

# State involved in E306 debate

## Bill filed for UT class

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Daily Texan Staff

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The Texas Legislature should try to pick up where the UT E306 committee left off in the struggle to add a multicultural aspect to higher education, a state representative said Tuesday.

Ron Wilson, D-Houston, filed a bill Thursday that would require all students to complete a course in racism and sexism issues as a condition for graduation.

"The faculty seems to be sitting on its collective butt," Wilson said. "When they don't act, we have to act."

All seven members of the lower division English Policy Committee, which designed the syllabus for English 306, resigned two weeks ago, citing a lack of support from the administration and an opposition from a group of professors, who committee members accused of distorting the new course's purpose.

Wilson said the administration was as much to blame for the problem as the faculty. "Somebody's dropping the ball," he said. "I know that the little black kids in my community are being short-changed."

According to Associated Press reports Monday, some professors say African and African-American studies courses in Texas and nationwide are attracting more whites than ever as students prepare themselves for the multi ethnic workforce of the 1990s.

"We're not talking about a maddening throng, but there is an increasing number of white students who are saying, 'I need to broaden my perspective,'" said Jacqueline Wade, associate executive director of the National Council for Black Studies.

Some professors say the dominance of rap music, interest in the civil rights movement of the 1960s and the changing ethnicity of the workplace are the main reasons white students choose to study black history.

Susan Heinzelman, a senior lecturer in English and member of the policy committee, said opponents had misrepresented the new freshman English course as a class in politically correct thinking rather than compo-

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sition and rhetoric.

She and Joseph Kruppa, chairman of the English Department, said harsh criticism of the department had been circulated throughout the state, causing the UT administration to shy away from the course.

The proposed course, "Writing about Difference," has stirred immense debate ever since the department announced its intention last May to make the social implications of difference the theme of E306.

Wilson, who graduated from the University in Plan II, said all his

classes had a slant toward the majority. "I don't see how taking one multicultural course is going to turn the whole thing upside down."

Southern Methodist University in Dallas will require all students to take a course on race or gender next fall.

Wilson's bill requires that each general academic teaching institution and each public junior college submit to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board by Jan. 1, 1992, an initial statement of the specific content of its course in racism and sexism issues.

By May 1, 1992, the coordinating board would approve or disapprove the courses.