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Teaching Research Methods in Women's Studies

"Research Methods in Women's Studies" is a two-credit-hour, 300-level course taught in the School of Library and Information Science at the University of Missouri—Columbia. One objective of this course is to ensure that students become regular, successful users of a library. The other is to introduce them to the wide variety of women's studies resources which are available at UMC and to make them aware of resources in other research collections, some of which may be available through interlibrary loan.

Students are taught that there is a systematic means of using a library's collections which every person should adapt to her or his needs. Seven basic types of resources are studied: (1) books—accessible through card catalogs, book catalogs, and computer terminals; (2) journals—often accessible through indexes to periodicals, but sometimes requiring scanning issue by issue; (3) newspapers—sometimes indexed but often not; (4) government documents—state, federal, and international; (5) audio-visual materials; (6) microforms; and (7) manuscripts.

Students are required to compile a bibliography on a topic which they choose on some aspect of women's studies. The

bibliography must include an introduction which defines the subject, outlines the research method used, and lists any limitations which the student has placed on the topic. All formats of materials studied in class must be included in the bibliography unless the student has determined that they are not applicable.

A pre-test is handed out on the first day of classes so that the instructors can more closely direct the course toward the students' needs. Areas of research already mastered by the students are omitted in order that unfamiliar topics can receive extra time and concentration. A post-test given on the last day of classes is used as a guide for both the students and the instructors to indicate the mastery of the resources and research methods by the students.

The course is taught by Robert Grey Cole, Associate Director of UMC Libraries and Adjunct Assistant Professor of Library and Information Science, and June DeWeese, Social Science Librarian and Adjunct Assistant Professor of Library and Information Science, UMC. The instructors would like to know whether other courses like theirs are being taught, and would like to share syllabi and ideas with the teachers of such courses.

Your Mind — Use It or Lose It: Women's Studies in a Nursing Home

By Dorothy Kilton

The following article, an example of student work, was sent in by Anne R. Barrett, Coordinator of the Women's Studies Nursing Home Education Project sponsored by the Women's Studies Program at the University of New Hampshire. Written by one of the elderly participants in the project, the essay, Barrett feels, "captures the spirit of our program most eloquently."

Barrett reports that she and her colleagues "are absolutely delighted with the outcome of the project. It is even more successful than we had originally anticipated. The average age of our students is 87, and we have added a new course this semester (at their request): New England Women's History." She adds that she "would be happy to provide detailed information to anyone interested, including a list of possible funding sources."

Until fairly recently, it has been the common belief that both the body and the mind succumb to the infirmities of old age. True or false? False! Among the elderly, there are many minds that long for more intellectual activity.

Two years ago, Anne Barrett, of the Women's Studies Program at the University of New Hampshire, had a persistent

idea that there must be older people—old-older—who would enjoy attending academic classes at the university. Yet, because of handicaps, or lack of transportation, they weren't able to. Could intellectual education be taken to them, and conducted in their own environment?

Because she is particularly interested in what women have accomplished and are accomplishing, and because there are more elderly women than men, she decided that homes for aging women would be a good place to start her outreach project. She got other faculty members interested, secured funding for a fascinating series of courses, and supplied books and materials for everyone. The details of how she did it—how she has brought her program to the elderly women here—are her story. How ten elderly women at the Eventide Home in Exeter, New Hampshire, have responded is my story.

Outsiders say, "But you at Eventide are *really* old." We sure are. We are the elder-elderly ranging in age from 75 to 97. The interesting point to me is that the many years have given us a broader and deeper perspective, with actual experience in some activities that are only history to our very much younger instructors. It amazed them that we actually marched in the Woman Suffrage parades back in 1915 to 1920.