

FRESHMEN SEEK ANSWERS TO SOCIAL PROBLEMS:  
REPORT ON "THE FIFTH COURSE"

Are college students less prejudiced against the American Negro than high school students or adults? (Yes). Do girls who are strong and muscular have fewer minor ailments than those who are thin or heavy? (Yes). Why is there no population explosion in Ireland? (Religion, inheritance patterns, and late marriage are the main factors).



*Pitzer  
College*

These are three of more than 100 questions which 130 Pitzer freshmen sought answers to during the first semester. Each young woman selected an independent study topic under such general titles as "The American Negro," "Medicine," and "Population Explosion." Each project, comprising the fifth freshman course, provided an opportunity to apply social science research methods. Library and interview were the basic tools.

Ruth H. Munroe, psychology instructor and director of the course, reported, "It took several class periods for freshmen to see that their research was an individual matter -- that each girl was on her own to establish the research method best suited for her project. From the experience, many students gained first-hand knowledge of various techniques. All learned that research calls for patience, detail, and analytical power."

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