

Professor publishes sex study

Professor Arlene Stein explores the changing concept of sexuality in her new book

By Teri Meeuwsen
Higher Education Reporter

Today's society has changed what it means to be a lesbian. What used to be a cut-and-dry definition has become part of a gray area called "sexuality," said Arlene Stein, assistant professor in sociology.

"Lesbians are not a monolithic group," she said.

Stein's new book, "Sex and Sensibility: Stories of a Lesbian Generation," describes a study she conducted involving in-depth interviews with 30 women who defined themselves as lesbians in the 1970s.

She said this was during the time that lesbianism was known more as a political movement rather than as a sexual preference.

"It was a radical step toward embracing feminism," she said. "What it means to be a lesbian has changed for individuals in the 1990s. They see it purely as a sex preference without a whole load of political connotation."

In her book, Stein probes questions dealing with a variety of sexual experiences and how society structures sexuality. She also discusses what happens when a woman decides that she is a lesbian.

"Some of the women [in the study] at an early age, at nine or 10, thought they were gay," she said. "Others said something

specific happened to them to change them."

Stein is currently beginning a new study of small, semi-rural communities in the Eugene area, where the organization of anti-gay movements is taking place, such as the censorship of books in school libraries.

"I'll look at what impact these conflicts have in the community, and what they tell us about how different people live side-by-side in a congenial way," she said.

Stein received an \$85,000 grant from the Social Science Research Council to conduct the study.

"I hope to find some general answers to big questions, like how a pluralistic society lives and nurtures itself," she said.

Typist knows ins and outs of student government

By Kristina Rudinskas
Student Activities Reporter

If the University Student Senate is doing the talking, Melissa Logan's fingers are doing the walking—all over her laptop's keyboard.

She silently goes about her work, furiously tapping away at her Macintosh, pausing to stop only on those rare occasions when the room falls silent.

As administrative assistant to the Senate, Logan types out the minutes for every weekly meeting. The meetings last from one to three hours, and she averages about three pages of notes per meeting.

Logan, 19, a native of Albany, can type 80 words a minute.

As a pre-journalism major at the University, her job is prime training for a future career. She learned to type quickly from high school typing classes and worked in an

accounting office filing and organizing information.

"You have to be able to listen well and catch what they're saying," she said. "In the beginning, I sometimes had to ask questions about terminology because I didn't always know what they meant during the meetings."

Luckily, the Senate records the meetings, so Logan can go back over the tapes to see if she missed anything. She doesn't always get it word for word, but the idea is to get the main gist of what's being said at the meetings, she said.

Besides typing out the minutes and general clerical work, Logan has become an expert on the goings-on of student government. She has worked for the Senate for more than a year.

"I can file anything and know where everything's at," she said.



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