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An Exploration of the Interdisciplinary Character of Women's Studies

by
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Abstract: This article uses the AIS "Guide to Interdisciplinary Syllabus Preparation" to explore the claim that women's studies programs and courses are interdisciplinary. Grace presents a historical overview of the development of women's studies as an academic interdisciplinary venue and then analyzes women's studies courses from U.S. colleges and universities, using exemplary syllabi published in the National Women's Studies Association 1991 Report to the Profession. The analysis concludes that women's studies programs are characterized by seven types of courses, many of which are distinctly not interdisciplinary even though they claim to be.

IS WOMEN'S STUDIES an interdisciplinary field or a discipline in its own right? The question nagged at me during my three weeks at the Institute for Integrative Studies at Miami University in 1993-94. As someone with multiple academic homes, literary criticism and composition theory, I had a particular interest in determining the character of my newest abode: women's studies. The Institute course materials included a range of articles on the theory and practice of interdisciplinarity, several of which mentioned women's studies and suggested that it is interdisciplinary, but there was no full-fledged discussion of it.[1] Consequently, my questions began to mount rapidly. What are the grounds for calling women's studies interdisciplinary? Is it because we look at women from many different disciplinary perspectives? Is it because we don't fit neatly into any other disciplinary niche? Is it because we integrate disciplinary perspectives, methods, or assumptions? Does everyone in women's studies believe that the field is interdisciplinary? Are there more appropriate ways to describe women's studies? How does women's studies' self perception complement perceptions of the field from outside women's studies? And has the academic character of women's studies changed over time?

I returned to my home institution that summer intent on pursuing some answers to these

questions, many of which appear in the following discussion. I cannot yet claim to have answered definitively what are truly vexing questions for women's studies practitioners. But I am convinced that the topic itself, a staple in women's studies and feminist literature for almost twenty years, holds great value for those of us in the field; situating ourselves with respect to the academy and its disciplinary structure is a critical issue that continues to engage rather vigorous discourse as women's studies matures. I am also confident that what we do in women's studies *is* both disciplinary and interdisciplinary, and that some of what we call interdisciplinary work *is* interdisciplinary, but some is not. What follows here is an explication and defense of these pronouncements, both shaped through a review of current women's studies literature on the topic of interdisciplinarity and through an analysis of women's studies syllabi. I have chosen this approach with the hope that it will elucidate women's studies practitioners' beliefs about our profession as well as clarify the degree to which the practice of women's studies adheres to its theoretical proclamations. The body of the essay has two recognizable parts, the first a literature review and the second an exploration of syllabi from 1976 through 1994, but in keeping with the spirit of both women's studies and interdisciplinarily, 1 have not held strong and fast to that form—one should be able to detect integration of the two throughout.

Part I

Women's studies is a term used to refer to the theory and practice of feminist research and teaching in the academy. The first women's studies course is purported to have been created by American historian Mary Ritter Beard, who in 1934 constructed a 54-page syllabus for a course titled "A Changing Political Economy as it Affects Women" (Tuttle, 367). Although the course was never taught, it prepared the foundation for the development of the first women's studies program in the United States: San Diego State University's program, formally approved in 1970. Some twenty years later, 621 such programs existed, including both undergraduate and graduate programs (Butler et al., 7). This growth in academic programs has been paralleled, and perhaps exceeded, by a tremendous growth in the published literature on women's studies, much of which has dealt with descriptions and analyses of the emerging field. At present, the consensus is that women's studies is, and has always been, interdisciplinary, a field akin to American, black, urban, and ethnic studies. Textbooks, program descriptions, and course syllabi proclaim this with the regularity of a finely tuned Swiss clock. As early as 1976, Florence Howe, in her introduction to *High School Feminist Studies,* announced that "all women's studies courses are, by their very nature, interdisciplinary. . . " (p. ix). By 1991, the term was still used prominently; for example. The National Women's Studies Association announced that year that women's studies and women's studies programs are fundamentally interdisciplinary (Butler et al., 3).

But if the profession is so convinced of its interdisciplinary character, why bother to

recross the territory? This question, rhetorical as it may at first seem, does deserve an answer: We recross because the territory is not as well traversed or understood by women's studies cartographers as we may think, a reality that women's studies practitioners themselves have admitted. As DuBois et al. astutely note in *Feminist Scholarship: Kindling in The Groves of Academe,* we can't even decide on a single term. It is not unusual when perusing women's studies literature over the last twenty years to see the profession called a transdisciplinary field, a multidisciplinary field, an academic discipline, a non-discipline, a discipline emerging within its own interdiscipline, a pre-discipline, or a new interdisciplinary academic discipline. The history of women's studies suggests a tendency to cling to the term interdisciplinary coupled with the need to track our way back into older disciplinary worlds and to strike out for what may be new knowledge frontiers. As a result, we appear to have created for ourselves a deeply muddled understanding of what we are all about. We could argue that this apparent confusion poses no real problem. After all, naming is itself a patriarchal form of subjugation and exclusion, so we should reject definitive naming at all costs, revel in the fact that we are many things to many people, and just keep doing what we do well. But more convincing is the argument that naming as a fundamental way of human knowing reflects an important modality which enables us as human beings to form thoughts. It is a fundamental mechanism with which others know who we are. And if we care at all about others knowing, it might well be in our best interests to name ourselves accurately so that we are recognizable to those with whom we work. This latter argument takes us back to the muddle, leaving us with the somewhat daunting task of sorting through it all.

To do so, we can begin by establishing a working definition of interdisciplinary. While the early years of interdisciplinary study were marked by a sometimes conflicting mixture of definitions (Klein, *Interdisciplinarity,* 26-27), we can now say that an interdisciplinary activity is an inquiry "which critically draw[s] upon two or more disciplines and which lead[s] to an integration of disciplinary insights" (Newell and Green, 24). This definition is well established and consistent with that used by prominent feminist voices in the field. For example, Virginia Sapiro, author of *Women in American Society,* believes that interdisciplinary work draws on and integrates materials from several disciplines through careful use and analysis of assumptions and methods (xvi-xviii). Such work is problem-focused and, as Sandra Coyner states, "is intended to produce something superior to that which a single discipline could achieve, although each discipline maintains its unique identity" (53).

An interdisciplinary enterprise can be defined by example, motivation, principles of interaction, or terminological hierarchy (Klein, *Interdisciplinarity,* 55). The history of women's studies suggests that the field has relied primarily upon the first two. By example, women's studies designates what form it assumes, telling us that it is something other than the disciplines as we have come to know them—it works between, around, through, over, and under them as a critical framework through which to view all knowledge (Butler et al.,

8). By motivation, women's studies explains that it exists because the pre-existing disciplinary structures failed to provide adequate answers to questions about and from women. Women's studies, emerging as the academic arm of the women's movement in the 1960s, exists in tandem with feminist scholarship, which, as Marian Lowe and Margaret Lowe Benston explain, has functioned to develop a woman-oriented understanding of the world, to seek out explanations for women's oppression, and to identify strategies for change. Women's studies has operated as one of these strategies for change, primarily as a way of disseminating information and "educating for change," based on the actual experiences and languages of women (48). Since its inception, the field has been motivated to transform society in order to achieve equality for women. The transformative mechanisms are aimed at all institutions, including the academy itself, the very house in which women's studies resides. Most interdisciplinary work is clearly not political, but women's studies is and here falls quite neatly into the interdisciplinary category identified by Stanley Fish as the radical view which seeks to distrust the barriers between the academy and the outside "in order to subvert the larger social articulation within which the academy" constructs its voice —to effect *"revolution tout court"* (103).

Women's studies has perceived disciplines[2] *per se* as structures inherently oppressive to women in that these sources of knowledge production and dissemination mask themselves in the belief that their enterprises are pure and objective, thus presenting a male perspective as falsely universal and failing to present women's lives fully and accurately. Using more colloquial language, Diana Grossman Kahn identifies six basic questions motivating women's studies:

1. What the hell is going on here anyway?
2. Why are women second class citizens?
3. What is the nature of women's oppression?
4. How did it come about?
5. What mechanisms perpetuate it?
6. Based upon these answers, how can it be changed? (20)

Answering these questions represents recognition of problem-centered rather than discipline-centered work, work necessitating a new form and a new place, one in which agency shifts from man (i.e., false universal) to woman (i.e., a legitimate perspective in her own right), where women claim ownership of themselves as both the knower and the known. This goal is sharply evident in the use of the possessive form in the name *"women's* studies."

Cathy Lubelska posits a somewhat different and intriguing explanation for the interdisciplinary motivation of women's studies. She argues that since women's studies takes as its subject matter the lived experiences of women, focusing on the interrelationship between the emotional and the intellectual in women's lives in opposition to the dearth of

such a perspective in mainstream approaches, students should start with rather than finish with interdisciplinary perspectives:

> Lived realities do not fall into neat disciplinary categories, nor do the ideas and sources through which we attempt to make sense of them. The sheer breadth and variety of women's experiences, and the myriad of ways and situations in which they are felt, range across and go beyond the concerns of other disciplines. (42)

At issue here is not teaching students about disciplines but rather teaching students to be skeptical of the disciplines. Fundamentally, then, what both Kahn and Lubelska are saying is that women's studies is interdisciplinary because its intent is to ask and to answer heretofore unaddressed questions and in the process to re-create the academy through research and pedagogy designed to heighten one's consciousness of disciplinary flaws, thus re-creating the world.

In other words, the academy must be reinvented from within and without. As Butler et al. tell us:

> women's studies both critiques existing theories and methodologies and formulates new paradigms and organizing concepts in all academic fields. It provides students with tools to uncover and analyze the ideological dynamics of their lives and to become active participants in processes of social, political, and personal change. What we teach and the way we teach it encourages students to image alternatives to present systems of inequality and participate in political transformation. (2)

Course syllabi consistently reflect this goal, particularly in the subtext, or the heart, of the course: its real agenda, the abstract issues embodied by the substantive topic of the course (Newell, 23). For example, Rutgers' introductory women's studies course for fall 1990 presented as one of its goals preparing students "to act effectively to challenge and change the social institutions and practices that create and perpetuate systems of oppression." "Introduction to Feminism" at University of California Santa Cruz in the fall of 1989 was created to enable students to "implement a feminist process and a politic for useful social change," and at Michigan State University, "Introduction to Women's Studies" in spring 1984 focused on how women develop solidarity and take collective action. Many other courses, while not specifically claiming to encourage students to affect social change, stress exploring ways in which women have been oppressed and have worked toward liberation and social change[3].

This goal is also reflected in pedagogical strategies intended to redefine the classroom, that essential space in which knowledge is generated by and passed along to students. As a result, women's studies has eschewed the formal lecture room and the regurgitation of

information nuggets, replacing them with more open discussion, an emphasis on connecting the personal/subjective with the public/objective, the removal of formal hierarchical barriers between students and instructors, the encouragement of students to think of themselves as sources of knowledge rather than as mere receptacles for knowledge, and the construction of more action-oriented classroom projects involving interaction with non-academic women's groups and organizations[4].

Women's studies also utilizes a third way of defining interdisciplinarity: principles of interaction, or the demonstration of the process of disciplines interacting (Klein, *Interdisciplinarity,* 55), and this approach, while employed less frequently than example and motivation, has merit and conceptual validity. Diana Kahn, for example, argues that "academic disciplines have a capacity to illuminate one another, and women's studies provides the opportunity to engage in that process" (23). Butler et al. found too that women's studies attempts at least in the process of problem solving to show that real life-centered issues require explorations in dialectical thinking, that is, cognitive processes revealing and fostering the connections between the contradictory (8). Therefore women's studies defines itself as a field that seeks to show how the disparate can be united, how answers to those fundamental, field-shaping questions can best be found by bringing together that which has traditionally been kept separate, that in the interaction of, say, literature and history, psychology and linguistics, political science and biology, we can show how and why bias exists within those areas of study and concurrently generate new knowledge about women's lives. What has then matured is a validation of sources of perspective—life experience and role as well as academic disciplines—and of ways of knowing, affective as well as cognitive.

Such a process has sometimes fused with the more radical intent to transform the world, a goal that has often manifested itself in curricular integration programs which bring faculty from different disciplines together to teach each other about themselves and women's studies, the hope being that conventional disciplines will be altered or transformed as they assimilate women's studies issues into their courses and research agendas.[5] This kind of work is the revolutionary task of epistemological transformation, for women's studies is intent upon not only a redrawing of the disciplinary maps, but also the reconceptualization of the very principles of mapping itself. Women's studies demands that through interdisciplinary investigation we reconstruct the very way we think about thinking: that we, at the very least, critique and, at the very most, obliterate categorical exclusivity separating the intellectual and the political, the dispassionate and the engaged, the search for truth and the promotion of group interest, that we rethink the very concepts of discipline and interdiscipline. In fact, women's studies in this regard may be exemplary of the direction outlined by Steven Fuller, who has recently called for a rhetorically-based definition of interdisciplinarity focused on the interpenetrability of disciplinary boundaries, requiring that the disciplines be evaluated not in terms of one's superiority to another or by overarching

and neutral criteria but rather "by criteria that are themselves brought into being only in the act of penetration" (37). What we have here, then, in the case of women's studies, is an intellectual movement whose history suggests that it has been working itself into and out of interdisciplinarity as we have defined it above.

Voices have, in fact, emerged calling for the rejection of the name interdisciplinary. One of the most influential and eloquent advocates of this position is Sandra Coyner, whose pathbreaking article, "Women's Studies as an Academic Discipline: Why and How to Do it," in 1983 argued that women's studies is a discipline. Coyner stated that while at one time interdisciplinarily was especially appropriate for women's studies because interdisciplinary work is problem-centered from outside the traditional disciplines, it no longer performs well for women's studies because (1) its problem-oriented focus means that forces outside the interdisciplinary community can determine when the problem is solved—autonomy is therefore jeopardized, and (2) women's studies is more than a collaboration: it is "a completely new way of viewing humanity" (Bowles and Klein, 54), striving not just to apply theory and method based in other disciplines but rather to create and contribute new theories and new methods.[6] Interdisciplinarity directs our focus back to the disciplines, to the goal of transforming the disciplines, and consequently away from the development of women's studies as a viable, legitimate endeavor in and of itself. Using Thomas Kuhn's model of paradigmatic change, she states that if we base our understanding of a discipline *on what one does* rather than on an idealized structure of knowledge, then women's studies is very close to becoming a discipline. New behavior, including identification of and agreement upon key concepts and methods as well as development of departmental structures, moves us into the realm of the discipline.

At the time Coyner wrote her now often-cited article, she described herself as a visionary and declared "just use the words" (59)—"women's studies *is* a discipline" (emphasis mine).[7] Some women's studies practitioners have followed this advice, establishing programs and departments from which to pursue education for change. However, some, such as Hilda Smith, are not as hopeful today. Smith believes that the goal of women's studies is the emergence of a new discipline, which she defines as a field of study with some inherent centrality, but that this development has not yet happened. She also claims that women's studies has failed to be truly interdisciplinary as this essay has defined it, since feminist theory, driven by philosophy, literary criticism, and other epistemologically focused fields, has dominated women's studies, leaving behind the bodies of knowledge from which the theory sprang and generating superficial application of knowledge. So while women's studies is not truly interdisciplinary it is not yet a discipline, although according to Smith it does have at least some inherent centrality or disciplinary nature: the understanding of gender as the core of social change and feminist analysis. The signal of true disciplinary status for Smith is the transformation of thought, which she contends we have not yet seen: when women's studies is a discipline, its students will ask very different questions than they

do now (June 1995 interview).

However, some evidence exists to suggest that a disciplinary world view has begun to emerge over the last decade or so. In *Women's Studies Graduate Students: The First Generation,* authors Barbara F. Luebke and Mary Ellen Reilly conclude that a particular perspective has been fostered in graduates of women's studies programs. This includes understanding of differences, forms of oppression, connections between oppressions, personal racism, the value of diversity, the impact of patriarchy, and the effects of injustice (199). Albeit some of these themes could emerge through other academic programs, this configuration is unique to women's studies, and with such a perspective emerging, one could surmise that Smith might well be right: those who see the world differently will ask new questions.

The emphasis on world view leads to the concept of transdisciplinarity, a superdiscipline subsuming a number of previously separate disciplines based on the belief in the underlying unity of all knowledge (Newell and Green, 24) and the need to eradicate "the narrow scope of disciplinary world views" (Miller, 21). Some feminists have expressed the conviction that this description more accurately suits women's studies. Gloria Bowles, for instance, has made the case that women's studies should be headed toward transdisciplinarity, although she warns that women's studies must avoid creating a Super Methodology that may prove even more impenetrable than existing methodologies (Bowles and Klein, 40-41). Bowles' caveat is well meaning, but one can ask how it is possible to be transdisciplinary and not create a super methodology, since that is by definition the function of transdisciplinarity. Bowles and Klein have also argued that women's studies is an autonomous entity with "the potential to alter fundamentally the nature of all knowledge" since *"all* existing knowledge needs to be examined for its adequacy and usefulness for women and men" (3). Their view is reinforced by Sue Lees, who has asserted that women's studies is not a discipline but rather "a way of transforming the academic world .. . changing the face of education" (Aaron and Walby, 97), in effect an overarching vision that moves us out of the disciplines, and thus beyond the interstices of interdisciplinary activity and into a new and singular orthodoxy.

Part II

So where does this leave us? The theoretical discussion strongly suggests that women's studies is interdisciplinary but that it is also something other than interdisciplinary. We may then ask the questions, "Does the theory complement the practice?" and "Can the practice lead us to a clearer understanding of women's studies?" Course syllabi, which I have already used throughout this essay, can help us here, for one can argue that it is in praxis—reflection combined with action—that we unveil our true selves, and it is through our course syllabi that we most directly express and preserve our intentions for converting theory into practice. Taking as our template a working understanding of what an interdisciplinary course should look like, just what can syllabi tell us about the practice of women's studies in relation to the theory?

The template that I am using to pursue this question is "The Guide to Interdisciplinary Syllabus Preparation," authored by the Association of Integrative Studies and the Institute in Integrative Studies.[8] The guide operates with the assumption that interdisciplinary work is problem focused, uses two or more disciplinary perspectives, explores the methods and assumptions of these disciplines, and attempts to integrate these perspectives in order to solve the topical problem. It also outlines definitions of other non-disciplinary courses. For example, it distinguishes a multidisciplinary course as one that presents disciplinary perspectives in isolation, does not critique methodologies and assumptions, and does not emphasize or attempt integration. A cross-disciplinary course will assume a dominant-subordinate disciplinary form in which the practice of one discipline is the subject of another; a conclusion will result from new insights but integration is absent since only one disciplinary perspective is apparent. The guide reflects an emerging consensus within the interdisciplinary profession and is thus an appropriate standard with which to evaluate women's studies courses.

The following key questions culled from the guide enable us to determine whether a course is interdisciplinary as well as the quality of its interdisciplinary focus.

1. Is there a distinct problem or topic which can best be solved through the integration of two or more disciplines?
2. Are the perspectives of disciplines or schools of thought explicit? Are their respective contributions (e.g., methods and assumptions) to the issue explicit?
3. Do the disciplinary perspectives remain unaltered while developing the course?
4. Does the practice of one discipline become the subject matter of another discipline?
5. Does the instructor have an explicit subtext, the "real" educational agenda of which the substantive topic is a particular embodiment?
6. Is there integration, and, if so, is it on-going or does it appear only at the end of the course, following serial presentation of disciplinary perspectives, insights, or methods?
7. Is the level of the course consistent with the depth in which disciplinary perspectives are presented, the explicitness with which their assumptions are probed and the overall balance between breadth and depth?
8. Does the contact among the disciplines include reasoning by analogy from the data, theory, methods, or modes of another discipline; revising hypothesis or principles in light of evidence uncovered by another discipline; redefining or extending definitions of key concepts from each discipline to form a common ground on which to integrate their insights; replacing conflicting assumptions with new variables?

I have applied these exploratory questions to the exemplary syllabi included in the

National Women's Studies Association 1991 report to the profession as well to several other syllabi published in women's studies literature, but primarily to the NWSA collection because it represents recent courses (1984 to 1990) legitimized through the major professional organization of women's studies practitioners as representative of the courses that have constituted women's studies programming across the United States. The vast majority of syllabi in this collection are from 1988 to 1990 and thus should mirror fairly accurately trends that we would see in most women's studies programs, particularly developments occurring over the last ten years.

I will provide a cautionary note here, however: the answers to some of the questions can be found in the syllabus alone, but others must be elaborated upon and teased out of the course as it is being taught. The following discussion, then, may not be an accurate representation of the course instructors' full intentions or of the nature of their courses as they actualized them. However, the syllabus does act as a finger print of sorts, an imprint or an artifact of the object itself, from which we can draw tentative yet plausible conclusions about the ephemeral reality of the course and its relationship to theory.

My analysis reveals seven categories of women's studies courses, some readily identifiable within the boundaries of current thought on interdisciplinary work, but others clearly operating in new ways. The following description and analysis of these types will illustrate that women's studies are situated kinetically between two worlds, but unlike those of Matthew Arnold's lyric poet in *Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse,* these worlds are not dead or paralyzed: they are vibrant and flourishing. Both of them, as well as the grounds of consubstantiality which their intersections create, have value and viability, and furnish women's studies with generative power.

Type I—Single Discipline With Feminist Perspective—This course constitutes the majority of courses offered in women's studies programs, which are generally multidisciplinary in structure, cross-listing courses from several departments. These courses, which are lower and upper division, often focus on women, but may also center on sexuality and gender. They are strictly disciplinary offerings which present a single disciplinary perspective combined with feminist analysis. The topic of the course is not investigated through more than one disciplinary lens, and such courses generally do not employ faculty from more than one discipline. Examples include "Women and Literary Imagination" (English/The University of Washington), "Women in American History" (History/The University of California, Santa Cruz), "Psychology of Women" (Psychology/The University of Wisconsin-Madison), "Nature and Status of Women" (Philosophy/Oberlin College) and "Comparative Sexual Poetics" (Comparative Literature/The College of Wooster).

Type 2—Multiple Disciplines With Feminist Perspective—This type may call itself interdisciplinary, but the syllabus presents a course incompatible with the established definition of interdisciplinarity. Some introductory courses fall into this category as do

many women and science courses. In the case of the latter, syllabi may state that they focus on the identification and analysis of the methods and assumptions of various social and natural sciences from a feminist perspective. For example, "Women and Their Bodies in Health and Disease" at The University of Wisconsin-Madison (Fall 1989) explores sociology, biology, economics, and political science; "Women and Science" at Pennsylvania State University (Spring 1990) focuses on biology, physics, and technology; and MIT's "Gender and Science" investigates research models in biology and sociobiology. In such courses, the subtext is the revelation of ways in which the sciences have operated to oppress women and how feminist theory can make visible these oppressive beliefs and methods, which are generally misunderstood as gender neutral. The course attempts integration, but it is the integration of a dominant perspective (feminist theory) and several subordinate perspectives (the serial presentation of the discipline). Thus the disciplinary perspectives themselves are subordinate to the feminist perspective; the larger systemic explicator resides in unbalanced tension with disciplines used as the object of critique. The individual disciplines remain separate in such a course, and the syllabi reveal no distinct way in which they are to be integrated to further one's understanding of the course topic, except in the general sense of revealing how feminist theory illuminates the problematic character of particular discipline-specific epistemologies with respect to women.

A good deal of time is devoted to learning about various scientific perspectives on reality, but if we assume that the NWSA courses are indicative of the category, the methods employed to do so do not engage students in learning how to apply these methods and to test them against feminist critique.[9] The primary method is the application of feminist theory. So while these courses may have certain similarities to what we know as interdisciplinary, their focus is not the solving of a problem or the answering of a question through the interaction of two or more distinct disciplines; rather their intention is to apply feminist theory to the sciences in order to demonstrate the gendered character of scientific activity. They may actually fit more comfortably in the categories of multidisciplinary or cross-disciplinary.

This type of course, and the preponderance of science courses in this category, may be a carry over from earlier forms of introductory women's studies courses. If my institution. The College of Wooster, is at all representative, and I have no reason to believe that it is not, early attempts lo introduce students to women's studies consisted of a march through the disciplines, using texts such as Carol Tavris's *The Longest War: Sex Differences in Perspective* to lead the way. Such courses focused not so much on issues essential to women's lives but rather on the disciplines compartmentalized within the academy and the need to expose their form and flaws. Using the name interdisciplinary, they marshaled as many disciplines as possible lo illustrate that feminist theory was relevant to all, a focus no doubt connected to the need of many women's studies practitioners to demonstrate to skeptical colleagues and administrators that women's studies had academic import, something that may still be necessary in the natural sciences.

Type 3—Interdisciplinary—This course more readily assumes the form and function of interdisciplinary courses that we envision through the lens of interdisciplinarity theory. Of the thirty-eight courses in the NWSA Report, only one fits this description, "Race, Class, and Gender in Contemporary American Society" offered at Rider College in 1989. The syllabus states that the course treats the categories of race, class, and gender "as social constructs that have been historically developed and sustained by economic, social, political, and cultural factors" (Report appendix, unnumbered page). Required texts include Paula Rothenberg's *Racism and Sexism: An Integrated Study, Working* by Studs Terkei, *Drylongso* by J.L. Gwaltney, and *Women and Children Last: The Plight of Poor Women in Affluent America* by Ruth Sidel. Although the syllabus does not present a schedule of weekly or daily readings and activities, it is broken into eight subtopics: identity, diversity, stereotypes, historical foundations, social policy, the individual within U.S. society, power, and change. Each subtopic features its own set of subtopics designed to facilitate the following course objective: "To learn skills of critical analysis by an explicit interdisciplinary approach to analyzing and understanding issues. In particular students will learn to compare forms of evidence (e.g. literary sources vs. social science data), to evaluate competing explanations (e.g. historical vs. biological explanations for gender differences in achievement), and to evaluate their own 'untested' assumptions regarding race, class and gender against alternate positions" (Appendix). The syllabus implies that by the time students reach section #8, on change, they will have grasped the features of literary and social science disciplines and are in a position where a synthesis has taken place, enabling them to discuss the nature and dynamics of social and individual changes and to begin to make a contribution to the reduction of racism, sexism, and classism in American culture.

Type 4—Mid-Evolutionary Interdisciplinary—This type is most analogous to that elusive fossil that paleontologists dream of finding to confirm for the hard-core skeptic the evolutionary history of humankind: an imprint of the half human/half ape that reveals clearly our once and future forms. These courses, which are sometimes introductions to women's studies, present themselves initially as interdisciplinary but shift quickly to something else entirely. Their syllabi may explain that they intend to explore women's studies issues through particular disciplines, such as literature, sociology, history, and psychology, and the required reading for the course will reveal that the course will make clear the respective disciplinary methods and assumptions. These disciplinary perspectives are often presented in serial form through particular readings or guest lecturers. For example, Duke's 1989 introductory course taught by Jean O'Barr, editor *of Signs,* features Virginia Sapiro's *Women in American Society,* a text which emphasizes the interaction of various disciplines within the social sciences; articulates their individual disciplinary methods, beliefs, and assumptions; and strives for a larger, more holistic understanding of women's lives. O'Barr's course also begins with a unit devoted to exploring competing

disciplinary explanations for the gendered character of society and includes guest lecturers from religious studies and the visual arts. Tulane University's introductory course for the fall of 1989 also requires the Sapiro text, Miriam Schneir's *Feminism: The Essential Historical Writings,* and Johnnetta Cole's anthology *All American Women: Lines that Divide, Ties that Bind,* thus giving the course a sharp socio-historical theme. MIT's "Introduction to Women's Studies" for fall 1985 devotes the first third of the semester to the serial presentation of several disciplines (biology, anthropology, psychology, religious studies, history, and linguistics) to explore rationalizations for inequality and the social construction of gender.

These courses, however, move quickly from disciplinary foci to the elucidation of women's studies concepts and issues. As the course progresses, the emphasis on the individual disciplinary perspectives shifts, but *not* to the integration of disciplinary insights with the emergence of new knowledge, leaving intact the distinct realities of the individual disciplines. Rather the disciplines become blurred, even wiped out to some degree, certainly subordinate to the development of women's studies themes. This can happen through the introduction of new disciplines not explicitly identified in the course goals section of the syllabus or supported through the major texts of the course. For example, in the Tulane course, literary texts suddenly appear in week nine of the fifteen-week course, and it is not clear how works of fiction such as Susan Glaspell's "A Jury of Her Peers," Marge Piercy's "Rape Poem" and Charlotte Perkins Gillman's *The Yellow Wallpaper* are intended to be analyzed and integrated with the socio-historical texts of the course. The syllabus itself presents no language suggesting that students will learn how to distinguish literary texts from historical analysis or sociological articles and that the authors of literary texts may have very different understandings of how their texts are to function compared to a historian or sociologist. The MIT course is similar: here works representing many disciplines and feminist perspectives are combined under topics such as "Reproduction," "Violence Against Women," "Race and Class," and "Culture and Creativity." Granted, in both courses, some interdisciplinary education may well take place within the actual course, but, again, the syllabus in no way prepares students to engage in this kind of work.

At this point, such a course begins to opt for breadth rather than depth, operating on the assumption that exposure to the central issues of women's studies, as well as to the central voices representing the field, is superior to the manipulation of multiple disciplinary perspectives. Integration and synthesis may be explicit, but more likely implicit, only in concluding projects requiring that students explore the connections between their personal lives and the materials they have read, or in concluding units that ask students to hypothesize about the future of feminism or women's studies. But even at this juncture of the course, the syllabi do not indicate that students will be given models of techniques of integration nor other assistance with this difficult cognitive task. Many of the texts read in such a course are also disciplinary texts written from a feminist perspective (the kind one sees in types 1 and 2 above); so on at least two fronts a considerable step is being taken to

remove the student from the disciplinary work against which women's studies and feminist theory operates, against that which in theory it intends to transform.

Since this course type is associated with the introductory level, it is possible that instructors find such an approach more appropriate for students who have little grounding in both disciplinary and women's studies practices. But more significantly, what such a course ultimately points to, I believe, is the malleable, evolutionary form of women's studies, the very genesis of a new being, much like the way *homo erectus* evolved from *homo habilis,* and *homo sapiens* evolved from *homo erectus.* The course sharply reveals as a structural whole an oddly shaped being with three major parts spliced together: the old disciplinary grounding of the current faculty of women's studies programs, the early feminist theory which claimed that we must situate ourselves as interdisciplinary because the disciplines have failed to take women seriously, and the quickly evolving transdisciplinary body of feminist research itself, which for many women's studies practitioners has assumed authority over other disciplinary perspectives.

Type 5—Transdisciplinarity/New Discipline—Certain women's studies courses tend to be labeled interdisciplinary if they clearly situate themselves outside existing disciplines through a topical focus and if they borrow widely from many different disciplines. This course, however, is not interdisciplinary as is Type 3, where the whole is expected to be greater than the sum of the parts. In this course, the parts don't even exist. From the introductory description of goals and objectives to the final exam, the syllabus maintains almost no interest in the disciplines themselves and seems *to have begun* at a point far removed from the territory of conventional disciplinary interests, far removed from a problem that can be solved or a question answered by the integration of disciplines. The blurring of disciplines that we see in part in the Type 4 course is in full force here. The substance and form of the course is generated by a transdisciplinary system to explain human relationships. When one teaches this kind of course, as I can attest from personal experience, one's primary effort is to introduce students to commonly held women's studies concepts, such as gender, sex, sexuality, oppression, liberation, authority, and patriarchy; issues, such as work, family, sexual orientation, violence against women, reproductive rights, language, heterosexism; and methods, such as connecting the personal and the political/the academic and the personal, journal writing, action-oriented projects, interviewing, oral histories. Equally as important is the introduction of seminal texts, such as Carol Gilligan's *In a Different Voice,* Angela Davis's *Women, Race, and Class,* Susan Faludi's *Backlash;* Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *Herland;* Adrienne Rich's *Of Woman Born;* Audre Lorde's *Sister/Outsider;* and Cherry Mogana and Gloria Anzandula's *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings of Radical Women of Color.* The whole is held in place by feminist theory and the research produced through that theory. While any women's studies topic can be approached from this perspective, it seems to characterize introductory courses

and courses on race and gender, as is exemplified by the following two courses: "Women in a Changing World" taught in 1989 at Old Dominion and "Classism, Racism, and Sexism" taught at SUNY-A1bany in 1989. Bear with me as I discuss these courses in some detail—I do so because I believe that they represent a dominant bias in women's studies and are a direct outgrowth of the Type 4 course.[10]

The Old Dominion course describes itself as an introduction to the interdisciplinary field of women's studies and asks students to read *Feminist Frontiers II, Rethinking Sex, Gender, and Society* by Laura Richardson and Verta Taylor, the novel *Woman on the Edge of Time* by Marge Piercy, and various articles in hand-out form. It is divided into three units: "Establishing the Questions," "The Social Construction of Gender: The Making of Modern American Women," and "The Remaking of American Women." The first introduces students to issues of gender and equality. The second encompasses women and work, intimate relationships, sexuality, politics of reproduction, and violence against women. The third provides a brief history of American feminism and explores its future. In all sections, a variety of disciplinary perspectives is presented but without any discernible pattern of disciplinary foci for the course as a whole. For example, the introductory session on the social construction of women includes texts by two psychologists of distinctly different intradisciplinary orientation, Carol Gilligan and Nancy Chodorow, and juxtaposes these with the video, "Still Killing Us Softly," a textual analysis of images of women in contemporary advertising. "Intimate Relationships" features texts by historian Carol Smith-Rosenburg and sociologist Barbara Ehrenreich; "Sexuality" includes sociologist Clyde Franklin and the poet Adrienne Rich. "Alternate Visions" focuses entirely on Piercy's novel. Integration and synthesis of all this finds its primary form of expression in an integrative journal in which students weave academic knowledge together with their individual perceptions of the world, the syllabus implying that this integration and synthesis is to take place primarily without explicit instructor assistance.

The SUNY-Albany course was created to enable students to develop an understanding of "structural inequality and group oppression from several different perspectives" (Butler et al., Appendix). Eight texts are required, mostly sociohistorical, although students are asked to read at least one of four novels. The stated goal of the course leads one to think that disciplines might be the perspectival focus, but this is not the case. Perspectives feature *social groups,* such as blacks, Latinas, Asian/Pacific, writers; *issues,* including family, sexuality, work, and reproductive rights; and *concepts,* ranging from discrimination, racism, and sexism to heterosexism and classism. Students explore these perspectives through an amalgamation of disciplinary texts including sociology, history, and literature, although the syllabus makes no mention of distinct disciplinary approaches except for the demarcation of fiction toward the end of the course. Feminist theories are presented as well, merging with the other texts so as to appear no different in form and academic weight. The syllabus and the course assignments (which include a life story essay), an essay on issues covered in the

readings, and a journal in which students record their reactions to class material and demonstrate evolving sensitivity to the central issues of the course do not indicate that explicit disciplinary integration and synthesis is to take place.

What we see in these courses fits neither the conventional disciplinary course model nor the conventional interdisciplinary model: but it has focus and purpose and, according to our students, a coherence that generates a powerful and positive impact on the maturation of those who take the course.[11] In a fundamental way, this structure is consistent with a theme that has dominated women's studies theory: the need to move out of the disciplines as much as possible to create a space in which a more honest, holistic-vision of the world can exist—the transdisciplinary nature of the theoretical foundation of this course gives coherence to the material presented and just may be the cement with which we build a new discipline. What we may be witnessing here is the development of truly unique body of knowledge with a core of concepts, values, methods, and issues that are distinctly women's studies, just what Sandra Coyner called for.

This development is tremendously exhilarating to contemplate, and I think that anyone who has taught such a course has experienced the energy that comes from compiling and disseminating revolutionary material. But there are drawbacks as well, caveats that must be addressed if we are to continue to build effectively on the base thus far established. First of all, with the tremendous blossoming of published research on women's issues, course instructors may feel great pressure to cover a great deal of material, particularly since so many new women-centered issues have emerged over the last fifteen to twenty years. An instructor creating such a transdisciplinary/disciplinary configured course runs the risk of trying to include too much. It is understandable that one would want to, since many of our students who are not majors may only take one women's studies course in their college careers—for them we hope to make that course as comprehensive as possible. But the result can be an encyclopedic entity with little depth and tenuous connections, connections that appear clear to the instructor well versed in feminism but perhaps not so clear to the student making that first, and often tentative, venture into women's studies.[12]

However, the ever-increasing volume of women's issues and our self-imposed expectations as teachers do not fully explain the appearance of this kind of course. A complementary explanation resides in the early history of the contemporary women's movement when women's studies practitioners were forced to hunt and gather as best they could to find material, in essence to create the field themselves. As Ann Fitzgerald wrote in 1978, women's studies practitioners were engaged in self-education, reading as much as they could find wherever they could find it, and working on a reactive/urgent basis (2-3). Such an approach has the positive attribute of passion based on the immediate need to know—an incredible motivator in the classroom—but when transferred to course structure, it can produce the simplistic juxtaposition of disciplinary approaches or the abandonment of any consistent disciplinary approach at all, and a course that relies only on the accumulation of

evidence without considering aspects of the unique methodologies (Fitzgerald, 2). Fitzgerald herself concluded that this is just fine—like building a ship as one sails on it—and that such a unique interdisciplinary approach is ground breaking. To a certain degree, yes, but some might say that it is just sloppy work and that anyone who is fool enough to build a boat while sailing on it deserves to drown. Worse, the approach has contributed to the complaint, which may be to some extent legitimate, that women's studies classes lack rigor and substance.[13]

This new kind of course also, and ironically, may work to undermine one of the major theoretical goals of women's studies: the transformation of the disciplines. When we construct such a course, we must rely on "facts" produced by the disciplines (with and without a feminist perspective), but the course structure and theoretical underpinnings allow little room for us to question and critique the validity of these "facts." Instead of illustrating how particular disciplines have kept us from accurately understanding women, or have perpetuated false assumptions about women, the course can promote the false perception that academic disciplines do not exist, or that they are irrelevant or useless, and therefore cannot be held responsible for the social construction of gender. It is troubling too that we find this in the courses with the most potential for substantial political change: our introductory courses and our race/gender courses. Again, however, we must acknowledge that the development of this kind of course can also be tied to the level of the course—critiquing disciplines is indeed difficult in lower level courses, to which students may bring almost no knowledge of disciplines *per se.*

But this leads us to another difficulty with the Type 5 course. If we can assume that students in lower level courses lack prior knowledge sufficient to engage in disciplinary critique, what do we do about the fact that so many teachers of women's studies courses have been trained in conventional disciplines and bring their own disciplinary biases to the course material? Students lacking disciplinary understandings are by and large not yet sophisticated enough to discern the instructor's disciplinary bent given to a course that eschews disciplinary contextualizations. This can be highly problematic, especially because so many of these courses are taught by a single instructor, which can produce a dominant disciplinary twist to the course. Very few of us engage in team teaching, although theorists such as Sandra Coyner stress the value of doing so. The costs of team teaching are great enough to prohibit many institutions from supporting it, and many of us are just too strongly wedded to our role as sole authority in the classroom to risk the experience of team teaching. Consequently, those of us trained and housed in specific disciplines often find ourselves teaching women's studies courses without the benefit of first working with someone from another discipline. But it is inevitable that someone trained in literary studies, for example, will use documents differently than someone trained in sociology, that a historian will use materials differently from a psychologist. The biases we bring to our courses are often invisible—sometimes even to ourselves— but these differences are

profound and consciousness shaping, and in this particular model for women's studies courses, they may be brought to light only rarely and even less often investigated with critical scrutiny. Students are left with the daunting job of making disciplinary sense of the material on their own, identifying the instructor's perspective, integrating and synthesizing whatever they can grab hold of. It's fair to assume that many of them just never do this.

But despite these drawbacks, this new kind of course provides consistent recognition that women's studies has its own agenda, its own particular way of constructing knowledge, its own body of core texts, its own methods, and as this kind of course is taught and retaught, all of those features that are commonly identified with a discipline are likely to be refined and shaped more artfully.

Type 6—Feminist Interdisciplinarity—As one might suspect, when revolutionary theory is applied to a body of knowledge, that knowledge must in some way become something other than what it was. A new kind of history, psychology, biology, or anthropology emerges to stand beside the old, perhaps even to dominate or obliterate the old. Any interdisciplinary activity will have this transformative impact to some extent, at the very least upon the way the instructor comes to see his or her own discipline. It is this process that we see in full force in this sixth type, a course in which the integration involves two or more *feminized disciplines,* that is, disciplines influenced by feminist theory, the kind we see in Type I and 2 courses. Upper-level feminist theory courses or senior seminars/capstone courses are the most likely courses to assume this form. In these, much greater attention is paid to the identification and analysis of assumptions and methods. For example, in Appalachian State University's "Feminist Theory, Feminist Theories" (1989), students are expected to try to come to grips with the theory and practice of feminism, clearly a problem that cannot be solved through a single disciplinary lens, so the course introduces them to multiple feminist disciplinary perspectives, such as feminist aesthetics, feminist political theory, feminist critiques of science, and feminist anthropology. The students are required to keep a synthesis chart that records the variety of theories studied and how each deals with specific issues. They then use the chart as their raw data to compose an extended integrative essay in which they apply one or more of the theories to a real world issue of importance to the student. Short response papers are placed throughout the course to give students the opportunity to synthesize material at a reasonable pace.

"Gender and Epistemology," an upper-level special topics course that 1 developed while participating in the Institute for Integrative Studies, also belongs in this category. Taught in the spring of 1995, this course focuses on feminist theories of epistemology in philosophy, psychology, the natural sciences, literary studies, and the visual arts. Students explored feminist perspectives on the respective disciplines through identification and critique of disciplinary methods and assumptions, synthesizing the material in class discussions and journal writing. A final project, requiring that students analyze the epistemological character

of another student in the class, compelled them to select and integrate methods from various disciplines to achieve new and workable investigative procedures.

This kind of course is one of the most powerful vehicles for the continued development of women's studies as a distinct disciplinary form. Since the focus is clearly on the ways in which feminists re-view different academic areas, virtually leaving behind the non-feminist world against which they work, the course is strong testimony to the creation and dissemination of complex feminist theories, some of which conflict with each other and illustrate the great diversity of thought inherent in women's studies. It is a course that strongly supports the theoretical assumption that women's studies must create its own space and must focus on educating itself, particularly younger generations, about the unique theory that generates from and informs women's studies research. As with other course types discussed thus far, though, this one also has the tendency to ignore the foundations of academic disciplines and to ignore critical assessment of what in some cases may be deep disciplinary biases informing the development of specific feminist theories.

Type 7—Feminist Transdisciplinary/Disciplinary—No course highlights women's studies' grounding in extremely complex feminist theory and its disciplinary character as fully as does the Feminist Transdisciplinary/Disciplinary course. In this type, feminism(s) provides the transdisciplinary umbrella for the course, which is devoted to the exploration of multiple feminist theories or to the use of feminist theories to investigate a feminist issue clearly positioned apart from conventional disciplines. The syllabus for this course will likely never mention disciplinary perspectives, but it will highlight various approaches to feminism, such as conservative, liberal, Marxist, radical, and socialist feminisms, as does the Rutgers University course "Theories of Women's Studies" (Fall 1989), or in categories such as black feminism, language theory, and power, as does The University of Massachusetts course "Feminist Theory" (Spring 1989). The course may also attempt to explore and integrate specific feminist philosophies such as feminist empiricism, standpoint feminism, and post-modern feminism. Feminist theories are presented as women's studies work, not as representative of feminist work in a particular discipline, and feminist pedagogy and methods are clearly identified as feminist. The Rutgers course syllabus does this very succinctly, stating that feminist pedagogy is "a structure and atmosphere conducive to the personal growth of students, . . . and particularly to the strengthened self-esteem of women, and to their full and confidence participation in society, including creative social and cultural change" (Appendix). Methods used in the course include reading, writing, and discussing practical problems faced by women and analyzing these from various feminist frameworks; doing this as far as possible in a collective, non-hierarchical way; emphasizing cooperation; working in small groups; and encouraging the reading and constructive criticism of each other's work.

This type of course takes as its subject the heart of women's studies— feminist theory—

and legitimizes it. By so doing, the course fulfills one of the primary tenets of women's studies theory: the need to construct a body of knowledge that can more than adequately address the issue of gender construction and sexual inequality. As with a number of these new types of courses, however, the attempt to put into educational practice within the academy the theoretical base of the feminist movement creates an ironic subversion of principles upon which the movement rests. With this last category, for example, while the focus on feminist theory as an integral core supports the notion that women's studies is a new, revolutionary, epistemological philosophy, it also uses the very form which it claims must be transformed—the academic course itself, grounded in theoretical postulates about reality, fixated on clearly articulated (i.e., affirmed by the establishment) methods, assumptions, and concepts.

Herein lies one of the ongoing dilemmas faced by all women's studies practitioners, no matter whether they are teaching a Type 1 course or a Type 7 course: the paradoxical need to create the new welded to the genuine and legitimate belief that academic, disciplinary knowledge paradigms retain validity. This dynamic has generated the alteration of disciplines[14] and the addition of a new component to the academic enterprise, but it has not, as yet, resulted in the radical transformation of disciplines or the academy. That goal is only to be realized over a much longer timeline, and I don't foresee women's studies ridding itself of this paradox in the near future, especially with renewed pressure placed upon young women's studies scholars to devote themselves first to their traditional disciplinary home and second to women's studies. As a number of graduate students have recently discussed in *Critical Matrix,* the Princeton journal of interdisciplinary work on women, gender, and culture, the pressure to choose a marketable niche—one readily identifiable to those trained within a more traditional discipline—continue to silence feminists and to direct them away from women's studies as well as other interdisciplinary enterprises.[15] But my hope is that this will not pose an insurmountable problem. The course typology that I have just presented suggests that it will not be.

But perhaps we could make the journey even less difficult for all of us in women's studies if we looked more carefully at our curriculum, particularly at the balance of disciplinary and interdisciplinary courses. Can we find ways to achieve our goals by constructing our programs to accommodate both the disciplinary and interdisciplinary needs of those in women's studies, to incorporate as intellectually valid both the maintenance and transformation of the disciplines? The disciplines have generated a tremendous amount of knowledge crucial to our ability to become productive citizens of the Twenty-First Century, and it strikes me as foolish to abandon so quickly that which has shaped us so profoundly. It also strikes me as an ethically untenable position: since we ourselves are so grounded in disciplinary knowledge, we do our students an injustice if we ignore this foundation when transmitting knowledge to our students. However, if we can find a modicum of common ground, a curriculum which features more distinctly interdisciplinary courses which

simultaneously critique and validate disciplines, we will provide for ourselves and our students a much stronger understanding of how the disciplines shape our beliefs and values while also nurturing processes with which we can build new knowledge. I am convinced that such a union is possible. The curricular foundation has already been laid and is still relatively sound. And if we do so, we will create for ourselves and our students, both male and female, a world in which we can work with and through the disciplines as well as against them, a world in which disciplinary competition vanishes in the face of interdisciplinary cooperation.

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Notes

1. Julie Thompson Klein mentions it in *Interdisciplinarity,* in "Blurring, Cracking. and Crossing: Permeation and the Fracturing of Disciplines" in Messer-Davidow et al., and in her work in progress, "Boundary Work." So too does Giles Gunn in "Interdisciplinary Studies."
2. See Howe for a discussion of Ihe historical development of contemporary disciplines.
3. All references are to the unnumbered appendix of Butler et al.
4. See Boxer in Minnich et al.,75; also Richardson & Robinson, *Thinking Feminist: Key Concepts in Women's Studies,* New York: The Guilford Press, 1993, 12-13.
5. It is important to note that not all feminists support the goal of integration. There is a distinct group that argue for autonomy—see "Introduction: Theories of Women's Studies and The Autonomy/ Integration Debate" by Gloria Bowles and Renate Klein in Bowles and Klein.
6. One such contribution frequently cited in women's studies literature is methodology that incorporates women's own experiences and perceptions into their research and leaching.
7. As co-author of the NWSA 1991 report to the profession, *Liberal Learning and the Women's Studies Major,* which clearly asserts that women's studies is interdisciplinary. Coyer has more recently aligned herself with the traditional faction of women's studies practitioners. This does not necessarily mean that her belief in the disciplinary nature of women's studies has changed, but it does suggest that such categorization is difficult to define and maintain and that equivocation may be more prevalent that the published literature leads us to believe.
8. *Association for Integrative Studies Newsletter,* vol. 16, no. 4, Dec. 1994, 4-5. Reprinted in the *Journal of General Education* 45:2 (1996). The document was the brainchild of David Flaten of the University of La Verne in La Verne, California, who attended the 1993-94 Institute in Integrative Studies at Miami University, Oxford, Ohio.
9. Rutgers' "Issues of Women in Science" course, spring 1988. is the only one of five in the NWSA collection to include anything close to this: an assignment thai requires analysis of an existing data set.

10. Other courses in the NWSA report representing this type include University of California, Santa Cruz, "Introduction to Feminism"; University of Richmond, "Women and Society: Introduction to Women's Studies"; Michigan Slate University, "Introduction to Women's Studies: Women's Consciousness"; Rutgers University, "Women. Culture, and Society"; University of California, Los Angeles, "Women of Color in America" and "Gender, Ethnicity, and Class."
11. See *The Courage to Question: Women's Studies and Student Learning and Women's Studies Graduates: 'The First Generation* for detailed descriptions of student responses to women's studies courses.
12. Rutgers' introductory course on "Women, Culture, and Society" exemplifies this problem. The course features 28 subunits, most with at least 3 to 8 required readings and many with 3 additional recommended texts. Areas of study include "class/race/ethnicity and gender divisions of labor," "difference," "gender socialization and motherhood," "transforming education: ways of knowing," "politics of language and image: revisions & transformations," "the geography of gender," and "female sexuality and relationships."
13. See, for example, *Professing Feminism: Cautionary Tales from the Strange World of Women's Studies* by Daphne Patai and Noretta Koertge, New York: Basic Books, 1994.
14. Some disciplines are more permeable than others. See *Feminist Scholarship: Kindling in the Groves of Academe* for a discussion of history, education, philosophy, literary criticism, and anthropology. DuBois et al. maintain that of these five, education and philosophy remain firmly resistant to feminist alteration and that even history and literary criticism has not been dramatically altered.
15. See "'In the Mess': A Roundtable Discussion of Feminism and Interdisciplinarity," Heather Hadlock, ed.. in *Critical Matrix.*

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