

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA  
LINCOLN, NEBRASKA 68508

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

Dean Walter Bruning  
Chairman, Curriculum Committee  
Oldfather 1223  
City Campus

Dear Dean Bruning:

In a public speech to a group of faculty last spring, Acting Chancellor Merk Hobson expressed the hope that Nebraska would pioneer with "new interdisciplinary courses dealing with social problems." After race, poverty, and war, one of the most vexing questions facing America is social policy regarding its estimated 15,000,000 homosexual citizens, now officially debarred from federal employment and liable to various criminal sanctions. Unlike the black man or the poor man, whose plight can only be helped by the expenditure of large sums of money, the most pressing need in the case of our homosexual minority is for the education of the public. Such an effort has recently been inaugurated by a government committee in the "Hooker report."

The growing demand for information about homosexuality has been brought home to me in the last few weeks by telephone calls from Time magazine, the New York Times, and the Omaha World Herald. The Nebraska Student Nurses' Association, in asking me to speak to them, indicated they had not been able to find any adequate authority on the subject in Omaha. Over the last year and a half I have also talked to the Lincoln Ministerial Fellowship, the Nebraska Welfare Association, and student religious groups on the campus and at Nebraska Wesleyan, and appeared on television panels in Lincoln and Kansas City.

During these meetings and during my own research it has become more and more evident to me that an interdisciplinary approach to homosexuality is in fact unavoidable. Our laws descend from ecclesiastical statutes and many police still act under what they regard as a religious warrant. More recent legislation, affecting such matters as sexual psychopath laws, is based on psychiatric theory. Our knowledge of the prevalence of homosexuality rests on anthropological and biological studies. People's idea of the homosexual is strongly influenced by what they see in plays or read in novels. Finally, a new national civil rights movement is underway that deserves study.

In talking to teachers and students in law, social work, sociology, anthropology, and the ministry, I am repeatedly told that they feel their knowledge of homosexuality is woefully inadequate to the problems they will have to face in their professional work. My sense of the need for a substantial academic course dealing with homosexuality has also been sharpened by familiarity with civil rights organizations working in this area locally, and in Kansas City, San Francisco, and London, and in the preparation of pamphlets



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on the draft, the services, psychiatric theory, and religious opinion on law reform.

The "Pro-Seminar in Homophile Studies" described in this proposal has been officially approved for cross-listing in English, sociology, and anthropology respectively by all three of the departments involved.

Yours sincerely,

*Louis Crompton*

Louis Crompton  
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