

A  
Concise  
Easy-to-Read

PROPOSAL  
for a  
WOMEN'S STUDIES MAJOR  
at IUSB

November 1, 1989

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WOMEN'S STUDIES  
Proposal for a New Major

SUMMARY STATEMENT

Now that IUSB has two faculty who are willing and qualified to teach advanced feminist theory, we can easily move (immediately) to a Women's Studies major with the addition of no new personnel.

To be visionary, I also recommend we think of establishing an Ethnic and Women's Studies major (combined) which would require additional personnel and which would have enormous appeal to our local ethnic groups (Black, Polish, Hispanics, Jews, etc.) as well as to our new and growing international student groups. It is also possible to put in place a Women's Studies major immediately as an announced first step toward an Ethnic and Women's Studies major.

WHAT IS WOMEN'S STUDIES?

In its most general sense, Women's Studies differs from traditional studies by analyzing human history and experience on the bases of race, gender, class, ethnicity, and the natural (as opposed to the industrialized) world. Traditional studies have been so highly selective (along White, male, occidental, industrial lines) that they have become incapable of dealing with (or even addressing) large "truths" they sought to examine. Women's Studies, then, seeks to be inclusive in contrast to traditional exclusive studies. It seeks to supplement, not to displace, traditional studies.

THE NATIONAL PICTURE

There are now 235 institutions with an undergraduate Women's Studies major and 404 with a concentration, certificate program, or minor in Women's Studies. In 1984 68% of U.S. universities offered Women's Studies courses (that figure is now higher).

How permanent are these programs? A University of Alabama study in 1987 addressed itself to that question and found that a shift in the attitude of university administrators had led to a positive climate for Women's Studies. Program directors at the October (1989) conference in Washington, D.C. attribute the new acceptance and promotion of Women's Studies by university officers to the accumulated body of feminist scholarship, now too solid, too substantial, and too significant to be ignored. A data summary at that conference states, "Program development appears to be constrained not by the intellectual coherence or attractiveness of the discipline, but by inadequate institutional resources." Concurrently there is a trend at some universities with funds (such as Rutgers, Harvard, Ohio State) to establish research institutes, endowed chairs, and advanced study programs in Women's Studies. The future of the discipline seems assured.

#### THE IUSB PICTURE

I was surprised to discover, as I put together a list of Women's Studies courses for 1990-91, that we have such a rich variety of courses to offer. The following page contains my preliminary listing of those courses, and it speaks more practically than mere words as to the feasibility of a Women's Studies major. It seems to me that with our current faculty we can put together a major distinguished enough to attract students to our campus. The Women's Studies Committee has directed me to submit a formal proposal for a major--formal but not final. This proposal invites contributions, criticisms, and responses from university officers and from colleagues as well as from members of the Women's Studies Committee.

WOMEN'S STUDIES (& CROSS LISTED) COURSES  
FOR 1990-1991

(Tentative listing dependent upon agreement of faculty and their respective Chairs. Other courses are also possible.)

FALL 1990

W100	Gender Studies	McNeal
E105	Culture & Society	Brandewie
W200	Women & Society	McNeal
S164	Marital Relations & Sexuality	Mooney
N200	Biology of Women	Winicur
A270/490	Women in the History of Art	Hood
W300	French Feminism	Poinsatte
C340	Women in World Literature	Bender
P331	Psychology of Aging	McIntosh
S316	Sociology of Family	Fritschner or Hollinger
S336	Women-Professional Communication	Miller

(Note: above courses are in Art, Biology, Literature, Psychology, Sociology, Communication Arts, and Philosophy as well as Women's Studies.)

SPRING 1991

W100	Gender Studies	McNeal
B250	Interdisciplinary Analysis of Women's Role	Kaufman
W200	Women & Society	McNeal
A103	Human Origins & Prehistory	Brandewie
S164	Marital Relations & Sexuality	Mooney
E105	Culture & Society	Brandewie
H260/425	History of Women in the U.S.	McNeal
L207	Women and Literature	Scanlan (?)
R364	Feminist Critique of Western Religion	Hengesbach
S316	Sociology of the Family	Hollinger
L350	Environmental Biology	Riemenschneider
W402	Seminar: Feminist Theory	Bender
A490	Twentieth Century Women in Art	Hood
P460	Women & Psychology	Van Auken

(Above courses in Religion, History, Art, Philosophy, Anthropology, Ecology, Archeology, Literature, Biology, Psychology, Sociology, & W. Studies.)

PROPOSED WOMEN'S STUDIES MAJOR

Note: The names of current faculty are included to show that we can mount such a major program in the Fall of 1990 with no additional personnel.

REQUIRED COURSES (12 credits)

B250 Interdisciplinary Analysis of Women's Role	Kaufman
W100 Gender studies or W200 Women & Society	McNeal
E105 Culture & Society	Brandewie
W402 Seminar: Feminist Theory	Bender

REQUIRED PROJECTS (6 credits)

Sophomore year: Attend one Women's Studies conference (national, regional, or intercampus) (0 cr.)

Junior year: Oral history project (using an ethnic woman as subject). With T325 Topics in History (3 cr.) Marti

Senior year: Topic paper either presented at Women's Studies conference or submitted to Women's Studies Committee. With W400 (3 cr.) Bender or McNeal or Kaufman

ELECTIVE COURSES (12 credits) Four of the following:

N200	Biology of Women	Winicur
L207	Women & Literature	Scanlan, Bender or Kaufman
S164	Marital Relations & Sexuality	Mooney
A270	Women in Art History	Hood
A490	Twentieth Century Women in Art	Hood
W300	French Feminism	Poinsatte
R364	Feminist Critique of Western Religion	Hengesbach
S316	Sociology of the Family	Hollinger or Fritschner
P331	Psychology of Aging	McIntosh
C340	Women in World Literature	Bender
S336	Women-Professional Communication	Miller
P460	Psychology of Women	Van Auken
H260/425	History of Women in the U.S.	McNeal
S360	Political Economics of Women in Africa	Sundiata
S420	Cultural Dimensions of Child Abuse	Brandewie
F266	Women in French Literature	Poinsatte
L450	Shakespeare's Women	Kaufman
W300	Images of the Women Scientist	Winicur
F340	Kinship Organization	Brandewie

(continued)

OTHER POSSIBLE OR PROBABLE ELECTIVES

S331	Sociology of Aging	Maher
A103	Human Origins & Prehistory	Brandewie
L350	Environmental Biology	Riemenschneider

Total credits required for major = 30.

A CAUTIONARY WORD

Although we can move immediately into the major program I am proposing, I believe we should not do so without guarantees for the core W-courses (W100, W200, W300, W402, B250). The cross-listed courses will have to vary, according to the personnel problems of individual departments, and the major can probably survive with those fluctuations. It cannot, however, be maintained without Women's Studies professionals to teach our core courses. I suggest, therefore, that we convert Pat McNeal's adjunct status (teaching W100, W200, and History of Women) to a full-time, tenure-track position in Women's Studies (not in History). She could continue to teach the History of American Women, of course, but she would also be available for other Women's Studies courses (W201, W301, W350, W480) that we do not currently offer. As of the moment, we have no one other than Pat McNeal to teach the W200 which is given every semester and also in the summer. My proposal is geared to our current needs.

DOWN THE ROAD: AN "ETHNIC & WOMEN'S STUDIES" MAJOR?

No matter how good a program is, it can always be made better. It occurs to me that an ETHNIC & WOMEN'S STUDIES major might be a better program for IUSB than just a Women's Studies major. We are in good strategic place to consider such a major, for we have neither an ossified Women's Studies Program nor a defined Black, Ethnic, or Cultural Studies Program that might lead to struggles over turf.

The advantages of such a program are:

1. It would make IUSB an extremely attractive place for Hispanics, Blacks, Polish, Jewish and other ethnic groups to come.
2. It would help in publicity and in fund-raising.
3. It is a natural and needed complement to Women's Studies which stresses ethnicities and stresses the diversity of world population.
4. It would be an attractive asset to our growing international student population. They could contribute a great deal to the program by their mere presence, and the program would help them feel that IUSB is a welcoming intellectual home.
5. An announced ETHNIC & WOMEN'S STUDIES major would create the necessity for hiring minority faculty trained in those areas. IUSB has not been successful in attracting minority faculty to the degree we desire. Such a program might constitute a substantial reason for such faculty to come.

The principal disadvantage of such a program is that we do not now have the faculty to put it in place. Other disadvantages (such as battles over defining required courses) can be minimized since we have so much lead-time to work on the program. Political disadvantages (the program will displease racists and bigots in the community) cannot be avoided, but they also constitute advantages of the program.

The Women's Studies Committee (in its initial enthusiastic discussion of the proposed joint major) saw other possible difficulties, but they felt that the idea was worthwhile enough that we should invite response--both from the IUSB administration and from colleagues. This proposal, therefore, is as much an invitation for response and/or input as a serious attempt to define a new direction. Another suggestion for a name for the major was "Multicultural Gender Studies."

Finally, the Women's Studies Committee felt that it was possible right now to establish a Women's Studies major as an announced first step toward an Ethnic & Women's Studies major. If we initially state that we would like our Women's Studies major to evolve into an Ethnic & Women's Studies major, the possibility of future trouble will be minimized or perhaps even ruled out.