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 sessions per week, one for two, the other for three, hours. The instructor or guests may lecture from time to time. Students will be expected to take some responsibility for class discussions.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Easlea, B. Liberation and the Aims of Science: An Essay on Obstacles to the Building of a Beautiful World (selections)

Engels, F. Socialism: Utopian and Scientific

Laing, R.D. The Politics of the Family

Rich, Adrienne Of Woman Born (selections)

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

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Students will be asked to write a total of approximately 4,000 words for the course in short essays for oral presentation to the class (20%), take-home exams (40%), and a final project (30%). The project will require students to relate the work of the course to their major disciplines. Oral presentations and participation will count for 10% of the final mark.

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