

SEPCHE

Nurturing Student Scholars in the Humanities and Social Sciences Faculty-Student Undergraduate Research Project

Research Project: RELUCTANT WARRIORS: ATHENA AND JOAN OF ARC (CAN JOAN BE CONSIDERED "RELUCTANT?")

Discipline: RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Faculty Mentor: MARIE A. CONN, PhD, Chestnut Hill College (mconn@chc.edu)

Project Description: Dr. Conn is currently working on a publishing project (perhaps a book; perhaps an article) with the tentative title, "Reluctant Warriors: Athena and Joan of Arc." The case for Athena as a warrior against her will can be made, both from mythology and from the work of the classical Greek playwrights. It has been suggested that describing Joan as "reluctant" may—or may not—be more difficult to substantiate, raising the question, quite simply, "Was Joan reluctant?"

The summer 2008 project will devote time to exploring this question. Much has been written about Joan, her life, her calling, and her trial. Much of that literature presumes that Joan heard voices and then jumped at the chance to lead an army. Dr. Conn is convinced there is more to her decision than emotion or a peasant's simple acquiescence.

This, then, is the project in which students would be welcome to play a part. Most of the work will be good old-fashioned research, making use of the many college/university libraries in our area. The web, of course, will facilitate some of this. And there may be faculty members in the area for whom Joan is of particular interest. Networking will prove helpful.

Student Task(s): study of the manipulation of feminine figures in myth, biblical literature, and Western Christian history; research into the story and trial of Joan of Arc in an attempt to answer the question, "Can Joan of Arc be considered 'reluctant?'"

Student Time Commitment: 8-10 hours a week for 10 weeks; this is the equivalent of a 3-credit course, so the student/s and Dr. Conn will work out an appropriate schedule of meetings at Chestnut Hill College. Electronic communication will also be used.

Student Learning Outcome: Critical Thinking: The student/s will explore facets of classical, biblical, and western history and literature that are often overlooked. Academic Research: The student/s will find sources of several different types to help answer the key question of Joan's reluctance. Writing for Publication: The student/s will work on an extended essay which will become either part of a chapter of a future book or a significant part of a future article.

Expected Student Product: An essay that will first incorporate all facets of the course and then go specifically into the question of Joan's reluctance.

Other Expected Outcomes: In addition to the two SEPCHE conferences, the student/s will be invited back to Chestnut Hill College at some point during the 2008-2009 academic year to join me in a presentation for the campus community through our Faculty Colloquium series.