

**The European Witch Craze, 1550 – 1650**  
**History 640.2 (3 units)**  
**Spring 2007**  
**W 4:10 – 6:55**  
**HSS 155**

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This proseminar will examine witchcraft and the occult in the early modern world. The readings will focus on early modern Europe, but students may write their research papers on topics in late medieval Europe or in other world areas in the early modern period. We will be interested not only in the European witch hunts, but also other topics relating to ideas about the supernatural in this time period. Among our readings topics will be the origins and consequences of the sixteenth-century witch craze, vampires and werewolves, Kabbalah, Christian mysticism, alchemy and astrology, and magic in literature.

This proseminar is intended for seniors or juniors who are History majors, to complete their major requirements, though graduate students are also welcome. Undergraduate students must already have completed History 300 and have upper-class standing to qualify for this course. History 300 may not be taken concurrently with this course.

It is University policy to provide, on a flexible and individualized basis, reasonable accommodations to students who have disabilities that may affect their ability to participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. Students with documented disabilities must register with the DPRC to facilitate the reasonable accommodations process. Students with disabilities who need reasonable accommodations are encouraged to contact the instructor. The Disability Programs and Resource Center is available to facilitate the reasonable accommodations process. The DPRC, located in SSB 110, can be reached by telephone at 338-2724 (voice/TTY) or by e-mail at [dprc@sfsu.edu](mailto:dprc@sfsu.edu).

Academic integrity is a fundamental principle of the university. Academic dishonesty, in the form of cheating or plagiarism, represents an attempt to gain an unfair advantage and it is expressly prohibited by the San Francisco State University Student Code of Conduct. Cheating includes, but is not limited to, gaining unfair access to answers to exams, fabrication of work, helping other students to cheat, etc. Plagiarism can be defined as using another person's words or work without proper acknowledgment (see also <http://online.sfsu.edu/~rone/StudentHelp/Plagiarism.html#what> for more information on avoiding plagiarism). Students who are found to have cheated or plagiarized will be subject to discipline ranging from receiving a failing grade for the specific assignment to referral to the Office of Judicial Affairs and Student Discipline to possible suspension or expulsion. All instances of academic dishonesty are reported to the Department Chair and College Dean. Students are responsible for knowing the SFSU regulations concerning

cheating and plagiarism, found in the University Bulletin and online at:  
<http://www.sfsu.edu/%7Ehelpdesk/docs/rules/conduct.htm>.

### **Goals and Objectives for the course –**

In this course, we will strive to:

- Begin to analyze the primary source base and the historiography about the occult in the early modern period,
- Work together to learn how to read and interpret historical documents,
- Conduct enthusiastic and respectful discussions in the classroom,
- Produce a major research paper.

### **Attendance Policy –**

Attendance and participation will make up 10% of your final grade for the course. You are encouraged to ask questions at any time and expected to participate in any class activity, discussion, or exercise. An attendance sheet will be passed around at the beginning of every class. You must sign the sheet in order to be counted as present. If you need to arrive late, please make sure you sign in before you leave the room at the end of class. If you need to leave early, please tell the instructor at the beginning of class. Because this is a course that relies on participation and meets only once a week, it is crucial that you be **present and prepared** at every meeting.

The classroom is a special environment in which students and faculty come together to promote learning and growth. It is essential to this learning environment that respect for the rights of others seeking to learn, respect for the professionalism of the instructor, and the general goals of academic freedom are maintained. Differences of viewpoint or concerns should be expressed in terms which are supportive of the learning process.

### **Readings –**

There are seven required books that will be available at the SFSU bookstore. There will also be readings that will be available on-line, through the course website. **Please bring the relevant book(s) to class when we discuss them.** On-line readings will be available in .pdf format. These can be read with Adobe Acrobat reader, which can be downloaded for free. When the readings are on-line, **please either print out the on-line excerpt or take detailed notes on the text.**

Florescu, Radu, and Raymond McNally, *In Search of Dracula: The History of Dracula and Vampires*, ISBN 0395657830

Ginzburg, Carlo, *The Night Battles: Witchcraft and Agrarian Cults in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century*, ISBN 0801843863

Goodrick-Clarke, Nicholas, *Paracelsus: Essential Readings*, ISBN 1556433166

Morton, Peter, *The Trial of Tempel Anneke: Records of a Witchcraft Trial in Brunswick, Germany, 1663*, ISBN 1551117061

Scholem, Gershom, *Zohar: The Book of Splendor: Basic Readings from the Kabbalah*, ISBN 0805210342

Teresa of Avila, *Interior Castle*, ISBN 0385036434

Wiesner, Merry, *Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe*, ISBN 0618474803

### **Course Requirements –**

The focus of this course is to prepare a formal paper, based on primary source research. This paper will be due at the end of the course, on Wednesday, May 23 at 4:10 PM. We will meet at that time to discuss the process of writing and to celebrate your achievements. Because it is the center of the course, the paper will comprise one-half of the course grade. The other half will consist of participation in class activities, discussions, and exercises, and a series of assignments designed to lead up to the final paper. Any late assignments will immediately lose points, and they will continue to drop in score the longer they are late.

If you are a graduate student, the final paper should be 20 – 25 pp. in length.

The course grade will be determined as follows:

Participation and attendance: 10%

Paper (5 pp., due week 7): 5%

Research abstract and bibliography (3 – 5 pp., due week 7): 10%

First draft (15 – 20 pp., due week 13): 10%

Research presentation (weeks 14 – 16): 15%

Final paper: 50%

### **Syllabus –**

This syllabus and schedule are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances. **If you are absent from class**, it is your responsibility to check on announcements made while you were absent.

WEEK 1 (1/24) – Introductions

WEEK 2 (1/31) – The Making of a Witch

Wiesner, Merry, ed., *Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe*

- Clark, Stuart. “Thinking with Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe”

- Zika, Charles, “The Devil’s Hoodwink: Seeing and Believing in the World of Sixteenth-Century Witchcraft”
- Williams, Gerhold Scholz, “Defining Dominion: The Discourses of Magic and Witchcraft in Early Modern France and Germany”
- Stevens, Walter, “Demon Lovers: Witchcraft, Sex, and the Crisis of Belief”

WEEK 3 (2/7) – The Witch Panics

Wiesner, Merry, *Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe*

- Levack, Brian, “State-building and Witch Hunting in Early Modern Europe”
- Swain, J.T., “The Lancashire Witch Trials of 1612 and 1634 and the Economics of Witchcraft”
- Klaniczay, Gábor, “Witch-hunting in Hungary: Social or Cultural Tensions?”
- Briggs, Robin, “Witches and Neighbors: The Social and Cultural Context of European Witchcraft”

On-line: Wolfgang Behringer, “Weather, Hunger and Fear: Origins of the European Witch-Hunts in Climate, Society, and Mentality”, in Darren Oldridge, ed., *The Witchcraft Reader*

WEEK 4 (2/14) – Gender and Witchcraft

Wiesner, Merry, *Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe*

- Broedel, Hans Peter, “The *Malleus Maleficarum* and the Construction of Witchcraft: Theology and Popular Belief”
- Roper, Lyndal, “Witchcraft and Fantasy in Early Modern Germany”
- Purkiss, Diane, “Women’s Stories of Witchcraft in Early Modern England: The House, the Body, the Child”
- Scully, Sally, “Marriage or a Career?: Witchcraft as an Alternative in Seventeenth-Century Venice”

On-line: Anne Barstow, *Witch Craze: A New History of the European Witch Hunts*, ch. 1.

WEEK 5 (2/21) – Witches as Folk Heroes

Ginzburg, Carlo, *Night Battles: Witchcraft and Agrarian Cults in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century*, entire.

WEEK 6 (2/28) – Malleus Maleficarum

On-line: Kors, Alan and Edward Peters, *Witchcraft in Europe, 1100 – 1700: A Documentary History*, pp. 105 – 189:

- Pope Innocent III, *Summis desiderantes*, the “Witch-Bull” (1484)
- Heinrich Kramer and Jacob Sprenger, *Malleus Maleficarum*, excerpts (1486)

WEEK 7 (3/7) – Tempel Anneke

Morton, Peter, ed., *The Trial of Tempel Anneke: Records of a Witchcraft Trial in Brunswick, Germany, 1663*, entire.

**PRELIMINARY PAPER (5 pp.), due in class 3/7 - Write a clear, well-organized essay with a coherent thesis statement on the documents about the trial of Tempel Anneke. You will write your own thesis and support it with evidence from the sources. This assignment must be typed and double-spaced with sensible margins, and must include footnotes.**

WEEK 8 (3/14) – Salem

On-line: Boyer, Paul and Stephen Nissenbaum, *Salem Possessed: The Social Origins of Witchcraft*, ch. 4 “Salem Town and Salem Village: The Dynamics of Factional Conflict”, pp. 80 – 109.

On-line: Boyer, Paul and Stephen Nissenbaum, *Salem-Village Witchcraft: A Documentary Record of Local Conflict in Colonial New England*, selections.

WEEK 9 (3/21) – Vampires and Werewolves

McNally, Raymond and Radu Florescu, *In Search of Dracula: The History of Dracula and Vampires Completely Revised*, pp. 1 – 6, 15 – 59, 78 – 92, 117 – 132, 193 – 219 (chapters 1, 3 – 5, 7, 10, and appendices).

Joynes, Andrew, ed., *Medieval Ghost Stories*, “Bisclavret the Werewolf”, pp. 133 – 137.

WEEK 10 (3/28) – The Supernatural in the Sciences

Goodrick-Clarke, Nicholas, ed., *Paracelsus: Essential Readings*, pp. 23 – 37, 109 – 144, 173 – 203.

On-line: Tyson, Donald, *Three Books of Occult Philosophy, Written by Henry Cornelius Agrippa of Nettesheim*, pp. 72 – 113.

WEEK 11 (4/4) – The Supernatural in Literature

On-line: Marlowe, Christopher, *Doctor Faustus*, Prologue and Act I, pp. 23 – 38

Shakespeare, William, *Macbeth* – we will watch a performance on DVD in class

**RESEARCH ABSTRACT AND BIBLIOGRAPHY (3 – 5 pp.), due in class 4/4 – Prepare an abstract of the argument of your paper and attach a bibliography of the primary and secondary sources you intend to use for your paper. Guidelines for this assignment will be distributed in class 3/21.**

SPRING BREAK – NO CLASSES 4/9 – 4/13

WEEK 12 (4/18) – Christian Mysticism

Teresa of Ávila, *Interior Castle*, First, Second, Fourth, and Fifth Mansions, entire; Seventh Mansion, chapter 1, pp. 3 – 31, 53 – 113, 207 – 213.

On-line: James, William, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, pp. 379 – 392

WEEK 13 (4/25) – Jewish Mysticism

Scholem, Gershom, ed., *Zohar, The Book of Splendor: Basic Readings from the Kabbalah*, entire.

On-line: Green, Arthur, *A Guide to the Zohar*, pp. 77 – 98.

On-line: Scholem, Gershom, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, pp. 1 – 10.

**FIRST DRAFT (15 – 20 pp.), due in class 4/25**

WEEK 14 (5/2) – Workshop

5/2: Research Presentations (**guidelines to be given in class 4/18**)

WEEK 15 (5/9) – Workshop

5/9: Research Presentations

WEEK 16 (5/16) – Workshop

5/16: Research Presentations

**FINAL PAPER DUE - Wednesday May 23, 4:10 PM – Come to class to celebrate!**