

To: Wayne Rebhorn and the Lower Division English Policy Committee

From: Betsy Berry BB

Date: Saturday, October 22nd, 8 p.m.

Please consider this my "early petition" re your memorandum of 10/21. I was most distressed to learn that I may not be reassigned to teach E 309k in Spring '89, and at this time I would like to request in writing two 309k course assignments for the Spring semester.

I had, naturally, planned my AI course work well in advance of the beginning of the Fall '88 semester, and I certainly anticipated the continuance of my present 309k course--teaching one section this term and two in the Spring. I have taught a 306 section on two separate occasions, but my 309k classroom experience now totals two full years, and I feel that my course, "Popular Culture and the Self in Modern America," has evolved into a very worthwhile one indeed--one which students benefit from and enjoy. I have the utmost confidence in the texts I use. I begin with John Berger's Ways of Seeing, which does teach the students to "see" things--particularly issues of gender and class--in a new light. Then a close study of rhetoric in advertising and other issues in American popular culture provides a context for the study of increasingly rigorous texts. Students learn to "read signs" that have come to stand for the fragmented self within post-modern society. We read Margaret Atwood's The Handmaid's Tale, Walker Percy's The Moviegoer, and Joan Didion's Slouching Towards Bethlehem--texts which also inscribe themes and tropes of popular culture. Contextual interrelationships are further illustrated through writing assignments that call upon students to produce discourse derived from both formal and thematic considerations arising from the texts.

Student evaluations have been particularly rewarding. Last year I received a 4.0 both in overall instructor rating and course rating for the Fall and Spring semesters of '87 and '88--and last semester I received a Graduate Development Award for my teaching. (I would be glad to supply the Committee with xeroxed copies of the students' written evaluations if desired.)

This is a course that I have a deep personal interest in and commitment to. I developed it, and I would be very saddened to lose it. Should either you or the Committee require additional information, please don't hesitate to contact me. Thank you for your consideration.

c: L. Brodkey, S. Heinzelman, J. Henkel, T. Hilfer, N. Nehring,
✓ J. Ruskiewicz, J. Slatin, R. Twombly