

University of South Australia distances itself from males studies proposals

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Reporter

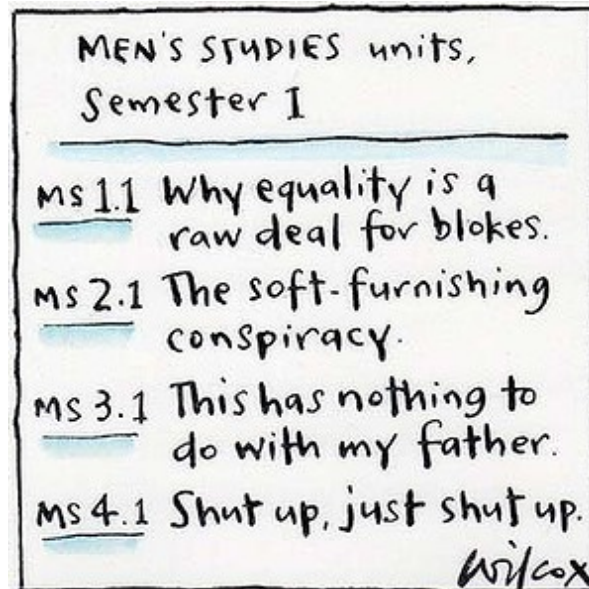
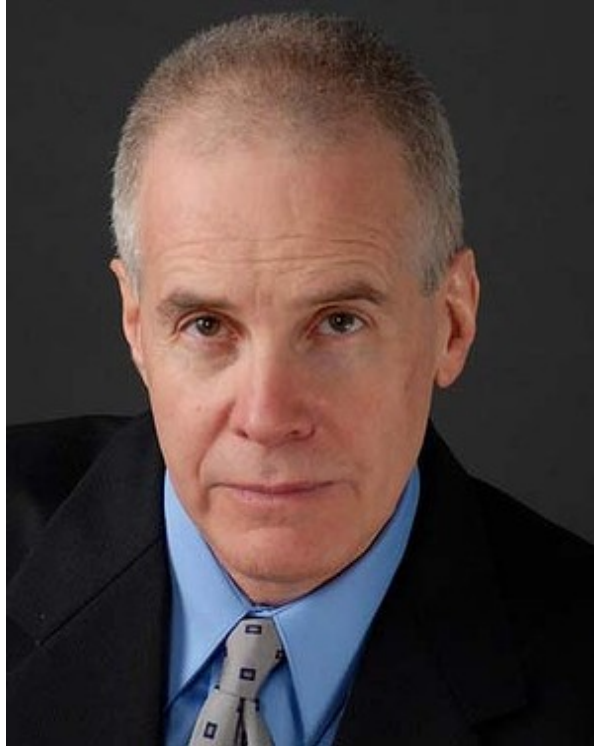


Illustration: Cathy Wilcox

The University of South Australia has distanced itself from a proposal for a series of male studies courses, some of which were to be taught by hardline anti-feminist advocates.

The university has approved one of four proposed graduate courses, a certificate in male health and health promotion, which will begin online next month.

But an original proposal by one of the university's academics outlined three further certificates, including a course called "males and sexism", which named lecturers who have been published on radical men's rights websites.



American lawyer and self-described anti-feminist: Roy Den Hollander. Photo: Supplied

Among those named was American lawyer and self-described anti-feminist Roy Den Hollander, who filed a lawsuit against Columbia University for offering women's studies courses that preached a "religionist belief system called feminism", *The New York Times* reported in 2008.

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Another proposed lecturer, Miles Groth from Wagner College in New York, wrote on the New Male Studies Facebook page on Sunday: "Two years of preparation and the support of the university from the start now seem to be jeopardy because of unnamed critics making erroneous accusations. It has been known for some years now that academe is held hostage by radical ideological feminists in the humanities and social sciences, and administration, who fear them."

The university emphasised it did not endorse views of the suggested lecturers. It said the courses, which were criticised in the media on Monday, were rejected in 2012.

Any future courses would need to go through the same approval process, a spokeswoman said.

But National Union of Students president Deanna Taylor said it was concerning that the academic who founded the course, Associate Professor Gary Misan, was linked to the controversial Americans.

"It's a slippery slope once you open the door to people with these views and give them a platform ... it's not long before proposals like the ones that were rejected actually get approved," she said.

Feminist academic Eva Cox said it was probably time to take a good look at how assumptions about gender constrain both men and women:

"Whether we need to run a university course on them, I've got my doubts," she said. "The only reason I can see that you'd be running men's studies is for the men who want to complain that they haven't had enough attention as victims, and that does worry me.

"Yes, some men have difficulties with going to doctors ... but I think we need to look at the assumptions about masculinity and femininity and how they trap both genders rather than picking on one or the other."