

A refreshing female perspective

BY MEGAN MCCONNELL

I can remember being in high school and thinking what the world really needed were courses in feminism and women's issues. I only had vague ideas about what I thought a women's studies course would consist of but I was sure it was necessary. When the university representatives came to my high school there was never any mention of Women's Studies. I didn't know it existed anywhere.

During my first year at King's College I did the Foundation Year Program. This course examines the development of Western history over six thousand years. During the year we looked at a total of four women. I knew there were more women in our

history who should be recognized by scholars, both past and present.

When I brought this absence to the attention of a couple of my professors I received two responses: the study of women is irrelevant to understand the development of Western society, and did I really expect the co-ordinators to replace the study of Plato with someone like Sappho. I knew then that I had a mission.

Much to my delight and surprise I discovered Dalhousie had a Women's Studies program; indeed I could take my degree in it. The program was in it's infancy but it was exactly what I was looking for.

For the last two years I have been a Women's Studies major. There are ten majors this year and two of us, Tanya Jones and Caroline Carpen,

will be the first women to complete an undergraduate degree in Women's Studies at Dalhousie and the first Women's Studies major in King's College. Next year I'll be the first major to graduate with an advance major. Although the Women's Movement has existed in our society for more than a century, we feel like pioneers on the Dal/King's campus.

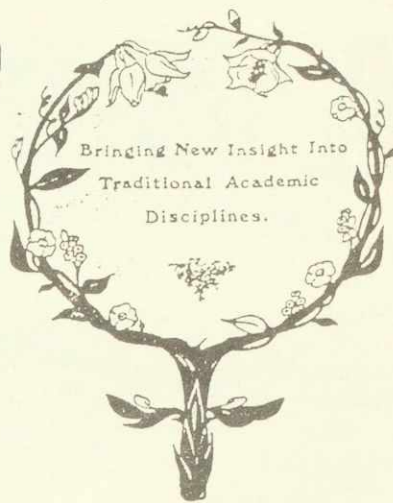
Many people ask me what a Women's Studies degree consists of. At Dal you can take courses in the program in English, History, Political Science, Philosophy, Education, Medicine, French, Theatre, Social Work, and Sociology. Each year more courses become available as a women's studies credit.

People take Women's studies for many reasons. Anybody can take the

courses, whatever their political, sexual or cultural orientation. I'm doing the program because I want to work in the therapy profession and I feel that a background in Women's Studies will be indispensable.

Students can apply what they learn in Women's Studies to any area of their lives, in fact, it will probably change your life.

Currently at Dal, students can get their advanced majors in Women's Studies. Moves are being made to get an honours program in action and one day we may even be able to do graduate studies. All of the major universities in Canada have Women's Studies and six of them offer graduate degrees. Dal's a little behind the times, but we are working on it.



Each day we are making a difference and are bringing new insights into traditional academic disciplines. If you want to find out more about our Women's Studies program at Dal feel free to drop in at 1444 Seymour St. in the Multidisciplinary Centre or call us at 494-3814.

For the opening of minds

BY TANYA RYAN-JONES

When most people think of Dalhousie, they don't think of Women's Studies. Indeed, if the thought occurs to them, it is often followed by "What's that?" I should know, because before I began majoring in it in my second year, I didn't know either.

An eloquent answer would be that it provides new insights into traditional academic disciplines (its crosslisted with almost every Arts subject), a not so eloquent answer would be that it simply kicks butt and provokes thought in a way no other subject does. Call me biased, but many perspectives are better than one, and even if you don't fall head

over heels for the stuff, getting exposed to often unexplored views breeds a balanced brain.

Another desirable side effect from taking Women's Studies (not to be mixed up with feminism, by the way) is you start asking questions rather than assuming things, and this is never a bad thing, it's actually a good survival strategy.

Possible worse than not knowing what Women's Studies is, is having an inaccurate preconception of the subject. Really, it is extremely accessible (due to mass crosslistings) and I would appeal to folks to take it, or at least talk to someone about it, before dismissing it. No, this is not an attempt at brainwashing; it is a request

for a sense of humour (another good survival strategy) and some fairness.

So step back for a moment, look around at things, and yourself, then look at Women's Studies. It's not a clique, it doesn't involve mandatory feminism, and at the 2000 level there are often no prerequisites. Hey look I took it, and am honestly really glad I did.

If you are not convinced, please contact someone at 1444 Seymour St. (494-3814). Or save the quarter and go over there in person. It's worth the trip (pun).

From a Women's Studies major who would never lie in print.

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