



DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

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Lower Division English Policy Committee Meeting

Minutes
April 3, 1990

Present: L. Brodkey, J. Duban, E. Fernea, S. Heinzelman, S. Kimball, J. Slatin, S. Fowler, S. Hinman, M. Villalobos

L. Brodkey opened the meeting with a brief explanation of the proposed curricular change for Fall 1990. All E 306 courses (with the exception of those taught by faculty) would focus on the topic, "Writing about Difference," and would use the same textbook, Racism and Sexism: An Integrated Approach. At least in the first year, the course would concentrate on those "classes" protected under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 from employment discrimination on the basis of race, religion, ethnicity, sex, age, and disability. A course packet of Supreme Court decisions, including minority and/or dissenting opinions, would provide students with excellent examples of arguments and some additional insight into the kinds of social complexities that attend any and all opinions. The topic and the text would serve at least two important educational goals: first, the entire semester would be devoted to an examination of the difference between opinions and arguments; second, the course would contribute to the university-wide effort to integrate multicultural education into the undergraduate curriculum.

Brodkey then asked the committee to advise her about the course and the text. The discussion that followed mostly concerned the strengths and weaknesses of Racism and Sexism as the text for a standardized E 306 curriculum. Most members saw the sections on definitions and distinctions among individual, institutional, and systemic acts of racism and sexism as strengths, and most saw its lack of biographical information as a weakness. Brodkey mentioned that Sarah Kimball had already pointed out that some of the information on racial slurs was simply inaccurate. Both then talked about how such problems could be used as part of the course, as a way of teaching students that published material is not to be taken at face value. It was suggested that the author might be asked to provide biographical material.