

instances by sharp conflicts among women in developed and developing nations. At the regional level, transnational organizing has become increasingly important as a means for spreading new ideas across national borders, fostering policy diffusion and solidarity among politically marginalized groups. Despite their long history, women's movements are thus constantly being reborn, reinventing themselves, and taking on new forms in order to politicize women's concerns, however these are identified and defined.

SEE ALSO *Abortion Rights; Equality; Family Planning; Femininity; Feminism; Feminism, Second Wave; Gender Gap; Inequality, Gender; Interest Groups and Interests; Masculinity; Politics; Politics, Black; Politics, Gender; Politics, Gay, Lesbian, Transgender, and Bisexual; Reproductive Rights; Social Movements; Stepford Wives; Suffrage, Women's; Women and Politics; Women's Liberation*

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WOMEN'S RIGHTS MOVEMENT

SEE *Women's Movement*.

WOMEN'S STUDIES

Women's studies is an interdisciplinary academic field that concentrates on the experiences and aspirations of women. Although women's studies departments and programs in the United States and around the world are

reflective of their locations within educational institutions and their larger social context, a common thread is the claim that women's experiences have been underrepresented or misrepresented in more traditional academic disciplines that claim to capture the human experience. This has been found by some critics to be the case in traditional disciplines that purport to speak about human nature but consider only the social location of men or take men as the universal subject, casting women as either substitute or inferior men.

WOMEN'S STUDIES AS CRITIQUE AND CORRECTIVE

Arguing that women are human too and that the academic is also political, women's studies is founded on critical terrain, offering critiques of traditional disciplines and correctives to their representations or exclusions of women. Thus, a women's studies program may offer courses in education, literature, history, political science, philosophy, psychology, ethnic studies, biology, medicine, religious studies, and international relations, among other fields, centralizing women and the theoretical frameworks of feminism within each of those fields. Further, the misrepresentation of women's experiences in academic disciplines is thought by some to reflect a generalized societal devaluation of women's experience and social roles and thus to be part of the oppression of women. In this way the purpose of women's studies is shaped by its relationship with women's movements inside and outside the academy. The field has developed around the idea that the personal is political, meaning that gender identity and the subjectivities of individuals are shaped through the political structures of a gendered social system.

In these ways the field of women's studies is a critique and a corrective as well as a self-reflexive and politically engaged discipline that functions with a commitment to social transformation within education and the wider society in which it exists. Since their inception women's studies programs have operated from the often contradictory position of educating for social change and existing within traditional academic institutions that tend to favor neutral and disinterested knowledge production.

EARLY COURSES AND PROGRAMS

The first women's studies courses were offered in the United States in 1965 at the New Orleans Free School, the University of Chicago, Barnard College, Spelman College, and the Free University of Seattle. The earliest women's studies program was established in 1970 at San Diego State University, and the Women's Resource and Research Center was established at Spelman in 1981. Influenced by the civil rights, women's, and New Left movements and the inception of African American,

American, and ethnic studies, early women's studies courses were guided by a vision of a world free from sexism, racism, class bias, ageism, and heterosexual bias.

The scope of the field has expanded continuously, increasing from 150 women's studies programs in the United States in the period 1970–1975 and three cross-disciplinary journals in 1972 to the growing number of courses, programs, departments, academic conferences, and journals of the first decade of the twenty-first century. In 2006 there were over seven hundred degree-granting women's studies departments in the United States with approximately seventeen doctoral programs, including the Africana Women's Studies program at Clark Atlanta, the Graduate Certificate Program at Howard University, and the earliest doctoral program at Emory University; more than two hundred fifty women's departments in sixty countries worldwide, with approximately twenty-five doctoral programs; and over forty scholarly journals and dozens of annual national and international conferences. The U.S. National Women's Studies Association (NWSA) was founded in 1977, and Women's Worlds: International Interdisciplinary Congress on Women was founded in 1981 with conferences held since that time in locations ranging from Haifa, Israel, to Seoul, South Korea.

METHODOLOGY AND STRATEGIES

The primary methodological approach of women's studies is derived from feminist analysis, a complex field of study that questions the foundations of traditional male-centered knowledge. Feminists have interrogated the masculine—also known as the patriarchal, androcentric, and phallogocentric—biases and exclusions of prevailing social relations, institutions, and political structures to understand why women consistently experience gender-based oppressions that are manifested differently in accordance with the context. From home, to schools, to the workplace, to neighborhood streets, to war zones feminists have demonstrated the ways in which women, by virtue of being female, are barred disproportionately and systemically from the privileges enjoyed by men. At the same time feminist analysis documents women's political agency and resistance to oppressive circumstances. This has been particularly true of black feminist traditions.

To rectify structurally derived inequalities between men and women, one set of approaches feminists have offered consists of strategies to oppose existing masculine structures. Feminist oppositional solutions have taken a number of forms, from proposing equity in the workplace, government, and home to more profoundly transformative solutions of challenging masculinist epistemologies with feminist ways of knowing. Whereas man has dominated the social and human sciences, feminists

have proposed woman as a replacement, a supplement, or the basis for structural transformation.

A number of concerns about the transformative potential of feminist oppositional strategies have been articulated within feminist debates. Proposing woman as an oppositional category immediately raises the question of whether gender is the primary identification of all women everywhere, casting doubt on the core of much of feminist politics. Racialized women, lesbians, disabled women, working-class and poor women, and women outside North America and Western Europe have been the most insistent voices against homogenizing women into hegemonic categories, thus contributing to the plurality of feminist analyses.

The long tradition of black feminist thought, for instance, has reconceptualized feminism by demanding attention to race, to diaspora communities, and to the construction of womanhood outside the United States. Debates about difference, or multipositionality, within women's studies programs continue, revolving around the ways in which race, class, nation, ability, age, and other social locations modify gender. Not only was the notion of woman challenged, the entire notion of a core focus or single identity was challenged by debates that demanded intersectional, plural, and culturally attentive approaches to feminism that are simultaneously antisexist and antiracist. For women's studies programs that primarily have focused on the experiences of white women the challenge is to integrate a racial analysis; for programs within historically black colleges and universities the challenge is to integrate a gender analysis into already established racial analyses.

DEBATES WITHIN WOMEN'S STUDIES

Starting from their initial questioning of man as the legitimate grounds of knowing, feminism and women's studies debate the proper subjects and objects of the field. In this sense feminist and women's studies debates are both reflective of and a challenge to broader debates within the social sciences about conventional criteria of knowledge production, disciplinary configurations of relevance, verifiability and falsifiability, the separation of subject from object, and the criteria of objectivity and universality as necessary features of legitimate knowledge production. With the "crisis of reason" comes the instability of feminist claims to know, and feminism is both oppositional to and implicated in conventional epistemological discourses. In fact, the very immersion of feminism in patriarchal practices is seen a factor in the critical effectiveness of feminism and thus the transformative potential of the field of women's studies.

These debates manifest themselves in a variety of ways in women's studies programs. Pedagogically, the field of women's studies has attempted to create inclusive, non-hierarchical, and open learning environments that do not privilege hegemonic voices or experiences. In this regard peer facilitation, experiential knowledge, and self-reflection are emphasized in many women's studies programs. Epistemologically, women's studies programs offer feminist theory and methodology courses in interdisciplinary and politically engaged knowledge production. This means that women's studies programs provide courses that centralize women's experiences as well as methods of reading the social through feminist theory. Normatively, women's studies courses tend to highlight the value biases of feminist theory and demonstrate the hidden values of knowledge that is said to be neutral and disinterested. Institutionally, women's studies programs are often in an uneasy alliance with academia, on the one hand attempting to offer transformative curricula and on the other hand finding it necessary to offer courses and programs that are recognizably legitimate in comparison with other liberal arts degree programs. Additionally, women's studies departments often seek models of departmental governance that maintain some of the ideals of feminist organizing while operating within the larger institutional framework. Finally, the field of women's studies continues to nurture its relationship with women's movements and community activism beyond the academy.

Beyond women's studies programs and departments, feminist analysis has found its way into many traditional disciplines and departmental appointments. In light of the mainstreaming of feminist analysis, the question arises whether women's studies as an autonomous field has outlived its utility in the academy. At the same time there are qualitative differences between working as a feminist scholar within a discipline that does not centralize the project of academic and social transformation and working within an interdisciplinary women's studies department that is intended to transform the entire educational experience from the classroom to departmental governance.

As women's studies programs have increased their legitimacy within the academy, acquired departmental status, increased their number of tenure-track appointments, and developed doctoral programs, the negotiations about remaining transformational and autonomous have continued. In that context the field of women's studies is dynamic, worldly, and continuously engaged with the central epistemological and normative debates that animate much of the social sciences.

SEE ALSO *Gender; Gender Gap; Gender Studies; Women; Women and Politics; Women's Liberation; Work and Women*

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WOODSTOCK

Although the Woodstock Music and Arts Festival is a celebrated symbol of the “hippie” counterculture, it did not initiate the counterculture, nor did it mark its end. Nevertheless, Woodstock is a useful reference point for discussions of this significant social phenomenon. By 1969, the “hippie” movement had emerged as a group of primarily young people, who not only were opposed to