WOMEN'S STUDIES PROGRAM

FALL 1989 EVENING
(Sec. E2) MARY MADSEN
Lec. Mon 18:30-20:20
Tut. Mon 20:30-21:20

W.S. 001-3
ISSUES IN WOMEN'S HEALTH AND HEALTH CARE

This course looks at Western medicine and our modern health care system - how it happened, how it shapes our views on health, disease, and the kinds of medical treatment women receive. A feminist, historical perspective documents the decline of women healers with the rise of male "experts" as the health care authorities. Modern medicine is almost exclusively a masculine domain (women comprise only 7% of North America's medical practitioners), yet women have become the major consumers of a health care system that doesn't meet their needs - women average 25% more visits to the doctor than men; take 50% more prescription drugs than men; and are admitted to hospitals much more frequently than men. This increasing ratio of women patients reflects not only the inadequate care women receive, but the need for a re-examination of the whole North American approach to health care generally and specifically to the need for increased control and responsibility by women for their own health.

The course is divided into three sections:

PART I: A FEMINIST SOCIOLOGY OF MEDICINE.

1. The Historical Perspectives: Women as Healers/Rise of Male Medical Authorities.
4. Medical Research: Male Prestige.
5. Iatrogenic Diseases: Diseases Caused by the Practice of Medicine Itself.

PART II: WOMEN'S HEALTH ISSUES.

8. Menstruation To Menopause: The "Treatment" of Natural Female Processes.
10. Women and Mental Illness.

(cont'd)
PART III: INFORMED CHOICE.

12. Alternative Health Resources.

REQUIRED READING

Ehrenreich, B. & English, D., For Her Own Good 150 Years of the Expert's Advice to Women. (Anchor Books, 1979)


Boston Women's Health Book Collective, The New Our Bodies Ourselves. (Musson Publishing)

RECOMMENDED READING

Webb, Christine, Feminist Practice in Women's Health Care. (Bristol Polytechnic, May 1986)

ASSIGNMENTS

15% Attendance, Participation and Readings
20% Journal - Personal Health Record
25% Research Project on Health Issue (10-12 pages)
20% Book Review (5-6 pages)
20% Take-Home Exam

THIS COURSE MAY BE APPLIED TO THE CERTIFICATE IN LIBERAL ARTS

Note * This course does not count toward the WS minor.

"Caution: Sexism is Dangerous to your health - Patriarchy is Pathological"