In the Advanced Women's Studies seminar this term, we will take up questions about the assumptions of political theory and the objectivity of science by focusing on the study of women in relation to the family. We will especially consider the influence of political ideology and cultural assumptions on the treatment of this subject by the social sciences. It is hoped that students will gain background and perspective with which to examine critically their own disciplines.

We will be looking at some of the most influential modern approaches to understanding human interaction - including those of Marx and Engels, Freud and Laing, and that of sociobiology - as they are applied to the family. We will also read feminist critiques of and contributions to these approaches on such topics as: the origins of divisions of labour in the family, the nature of motherhood, the development of masculine and feminine personalities in the family, the family's contribution to mental "illness", and the role of women's family work in the maintenance of both capitalist and socialist economies.

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

Books Required:

1. Liberation and the Aims of Science: An Essay on Obstacles to the Building of a Beautiful World, by B. Easlea (selected parts)
2. Socialism: Utopian and Scientific, by F. Engels
3. The Politics of the Family, by R.D. Laing
4. Of Woman Born, by Adrienne Rich (selected parts)

In addition, a reprint package will be available, at cost, from the General Office, 9221 CC.

Written Assignments:

Students will be asked to write a total of approximately 5,000 words for the course in short essays, take-home exams, and a final project. The project will require students to relate the work of the course to their major disciplines.

Prerequisites:

Completion of all W.S. minor lower-level requirements, or permission of the instructor.

Class times:

Tuesdays 1330 - 1550 CC 6101
Thursdays 1330 - 1550 LB 7501