the current situation.

There was also a general discussion of the characteristics of the University of Saskatchewan as an environment for study, research and teaching by female students and faculty. Professor Male expressed interest in pursuing some of the matters which had been brought up, and suggested that further meetings might be held.

--Beth Bilson

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NEW WRITING BY CANADIAN WOMEN--AN ANTHOLOGY

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Ann Dubras has put together a volume of poems by Canadian women. This collection, Clever Cats, intended to "celebrate women's diversity," is now available. Ms Dubras describes it as "a collection of very readable work which tells us how women feel about the various transition periods in their lives and also discusses some of the important relationships which have affected them." Response to the volume is invited: "will women who want to communicate through poetry . . . support other authors?"

Clever Cats may be ordered from Dubras & Associates, 107 Beaver Ridge, Nepean, Ontario K2E 6E5, price \$7.00 per copy (please make cheques payable to Ann Dubras).

First Director - WSRU

The time and energy of many people has been required to organize the activities of the Women's Studies Research Unit in the past year. What more could be done, the Executive thought, if we had more time to devote to the Unit, if we were not all so busy with our other duties? Surely then the sky would be the limit!

The Executive is happy to announce that some time has been found. President Kristjanson has approved our application for release-time funding for a Director of the Unit. The Director will be released from teaching one course a term in order to work on the projects of the Unit. The President will provide the Director's Department or College with the money to hire a sessional replacement. The funding commitment is for three years, thus allowing the Unit to establish a solid foundation and pursue long-term plans.

The first Director will be Dawn Currie. She has been very active this past year as Co-Chair, and the Executive is pleased that she has agreed to take on the Director's responsibilities. The major project that she will be overseeing is the planning of a possible Conference on feminist research methodology. The Executive is brimming with ideas for the Unit and we must now be careful not to overwork the Director!

A big thanks must be extended to President Kristjanson for his financial commitment and support to the Unit.

You will be hearing more about the release-time funding in the months to come.

Secretary of State Funds

As many of you know, the WSRU was successful in securing Secretary of State funds to hire a part-time research coordinator for fourteen weeks. The Unit was very lucky to be able to hire Gerlinde Sarkar. Gerlinde received her MBA from this University in 1986, and has been directly involved in a number of research projects in the community.

In the past month, Gerlinde has been compiling materials and exploring avenues of future funding. Gerlinde is currently ordering information and research application forms from agencies likely to fund projects in Women's Studies. These will be made available for the use of all members. She is also working on Membership, so you will be hearing from her soon.

In case you don't know, our Unit is located in Room 3083 of the Education Building (we will be moving to 3088 after July 1). The telephone number is 7521. Feel free to drop around and meet Gerlinde. At the moment, our physical resources are rather scanty, so donations of resource materials or equipment/supplies for the office would be gratefully accepted!

WOMEN AND COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRES

WOMEN AND COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRES: Policy and Program Responses to the Changing Reality of Lives of Canadian Women is the title of a special workshop to be held on 11 June 1987 from 3:30 to 5:30 as part of a national conference on "Community Health Centres: Requirements for Growth." The conference takes place at the Marlboro Inn, Prince Albert, from 10 to 12 June.

The special workshop on Women and Community Health Centres will be chaired by Judith Martin, of the Saskatoon Community Clinic. Those presenting papers will be Jennifer Cooper, Executive Director of the Women's Health Clinic in Winnipeg, Madeline Boscoe, Co-ordinator of Program Development, Women's Health Clinic, Winnipeg, and Pat Cooper, Western Vice-President of the Canadian Advisory Council, Status of Women.

To register (\$200.00 full registration including meals and travel to and from Saskatoon if desired; \$25.00 for half-day registration) contact Secretary, Co-operative Health Centre, 110 8th Street East, Prince Albert, Sask. S6V 0V7. Further information on the workshop available from Judith Martin, Community Health Services Association, 455 2nd Avenue North, Saskatoon, Sask. S7K 2C2, tel. 652-0300.

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NEW JOURNAL

Gender and Society is a new quarterly journal that is:

- feminist
- multi-disciplinary
- carefully refereed
- focuses on the social and structural study of gender as a basic principle of the social order and as a primary social category.

Order from Sage Publications, Inc., P.O. Box 5084, Newbury Park, California, 91359, Phone (805)499-0721.

A WOMEN'S STUDIES BOOKSHELF

Barrie Thorne, Cheris Kramarae, and Nancy Henley, editors. Language, Gender and Society. Rowley, Mass: Newbury House Publishers, Inc, 1983.

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Language Gender and Society an interdisciplinary feminist work, is an essential resource for anyone who wishes to study gender and communication. Drawing from many fields, including speech communication, sociology and psychology, essays in the first half of the book look at such diverse areas as sex bias in everyday speech, perception in language usage, and conversation and power. The editors' introductory essay, subtitled "Opening a Second Decade of Research," highlights the nine research essays, describes research completed, and suggests new areas and questions to explore. It may be comforting that research cited in this book shows that women do the work in conversations, that men are much more talkative than women and that they interrupt more than women.

The second half of the book consists of an excellent annotated bibliography, divided into nine sections, including "conversational interaction," "Genre and style," and "children and language." It has more than five times the entries of Henley and Thorne's pioneering 1975 work, a sure indication of the growth of gender and communication research.

--Patricia Williams

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Conference '88

At the moment, we are exploring the possibility of a holding a one-day conference sometime in April 1988. At the moment, I am exploring possible sources of funding for such a project (which shall certainly determine its scope!). We feel that our first effort should be modest, perhaps limited to one day (avoiding the logistics of overnight arrangements, banquets, registration in advance, etc.).

In the meanwhile, I would like to assess the interest of the membership in participating in this event. Anyone willing to give a paper is invited to drop an abstract to me. The theme of the conference will be "Feminist Research/ Feminist Methodology". Papers should address a methodological or research issue rather than be merely a presentation of research findings. At the moment, tentative sessions are:

- Making Women Visible Through Our Research
- The Usefulness/Limitations of Traditional Methods and the Development

of "Feminist" Methods

- The Relationship between Academic Research and the Community.

I am anticipating that I will require a tentative list of presentations in order to complete application forms for funding. I would therefore appreciate receiving your abstracts by the end of the summer (i.e.: end of August). Depending upon the availability of resources, the plan is to publish the papers as a collected book of readings in Women's Studies. Also, we would like to invite in outside speakers - any suggestions?

Other suggestions will be welcome, as well as offers to assist - advertising, organizing coffee or lunch, working on registration, being part of a welcoming committee, or whatever.

Please send abstracts, suggestions, comments, etc. to:

• Dawn Currie
Sociology Department
(Phone: 966-6929)

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 news HAVE YOU HEARD . . . ? calls
 for papers publications sources

CRIAW CONFERENCE 6-8 November 1987: the 1987 conference of the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women will be held at the Westin Hotel, Winnipeg, from 6 to 8 November. The conference theme is "Women and Wellbeing": "What are the supports for women's physical, emotional, mental, economic, political and spiritual wellbeing? What are the threats to it? How do/can women affect the wellbeing of others in their social world? Potential topics include health / illness issues, strength, empowerment, abilities / disabilities, peace, economics and employment, marriage, family, and other relationships, arts and culture, stress, institutional problems and supports." For information call IN-KA Conference Planners at (204) 949-1653.

PRAIRIE REGION CHAIR OF WOMEN'S STUDIES: Tax deductible contributions invited: 201 Allen Bldg., University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Man. R3T 2N2.

FEMINISM/MARXISM/NATIONALISM: A new publication edited by Roberta Hamilton and Michele Barrett addresses the threat of possible fragmentation of feminist causes. The Politics of Diversity: Feminism, Marxism, and Nationalism is a collection of essays on the question "can we properly apprehend the differences between women without losing a common political purpose? . . . A section on class and gender explores empirical research on the changing meanings of home and the workplace and points towards new directions in Marxist-feminist theory of biological reproduction. Elsewhere, contributors examine the highly charged relations between feminism and nationalism, the issues of

generation and religion, the socialization of immigrant women, women's role in education and the social division of skills." \$24.95 paper covers; available from The Book Center Inc., 1140 Beaulac Street, Montreal, Québec H4R 1R8.

CANADIAN WOMEN WRITING: A conference at Atkinson College, York University, 23 May 1987. Writers who will present and discuss their work include Doris Anderson, Sandra Birdsell, Dionne Brand, Elizabeth Brewster, Carol Bolt, Claire Harris, Janette Turner Hospital, Penny Kemp, Joy Jogawa, Dorothy Livesay, Daphnes Marlatt, Sharon Pollock, and Miriam Waddington. Registration \$15.00, Office of the Master, 258E Atkinson College, York University, 4700 Keele Street, Downsview, Ont. M3J 2R7. [We hope to include a report on this conference in the next issue of the Newsletter.]

UN WOMEN AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME: As part of the UN Decade for Women a small Women and Development unit was set up inside the Commonwealth Secretariat to work for the advancement of women in Commonwealth countries through exchanges, training programmes, research and discussion. Further information and sample copies of the unit's newsletter Link In may be obtained from Dorianne Wilson-Smillie, Director, Women and Development Programme, Commonwealth Secretariat, Marlborough House, Pall Mall, London SW1 Y 5 HX, U.K.