

# Draft Syllabus: History of Witchcraft and Magic

History 510:253

Summer Session II 2021

June 28 - August 6, 2021

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Office Hours: By appointment (Zoom/WebEX/Telephone)

## **Course Description:**

This course examines the social, cultural, and legal history of witchcraft, magic, and the occult throughout Europe and the United States. We will examine the values and attitudes that have influenced beliefs about witchcraft and the supernatural, both historically and in the present day. This course will pay specific attention to the role of gender and sexuality in the history of witchcraft, as the vast majority of individuals charged in the witch hunts of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were indeed women. We will also study accusations of witchcraft, breaking down the power dynamics and assumptions at play behind the witch trials, and the effects of these trials on gender relations in European society. The class will also discuss how European perceptions of non-Europeans, explicitly through race, was used to label and discriminate against the people of other continents and the descendents of Africans, Asians, and Latin Americans. This class will track the intersections of magic and science throughout the early modern period, and the reconciliation of belief systems during the Enlightenment. We will carry our analysis into the modern period, touching on Victorian spiritualism and mysticism, the misrepresentation of Voodooism, McCarthyism in the United States, and contemporary goddess worship religions. We will conclude the semester with an investigation into the role of witchcraft in discussions of gender, race, and sexuality in popular culture.

## **Course Requirements and Assessment:**

Students are required to listen to recorded lectures, complete readings, and participate in class discussions on the Canvas course platform. Students will receive guidelines on how Canvas discussions will operate and what will be expected of them in the first week of the course. Students are also required to complete one midterm exam (30%) and one final paper (35%). Participation is worth 35% of your final grade.

**The Midterm:** You will need to respond to three definitions, write two short essays, and write an analysis of a primary source. This is a take home exam. DUE DATE: July 25th at 11pm!

**The Essay:** You will receive more information on this essay in the third week of the course. This is in lieu of a final exam, you will complete a final essay on some aspect of witchcraft and/or magic in popular culture. DUE DATE: August 5th at 11pm!

**Participation:** Participation is a critical part of your grade in class discussions on Canvas. Participation is worth 35% of your grade. You will be expected to actively contribute to the discussion board questions in a constructive way that shows evidence of having listened to the lectures, watched the films, and done the readings. You are expected to start at least one discussion during the semester, it is very important that you post your questions or comments.

Participation will require you to start at least one discussion!

**A Note on Discrimination or Belittling Language:**

I will be taking a zero tolerance policy on any discussions that turn into insults or discriminatory language directed at anyone based on race, gender, sexual orientation, or identity. Healthy discussion and debate will not be hijacked and turned hateful. If you have any concerns about some of the discussions, please email me immediately.

**SAS Core Learning Goals:**

- H: Understand the bases and development of human and societal endeavors across time and place
- I: Explain and be able to assess the relationship among assumptions, methods, evidence, arguments, and theory in social and historical analysis
- K: Explain the development of some aspect of a society or culture over time, including the history of ideas or history of science.
- L: Employ historical reasoning to study human endeavors

**Required Texts:**

All readings will be posted to Canvas course site, however there is one film (The Crucible, 1996) that will need to be rented or streamed through an online site such as Amazon Prime or Youtube. The second film, Nosferatu (1922), is currently available to be streamed for free (through Tubi, I found it just by googling it), or you can pay for it on Youtube, iTunes, or Amazon Prime.

**Class Announcements:**

All course announcements and any additional materials will be posted on our course Canvas site. It is each student's responsibility to check the Canvas site regularly.

**E-mail Policy:**

I will do my best to reply to any other emails within 48 hours.

**Academic Integrity:**

Plagiarism is absolutely unacceptable. Cases of plagiarism and cheating will be reported to the appropriate college dean for review. For details see:

<http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-at-rutgers/> and <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/>.

### **Students with Disabilities:**

If you need different arrangements for exams or other coursework, please contact the Office for Disability Services (<http://disabilityservices.rutgers.edu/>) and provide the instructor with documentation as soon as possible.

### **Course Schedule:**

Please note: You are expected to complete the readings prior to engaging in class discussion.

#### **Week 1 (June 28 - July 2)**

Introductions, Guidelines, and Course Expectations

Short Lecture on Introduction to the Topic of Witches and Witchcraft

- No Readings - Probably a good idea to start next week's readings!

#### **Week 2 (July 5 - July 9)**

Ancient Roots and Early Christian Attitudes on Magic, and The Intersections Between Magic, Religion, and Science

- Michael Bailey, "The Meanings of Magic"
- Caesarius of Arles, "Sermon 54" (Primary Source)
- "Ancient Egyptian Technology and Innovation"
- "What is the I Ching?"

#### **Week 3 (July 12 - July 16)**

Early Modern Theories on Magic, Witchcraft, and Women

- Sara Grieco, "The Body, Appearance, and Sexuality" (Students with Surname A - L)
- Lyndal Roper, "Fertility" in *Witch Craze* (2004) (Students with Surname M - Z)
- Excerpts from James Sprenger and Henry Kramer, "Malleus Maleficarum" (1486)
- Florentine Codex Book 4 & 5

The "Witch Craze"

- Reginald Scot, “Discoverie of Witchcraft” (1584)
- “The Trial and Confession of Elizabeth Sawyer” (1621)
- “The Trial of Suzanne Gaudry” (1652)

#### **Week 4 (July 19 - July 23)**

##### Witchcraft in Colonial America

- Film: The Crucible
- Veta Smith Tucker, “Purloined Identity: The Racial Metamorphosis of Tituba of Salem Village”
- Ray - “Salem Review Essay”
- Brekus - “Salem's Tragedy”

**Primary source documents and exam will be posted on Canvas Midterm Exam at noon on July 23 (To be completed and turned in on Canvas by 11pm on Sunday July 25)**

#### **Week 5 (July 26 - July 30)**

##### Victorian Mysticism, Occultism, and Spiritualism

- Alex Owen, “The Darkened Room: Women, Power, and Spiritualism in Late Victorian England”

##### Magic and the Occult in Twentieth Century Europe

- Film: Nosferatu
- Gábor Klaniczay, “The Decline of Witches and the Rise of Vampires”
- Armitage, “European and African figural ritual magic: The beginnings of the voodoo doll myth”
- Review Essay of Owen Davies’, “A Supernatural War: Magic, Divination and Faith during the First World War”

#### **Week 6 (August 2 - August 5)**

##### Modern Witchcraft and Modern “Witch Hunts”

- Arthur Miller, “Why I Wrote the Crucible”

##### Witchcraft Today

- Pam Grossman, “Waking the Witch”

**Final Essay Due by 11pm on August 5th**