WOMEN'S STUDIES 300-5

Instructor:
Susan Wendell

Spring Semester 1981

Feminist Theory

Description

Thoughtful people of many generations have given us analyses of the nature and origin of sexism and the oppression of women. Liberals have emphasized the importance of the prejudice, ignorance, and immorality of individuals and the reinforcement of these by governments. Marxists and other socialists have focused on the economic conditions which demand women's oppression. Radical feminists have analyzed sexist societies in terms of a basic male/female split and the nearly universal undervaluing of whatever is associated with females. In our seminar we will look at some of the most interesting and influential of these analyses and at the political goals and strategies they generate. We will criticize and compare feminist theoretical writings - liberal, socialist, and radical feminist - with the aim of assimilating what is valuable to us from each.

The seminar will meet for two 2½-hour-long sessions per week. The instructor or guests may lecture from time to time. Students will be expected to take some responsibility for class discussions.

Readings

Required Reading:

Feminist Frameworks, edited by Jaggar and Struhl.

Recommended Reading:

The Feminist Papers, Bantam Books

Reprints will be handed out in class.

There will be an average of fifty pages reading per week.

Written Assignments

Students will be expected to write one short essay on an assigned topic, (20% of final mark), one research paper, (50%) and one take-home exam (30%), (a total of approximately 5000 words for the course).

Prerequisites

Nine credits, including W.S. 100-3 and any two 200-level W.S. courses/or permission of the instructor.