

To: LDEPC
From: John Ruszkiewicz
Re: New English 306 course
Date: April 6, 1990

I apologize for missing the LDEPC meeting of April 3. I had mistakenly thought the meeting was scheduled for Wednesday.

While I realize that the committee has already voted to approve Professor Brodkey's proposals for modifying English 306, I think the issues raised by the change weighty enough to merit more extensive discussion. Consequently, I am asking the LDEPC committee at its next meeting to consider (and reconsider) several matters of consequence to the implementation of this major course change.

At that next meeting, I request that the committee discuss the following propositions.

1. Any major modification of E 306, a university-wide required writing course, should emerge from a methodical process of syllabus design, revision, and approval. A significantly new E 306 course design should be tested in a small-scale pilot program before being implemented generally.
2. Any E 306 course syllabus should permit and encourage a diversity of approaches to teaching writing. At a minimum, experienced assistant instructors should be able to choose from among a variety of textbooks representing the major currents in composition theory and practice. The program ought not to require experienced assistant instructors using mainstream approaches to submit "variant course proposals" simply to follow methods or textbooks that have worked well for them in the past.
3. An anthology selected to raise the issue of "difference" should itself demonstrate an awareness of "difference." Its readings should invite balanced teaching, encourage full class participation, and evoke significant writing; the essays within such a collection ought to be sufficiently diverse to challenge the assumptions of instructors and students alike. The required anthology proposed for the new E 306--St. Martin's Racism and Sexism--is too narrow in scope to meet these criteria.

Textbooks that survey a broader spectrum of political and social opinions and address a wider range of issues than Racism and Sexism are available. (Please see the attached copy of a memo sent to the LDEPC office on March 27, 1990 listing eight alternative texts. Greenhaven Press also offers a series of inexpensive paperback anthologies on specific social and political issues; any volume of the series offers a wider and more challenging range of opinions than does Racism and Sexism.)

I would appreciate your patience in permitting me to speak to the LDEPC committee about these matters on April 10.