SPRING 1988

W.S. 400-5/W.S. 800-5
ADVANCED WOMEN'S STUDIES

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. Our goal is that students will gain skills, background, and perspective with which to examine critically their own disciplines.

We will be looking at some of the most influential Western approaches to understanding human interaction - including those of Aristotle, Locke, 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 family's contribution to mental "illness," the role of women's family work in the maintenance of both capitalist and socialist economies, and the interaction of science with sexual politics. In addition, we will study some recent work on feminist research methodology and feminist epistemology as it relates to our concerns.

The seminar will meet for two 2 1/2 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.

REQUIRED READING

Laing, R.D., The Politics of the Family (all) (Random)  
Harding, Sandra, The Science Question in Feminism (3 chapters) (Cornell U. Press)  

* A reprint package will be available from the instructor.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Undergraduate students will be asked to write a total of approximately 5,000 words for the course in short essays for oral presentation to the class (35%), a take-home exam (25%), 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.

Graduate students will be asked to write a longer final project (about 20 pages). The distribution of credit will be the same as for undergraduate students.

Prerequisites: completion of all W.S. minor lower-level requirements (e.g., WS 100 and two 200-level WS courses), or permission of the instructor.