ABSTRACT

This document presents a series of 6 articles that present the case for women's studies in today's colleges and universities. Our society has traditionally discriminated against women, not only in jobs and education, but also by defining the female role as a submissive one, where the woman's highest goal is to further the occupational success of her spouse. The purpose of women's studies is to redefine the female role in terms of the possibility of women attaining success and fulfillment through professional occupations rather than through homemaking and child-rearing. Courses in women's studies attempt to raise the awareness of the achievements of women through the normal educational process. During the 1971-72 academic year there were approximately 750 women's courses on 500 campuses, covering topics from the history and literature of women to sex, sexism, and sex roles. It is hoped by the leaders of the movement that women's studies will become even more widespread and will penetrate the consciousness of all persons in every phase of our society. (HS)
NEWEST COURSE ON CAMPUS

WOMEN'S STUDIES

ARTICLE I: Frill or Necessity?

By LINDSAY MILLER

"The whole education of women ought to be relative to men. To please them, to be useful to them, to make themselves loved and honored by them, to educate them when young, to care for them when grown, to counsel them, to console them—these are the duties of women at all times and what should be taught them from their infancy."

—Jean Jacques Rousseau, 18th Century French philosopher.

WELL, QUITE a few people these days would disagree with Jean Jacques about what the “whole education of women ought to be.” And with Rousseau’s hidden assumption that women and their place in human history are not really worthy of serious study.

For now we have Women’s Studies—a new phenomenon which has sprung up on college campuses across the country in the wake of the Women’s Liberation Movement. This last school year there were 750 women’s courses on 500 campuses, covering topics from the history and literature of women to sex, sexism and sex-roles.

Five years ago, only a handful of courses focused on women in particular. Today such courses are found all over, from Ivy League schools to community colleges. In the New York area, at least 27 colleges offer courses on women, and at Richmond College of the University of New York, you can even

Women’s Studies runs along the same lines as the furor over Black Studies in the late ’60s. At that time, there were two sorts of reactions to Black Studies. Academics who opposed Black Studies said there wasn’t enough substance or scholarly research in the field to justify legitimate courses. There were also those who expressed the fear that Black Studies was a new way to teach black separatism and “hate whitey.”

The same kind of fears and criticism are now being voiced about Women’s Studies. “The scope is much too broad,” says one professor, male. “Too narrow to be academically significant,” says another. Or, “That’s not a course, it’s propaganda. Why don’t they go on and call it Bra-Burning 101—or Castration 201?”

What are these courses about anyway? Who takes Women’s Studies? Are they really legitimate courses? Is Women’s Studies here to stay—or is it simply the latest intellectual fad? Answers may be found in an extensive survey by this reporter of Women’s Studies courses in the New York area.

Here’s a mini-catalog of some of the most popular types of courses and the kinds of questions they ask:

HISTORY, OR "THE AMAZING INVENTIONS OF KINGDOMS FOR THE FIRST SATE OF CLAN."

historians focus on her sex life, or lack of it."

Yet, she says again, history is obviously more than kings and queens, heroes and heroines.

"Women’s Studies will make a big mistake if it concentrates only on the stars," she warns. "The real story in history is always the people. We need to know what was happening to the average woman."

"Take the battle for birth control 50 and 60 years ago. This was a turning point in American history because it meant that for the first time women didn’t have to have 11 children or die before they reached 40. Yet many students reach college never having heard of Margaret Sanger."

But isn’t that because high schools avoid talking about sex, not about women? "That’s just the point," she replies. "Sex may seem a sticky subject to male textbook writers and school administrators, one they’d rather avoid. But birth control is a subject women can’t afford to avoid. The controversy over birth control, like the current battle over abortion, is also very instructive about the society as a whole."

"Imagine what it’s like for a young woman to go through school hearing only about men," says Gerda Lerner, a prominent women’s historian and a professor at Sarah Lawrence College. "If everything about women in general is so insignificant, then she must be insignificant as well."

But is such criticism fair to history texts?
STUDIES

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But now we have Women's Studies—a new phenomenon which has sprang up on college campuses across the country in the wake of the Women's Liberation Movement.

This school year there were 780 women's courses on 500 campuses, covering topics from the history and literature of women to sex, sexism and sex-roles.

Five years ago, only a handful of courses focused on women's topics. Today such courses are found all over, from Ivy League schools to community colleges. In the New York area, at least 27 colleges offer courses on women, and at Richmond College of the City University of New York, you can even major in women.

The argument for Women's Studies is based on the premise that for Black Studies—a large chunk of human history and experience (exactly half in this case) has been neglected or misrepresented.

"But women don't need their own courses," a male professor at Hunter says. "Blacks maybe—but women? Any course about men is certainly about women too. And besides, what have women ever done anyway?"

"Plenty," is the angry response of Sarah Pomeroy, who has spent the last seven months working to establish a women's studies program at Hunter. "Women have been living on this earth just as long as men. They've done plenty, and plenty has been done to them. If traditional courses had done their job, there'd never be this knawed-up gap."

Women's Studies is also caught in an Enthusiasm Gap. Those who are involved can't be more excited. The general public, as yet, isn't even aware of this newest academic revolution. For various reasons, this corner of the women's movement has not had the publicity given to other more colorful women's actions.

But once the word gets out that "They're teaching thatfab stuff in college now," the sparks are bound to fly. In fact, the sparks are already flying on college campuses.

Not surprisingly, the controversy...
Women's Studies runs along the same lines as Black Studies in the late 1960s, when there were two sorts of people to Black Studies. In this section, we will look at the concerns and criticisms raised by female intellectuals who opposed Black Studies and Black History courses.

Women's Studies was initially seen as a way to teach black separatism and white people white, as opposed to teaching about black experiences. Women's Studies courses were seen as a way to teach white women about their experiences, rather than teaching about black experiences.

Women's Studies courses were also criticized for being too narrow or too broad. There were those who argued that Women's Studies courses were too narrow to be academically significant, while others argued that they were too broad to be meaningful.

Women's Studies courses were also criticized for not being inclusive enough. Students were asked to name 10 important women in American history, and many were unable to do so. This was seen as evidence of the lack of knowledge about important women in history.

The controversy over Women's Studies is still ongoing today. However, many people see Women's Studies as an important way to teach about the experiences of women and to challenge traditional views about gender roles and expectations.

Despite the criticism, Women's Studies has continued to grow and to be taught in many universities around the world. It continues to be a subject of debate and discussion, as people continue to grapple with the issues raised by this field of study.
At a meeting of the prestigious Modern Language Assn., Elaine Reuben of the University of Wisconsin delivered a paper on how to spot hidden sexism in literary analysis. Her title (borrowed loosely from Tonto's comment to the Lone Ranger when the latter said, 'We'd better get out of here, the Indians are coming') was: "Feminist Criticism in the Classroom, or 'What Do You Mean We, White Man'?

BIOLOGY—What are the actual biological differences between men and women? Is the "raging hormonal influence" any stronger in women than in men?

PSYCHOLOGY—What are the alternatives to Freud's view of women as passive, dependent creatures motivated by penis envy? How are men and women conditioned differently as children? Do psychologists have one standard of healthy behavior for men and another for women?

SOCIOLoGY—The nuclear family has become the norm only in recent history. What are the consequences of such social arrangements?

RELIGION. Why is God always "He" in Judeo-Christian tradition? What about the Creation story, with Eve, the temptress, fashioned from Adam's rib? How are women viewed in Eastern religions? At NYU a group of women religion majors who thought questions like these weren't being answered in class formed their own study group called "Women of the Spirit and the Flesh.

Obviously, Women's Studies is not sticking to Rousseau's narrow definition of what the "whole education of women ought to be." For the feminist, Socrates had perhaps a better motto: "Know thyself."
NEW YORK POST, TUESDAY, MAY 23, 1972

WOMEN’S STUDIES

NEWEST COURSE ON CAMPUS

By LINDSAY MILLER

ARTICLE II: The Students.

WHO STUDIES Women’s Studies?
A male engineering student from Columbia crossed over to take “Male and Female: A Sociological Perspective” at Barnard this semester because he said “It sounded like a nice, easy springtime course.”

A nun who teaches fifth grade in Brooklyn took “Women and Schools” at Richmond College because “I needed one more education credit and this course me at the right time.”

And, undoubtedly, in some Women’s Studies class in the city this year there sat an unreconstructed male chauvinist who signed up for the course “to study a few females myself—ho, ho.”

Barbara A. White, who teaches a course led “The Woman Myth” at Northwestern University, tells about her experience with a last type of student: “I was surprised to find one of my second term sections combined,” says Florence Howe, who teaches several non-Women’s Studies courses in addition to this one. “At a time when most teachers are complaining about apathy and non-attendance, we’ve had a large exciting class every time,” agrees co-teacher Anne Driver.

The variety of students in this class is unusual. Old Westbury, which is a new experimental division of the State University, makes it official policy to admit a large percentage of older and minority-group students. Two of the 16 women in this course, a nurse and a preschool teacher, are black.

The majority of students in Women’s Studies are young, white women. But there are also some white men and a sprinkling of black and Hispanic students, both men and women, in many classes.

There’s also a growing interest in Women’s Studies among older women. Betty Gordon, for instance, took a course on “The Feminist Movement” at Queens College this women in the course on “The Feminist Movement” at Queens College. What’s he doing there?

“I kept getting Women’s Lib by osmosis, through the media and everything. Some of it sounded pretty good, especially the idea that men and women don’t always have to play roles. I was fed up with roles and rules about what a man should be. I guess I wanted a little liberation for myself.”

Has the course made a difference? “It really has. I’m a lot happier and more relaxed. I don’t feel like a failure if I’m not out having sex every minute. I’m free to be me.

“Of course,” he adds, “a lot of guys think I’m crazy. Women’s Lib frightens them, so they get uptight whenever I talk about this class. Girls are a problem too, since most of the ones around here are definitely not feminists.”

“But the women in this course,” says Davis (making the unconscious switch from “girls” to “women”), “have been great, really supportive. We’re going through the...
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Barbara A. White, who teaches a course called "The Woman Myth" at Northwestern University, tells about her experience with this last type of student: "I was surprised to find one of my second term sections two-thirds male. For the first two weeks, their communication was mostly non-verbal—consisting of snicker twice, roll your eyes and elbow your buddy in the ribs."

"Why were they in the class, it seemed time to ask. A very guilty-looking young man finally volunteered the answer. He and nine or 10 friends in the same dorm had decided to take the course as a joke. 'A joke?' I said, a little slow on the uptake."

"Barbara White admits that "this story, like many of our stories about women, is extreme but true.Obviously, people take college courses for their own particular, personal reasons."

Yet, from interviews with a large number of Women's Studies students, it seems that for every one who regards this kind of course as a convenience or a joke, there are a dozen others who take it quite seriously.

Take the students studying "The History of Women's Education in the U.S." at the State University at Old Westbury. They include a high school teacher, eight children, a young married woman who works as a computer programmer, a high school teacher and several full-time undergraduates.

"There's more hard work coming out of this one class than all my other classes combined," says Florence Howe, who teaches several non-Women's Studies courses in addition to this one. "At a time when most teachers are complaining about apathy and non-attendance, we've had a large exciting class every time," agrees co-teacher Anne Driver.

The variety of students in this class is unusual. Old Westbury, which is a new experimental division of the State University, makes it official policy to admit a large percentage of older and minority-group students. Two of the 16 women in this course, a nurse and a preschool teacher, are black. Still, the majority of students in Women's Studies are young, white women. But there are also some white men and a sprinkling of black and Hispanic students, both men and women, in many classes.

There's also a growing interest in Women's Studies among older women. Betty Gordon, for instance, took a course on "The Feminist Movement" at Queens College this year because "my son recommended it." She'd taken the course last year.

Students are attracted to Women's Studies for a variety of reasons. Many are Women's Lib activists, some are intellectually curious and others are just plain curious.

"It's this last group that really interests me," said Wendy Martin, a teacher at Queens College. "Many of the students in my course on 'The Feminist Movement' come from conservative, middle-class back-grounds, and most of them still live at home.

"Two years ago, they wouldn't have set foot in this course. Yet here they are."

How come? "Students today just can't escape dealing with the women's movement. They hear about it in the media—and they're intrigued or annoyed or confused. But why don't you come out next Wednesday and see the students for yourself?"

The class at Queens turned out to be a kaleidoscopic view of this particular kind of Women's Studies. For the most part, the students were not highly politicized like those at Richmond College, nor were they rigorously intellectual like those at Barnard (both to be described in tomorrow's article). These were just student-students—some naive, some more sophisticated—grouping around, trying to understand the issues.

"Mark Davis is one of five men among 85 women in the course on "The Feminist Movement" at Queens College. What's he doing there?"

"I kept getting Women's Lib by osmosis through the media and everything. Some people insisted that men and women don't always have the same roles. I was fed up with rules and roles about what a man should be. I guess I wanted a little liberation for myself."

Has the course made a difference? "I don't feel like a failure if I'm not out having sex every minute. I'm free to be me."

"Of course," he adds, "a lot of us think it's crazy. Women's Lib frighten them, so they get uptight whenever I bring this up."

"Girls" are a problem since most of the ones around here are definitely not feminists.

"But the women in this course," says Jack McInerney (making the unconscious switch from "girls" to "women"), "have been generally supportive. We're going through the changes together."

It doesn't always work out so nicely for the men who venture into Women's Studies. In classes where women are in the majority, men often say they feel like neutered goats, as if they personally were supposed to bear the sins of male chauvinism.

"Even worse for a man," says Jack McInerney, "is to be excluded from conversation by women. I had one student who was devastated when this happened. Not only did he feel avoided, self-conscious, but insignificant and stupid as well. Later he said, 'That's what I was put on earth to do.'"

Just as some blacks argued for single-sex courses to "free" black students from the presence of whites, some white students say they can't accomplish their seriousness-raising with men around. Many are saying they can't accomplish their seriousness-raising with men around. Many are saying they can't accomplish their seriousness-raising with men around.

"I'm glad there were no men in this class," added one of the older women, "I discovered I'm really scared to take this course. I need this class with just women to give me the courage to speak up here, then on my job."
NEWEST COURSE ON CAMPUS

STUDIES a coed school? Isn't that sex discrimination in reverse? "I know it is," said one teacher. "But I believe strongly that if women can't talk, they can't learn. Some men signed up for this course but—let's just say the registrar couldn't work it into their schedules."

Eliminating men didn't prove so easy in a course on "Women's Revolution" at CCNY's experimental School of Humanistic Studies. "On the first day of class," recalled Ann Petrie, one of the co-teachers of the course, "a group of activist women announced this should be a women-only class."

"Later the rumor spread that the women bodily ejected the men from the class, but that really isn't what happened," she said. "The women made some very cogent arguments, it wasn't hysterical or angry. The class that day lasted five hours, and by the end two of the four men had accepted the women's arguments. They agreed to leave, but two other men wanted to stay."

"The whole episode became a cause celebre on campus," she continued, "It went all the way to the president's office and the word came down, include those men—or else. So, we worked out a compromise. It was a twice-a-week class, and one day the men and women met together, the other separately."

Steve Matthews is one of the men who refused to leave the class. "But I was happy with the compromise," he said last week on the last day of class. "While the women were meeting separately, I went to a men's consciousness-raising group."

"It was a new experience working closely with men in this kind of group," he said. "We met in people's houses and usually cooked a meal. We ranged in age from 42 to 20, so there were different perspectives when we talked about things like the relationship between fathers and sons."

"I guess the same things happened with us that happen with women's consciousness-raising groups," he continued. "We started talking and we found we shared a lot of the same feelings and fears—about women, marriage, friendships with men. The best thing was that we evolved into a real group. School is over, but we've decided to keep on meeting."

Sheila Tobias, who heads the Women's Studies program at formerly all-male Wesleyan University, believes men and women can coexist in school. "We've done our best for an introductory..."
women in the course on "The Feminist Movement" at Queens College. What's he doing there? "I kept getting Women's Lib by osmosis, through the media and everything. Some of it sounded pretty good, especially the idea that men and women don't always have to play roles. I was fed up with roles and rules about what a man should be. I guess I wanted a little liberation for myself.

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Shelia Tobias, who heads the Women's Studies program at formerly all-male Colbyan University, believes men and women are an "appropriate mix" for an introductory lecture course on women. (What doesn't mix, she says in an aside, are radical and non-radical women. "They just infuriate each other.")

Men and women, though, can benefit from being in class together, she insists. Yet, she adds, "I never cease to be astounded at how readily male students will talk in class and how long it takes women students to respond—the exception being the older women from the community who enjoy taking on adolescent males."

"One explanation," she suggests, "is that young women are taught to be passive in front of men their own age. But I think something else is at work in this class, too."

"A woman has an entirely different experience of this course than a man. Her questions are more subtle, her appreciations more complex. She digests a lecture slowly, referring to it or the reading weeks later. After all, this course is about her."

"We recently had a lecture on the poetry of Sylvia Plath, for example. Here she is, an overachieving, very talented Smith College graduate, and her poems trace her path toward suicide. The men found the lecture interesting. It made 'em shudder."

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TOMORROW: Street vs. Classroom.
ARTICLE III: Street vs. Classroom.

THE WOMEN students at Barnard and Richmond College look basically alike—long hair and jeans. But in terms of their Women's Studies programs, the two schools couldn't be farther apart.

To use current feminist jargon, it's the distinction between "street" and "classroom" Women's Studies. In "street" studies, as practiced at Richmond, the emphasis is on consciousness-raising, and the goal is to politicize, to radicalize women. "Street" Women's Studies may still meet in classrooms, but the focus is outside, in-the-street.

"Classroom" Women's Studies, on the other hand, is much more traditional. That's not to say students at Barnard aren't political or active in the women's movement. Many of them are. It's just that in class they're more likely to find the traditional tools of the academic trade—research, analysis, lecture, papers and grades.

Obviously, this distinction is too arbitrary to be completely accurate. But the two programs are different, and the ways in which they are different say something about what's happening in the Women's Studies movement as a whole.

Richmond College is a small division (3,000 students) of the City University of New York, located in a converted office building just overlooking the Staten Island ferry. It's also the first college in the city to offer a major in Women's Studies.

"Richmond is really a special, unusual place," said one of the group of women students who had gathered in the cafeteria to discuss the women's program. They were happy to talk, but with two provisos:

No names. ("That would be ego-tripping. We're much more of a collective.") And no physical descriptions. ("There was a reporter here from the local paper who couldn't get over the way we looked—nice and non-traditional.")

The debate at Richmond, in fact, reflects a conflict in the women's movement as a whole.

Should feminists concentrate all their energies on the women's movement? Or can they fight against the war and racism at the same time? Must women unite and fight together as women—or can they work together with men in a common struggle?

"The majority don't want to ghettoize Women's Studies," said one of the students. "If the program gets the reputation of being only for political radicals, or only for lesbians, or even only for women, we're going to turn people off. Our job right now is to turn people on to feminism."

Richmond's students will have a choice of organization or food co-op, anything from a traditional course to one where the group agrees teaches the student more about women and society.

When Annette Baxter, professor of English at Barnard, heard about the Women's Studies program at Richmond, she immediately dropped. "When I think," she said, "the trouble we had pushing through a few traditional courses.

"That was in 1966," she explained, "but a lot of the students were interested in the idea of Women's Studies really making a difference. But by the time they began to talk about the women's liberation movement, it was too late.

"At Richmond, the in-fighting has been out in the open. This year the program has been torn apart by a deep internal conflict involving, among other things, a small group of lesbian students and faculty.

The students in the cafeteria did not identify with the lesbian group and were less eager to talk about this. But, they said, the conflict gets down to goals and methods. The debate at Richmond, in fact, reflects a major conflict in the women's movement as a whole.

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"Richmond is really a special, unusual place," said one of the group of Women's Studies students who was gathering in the cafeteria to discuss the program's progress. They were happy to talk, but with two provisos: no names. ("That would be ego-tripping. We're much more of a collective.") And no politics. ("There was a reporter here from the local paper who couldn't get over the way we looked—nice and normal.")

Anyway, this student explained, "Richmond is a special place because the administration, students and teachers actually listen to each other. Change and innovation don't come easily, but things can happen here.

The first thing to happen in Women's Studies was a course called "Wren's Studies," offered in the spring of 1970. Richmond already had an active women's group—both students and teachers—which had been meeting regularly for consciousness-raising sessions. "We wanted a course specifically about women, and together we designed this one."

The enrollment was high, and so was the demand for more courses. By spring of the next year, the school had established a Women's Studies program, with a major in the Social Sciences division. This semester the program had grown to 15 courses for 250 students, including 15 majors. There was also a non-credit lunch-hour course on "Sexuality" for secretaries in the building.

Perhaps the most unusual aspect of the Richmond College women's program is the way it's run. Once a week, a group of majors, teachers and other "actively involved" people gather in an office for a course called "Dialogue on Development and Governance of Women's Studies."

Actually, it's an open debate on how to run the program. Together this group tries to decide what's working and what is not, which courses to offer and whom to hire and fire.

Such collective decision-making is a far cry from the traditional "student-run" hierarchy where department chairmen make the decisions, students have little to say and the in-fighting goes on behind the scenes. At Richmond, the in-fighting has been out in the open. This year the program has been torn apart by a deep internal conflict involving, among other things, a small group of lesbian students and faculty.

The students in the cafeteria did not identify with the lesbian group and were less eager to talk about this. But, they said, the conflict gets down to goals and methods. The debate at Richmond, in fact, reflects a major conflict in the women's movement as a whole:

Should feminists concentrate all their energies on the women's movement? Or can they fight against the war and racism at the same time? Must women unite and fight together as women—or can they work together with men in a common struggle?

"The majority don't want to ghettoize Women's Studies," said one of the students. "If the program gets the reputation of being only for political radicals, or only for lesbians, or even only for women, we're going to turn people off. Our job right now is to turn people on to feminism."

Next year's students will have a choice of 20 courses, ranging from introductory classes on "Sex Roles" and "Self Defense" to others on "Third World Women" and "Lesbian Consciousness."

The course on "Sociology of Women" will be open to women only, and "Sociology of Men" to men only. There will also be a coed class on "Human Sexuality" which, according to a course description, emphasizes "basic factual material on physiology and sexual response to dispel some of the many myths we have." It's interesting," noted one of the women students who took the sexuality course this term, "the women were fascinated by all the reading, but a lot of men seemed scared of it. Most of them obviously didn't read Maslow and Johnson in class, because they kept asking the same questions over and over again.

Besides its unorthodox courses, Richmond also offers credit for "street" experiences. That means interns can earn credit for working in a day care center, welfare rights organization or food co-op, any group agrees teaches the students something about society.

When Annette Baxter, professor at Barnard, heard about the Classes program at Richmond, her hairly dropped. "When I think of all the trouble we had pushing through few traditional courses . . ."

Actually, Dr. Baxter corrected a first course wasn't that hard to establish; it was simply to choose a topic for an American colloquium. Out of the blue she had a slice of the students.

"Some were intrigued," the idea of Women's Studies ran through their eyes. But by the time they were ready to propose their own courses. Who had entered the picture. All of there was a lot of opposition.

"Interestingly," notes Catherine Manes, an assistant professor of English at Richmond, "the Men's Liberation Movement came from a small group of young men on the faculty. They thought their courses were frivolous because they weren't enough material. Perhaps they were threatened by the fact there is material. They just have to sit there and think about it."

As a reaction to such a part out of Barnard's intellectual life, the 11 women's courses in their own have a strong academic tone. Not all the students are pleased. Some have hoped this course would be more political, more militant. They are a group called "Male and Female. A Sociological Attraction." Told of the student's cetticessor Emeritus Mirra Komarovsky, "But we must be scholarly, not radical. The students think they are knowledgable, but they can be naive very easily.

In class that day, she had listened and chided the students for their thinking: "I asked for a critique of the book. But most of you only told me what he said. I wanted you to ask on what's wrong with the theory."

She spoke in a motherly, teachable tone: "Now 10 of you got C-plus or below. But you waited for the end of the course to ask what's wrong with the theory."

As the class continued over a few papers, Prof. Komarovsky brought up a very consistent cultural stereotype: "Female is more thoughtful and feels more deeply than will, because of the men's role, which is to work and sacrifice."

She asked the class for comments, and not particularly lively discussion followed. The class that day, however, has been an exception. Both students and teachers in the Barnard program...
At right, a "dialogue" at Richmond College. Students at left are researching the Overbury collection on women at Barnard.

At Barnard, the most unusual aspect of the 11 women's courses in their curriculum is the women's Studies program. The students think they know the answers to sex roles and self-defense, and they are more excited about these courses than any other course. But in class my job is to help them see, not just what you're thinking, but that's fine, or a political one—just as long as you are the woman's movement as

organization or food co-op, anything the group agrees the student more about women and society.

When Annetta Baxter, professor of history at Barnard, heard about the Women's Studies program at Richmond, her jaw literally dropped. "When I think," she said, "of the trouble we had pushing through just a few traditional courses . . ."

Actually, Dr. Baxter corrected herself, the first course wasn't that hard to establish. "I had to choose a topic for an American history colloquium. Out of the blue, really, I chose women."

"That was in 1966," she explained, "when no one, faculty or students, had even heard of the Women's Liberation Movement. As a scholar, I had simply become aware of a great gap in our knowledge of American history."

How did her colleagues react to the course? "Some were intrigued," she said. "The idea of Women's Studies really opened the trouble we had pushing through just a few traditional courses . . ."

"Interestingly," notes Catharine Stimpson, an assistant professor of English, "much of the restatement came from the bright young men on the faculty. They said women's courses were frivolous because there wasn't enough material. Perhaps they were threatened by the fact there is plenty of material. Theirs just to step out of their comfortable specialities to find out about it."

Partly as a reaction to such skepticism, partly out of Barnard's intellectual tradition, the 11 women's courses in their curriculum have a strong sociological focus. Their students think they know the answers to sex roles and self-defense, and they are more excited about these courses than any other course.

Not all the students are pleased. "Look, I said. You've got who is who and what I am."

"The academic atmosphere does not have the spirit that releases the energy," says Catherine Stimpson. For example, she says, in her women's literature course this fall, "We were discussing Mrs. Ramsay in Virginia Woolf's 'To the Lighthouse,' and all of a sudden there was a violent argument over whether she was a fink.

"The radical students said she was for accepting the traditional woman's role. Another group of students defended her because they seemed to identify with her. And a third group, rather plainly, said, 'I refuse to discuss Mrs. Ramsay in this way. This is a week of literature.'"

While the Women's Studies program will get stuck in the middle, it is often the spark that releases the energy," says Catherine Stimpson. For example, she says, in her women's literature course this fall, "We were discussing Mrs. Ramsay in Virginia Woolf's 'To the Lighthouse,' and all of a sudden there was a violent argument over whether she was a fink.

How does the fact that Barnard is a women's college affect the question of Women's Studies?

"It means we have a special obligation to women," said Martha Peterson, president of the college. "We want to help them see, not just what you're thinking, but that's fine, or a political one—just as long as you are the woman's movement as

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"It means we have a special obligation to
women," said Martha Peterson, president of the
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new Barnard Women's Center, established
with a bequest from Mrs. Rogers Reid, Barnard '03 and mother of Westchester Rep.
Ogden Reid.

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sion of a Women's Studies class the other
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"There were usually one or two students
who dominated class discussion, while the
rest sat bored. Or the teacher lectured and
the students took notes." Yes, she remem-
bered the apocryphal college story about
the professor who walked in and said "Good
Morning" and the class wrote it down.

"I can't lecture the students," said Ann
Driver, the other teacher of the class. "I can
share my expertise on history, and Florence
can talk about literature. But we can't pro-
ounce the truth. Women's Studies Is so
new and so vast, no one can claim to be an
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"The great thing about Women's Studies,"
said one young woman in the class. "It first
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young woman who tried to commit suicide—
and of course author Plath later, at the age
of 31, did commit suicide.

The open-ended question was a quote
from a review by Elizabeth Hardwick:

"The Bell Jar" has an interestingly cold.
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"Are you sure she read the same book?",
asked Sophie, an older woman meAl some-
times the clown of the class. "I didn't think
the heroine was cold or hard at all. I felt
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"The second sentence about how every-
thing was described empirically hit me," vol-
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"Like especially when she describes crawl-
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time you read it you say, oh, she's crawling
across to the window. And then you sort of
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The two-hour class, which had started
at 7 p.m., didn't end until 11. At the break,
two students brought out bottles of white
wine, and others produced cookies and
cakes. "This class has been so good, we
wanted to celebrate," they said.

And this class is not unique. "Our group
started in chaos, but we evolved into some-
thing beautiful," says Ann Driver, a writer. 
WOMEN'S STUDIES
NEWEST COURSE ON CAMPUS

By LINDSAY MILLER

The Educated Woman in America class at Old Westbury discusses Sylvia Plath's 'The Bell Jar.'

Driver: The villains can be seen.

Grace: An open-ended question.

ARTICLE IV: A Classroom Session.

TWO THINGS stood out at the final session of a Women's Studies class the other day—no one took notes, and everyone participated.

"This class is very different from what I remember in college," said Florence Howe, one of the co-teachers of "History of Women's Education in the U.S." at the State University of New York at Old Westbury, L.I.

"There were usually one or two students who dominated class discussion, while the rest sat bored. Or the teacher lectured and the students took notes." Yes, she remembered the apocryphal college story about the professor who walked in and said "Good Morning" and the class wrote it down.

"I can't lecture the students," said Ann Driver, the other teacher of the class. "I can share my expertise on history, and Florence can talk about literature. But we can't pronounce the truth. Women's Studies is so new and so vast, no one can claim to be an expert in the field.

"The students [all female in this case] are just as much experts on being women as we are. Maybe they don't take notes because there's no final exam. But I really think it never occurred to anyone because we're too busy talking and sharing." "The great thing about Women's Studies," said one young woman in the class, "is first, you're learning new stuff but, second, you're learning it in a new way. I never used to speak up in any classes, but here the mood is—well, different, and you're studying about yourself, really, so everybody feels like talking.

But this open atmosphere didn't spring up overnight. Florence Howe admitted over dinner, "At first the students were painfully shy and unsure of themselves. There are a few articulate women in the class, and they can intimidate the others."

To counteract this, she uses a technique which is popular in women's consciousness-raising groups. She asks an open-ended question and gets everyone in the class to answer. "Once a woman discovers the group is interested in what she personally has to say, she'll keep participating."

The topic last week was Sylvia Plath's "The Bell Jar," the autobiographical novel of an extremely sensitive and tormented young woman who tried to commit suicide—and of course author Plath later, at the age of 31, did commit suicide.

The open-ended question was a quote from a review by Elizabeth Hardwick: "The Bell Jar is a hauntingly cold, unfriendly humor ... The suffering is described more or less empirically like a photograph, the teacher said, as if it were a natural thing, and the pity flows over you partly because she is so hard and glassy about her life."

"Are you sure she read the same book?" asked Sophie, an older woman who is something of a Women's Studies class the other day—no one took notes, and everyone participated. "I didn't think the heroine was cold or hard at all. I felt very sympathetic toward her."

"The second sentence about how everything was described empirically hit me," volunteered a young soft-spoken woman. "Plath has a way of describing everything in this sort of flat, inevitable tone. I think this is part of the way she experiences a nervous breakdown."

"Like especially when she describes crawling on the floor to the window. The first time you read it you say, oh, she's climbing across to the window. And then you sort of realize, wait a second, that's not how most people get to windows. This was really a well-handled strategy to help the reader understand madness, because it sort of creeps up on you."

Several women said they identified strongly with the Sylvia Plath character in the book, others said they couldn't see why she had a breakdown. "She had everything going for her," said one of the younger women. "In the beginning, when she won that magazine scholarship, she seemed like a normal girl on a fling in New York."

"But maybe," said another, "normal girls are crazy. Or at least they live in a crazy world which tells them be bright and do well in one breath, and says be soft and passive and feminine in the next."

Teacher Ann Driver supplied some background information. "I was getting impatient with the character and her problems, until I thought about the real Sylvia Plath and what she went through in the last two years of her life, when she was writing this novel."

"One baby, a miscarriage, an appendectomy, another baby. She broke up with her husband and was left with no friends, no problems and those babies, and she was tearing to write. I began to see villains in society as a whole."

The discussion proceeded, mixing literary analysis, psychological observations and personal experience in a natural, casual manner. Much of what the students said about Sylvia Plath could have applied if she had been a man. But they also looked at what was uniquely female in her experience.

At one point, the class focused on the question of the character's relationship to her mother and the woman-woman relationship in general. Both teachers made theoretical comments, but they also talked about their own experiences—one with her mother, the other with her daughter.

The two-hour class, which had started at 7 p.m., didn't end until 11. At the break, two students brought out bottles of wine, and others produced cookies and cakes. "This class has been so good, we wanted to celebrate," they said.

And this class is not unique. "Our group started in chaos, but we evolved into something beautiful," says Ann Petrie, a woman who co-teaches a course on "Women's Relation in OCNY's experimental School of Humanities. "By the end, there was very honest feedback among us all. We were talking on a real level."

"And the reason," added her fellow teacher, anthropologist Joan Howard, "we were talking about the real issues facing the women today, sex, for instance. Before Women's Studies, how many of us talked about sexual experience and what it means in this classroom? Maybe we'd made a sexual reference, or we'd been clinical or gossipy, but I mean talking in a real way."

"Can't you talk this way in your own living room? No matter how honest you are, is this what should be going on in a college classroom?"

"It certainly is," said Ann Petrie. "Probing, self-analysis can be just as difficult an intellectual activity as analyzing a book."
WOMEN'S STUDIES

COURSE ON CAMPUS

By LINDSAY MILLER

Woman in America class at Old Westbury

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"Women classes include both men and
women, or radical and non-radical students,
she points out, students often find 'them-
selves involved in violent disagreements. "For
women who've been taught to repress and
avoid conflict all their lives, this can be an
alarming experience—and liberating, too."

One way students work out their new
thoughts and feelings is by keeping a jour-
nal. Many introductory courses, in fact, re-
quire such a journal instead of a term paper.
"It's amazing how much the students grow," says Wendy Martin of Queens College.
"Many say the course has been a turning
point in their lives."

Women's Studies deals with dynamite—
very personal behavior, deep-set cultural
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Women's Studies courses deals with dynamics—very personal behavior, deeply set cultural norms. "In what other course," asks Barbara White of Northwestern University, "can you find, sandwiched between two abstract statements in a student's essay on marriage, 'You probably think I'm nothing. But, in our Puerto Rican culture we're taught respect for the family?'"

Such an experience, she says, "makes one consider one's responsibility as a teacher more seriously than ever—and sometimes I feel like leaving town." Obviously, this student had the impression there was one approved way to think about the family in this course, and she was "nothing" when she couldn't understand or accept it.

But are there "correct" answers to the complex questions posed by Women's Studies? Must a student feel embarrassed if she or he has a dissenting opinion? "I don't go to class prepared with one point of view to present," says CCNY's Miss Petrie. "I certainly don't know the whole truth about women. But together the class and I take what we know together with our personal experience and try to figure things out. I count it a good class when we both learn something new. And, believe me, we're learning every day."

Tomorrow: Up From Under-Achievement.
WHEN HARVARD psychologist Matina Homer was named president of Radcliffe College earlier this month, there was general rejoicing in many Women's Studies classes. Not just because she's a woman, not just because she's 52 years old, but also because she's living proof that women don't have to be trapped in the syndrome she has described in her best-known psychological research.

Dr. Homer's pioneering work on underachievement in women—what she calls their "fear of success"—has become required reading in many Women's Studies courses. She explains her research this way:

"Consider Phil," she suggests in an article that has appeared in various anthologies. "A bright young college sophomore, he's always done well in school. For as long as he can remember, he's wanted to be a doctor. "We ask him to tell us a story based on one clue: After first-term finals, John finds himself at the top of his medical school class."

Phil writes:

"John is a conscientious young man who worked hard. He is pleased with himself. John has always wanted to go into medicine and is very dedicated. John continues working hard and eventually graduates at the top of his class."

"Now consider Monica," Dr. Homer continues. "Another honors student, she too has always done well and she too has visions of a flourishing career. We give her the same clue, but with Anne as the successful student: After first-term finals, Anne finds herself at the top of her medical school class . . . Instead of identifying with Anne's triumph, Monica tells a bizarre tale:

"Anne is a code name for a nonexistent person created by a group of med students. They take turns writing exams for Anne."

Dr. Homer reports that more than 65 per cent of the women students saw Anne's success as not much of a victory. Less than 10 per cent of the men saw John as worse off for having done well.

A bright woman, Dr. Homer concludes, is caught in a double bind. She's damned if she does succeed, and damned if she doesn't. Consequently, a woman capable of success fears that she might fail but she fears succeeding as well.

"What does all this have to do with Women's Studies? "Plenty," says Judy Stacey, who teaches a course on 'Women and Femininity' at Richmond College. "When a woman sees a friend suddenly doing poorly, she often worries that she--as strong as she is--will be trapped in the syndrome she has described in her best-known psychological research."

Critics of Dr. Homer's thesis say she puts too much emphasis on sex differences, and not enough on the other factors which can influence achievement. Critics also question Dr. Homer's conception of "success." It could be that the woman who shies away from material success (symbolized by becoming a doctor, for instance) is not responding to feelings of female inferiority. She could be rebellious, certain men are, against the drive to "get ahead," to acquire wealth.

Nonetheless, the general outline of theory—the idea that bright women are afraid to do their best—has struck a responsive note with many bright women who say they know exactly what Matina Homer is talking about. "This helps explain a lot of my confusion," is a common reaction.

And, as usual there may be an exception to prove the rule. "In every class there are a few women who are more articulate and forceful than the rest," notes Elaine Silver. "But the Women's Studies teacher must resist the temptation to dominate them."

"We must all confront our stereotypes about women," she says. "Often the smartest women in class are not happily listening to the others have to say. They may be undergoing great stress, wanting to speak for themselves. Helping them find that tongues is a challenge to the teacher."

The cat, or somebody, has most won't come. At least this is what Dr. Homer explains.
WOMEN'S STUDIES

NEWEST COURSE ON CAMPUSS

By LINDSAY MILLER

WHEN HARVARD psychologist Matina Horner was named president of Radcliffe College earlier this month, there was general rejoicing in many Women's Studies classes. Not because she's a woman, not just because she's 32 years old, but also because she's living proof that women don't have to be trapped in the syndrome she has described in her best-known psychological research. 

Horner's work on underachievement in women—what she calls their "fear of success"—has become required reading in many Women's Studies courses. She explains her research this way: "fear of success" has become required reading because she's 32 years old, working hard and eventually graduates at the top of the class. 

John is a conscientious young man who worked hard. He is pleased with himself. John has always wanted to go into medicine and is very dedicated. John continues working hard and eventually graduates at the top of his class.

"Now consider Monica," Dr. Horner continues. "Another honors student, she too has worked hard. He is pleased with himself. John has always wanted to go into medicine and is very dedicated. John continues working hard and eventually graduates at the top of his class."

"Another hint is to tell us a story based on one clue: After first-term finals, John finds himself at the top of his medical school class. Phil writes: "John is a conscientious young man who worked hard. He is pleased with himself. John has always wanted to go into medicine and is very dedicated. John continues working hard and eventually graduates at the top of his class."

"Now consider Monica," Dr. Horner continues. "Another honors student, she too has always done well and she too has visions of a flourishing career. We give her the same clue, but with Anne as the successful student: After first-term finals, Anne finds herself at the top of her medical school class. Instead of identifying with Anne's triumph, Monica tells a bizarre tale: "I think Phil's complaining her surprise and joy. Her fellow classmates are so disgusted with her behavior that they jump on her in a body and beat her. She is maimed for life."

"We ask Monica and Phil to work on a series of achievement tests by themselves. Monica scores higher than Phil. Finally we get them together, competing against each other on the same kind of tests. Phil performs magnificently, but Monica dissolves into a bundle of nerves."

Phil and Monica, it turns out, are not unique. Dr. Horner gave the "John/Anne" test to 175 undergraduates at the University of Michigan and found the same glaring differences in stories by men and women—and the same drop in performance when women were competing against men.

Consistently, when students said Anne was in trouble. She lost all her boyfriends, or she was so ugly she never had any. She might start wondering why she wanted to be a doctor in the first place. One woman even suggested: "Why are these women so shy? Is it simply because they're women? Aren't they shy too? Critics of Dr. Horner's thesis put too much emphasis on sex differences, and not enough on the other factors which can influence achievement.

Critics also question Dr. Horner's concept of "success." It could be that a woman who shies away from material success (symbolized by becoming a doctor) is not responding to feeling female inferiority. She could be rebelling against the outcome of her stereotypes. The struggle to be against the drive to do all ahead, to acquire wealth.

Nonetheless, the general outline of theory—the idea that bright women are afraid to do their best—has struck a responsive note with many bright women say they know exactly what Matina Horner is talking about. "This helps explain many of my confusion." says a bright woman who teaches a course on "Women and Femininity": "I have never this so-called femininity."

One recent class was devoted to Eleanor Maccoby's lengthy scientific study, "The Development of Sex Differences." There was some of her students: "I began this course with little confidence and I am leaving with an equal amount, neither more nor less."

She quotes end-of-the-year comments from some of her students: "I began this course with little confidence and I am leaving with an equal amount, neither more nor less."

Dr. Horner reports that more than 65 per cent of the women students saw Anne as not much of a success. Less than 10 per cent of the men saw John as worse off for having done well.

A bright woman, Dr. Horner concludes, is caught in a double bind. She's damned if she does succeed, and damned if she doesn't. Consequently, a woman capable of success fears that she might fail but she fears succeeding as well.

Why? Dr. Horner suggests that a woman—"a bright, middle-class woman, at least—has been told all her life that she will "lose her femininity" if she does too well. Men—and women, too—won't like her if she's too smart.

What does all this have to do with Women's Studies? "Plenty," says Judy Stacey, who teaches a course on "Women and Schools" at Richmond College. "Women should know they can do better and aren't just because they're hung up on losing whatsoever this so-called femininity."

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Or, another student wrote, "I do not like to talk in class. I guess I still fear saying the wrong thing." One student was a little more confident when it came to self-grading: "I think I deserve an A in this course," she wrote, "because I took it I never had the guts to ask for any help.

And, as usual, there may be an excuse to prove the rule. "In every class there was a few women who are more articulate and forceful than the rest," notes Elaine S. Horner. "But the Women's Studies teacher must try to help overcome them."

"We must all confront our stereotypes about women," she says. "Often the situation is not that women in class are not happily listening to each other, but that the teacher is being too soft."

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WOMEN'S STUDIES

NEWEST COURSE ON CAMPUS

"Anne is a code name for a nonexistent woman created by a group of male students. Probably turns writing exams for Anne." Dr. Horner reports that more than 65 percent of the women students saw Anne's success as not much of a victory. Less than one percent of the men saw John as worse off than Anne. Critics of Dr. Horner's thesis say she puts too much emphasis on sex differences, and not enough on the other factors which can influence achievement.

Critics also question Dr. Horner's concept of "success." It could be that the woman who shies away from material success (symbolized by becoming a doctor, for instance) is not responding to feelings of female inferiority. She could be rebelling, as certain men are, against the drive to "get ahead," to acquire wealth.

Nonetheless, the general outline of the theory—the idea that bright women are afraid to do their best—has struck a responsive note with many bright women who say they know exactly what Matina Horner is talking about. "This helps explain a lot of my confusion." is a common reaction.

And, as usual, there may be an exception to prove the rule. "In every class there are a few women who are more articulate and forceful than the rest," notes Elaine Showalter. "But the Women's Studies teacher in particular must resist the temptation to let them dominate.

"We must all confront our stereotypes simply because they're women. Aren't men shy too?" Critics of Dr. Horner's thesis say she failed to prove the rule. "In every class there are a few women who are more articulate and forceful than the rest," notes Elaine Showalter. "But the Women's Studies teacher in particular must resist the temptation to let them dominate.

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Going up the staircase at Barnard.

Post Photo by Arthur Pomorents

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, but by the time they reach adoles-
boys almost surpass girls in yest.

In the feminine teacher, these differences
result of conditioning and not biolo-
gays Elaine Showalter of Douglass Col-
the differences exist nonetheless, it's one of the jobs of Women's Studies
over them. But even when stu-
have sympathetic teachers and wom-
classes, they still must struggle with
of inadequacy and timidity." It's a
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"We must all confront our stereotypes
about women and about all women in class
are not happily listening to what the others have to say. They may be
undergoing great stress, wanting to speak
for themselves. Helping them find their
tongues is a challenge for the teacher.

The cat, or somebody, has most women's
tongues. At least, this is what Florence
Howe, who now teaches at SUNY at Old
Westbury, discovered in teaching a freshman
writing course for a number of years at all-
female Goucher College in Baltimore.

"Most students found it incredibly hard
to write," she says. "They claimed they had
nothing to say." To give the students some
focus—and a topic that they surely had
something to say about—Florence Howe de-
voted the entire term to "the identity of
women.

Reading for the course included Doris
Lessing, Mary McCarthy, Kate Chopin and
Simone de Beauvoir. "Every year," she says,
"someone would ask, 'Why do we have just
lady writers? They're always inferior to
men.'"

"I realized that if women think women
writers are inferior to men, no wonder they

paper on whether they thought they
wrote well. I also asked if they enjoyed writing."

The next day the innovative teacher gave
the papers back. The freshmen got a plus
mark if they expressed any pride or plea-
ure in writing. Minus if they said it brought
pain and failure.

One year 14 out of 15 students got mi-
nuses. Typical comments were: "When I
have to write anything I get a headache for
the whole day before." Or, "I'm afraid English
teacher last year said I couldn't think logically." Or, "I'm afraid I don't have any
imagination."

For the rest of the year, she asked stu-
dents to spend the first 10 minutes of every
writing in a journal they would not have
to show her. "Students who could only write
20 words that first day were writing pages
by the end of the term. And quality in their
other work came with fluency," she said.

"There's a definite correlation between
women who like to write and those who can."

But the freshmen still had the tendency,
she notes, to avoid taking stands on issues,
preferring to remain neutral. "They were
also passive and dependent when it came to
assignments," she says. "They'd always ask
me to spell out exactly what they wanted.

"I refused, of course. I also refused to
give grades," she says. "Once the students
realized they had to be assertive about what
b,ut themselves, their creativity began to
flow."

All this sounds so familiar to me. I was
an English major, but I never wrote ideas
papers. I always wrote beautifully. I'd take a
small poem or act of a play and analyze
very carefully. I learned to do that rather
well, but I never trusted myself to go on
out and express an opinion. And, in
retrospect, none of my professors ever
pressed me to.

I graduated from college (a women's col-
lege, in fact) just on the eve of Women's Libera-
ion. I realize now I was never interested in
what it means to be a woman. I wrote papers on topics like "The Women
in 'Pamlet" or 'Yeats' Crazy Jane Poems."
I was trying to understand women—but, I
realize now, as seen through the eyes of
men.

In class, when something seemed to
relate to me personally, I'd hurry back
to the dorm to discuss it with my friends. I'd
never bring the subject up in class. It didn't
seem "intellectual enough." In fact, I
remember sitting in my classes, brimming with
questions, but afraid to ask them. And I'm
sure I wasn't the only one.

I asked a number of my women friends
about Women's Studies, and we've all had the
same reaction: Wouldn't it be great to
take all our courses again—with eyes open?
I remember signing up for Child Psychology,
for茎e, vaguely thinking and joking out
loud that it would make me a good wife-
for instance, vaguely thinking and joking out
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WOMEN'S STUDIES arriving.

Bacharach curriculum committee meetings recently.

Women's Studies program at Hunter 'all

at Hunter College rose to say at two sep-

Said, "Five hundred colleges have recognized

press she published a catalog called "Fe-

Pittsburgh who run their own storefront

Cornell in 1970.

Tobias, who taught one of the earliest

courses and the college will too."

Women's Studies is not a joke," said

thought it was Women's Lib," said one wom-

"I'd never have come to this course if I

went out and recruited 30 more women for

the next semester's class.

Some women get recruited unwillingly.

"I'd never have come to this course if I

had the next course for women for years, but the

resistance to Women's Studies, which

in this case has come from both men and women;

the pressure to establish these courses seems to be even

stronger.

The growth of Women's Studies courses

over the last few years has been "nothing

short of phenomenal," according to Sheila

man in history books, for instance."

Here again, students, teachers and even

some parents are pushing for change. There

were Women's Studies this year at a num-

ber of city high schools, from Adlai Steven-

son HS in the Bronx to Susan B. Wagner HS

in Staten Island.

Colleges are also starting to offer wo-

men's courses in their adult education pro-

grams. One group of housewives who took

a course on feminism at Queens College

were so excited by what they learned, they

went out and recruited 30 more women for

the next semester's class.

Some women get recruited unwillingly.

"I'd never have come to this course if I

thought it was Women's Lib," said one wom-

an in "Making It in a Man's World" at the

New School for Social Research. "I came for

some practical help."

This course is part of a trend in self-help

courses for women. "There have been get-

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emphasis has often been: use your feminine

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teacher Charlotte Klein, who's made it on

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confidence. The support of other women is

very important when you're going through

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The "Making It" class this term included

both professional women and secretaries, from their 20s to their 50s. "The one thing

they had in common when we started," said

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Cornell in 1970.

"We thought we were the first," she

said, "until we discovered women all over

the country had the same idea." With the

help of KNOW Inc., a group of women in

Pittsburgh who run their own storefront

press, she published a catalog called "Fe-

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are so many all we can do is list the names

of the courses and the colleges.

But the most significant development, she

says, is the growth of Women's Studies be-

yond college walls. Starting at kindergarden,

The course, she said, focused on "his-

historically, women have been put down

cause of their bodies. We talked about vi-

dels, birth, sex and menstruation in dif-

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val witches were really gynecologists; the

hysteria, the common malady of inner

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"Finally, we looked at the current health

system where these women work, most of the doctors and administrators are

men, and where three-quarters of the he-

consumers are women."

"When these students came in, they

feeling ripped off by the health system,

they put that feeling together with their feelings about being women," explained.

"They still can't stand the media in

of Women's Lib," she added. "But the

developed a real pro-woman spirit. They

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catries in the health system. In other words, if

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But, insists anthropologist Constance

ton, "you've got to be careful not to gen-

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ment. Women in different cultures have

much in common, but they're not the same."

And that makes a difference. The third

World women see liberty as a smaller, rela-

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"Women's Liberation often focuses on

white women and generalizes from the

Prof. Sutton says. "But in the Third Wor-

the total group-and not just women-the

press."

At one recent session, however, a woman

stockbroker stood up and said, "I just want

to tell you I spoke up this week. I asked for

something I should have had years ago."

She wouldn't say what that was, but, she

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The growth of Women's Studies courses over the last few years has been "nothing short of phenomenal," according to Sheila Tobias, who taught one of the earliest multidisciplinary courses on women at Cornell in 1970.

"We thought we were the first," she said, "until we discovered women all over the country had the same idea." With the help of KNOW Inc.—a group of women in Pittsburgh who run their own storefront press—she published a catalog called "Female Studies." "At first we included course descriptions and booklists. But now there are so many all we can do is list the names of the courses and the colleges."

But the most significant development, she says, is the growth of Women's Studies beyond college walls. Starting at kindergarten, even on the day-care level, some teachers are now making conscious attempts to avoid what she describes as sex-stereotyping.

"But the majority of teachers still make important distinctions between boys and girls," says Judy Stacey, who teaches elementary school teachers in her graduate-level class on "Women and Schools" at Richmond College. "Sometimes they act unconsciously: 'Alright, boys, I want you to rearrange the chairs while the girls clean up.'"

"By high school," she adds, "these sex distinctions are both more blatant (boys only shop, emphasis on men's sports) and more subtle—the silent treatment given women in history books, for instance."

Here again, students, teachers and even some parents are pushing for change. There were Women's Studies this year at a number of city high schools; five Adaline School students asked the principal to have a Women's Studies class this year. "The principal asked me what I hoped to accomplish. I said, 'What I hope is that the girls understand the things we're studying.'" said a high school student. "He wasn't impressed. But the majority of teachers still make sex distinctions, although some are beginning to recognize their own attitudes."

The course, she said, focused on historically, women have been put off because of their bodies. We talked about childbirth, sex and menstruation in different cultures; the possibility that titanic witches were really gynecologists. How hysteria, the common malady of the faint ladies, might have been a real woman's need for something they had in common when we started," said the teacher. "And in the first week, a stockbroker stood up and said, 'I just want to tell you I spoke up this week. I asked for something I should have had 10 years ago.' She wouldn't say what it was, but, she said, 'I got it.' The class broke into applause."

Despite its speedy growth, however, Women's Studies still is subject, as is the women's movement as a whole, to the notion that it is a middle-class movement, of interest only to privileged white women. "Women's Liberation often focuses on white women and generalizes from 1920s to 30s. "They still can't stand the pied piper of Women's Lib," she added. "But they have developed a real pro-woman spirit. We, ourselves as having a pro-woman in the health system. In other words, working-class black women have just developed a real pro-woman spirit.

But, insists anthropologist Constantine, "you've got to be careful not to lose when you talk about the women's movement. Women in different cultures are speaking about what they need. They're not thinking only of black women."

The "Making It" class this term included both professional women and secretaries, from their 20s to their 50s. "The one thing they had in common when we started," said the teacher, "was a defeatist attitude. They felt no matter what they did on their jobs, they couldn't succeed."

At one recent session, however, a woman stockbroker stood up and said, "I just want to tell you I spoke up this week. I asked for something I should have had 10 years ago." She wouldn't say what it was, but, she said, "I got it." The class broke into applause.

Women's Liberation often focuses on white women and generalizes from one professor. But in the Third World, says professor Johnson, it's a different story. "Women's Liberation is an interesting project. It's interesting that these women are so excited by what they learned; they went out and recruited 50 more women for the next semester's class."

Some women get recruited unwittingly. "I've never had to come to this course if I thought it was Women's Lib," said one woman in "Making It in a Man's World" at the New School for Social Research. "I came for some practical help."

This course is part of a trend in self-help courses for women. "There have been Get-ahead courses for women for years, but the emphasis has often been: use your feminine wiles and you can get what you want," said teacher Charlotte Klein, who's made it on her own to senior vice-president of a public relations firm. "This course talks about women's rights. I'm trying to build self-confidence. The support of other women is very important when you're going through this struggle."

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At one recent session, however, a woman stockbroker stood up and said, "I just want to tell you I spoke up this week. I asked for something I should have had 10 years ago." She wouldn't say what it was, but, she said, "I got it." The class broke into applause.

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This course is part of a trend in self-help courses for women. "There have been Get-ahead courses for women for years, but the emphasis has often been: use your feminine wiles and you can get what you want," said teacher Charlotte Klein, who's made it on her own to senior vice-president of a public relations firm. "This course talks about women's rights. I'm trying to build self-confidence. The support of other women is very important when you're going through this struggle."

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For more information on women's studies:

KNOW Inc., Box 89031, Pittsburgh, Pa. 15221, publishes essays about Women's Studies as well as lists of courses and course descriptions.

"Women's Studies, An Interdisciplinary Journal," c/o Wendy Martin, 39 Jane St., N. Y. 10011, is planned as a scholarly journal edited by a group of prominent Women's Studies professors. It will be published twice a year, starting this summer.

Charlotte Klein outlines the course for 'Making It in a Man's World,' part of the Women's Studies program at the New School for Social Research.

Post Photo by Frank Leonardo

Here again, students, teachers and even some parents are pushing for change. There were Women's Studies this year at a number of city high schools, from Adlai Stevenson HS in the Bronx to Susan B. Wagner HS in Staten Island.

Colleges are also starting to offer women's courses in their adult education programs. One group of housewives who took a course on feminism at Queens College were so excited by what they learned, they went out and recruited 30 more women for the next semester's class.

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"Students used to complain about their work being irrelevant," says Gerda Lerner, who teaches Women's Studies at Sarah Lawrence. "Now it doesn't have to be. I had one student who interviewed her grandmother for a paper on a woman's experience of immigration from Europe. She said she felt close to her for the first time."

Graduate students, too, are being affected by Women's Studies, says Sheila Tobias, who is now head of Women's Studies at Wesleyan University: "Why write a Ph.D. thesis on some third-rate obscure male poet, when there are so many good women crying to be done? I know one woman who fought like hell to change her thesis from 'Diplomacy in 14th Century Venice' to 'Anti-Feminism in 19th Century America.' Sarah Lawrence," she added, "has just announced a master's program in women's history where such topics will be welcome."

Should Women's Studies be a major on the undergraduate level? The vote here is split, although many people agree with Miss Tobias that "Women's Studies should never cut itself off from the bulk of the college. If only committed feminists are attracted to Women's Studies, then you'll just be preaching to the converted."

Instead of a major, she suggests, "I'd like to see Women's Studies a required part of every student's basic education. It's not just for women anymore. It's about making women's lives equal to men's lives."

Charlotte Klein outlines the course for 'Making It in a Man's World,' part of the Women's Studies program at the New School for Social Research.

The course, she said, focused on "how, historically, women have been put down because of their bodies. We talked about views of childbirth, sex and menstruation in several cultures; the possibility that the medieval witches were really gynecologists; and how hysteria, the common malady of Victorian ladies, may have been a reaction to their cooped-up role in life.

"Finally, we looked at the current health system where these women work, where most of the doctors and administrators are men, and where three-quarters of the health consumers are women.

"When these students came in, they were feeling ripped off by the health system. In this course, they put that feeling together with their feelings about being women," she explained.

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But, insists anthropologist Constance Sutton, "you've got to be careful not to generalize when you talk about the women's movement. Women in different cultures have much in common, but they're not the same.

She and fellow NYU professor June Nash developed a real pro-woman spirit. They see themselves as having a pro-woman function in the health system. In other words, these working-class black women have joined the larger women's movement."

"Women's Liberation often focuses on the white women and generalizes from there," Prof. Sutton says. "But in the Third World, the total group—and not just women—is oppressed. And that makes a difference in the way Third World women see liberation—and the way we should see Women's Studies."

Women's Studies is still, if the pun will be pardoned, "virgin territory." No one yet knows the full scope of the subject or exactly how to teach it.

At present, the one thing common to all participants in Women's Studies is a feeling of excitement. "For once, you're studying about you," said a junior at Sarah Lawrence. "The work is exciting, personal, intellectually. There's so much work to be done. Writing one of these papers is not like doing another paper on the Civil War. You go out and do original research. You 'make history' yourself."

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Graduate students, too, are being affected by the Women's Studies movement. "Women's Studies is to self-destruct. Some-" says Barbara Bellows Watson, newly appointed head of the Women's Studies program at City College. "Now labor history is an accepted part of the college curriculum. I think that's what will happen with Women's Studies."

Some people, however, feel the goal of Women's Studies is to self-destruct. "It's a long way off."