

Wednesday, November 17, 2010

City Room



April 27, 2009, 2:15 pm

Court Rejects Men's Studies Lawsuit

By COREY KILGANNON

Remember [the lawyer who sued Columbia University for failing to offer classes in men's studies](#)? His contention was that [Columbia](#) was being biased against men, since the university offers women's studies.

The lawyer, Roy Den Hollander, contended that he was trying to save the men of the world, one chauvinistic lawsuit at a time. But he'll have to do better next time, because his suit against Columbia was thrown out on April 23 by Judge [Lewis A. Kaplan](#) of United States District Court in Manhattan.

In his decision, now released, the judge noted that Mr. Den Hollander claimed Columbia was violating the first amendment because "his central claim is that feminism is a religion."

"Feminism is no more a religion than physics," the judge wrote, "and at least the core of the complaint therefore is frivolous."

The judge also disagreed Mr. Den Hollander's claim that the judge should have recused himself from the suit because he attended Columbia.

Mr. Den Hollander, who had claimed that offering a course of study about one gender violated Title IX and the Constitution, assailed the judge as a feminist and said, "The only thing frivolous and absurd is men looking for justice in the courts of America."

"When it comes to men's rights, judges act with an arrogance of power, ignorance of the law, and fear of the feminists," he said.



Roy Den Hollander, in a photograph from [his Web site](#).

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- Good decision. This was just another example of white men crying about how hard it is to live in a country where they have all the advantages. Get over it. If you fail in life, its your fault! Besides if you must learn more about the culture of men, then take any class called history, literature, science etc.....And it will be a course primarily about men's history, men's literature, mens's science etc....

— *R. Arispe*
- I hope the court makes Mr. Den Hollander pay damages for filing a frivolous lawsuit. It costs our society lots of taxpayer dollars to allow these narcissists to act out their stupid filings in courts of law.

— *Scientificia*
- It's still hard to believe this guy is for real. There are plenty of courses on men's studies, although usually they're listed under "history."

— *Jamie*
- The things a woman (ex-mail order bride) can drive a man to do!

— *Xivo*
- This only serves to point out how absurd it is to have classes in women's studies. We don't need one program that's biased towards women and another that's biased towards men. History education must be an unbiased presentation of the facts, with room for debate on all the issues.

— *Ilya*
- Doctors are often investigated for Medicare fraud. Shouldn't lawyers be investigated for lawsuit fraud, ie, filing frivolous lawsuits that waste time and money and crowd an already overburdened legal system? Or better yet, as Shakespear said...

— *Robert E. Topper, MD*
- Men's studies, like women's studies, now more often than not falls into the category of gender studies, which examines gender as a social construct particular to a given place and time. Women's studies, while still a department in

do you mean a Caucasian local of European descent voice? Every voice can be found living in NYC, including a woman's from Maine."

— anthony

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— Nat

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many universities, is generally considered to be quite outdated.
That said, I think Jamie, #3, has summed things up quite nicely.

— Karen

8.

Womens studies...We need mens studies. Good Try!

— bee

9.

Ideally, history would be about both genders equally. In reality it isn't. But illuminating the role of women in history is not the sole function of Women's Studies. It also includes consciousness raising about and discussion of social and political issues of importance to women specifically. It is entirely reasonable to maintain there should be Men's Studies which provide a similar function for men. And if you think Women's Studies raises consciousness in a non-biased fashion, consider its position on circumcision which it properly condemns when the victim is female but ignores or excuses if they are male. Just one of the most glaring examples, there are others. Mr. Hollander's mistake was claiming it was a religion, not in protesting the disparity. My thanks to Ilya for demonstrating not all women are condescending self-serving hypocrites on this issue. No thanks at all to Mr. Topper and other dismissing men. You are as pathetic as women who mocked the suffragettes.

— Edward Virtually

10.

All this law suit shows is how bad a lawyer Mr. Hollander is. If he would have filed a brief based on facts and logic, rather than ideology, he may not have ultimately prevailed at trial, but he would have gotten a fair hearing.

— DonO

11.

According to the Biographical Directory of Federal Judges (official), Kaplan did not attend Columbia. He studied at Rochester and received his J.D. from Harvard. <http://www.fjc.gov/servlet/tGetInfo?jid=1226>

— Mark

12.

I was in a men's group in the 70's. Brings back memories...

— Robert Jordan

13.

Women's studies is a joke. It's the kind of soft-subject area of study that should be offered as an elective only. A degree in this field is about as useful a degree in comparative basket-weaving or folklore & mythology.
That being said, I'm glad this lawsuit failed. Men's studies would have been an equally useless area of study. What we need now are more students studying science and engineering. The last thing we need is another useless academic field rooted in gender based whining.

— JG

14.

I think this guy's time would be better spent guaranteeing equal treatment for both men and women under NY state divorce law and fighting for father's rights. While I hate Columbia's politics, I wouldn't begrudge them to teach anything if they didn't take public money. (The same goes for the Nazi Party in Skokie, IL, IMHO.)

— Jon S.

15.

With a constitutional provision as obvious as "equal protection" this guy is doing

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men more harm than good. Way to make equality in access to education a joke, nutjob.

— David

16.

JG—hey, you insult folklore and mythology...such a course of study could be very useful indeed to pursuing graduate degrees in literature or divinity, for instance....

The premise of this lawsuit was...odd. I don't agree there should be "men's studies." But I do think women's studies programs are mostly absurd. History should do a better job of incorporating the lives of women into course material, and "gender studies" can even-handedly address problems of both manhood and womanhood in society. But why should there be a whole course of study devoted to one sex but not the other? It's not equal, and I don't think it really does anything to advance true equality for women.

— Emily B.

17.

JG I obhject to yore puting down my comprative basket-weaving degreee.

Thanks for making me choke on my coffee. :) It's all good though. Comments are easily 50% of the fun of reading the Times.

That the lawsuit was frivolous is beyond argument. What I really don't understand is the motivation of someone to bring a case like this to the court. Snubbed suitor? Professor refused to re-consider a grade? This didn't come out of nowhere. Nobody takes womens' studies seriously enough to actually argue about the efficacy of having a mens studies program without some serious mental issues.

— Robert Pratt

18.

What Roy Den Hollander and a great many other people seem unaware of is that the majority of Women's and Gender Studies courses taught at present cover many issues connected to gender, not just those relevant to women, women's history or feminism. It frequently takes a global, transnational, and postcolonial focus as well.

It can hardly be said that feminism is only about women. Pay equity for women, as just one example, is something which greatly affects the income of families as a whole.

I long for the day when the discipline truly becomes outdated. In the meantime, my students will continue to learn about such varied topics as the sexual division of labor and its impact on both men and women, the history of compulsory sterilization, and why a 13-year-old Somalian girl who was gang-raped was partially buried in a hole and stoned to death for her "crime."

I don't teach at Columbia, but I'm perplexed that a Columbia-trained lawyer, let alone any educated person with a shred of common sense, would try to make the case that feminism is a religion. I hope he receives all the mockery he so richly deserves.

— professor

19.

I find it humorous how so many sectors of the population feel they are more entitled than others to study their particular bias. This along with the notion that it's okay to slight one group, so as to compensate a different group for their being slighted in the past..

Has anyone ever heard that two wrongs don't make a right??? The plethora of specialized studies is nothing more than bigotry and favoritism for the sake of some supposed slight.

Life isn't fair and never was designed to be fair, you can't set things right by discriminating against some other group to compensate for your being discriminated against. This case is a perfect example, Female Chauvinism is not a remedy for Male Chauvinism and vice-versa, the same way the racial preferences of "Affirmative Action" cannot and will never correct the injustices of the past. It simply inflicts the same injustice to the other side. This will only

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salve the petty minds of those who feel revenge is justice. The plain and simple fact is, as this lawsuit demonstrates, these small minded “fixes” create more resentment and more bias, and consequently more absurd demands to add more bigoted courses of study to the .curriculum. ENOUGH ALREADY, This practice is divisive and diminishes the fact that we are all human beings.

How does discriminating against anything undo any past differential treatment? It doesn't, and the idea is just drivel to justify the bigoted, inequitable policies that are being implemented by those hellbent on punishing someone, anyone they feel is vaguely responsible for their past injustice. Nothing will ever set the past straight, and certainly not more prejudicial polices

— David F.

20.

Just look at mr. den hollander's photo...he is trying to evince some sort of credibility and toughness that he may not really have...just another garden-variety angry white man.

also, Edward Virtually (9), there is no point in making blanket statements about male circumcision and female genital mutilation. When male circumcision is done properly it does not cause any lifelong life-altering harm. whether it's a good idea is up for debate, but there is no debate about the fact that calling FGM “female circumcision” is grossly euphemistic. Victims of FGM suffer horribly. Their mutilation typically occur in unsanitary conditions and can lead to infections that are life-threatening. Sometimes the entire labia as well as the clitoris is excised. Afterwards, they are liable to suffer fistulas when they are unable to labor and deliver normally because the vaginal opening is scarified and inelastic. They and their babies are at risk of dying during these protracted labors. The fistulas often lead to lifelong incontinence (urinary and/or bowel) that makes them social pariahs. All so some patriarchal beliefs about women's sexuality can be enforced.

The costs of female genital mutilation, I think you will acknowledge, far outweigh the costs of male circumcision, which according to some scientists actually helps reduce the spread of sexually transmitted diseases like HHV and HPV.

So I think if women's studies focuses more on women's mutilation than men's, they can be forgive for that, don't you?

— elizabeth

21.

Male circumcision can be just as damaging as female circumcision as children die from it in America and elsewhere. There are some “scientists” who also claim that female circumcision can prevent the spread of viruses therefore would you also recommend that Elizabeth.

I have worked internaionally for 13 years to protect everyone regardless of gender from these mutilative practices your remarks are insulting to all those families who have lost male children from circumcision because they did not know the facts.

Male circumcisionwas introduced into western medical practice to curb male sexuality and it does.

All children who are circumcised suffer horribly there is no such thing as a properly done circumcision because it is not medically necessary.

— linda Massie

22.

He has a right to ask for rights for men the agenda is totally biased against men. But to ask for another mens studies? Better would be to ask to have the womens studies program discontinued, who needs a lightweight joke degree anyway?

— stano

23.

There should be a Foreign Women Studies course. That way, when American men are ready for marriage to a young fertile non feminist woman, they will know where to find her...

— Rogue

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24.

Feminism in America has long outlived its usefulness considering the original goals of political, economic and social equality have already been met long ago. The continued existence of this movement is a con game that bilks taxpayers out of billions while denying the rights of due process of law for American men. Today's women's movement reminds me of a half deceased cow and it stinks and permeates the American judicial and legislative system. There are two electrodes attached to this cow and every one in a while the cow twitches. The name of the cow is appropriately named "American women feminists of the 21 st century".

— flus

25.

It seems as though everyone agrees that the lawsuit was frivolous and ridiculous. While I can't see myself majoring in Women's Studies, I do think the role women play is ignored— and why does feminism have such a bad name? Most of us have nothing against men. We just want the right to pursue our goals, get pay commensurate with our positions and work, and to be treated without denigration.

And I don't know about anyone else on this thread, but I strongly prefer gender-balanced work environments. Everyone seems much happier.

— Sandya

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