Cunning Regal Women: English queens before Elizabeth I
Julia Cruse PhD
5 weeks
19, 26 October; 2, 9, 16 November
Thursdays
10.30am – 12.30 pm
Course code: 17TON307
Course fee: £75

Helen Castor’s ‘She-Wolves’ The women who ruled England before Elizabeth’ presents an exceptional picture of the women who held sway in the early years of English monarchical rule. Based on this study we consider the clever, wily, female rulers who came before Elizabeth I: Matilda; Eleanor; Isabella; Margaret and Mary Tudor.

The most famous iconic queen in our history is surely Elizabeth I but what of the women who came before her: Matilda, the daughter of Henry I, granddaughter of William the Conqueror, Eleanor of Aquitaine, Isabella of France, Margaret of Anjou and Mary Tudor – what historical legacy have they left in order that we can evaluate them in terms of their abilities as women to hold power, responsibility and rule? Is it true, as Ian Mortimer comments, that ‘their stories [are] more about the failings of kings than queenship’ and ‘that they gained political influence as a result of the vicissitudes of their times’?

We will examine the social and political evidence that surrounds these women, evaluate their relationships, marriages, successes and failures and the context in which they found themselves heiresses or married to ruling kings. We will consider questions such as: Acknowledged as Henry I’s successor was Matilda’s failure to secure the crown because she was a woman in a male-dominated society? Did Eleanor, one of the most powerful women in Europe, encourage her sons to rebel against their father, Henry II? Was Isabella, as often portrayed, a beautiful but cruel, manipulative figure? Do we agree that Margaret of Anjou was indeed a woman with ‘a tiger’s heart wrapped in a woman’s hide”? Does Mary Tudor deserve the sobriquet ‘Bloody Mary”? We will consider whether we can separate the myths surrounding these influential royal women and their turbulent lives to evaluate the truth behind their control and power.

Suggested reading
Helen Castor, ‘She-Wolves’ The women who ruled England before Elizabeth (London: Faber and Faber, 2010)

Helen Castor also presented a BBC programme on the subject which is available on DVD.
Additional information

- This course is suitable for those with some or no prior knowledge of the subject.
- This course allows you to spend time exploring a subject for interest, among like-minded people, without formal assessment.
- There may be research/discussion activities during the course or between sessions.

Intended learning outcomes

- To provide a foundation for the study of the rule and influence of queens and other royal women.
- To evaluate our understanding of how history is written by 21st century historians and authors.
- To provide a background to the many varied sources available to aid the study of both our social and political history throughout the late-medieval period into the early modern period and to consider what written primary and secondary sources and other evidence can be used to understand the context and complexities of these centuries.
- To enable students to continue reading and researching the individuals and characters of the royal households and courts before the time of the Elizabethan court.

About the tutor

Julia Cruse has a PhD in Medieval and Early Modern Studies and has taught undergraduates at the University of Kent. As a mature student she graduated from the University of Kent with a degree in History; her BA dissertation focused on the Paston letters. Her doctoral thesis continued her research into late medieval letter-writing and looked at gentry identity and the politics of letter-writing. She is currently developing education packages to inspire school children and young people about medieval life and history.
Short Course Programme
General information, terms & conditions

How to book a place
These courses are usually very popular so you are advised to apply as soon as possible. Places cannot be held without payment of the course fee.

- **Online** Booking is preferred. Please visit [www.kent.ac.uk/tonbridge](http://www.kent.ac.uk/tonbridge)
- **By post** to us at the address below, using the application form in the programme booklet. Please note that you will not receive an acknowledgment of your paper application; your payment will usually be processed when the course becomes financially viable, otherwise we will notify you of cancellation approximately seven days prior to the course. A paper application affirms acceptance of our terms & conditions.

Course cancellation
As these short courses are self-financing, each course can only proceed if there are sufficient enrolments. Therefore, if a course is cancelled due to insufficient enrolments we aim to notify applicants approximately one week before the course start date; if there is no suitable alternative course, we will refund the appropriate course fee in full. The University of Kent reserves the right to cancel a course for this or any other reason in which case the relevant course fee will be refunded in full.

If you find it necessary to cancel your place on a course, please let us know as soon as possible. Refund requests, including the reason, should be made by email or in writing to us at the address below. We reserve the right to retain all or part of the course fee if you request a refund after 14 days of your online booking being made or paper application being received. Discretionary, partial refunds may be made, after the deduction of an administrative handling fee as follows:

- a course fee of up to and including £42 will incur an administrative handling fee of £10.00
- a course fee of £43 and over will incur an administrative handling fee of £12.50.

The University reserves the right to:

a) exclude any student if the student’s presence is making it difficult for the class to function properly
b) cancel or amend the length of any course if the circumstances so warrant.

Neither the University of Kent, nor its staff, can be held responsible for any damage, loss or injury, however sustained, suffered by participants attending courses. Insurance is the student’s responsibility.

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- Parking. There is plenty of public pay and display car parking locally, but please note that only selected car parks permit parking in excess of four hours; detailed information is available from [www.tmbc.gov.uk](http://www.tmbc.gov.uk). No parking is available here on site.
- Refreshments are not provided; food and drink can be purchased from any of the nearby café outlets - we are closely situated to the High Street and town centre. A hot drink vending machine is usually available on the ground floor of this building.

Mailing List and data protection
Those attending our courses are automatically added to our database and kept informed about new courses. This information is not released to outside organisations. Please write to us if you do not wish your details to be kept on our database.

Please contact us if you have any queries or would like to register your email address to receive our course information updates. We look forward to welcoming you here soon.

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