Spring 1981

News from Women's Studies Program

Florence Howe
The Sculpture collection provides a very effective overview of nineteenth- and twentieth-century work by Europeans and Americans. Of the forty-seven artists, only Bontecou, Callery, Chryssa, Claudel, Falkenstein, Hepworth, Nevelson, Oppenheimer, and Richier are represented by three or more slides. Often, however, the images are so powerful or important that one is enough; Niki de St. Phalle’s Church for All Religions (1978-79) is a case in point. The chance to compare Bonheur’s Sheep, Huntington’s greyhounds and stallions, Callery’s Horse, Richier’s Six-Headed Horse, and Graves’s Camels is sufficient by itself to recommend the set; but this is only the most obvious level of relationships to be studied. In subjects, physical materials, and visual effects, this body of work is one of the most impressive testimonies to women’s strength available to us. The set is a must for women’s studies programs.

The Photography collection, all in black and white except Dolls by Marie Cosindas, is likewise excellent, offering a balance of the great and the less well-known European and American artists in several genres of photography from the late nineteenth century to the present. The set affords a predictably rich opportunity to study our visions of rural life through powerful images by Kate Mathews, Emma Coleman, Chansonetta Stanley Emmons, Tina Modotti, Doris Ullmann, Eudora Welty, and Dorothea Lange. Perhaps the surprise here is that there are so many cityscapes, architectural studies, nudes, and abstractions. Because the subject matter is for the most part familiar, this would be the easiest of the sets for those trained in fields outside the arts to use; it also offers a convenient way to introduce students to the differences artistic technique can make in vision.

In short, I cannot recommend the slides highly enough, nor can I overstress the importance of providing formal education in visual thinking by women.

Estella Lauter is Associate Professor of Communication and the Arts at the University of Wisconsin — Green Bay, where she teaches three women’s studies courses on creative women. three courses in aesthetic awareness for students of the several arts, and a course on the role of myth in contemporary life.

NEWS from Women’s Studies Programs

By Florence Howe

We began this feature because we had news, and we continue to have news. Also, rumors are current again about the potential demise of programs, as well as the less dramatic cutting of budgets. We know of the demise of no programs, and the occasional budget cut we have heard of (as at the University of Washington) is not for the curricular program, but for some new addition that was planned. Send items—good news or bad—to NEWS, Women’s Studies Quarterly, Box 334, Old Westbury, NY 11568.

Congratulations to Nancy Cott, newly tenured in history at Yale University, and new Coordinator of Women’s Studies at Yale; and to Sue-Ellen Jacobs, Director of Women’s Studies at the University of Washington, tenured in women’s studies.

In addition to Yale’s developing program (and a women’s studies faculty seminar currently in progress on that campus), women’s studies programs are in the planning stage at Princeton, M.I.T., and Harvard. At M.I.T., Foreign Languages and Literature will offer a Sex Roles course in Spring 1982, the first such course since the one offered by Lillian Robinson and Susan Hirsch in the late sixties. The new course will be team-taught by Marjorie Resnick, Isabel De Courtivron, Louis Kampf, and Edith Waldstein.

At Stanford University this academic year, in preparation for the initiation of a new Feminist Studies degree-granting program, scholars have sponsored a regional, year-long colloquium on current issues in the theory and scholarship of women’s studies. One of the members of this group, political scientist Nan Keohane, was recently appointed President of Wellesley College.

Deborah Rosenfelt, now Director of Women’s Studies at San Francisco State University, is the first full-time, tenure-track person in that position. Another new appointee, Judith Gappa, was hired as Associate Provost of the University, fully tenured as Professor of Women’s Studies. Gappa came from Utah State University with a large WEEAP grant for disseminating the insights of feminist scholarship throughout introductory courses in the social sciences.

The Bay Area Women’s Studies Consortium, which has been meeting for a year, consists of feminist scholars from the University of California and the State University systems. In addition to discussing substantive issues in women’s studies scholarship, they explore the potential exchange of resources and information, including the development of a system of course credit exchanges for students.
Anthropologist Sondra Hale has a new two-year appointment as Director of Women’s Studies at California State University-Long Beach. She has been awarded one-quarter release time for the development of a grant to mainstream women’s studies throughout the curriculum.

Gloria Bowles, Director of Women’s Studies at the University of California—Berkeley, last year received a grant from the Quill Foundation to offer a course on Vocational Issues for Women’s Studies Majors.

Myra Dinnerstein, Director of Women’s Studies at the University of Arizona, was recently awarded a $275,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to mainstream women’s studies into introductory courses. Since 1975, Dinnerstein has raised almost one million dollars in grant monies from private and public agencies for the Women’s Studies Program and the Southwest Institute for Research on Women (SIROW).

SIROW has received a $72,574 grant from the Elementary and Secondary Education Program of the National Endowment for the Humanities for the establishment of an Extended Teacher Institute for Women’s Studies in Literature. During the summers of 1981 and 1982, the Institute will introduce 60 secondary teachers of English within the SIROW four-state area (Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, and Colorado) to the new research on women authors and images of women in literature and, in particular, to multicultural material by and about women of the Southwest. The program, to be conducted at the University of Arizona, is directed by Sidonie Smith, Associate Professor of English at the University of Arizona, and Mary Lynn Hamilton, Coordinator of Arizona’s Institute for Equality in Education and a teacher at Cholla High School.

At the University of South Florida in Tampa, Judith Ochshorn, Director of Women’s Studies, has begun formal procedures to institute an autonomous B.A. program. Ochshorn is planning both for a regular women’s studies degree and for one with a specialty in human services. She has strong administrative support within the College and must work to gain faculty support, as well as to gather the necessary documentation and write a strong proposal.

At the Claremont Colleges, a consortium of six private institutions in Southern California, approximately 35 faculty members have been participating in a Faculty Development Seminar in Women’s Studies, as part of a three-semester plan to study together about “Women and Achievement.” They have focused on the ways in which women develop autonomy, creativity, and excellence. First, they studied the character of the traditional women’s culture in which most women have been brought up — and the ways in which women’s experiences help or hinder the development of full powers. Then, through the discussion of selected texts in literature and biography, the group began to discuss the lives of achieving women. Finally, this semester, they are attempting to ask: where do we go from here? How do we apply what we seem to be learning to the process of teaching our students? Professor Emerita Jean Walton, Director of Women’s Studies for the Consortium, has been coordinating the Seminar.

The Great Lakes Colleges Association (GLCA) has received a grant of $175,000 from the Lilly Foundation toward launching the first two years of a national Summer Institute in Women’s Studies. In 1981, the Institute, entitled “Toward a Feminist Transformation of the Curriculum,” will be held on the campus of the University of Michigan from July 12 to August 1. For further information, write to Beth Reed, GLCA, 220 Collingwood, Ann Arbor, MI 48103.

At the University of Kansas, where an autonomous B.A. degree-granting Women’s Studies Program has been in operation since 1976, no appointments were made directly in women’s studies until 1980. Beginning last fall, Ann Schofield was hired half-time in women’s studies, half-time in history. At Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana, a 36-hour interdepartmental minor in women’s studies, designed to offer students a comprehensive program for the investigation of women’s experience in the Western world, is currently under consideration by the Ball State Undergraduate Educational Policies Council.

Finally, an international note: Jenrose Felmeley, Washington, D.C., librarian, is the first person to be awarded a Fulbright Scholarship in Women’s Studies. She is currently at Waikato University in New Zealand, working with the collection of women-related materials there.

SPEAKOUT (Continued from page 3)

Association of University Professors, the Oregon Federation of Teachers, and the Oregon State Employees’ Association.

If what is happening in Oregon is typical, a small group of women has already put in untold volunteer hours analyzing a mass of data—and the struggle has just begun. Money is urgently needed to pay for computer runs of salaries and other necessary expenses.

As the letters from SUNY/Stony Brook and Cornell make clear (Women’s Studies Newsletter 8:4 [Fall/Winter 1980]), plaintiffs and their groups need support—both moral and financial—to supplement their own courageous and costly efforts.

Perhaps we, the Quarterly readership, can celebrate our new status by contributing at least token sums to the various groups who have solicited our help. If so, please add the Oregon group, Faculty Women for Equity, to the list and send contributions: c/o Hilda Young, Student Affairs, University of Oregon, Eugene, OR 97403.

Thank you,

Elaine Spencer
Professor of Chemistry

Nancy Porter
Associate Professor of English

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