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THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE AT CHATTANOOGA

Women's Studies Newsletter

Edited By: Cara Cote

Women's Studies Courses for Spring 2008

WSTU 200	Introduction to Women's Studies*	Gailey	MWF 11:00 -11:50
WSTU 295	Violence Against Women *	Peters	W 5:30-8:00
WTSU 422	European Women's History to 1800	White	TT 1:40-2:55
WSTU 425	Gender, Crime, and Criminal Justice	Richards	MWF 10:00-10:50
WTSU 455R Section 001	Rhetorics of Embodiment	Palmer	W 2:00-4:30
WTSU 455R Section 002	Edith Wharton	Noe	M 2:00-4:30
WSTU 483	Feminist Theory	Welsh	TT 3:05-4:20

*Counts as a general education requirement
Registration begins November 5th for enrolled students

A Note From the Director:

We Have a New Women's Studies Major!

It is my pleasure to announce that after two years of hard work by women's studies faculty and students, the new women's studies major will take effect in August of 2008.

The 30-hour major requires WSTU 200, WSTU 496, WSTU 481 or 483, and 21 hours of women's studies courses that include at least one course in the humanities category and one course in the social science category. See our new brochure and web site for details; the new major will also be listed in the 2008-09 UTC catalog under Interdisciplinary Studies.

Students will be encouraged to double-major in women's studies and in another discipline. The 18-hour women's studies minor remains in place.

Please call me at 425-4692 or 266-9316 if you would like to discuss majoring or minoring in women's studies. Feel free to drop by the women's studies office in Holt Hall (338 D and E) for advisement.

Marcia Noe, Professor of English and Director, Women's Studies

Calendar of Events

October 15 - Dr. Lynne Cossman, Director of Women's Studies at Mississippi State University, will be the guest of honor at a coffee given by the UTC Women's Studies Program from 10:00-noon in the Cherokee Room of the University Center

November 5 - Dr. Talia Welsh will lecture on "The Politics of Fat: Body Images and Class Consciousness" in Holt Hall 207 at 3:30.

November 6 - Gloria Steinem will speak at a dinner sponsored by the Chattanooga Women's Leadership Institute at 6:00 p.m. at the Chattanooga Trade and Convention Center. Tickets are \$50.00 and can be ordered by calling (423) 266-0382.

With the new women's studies major coming next August, more and more people have been asking me what someone can do with a degree in women's studies. The article below offers some answers to that question. —MN

Transform The World

What you can do with a degree in women's studies

BY NIKKI AYANNA STEWART

- a) *Become the first woman president of Harvard University*
- b) *Win a Rhodes Scholarship to study sexual civil rights*
- c) *Advocate for domestic-violence survivors while starring on TV's Survivor*
- d) *Teach the next generation*
- e) *All of the above, and more*

IT'S A TYPICAL QUESTION FROM parents, fellow students and even faculty: What can you do with your college degree? In an era of conservative impediments to progressive liberal arts education, a field such as women's studies seems a particularly common target for that query.

Recently, we have had at least one excellent role model to point to: Drew Gilpin Faust, the first woman president of Harvard. She may have earned her Ph.D. in American civilization, but she was formerly chair of the women's studies program at the University of Pennsylvania and founding dean of the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study. Under her leadership, Radcliffe—Harvard's former women's college—has become an interdisciplinary research center supporting “transformative works,” with a special commitment to studying women, gender and society. In a similar fashion, many women's studies majors tend to intermix their fields of concentration in order to craft distinctive careers aimed at transforming our world.

How many women's studies grads

are we talking about? According to the National Center for Education Statistics, in the 2003–2004 academic year U.S. institutions of higher education granted 1,024 bachelor's degrees, 135 master's degrees and five doctoral degrees in women's studies. These statistics, however, are suspect, given that the National Women's Studies Association (NWSA) has documented 750 active undergraduate and graduate women's studies programs in U.S. colleges and universities.

“It is very difficult to get a picture of women's studies as a field,” says Allison Kimmich, executive director of the NWSA and a Ph.D. in women's studies from Emory University, “particularly the number of graduates now out in the workforce and the kinds of career paths those graduates have taken. Women's studies has not historically

“We have students going into public health, international policy, journalism, politics, filmmaking, education—careers that allow them to effect change.”

—BEVERLY GUY-SHEFTALL

collected that data on itself.” A clearer picture of women's studies programs should begin to emerge, however, as NWSA has embarked on a Ford Foundation-funded project to map women's and gender studies in the U.S. In the future, the association hopes to collect data on graduates' career paths.

Earlier studies of women's studies graduates, such as that by Barbara F. Luebke and Mary Ellen Reilly in their 1995 book, *Women's Studies Graduates: The First Generation* (Teachers College Press), were similarly concerned with documenting the value of such degrees. They found that the fact that women's studies majors and graduates were persistently asked what could be done with their degrees reflected a continuing ignorance about women's studies as an academic discipline. In their study, Luebke and Reilly were also able to document a unique set of skills learned through women's studies programs: empowerment, self-confidence, critical thinking, building community, and understanding differences and intersections among racism, homophobia, sexism, classism, ableism, anti-Semitism and other

types of oppression. Moya Bailey, a B.A. in comparative women's studies at Spelman College (the first historically black U.S. college to offer a women's studies major) and now a Ph.D. student in women's studies at Emory University, has already been able to use some of her

women's studies skills in community action. While at Spelman, Bailey participated in "The Nelly Protest," a nationally publicized demonstration against misogyny in hip-hop music and videos.

That and other protest actions were so meaningful to her that, as a doctoral student at Emory, she has studied how "intentional communities"—like the nurturing spaces often created by women's studies programs—assist marginalized groups to develop much-needed critical and political perspectives. Within 10 years, she hopes to be teaching women's studies at a historically black college or university, "adding gender, class and sexuality as important pieces of the conversation within an African American community context."

Similarly, Harvard undergraduate Ryan Thoreson hopes to develop a career focused on the intersection of multiple concerns. As a dual major in government and women/gender/sexuality studies, Thoreson believes that women's studies will enrich his planned practice of international sexual civil-rights law. "In my government courses I learned about political theory, but I found the political theory I learned in my women's studies curriculum to be much more broadly applicable," says Thoreson, a Rhodes Scholarship winner. "If I had only majored in government, I would not come to legal and policy questions as thoughtfully, wanting to understand the social and cultural context of groups affected by the law."

Maria Bevacqua, associate professor and chair of the Department of Women's Studies at Minnesota State University, Mankato, believes that women's studies has carved out a niche in the area of applied theory and practice. Like many programs, Mankato's women's studies curricu-

lum includes internships in feminist organizations and collective action projects for course credit. Bevacqua—who has her own women's studies Ph.D. from Emory—has seen her program's graduates do everything from working in human service agencies to opening feminist businesses. Moreover, women's studies graduates act as "ambassadors of feminism, bringing the women's studies perspective into the rest of the world."

Beverly Guy-Sheftall, founding director of the Women's Research and Resource Center and professor of women's studies at Spelman, has increasingly seen students take women's studies into the public sphere. "In the early years, women's studies graduates tended to work on gender-specific issues, getting jobs in battered-women's shelters and rape crisis centers," she says. "But more and more we have students going into public health, international policy, journalism, electoral politics, filmmaking, K-12 education and other careers that allow them to effect large-scale change."

Guy-Sheftall has also seen students increasingly desire to be public intellectuals and media producers, so much so that Spelman has incorporated digital media production into its women's studies curriculum. "I think we are going to see many more women's studies graduates going into film and television, and many of our students already produce documentaries—even if they choose to do something else as a career."

Deborah Siegel, author of the forthcoming book *Sisterhood, Interrupted: From Radical Women to Grrls Gone*

Wild, has noticed the same thing. She observes that in the 1970s, "women's studies was about bridging the divide between scholarship and activism. This current generation is bridging scholarship, activism and media."

Becky Lee is representative of this new generation. After acquiring a B.A. in women's studies from the University of Michigan in 2000, Lee went on to law school and then worked as an advocate for domestic-violence survivors. While doing this work, she was approached to audition for the popular reality TV show *Survivor*. Thinking it could serve as a good platform for her cause, she joined the cast, and while she found that most of her statements on domestic violence got left on the editing floor, she has used the *Survivor* experience to expand her advocacy.

"I came in third and used my \$75,000 prize to found a fund for domestic-violence prevention with a special focus on immigrant women from marginalized communities," she says. "Now when I make public appearances for the show, I talk about the fund as a way to raise the issue of domestic violence for mainstream audiences."

So what can *you* do with a degree in women's studies? Perhaps transform enough minds through feminist education that this question is no longer asked. ■

NIKKI AYANNA STEWART is a Ph.D. candidate in women's studies at the University of Maryland. She is completing a dissertation titled *Visual Resistance: African American Girls, Visual Media, and Black Feminist Education*.

Working toward a degree in women's studies or already have one? Please let us know what you are doing with it, or plan to do; we'll include your answers in an upcoming Ms. report. Email us: womensstudies@msmagazine.com.

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Congratulations!

To Dr. Helen Eigenberg, who was re-elected for a three-year term to the Tennessee State Victims Coordinating Council.

To Dr. Felicia Sturzer, who was elected to the UTC Council of Scholars.

To Dr. Michelle White, who earned tenure and promotion to Associate Professor of History. Dr White also received the University of Tennessee National Alumni Association Outstanding Professor Award and the Student Government Association Outstanding Teacher Award.

To Dr. Talia Welsh, on her engagement to Dr. John Littlefield of Berry College, Rome, Georgia.

To Marcia Adair and Amber Beason, the new co-chairs of the Women's Action Council.

To Dr. Oralia Preble-Niemi, who was named as the official 2007-2008 Professional of the Year by Cambridge Who's Who representing Foreign Languages & Literature in Higher Education.

To Dr. Charles Lippy, whose work was appraised at the Southeastern Commission on the Study of Religion last March. Also, in November, at the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, there will be a panel devoted to *Faith in America* which he edited, and published last year. Dr. Lippy's essay, "Slave Christianity" will be published in volume 6 of the *People's History of Christianity*.

To Dr. Elizabeth Gailey whose essay "Self-Made Women: Cosmetic Surgery Shows and Construction of Female Psychopathology" was published in the book *Makeover Television: Realities Remodeled*, London: I.B. Tauris, 2007.

To Sarla R. Murgai and Mohammad Ahmadi whose article "A Multiple Regression Model for Predicting Reference Desk Staffing Requirements" was published in *The Bottom Line: Managing Library Finances*.