

UCLA, Spring, 2003

**Women's Studies 120
Internships in Women's Studies**

Instructor: Dr. Sharon Bays

Time: Thursday 1-3:50; Kinsey Hall 94

Office Hours: Thursdays 12-12:50 and by appointment

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Course Statement:

One of the most important contributions of feminist scholarship has been the breakdown of boundaries "between one discipline and another, between domestic and public, between theory and practice, between expert and non-expert" (Pat Caplan 1988). Through the experience of our internships and discussions in our seminar gatherings, we will attempt to integrate theory, practice and interdisciplinary scholarship. We will draw on data and experience from sociopolitical environments such as the workplace, health clinics, arts projects and domestic violence programs and from movements for societal transformation as well as from research produced within traditional disciplines and that is transdisciplinary. Women's Studies, as practiced in this class, should reflect the connectedness, breadth and the intersection of the academy and community as well as of gender, class, race, ethnicity, and sexuality.

Women's Studies 120 provides students the opportunity to gain practical experience working in the community on issues related to women's lives. Each student is expected to serve as an intern in an agency of their choosing and one approved by the professor and/or by Mary Margaret Smith, the Student Affairs Officer and internship coordinator. This is also our opportunity to connect our community experiences to the methodological and theoretical themes explored in the feminist theories and research (such as WS197) courses offered at UCLA. In this course we will learn by doing, not only in performing the job at the internship site but by analysis of the constraints and consequences of one's own participation in a structured social setting. As any good researcher or ethnographer will do, each Women's Studies intern will consider her place in the field setting and the impact she will have on the social setting. So, interns will apply methods and theories of feminist social analysis in relation to their site as well as to their own actions. With this in mind, we can better understand the intern as an agent of social change within an organizational structure. We can also better examine the relationship between the agency's agenda and the broader social context. These analyses, ruminations and examinations will be conducted both individually and together in our weekly gatherings.

Required Readings

Teaching Feminist Activism: Strategies from the Field. 2002. Nancy Naples and Karen Bojar. Controversy and Coalition: The New Feminist Movement Across Four Decades of Change (Third Edition). 2000. Myra Marx Ferree and Beth B. Hess.

The Challenge of Local Feminisms: Women's Movements in Global Perspective. 1995. Edited by Amrita Basu.

For the second week (April 10th), please read materials handed out the first day of class. Read also the Introduction, First, Second and Fourth Chapters of Teaching Feminist Activism. These are short readings and will provide a review of perspectives about learning and practice--in the classroom and in the field. Chapter Four challenges our perceptions concerning the academic and the real world and should provoke thinking and discussion before beginning your internship.

Further reading assignments will be given in second and third weeks of class. This is not a reading heavy course but ideas from the readings should be incorporated into your course writing assignments (see below).

Course Requirements:

1) **Learning Agreement**: Students must complete a "Learning Agreement" form which is recommended by the UCLA Field Studies Office. This form should be filled out and signed by the field site supervisor and the faculty sponsor by the second week of class. The form itself is ungraded and must be submitted by the third week of class. There will be a penalty of a grade fraction (for example from an A to an A-) if the learning agreement is not turned in on time.

2) **Internship**: Each student is expected to serve as an intern in a community agency. Students agree to an average of eight (8) hours a week, 40 hours for the quarter. In some cases, interns are required to take an agency training course which may take as much as half the quarter. If this is the case, the training course itself will be an important part of your analysis. See below for internship projects and journals.

3) **Attendance and participation**: Everyone must attend and be ready to participate in each class gathering. This means that the readings are completed and your critical analysis process is poised to undergo an exchange of ideas. This also means that you have been journaling and reflecting on your site's setting and you are ready to undergo an exchange of experiences and ideas. Attendance and participation in our Thursday gatherings are worth 15% of the course grade. If you know you have to be absent, please email or call me ahead of classtime. Students will sign an ongoing attendance sheet so that we both have a record.

4) **Journal**: You will begin your journal process the first week of your internship. Your journals will be typed and double spaced and include questions that arise from your work in the agency, interactions that you deem important, connections between your current and past course work and what you are observing at your site, conversations that are meaningful and insightful or confusing and seemingly meaningless. You will also consider yourself in the process of these interactions without making yourself the main attraction. Create a document--WS120 Journal, for instance--and reflect in it every week if not more often, but once a week is required. Turn in your

journals midterm (May 1) and again at the end of the class (June 5). Your journal work will be a valuable tool for your final paper. Many of your journal insights can serve as a springboard for your critical analysis. Journals are worth 20% of your grade.

5) **Preliminary Report:** Each student will give a preliminary report to the group, describing the agency's mission and in terms of its feminist agenda and community work and its work with women and girls. Students are expected to interpret the agency within a broader social context, and each must describe her role in the agency. It would be helpful if students answer these questions: *What were your reasons for selecting your particular intern site? What are your goals? Is the site organized around a particular problem or set of problems? How do agency staff or volunteers claim to meet these problems? Who is the staff (not necessarily names but backgrounds and education)? What was the original mission of the agency? Who organized it and why? How are feminist theories incorporated into the agency's agenda? What are guiding theoretical perspectives if any?* These reports will begin in the second week of class since most of you know your agency and a few have even begun your fieldwork. Preliminary reports should be approximately five pages long and are worth 15% of your course grade.

5) **Final Report:** Final reports incorporate a critical analysis of your internship, the site and your role within it. You will return to your preliminary report for review and evaluation, your journals for inspiration and process and class discussions for grounding and theoretical connections. We will talk about this project as the course progresses. You will want to consider many of the above questions and new ones like: *Did you accomplish the goals you set for yourself at the beginning of the course? To what extent does the agency use feminist theories in its overall mission and day to day operations? Is there a feminist model for dealing with its primary mission and how well does it embrace the model or models? Does the agency meet its goals? Does the agency have an evaluation process? What is the agency's decision making process? What is the relationship of the agency to the community it serves? How is the organization funded and how does the nature of the funding affect the agency's mission. How is the staff trained to meet the mission and are they trained in feminist workshops? Who do they serve (regionally and demographically)? How does staff refer to people they serve? Are services free? If asked by the agency's director to evaluate the site, what would you say?* The final report is worth 30 % of your course grade. They are due the last few weeks of school. A form of the full report will be given to the class. This means, please don't read your report but rather talk to the class about what you have learned (including the answers to the above questions) and what you might do differently because of what you now know. This typewritten, double-spaced paper should be approximately fifteen pages long. Your talk should be approximately 10-15 minutes long. Students are expected to incorporate the readings into this report as well as into the preliminary report.

6) **Evaluation of your Internship by Site Supervisor:** The final aspect of your course grade will be an evaluation of your work by the site supervisor. We will discuss this aspect of your grade further in class. It is worth 20% of your grade.