

Copy

CALIFORNIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

PASADENA, CALIFORNIA 91125

DIVISION OF THE HUMANITIES  
AND SOCIAL SCIENCES 228-77

February 17, 1983

Dr. Malcom Lester, Chairman  
Department of History  
Davidson College  
Box 546  
Davidson, North Carolina 28036

Dear Dr. Lester,

Thank you for your warm and thoughtful phone call last weekend welcoming me to Davidson. I am already anticipating August and my change in life from Pasadena to Davidson. I have a feeling that I will be far more at home in the rich culture of North Carolina than one could possibly be in LA suburbia. I am looking forward so much to getting to know you all at Davidson.

In regard to your request for a topic for my section of History 100, your suggestion of "Women in the Middle Ages" is an excellent one. There are quite a few good English translations now of medieval works on or by women, and it is a topic that is broad enough to cover a large variety of students' interests. I have sketched below a course blurb, which perhaps you can use in your forthcoming description of the History 100 topics. (It is only a suggested outline at this point and can be altered).

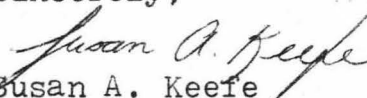
History 100 (D). WOMEN IN THE MIDDLE AGES  
Fall and Spring, 1983-84. This section of History 100 will focus on the roles of women in medieval society described in medieval literature and iconography. We will read medieval works (in translation) written by medieval women and written about medieval women. We will look at various social settings, such as the home, monastery, pilgrimage, and market place, and we will investigate medieval rituals such as marriage, veiling, coronation, and churching. The aims of the course are: 1) to become aware of the multiple roles exercised by women and their influence on the character of medieval society. For example, the roles of women as queens, abbesses, nuns, virgins, widows, deaconesses, ale-wives, witches, sorceresses, confessors, saints, mystics, scholars, concubines, and prostitutes will be examined;

2) to develop an awareness of the variety of sources and materials available to us to learn about medieval society; 3) to develop an historian's sensitivity to the context in which a primary source was written in order to estimate its value as a true mirror of that time.

Please let me know if there is anything further I can do for you right now to help in preparing the History schedule. I am sure I will be in touch with you again shortly, about reading lists, if nothing else. I would like to know if there is a feasible limit (pages per course or per week) that you feel the students can handle, and what is the average number of pages assigned per week by each of the history professors. Perhaps you have some copies of old syllabi? I would appreciate whatever thoughts you have on this, and also on the option or number of written assignments, oral reports, research papers, and quizzes customary for Davidson students.

Please greet everyone I met in the History Department for me, especially Robin Barnes and Malcom Partin who were so friendly and gave me so much of their time.

Sincerely,

  
Susan A. Keefe