



Teaching Introduction to Women's Studies: Expectations and Strategies

Carolyn DiPalma, Barbara S. Winkler

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This edited collection addresses the institutional context and social issues in which teaching the women's studies introductory course is embedded and provides readers with practical classroom strategies to meet the challenges raised. The collection serves as a resource and preparatory text for all teachers of the course including experienced teachers, less experienced teachers, new faculty, and graduate student teaching assistants. The collection will also be of interest to educational scholars of feminist and progressive pedagogies and all teachers interested in innovative practices.

The contributors discuss the larger political context in which the course has become a central representative of women's studies to a growing, although less feminist-identified, population. Increased enrollments and changes in student population are noted as a result, in part, of the popularity of Introduction to Women's Studies courses in fulfilling GED and diversity requirements. New forms of student resistance in a climate of backlash and changes in course content in response to internal and external challenges are also discussed. Evidence is provided for an emerging paradigm in the conceptualization of the introductory course as a result of challenges to racism, heterosexism, and classism in women's studies voiced by women of color and others in the 1980s and 1990s. Sensationalist charges that women's studies teachers, including those who teach the Introduction to Women's Studies course, are the academic shock troops of a monolithic feminism are challenged and refuted by the collection's contributors who share their struggles to make possible classrooms in which informed dialogue and disagreement are valued.

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