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CLOSEUP: WOMEN'S STUDIES AT THE COLLEGE OF NEW ROCHELLE

In the fall of 1973, the College of New Rochelle will offer an interdisciplinary major in Women's Studies. Student and faculty enthusiasm and a sympathetic administration have made possible the rapid expansion of the program from two courses in the fall of 1971 to eight courses this year. By the fall of next year, eight departments will participate in the program through course offerings, and tutorials will be available in five other departments.

The keynote of the major will be flexibility within a structure designed to ensure breadth and depth. The program includes 36 credits in Women's Studies accumulated through either courses or tutorials (at least 9 credits to be in advanced work in a focal department); a methodology course appropriate to the focal department; at least one interdisciplinary seminar; in the senior year, a project designed by the major, to be carried out under tutorial guidance. Courses to be offered in 1973-74 include: "Mythology: The Feminine Archetype," "Image of Woman in the Modern Novel," "Woman in Biography," "Image of Woman in the Modern Drama," "Woman in European History," "Psychology of Adolescent Women," "Theology of Woman," "Sociology of Woman and the Family," "Philosophy of Woman," "Origin of Feminine Stereotypes" (interdisciplinary seminar using methods and materials of literature, sociology and psychology).

Some courses in the program will be offered each year; others will be cycled. Cycled courses to be offered in 1974-75 include "Woman in Antiquity"; "Three Woman Novelists: Woolf, Lessing, Oates"; "Psychology of Woman"; "Woman in American History."

The presence on campus of the Ursuline Religious Order has been a positive force in the program's development. Although the college is now a legally and financially separate institution, it was founded in 1904 by women of this order, which has been active in women's education since the sixteenth century. Several of the women religious currently on the faculty have been part of the struggle with Catholic hierarchy for recognition and advancement of women in the Church. Sr. Kristen Wenzel, chairwoman of the sociology department and one of the original supporters of the Women's Studies Program, is presently chairwoman of both the New York State Chapter of the National Assembly of Women Religious and the 1973 National Convention of this Assembly. Five of the ten faculty actually teaching in the program are members of the Order.

Students have been active in the program to date in suggesting both the content of courses and the direction they should take. Over two hundred students, or one fifth of the undergraduate population of the college, have taken Women's Studies courses, and six seniors are currently doing tutorials in such topics as "Woman in the Plays of Tennessee Williams," "Woman and Madness in the Contemporary Novel," "The Status of Woman in Underdeveloped Nations."

The Women's Studies major will be qualified for either traditional or interdisciplinary graduate work. More important, her consciousness of herself, her past as a woman, and her society will be raised to enable her to make autonomous and fulfilling choices governing her own life.

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