Why has belief in witches and witchcraft been found so widely throughout history? What were central doctrines about witchcraft and how did beliefs vary over time and space? Why were witches usually imagined as female? How was witchcraft linked to religion, magic, and demonic possession? What were the relations between elite and popular witch beliefs? Why did belief in witchcraft die out in some places and survive in others? How do earlier witch crazes help explain modern “witchhunts”? 

The requirements for the seminar include:
1) Regular, on-time attendance in class.*
2) Informed and consistent participation in the weekly discussions.
3) An essay of about 5 typed pages on relations between beliefs in witchcraft, in magic, and/or in popular religion, due at the beginning of class on 11 February. A full explanation of the assignment will be posted on Blackboard.
4) An essay of about 5 typed pages on gender and the identification of witches, due at the beginning of class on 3 March. A separate posting will give full details.
5) Either an essay of about 5 typed pages that critically evaluates an interpretation of the Salem witchhunt, due at the beginning of class on 31 March, or an essay of about 5 typed pages on an example of witchcraft or an episode of witchhunting in Latin America or Africa. This paper is due at the beginning of class on 14 April (Latin America) or on 21 April (Africa). A separate posting gives full details.
6) A final paper, of no more than 10 pages, on an instance of twentieth or early twenty-first century witchcraft or witchhunt, due at 5 p.m. on Wednesday, 5 May. As always, a detailed assignment sheet will be posted.

*The history department has implemented the following policy on attendance: Students are required to attend all classes for the successful completion of the course. Unexcused absences will result in a lower grade.

During our first meeting, we shall consider conceptual and historiographical issues, discuss paper writing, and organize the seminar. Thereafter, some weekly discussions will be based entirely on common reading, whereas in other weeks discussions will be based both on common reading and on the reading for essays due at that time. Classes based only on common readings will be facilitated by two students who will be responsible for posting questions and conducting discussions.
Every student should buy the following paperbacks:

Robin Briggs, *Witches and Neighbors*

*Witchcraft in Europe, 400-1700: a Documentary History*, ed. Alan Kors and Edward Peters

*The witchcraft reader*, ed. Darren Oldridge

Suggested:


This course, like any other, is premised on mutual respect and honesty. Thus I expect that the work you submit is your own. Plagiarism will be severely penalized: any work containing plagiarized material will be granted the grade of no credit and may subject you to prosecution before the CJC. In order to clarify the issue of academic honesty, I will distribute copies of the History Department's guidelines. When in doubt, check with me.

**SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND DISCUSSION**

1. (21 January) What was Witchcraft? What is Witchcraft? A First Discussion
   Reading:
   For historical accounts, read:
   - *Witchcraft in Europe, 400-1700*, “Introduction” (required)
   - *The witchcraft reader*, “General Introduction” (required)
   - Briggs, *Witches and Neighbors*, “Introduction” (required)
   - *Dictionary of the History of Ideas* on-line, article “witchcraft”
     [http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/cgi-local/DHI/dhi.cgi?id=dv4-71](http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/cgi-local/DHI/dhi.cgi?id=dv4-71) (suggested)

   For contemporary definitions, visit at least one of the following:
   - [http://www.religioustolerance.org/witchca.htm](http://www.religioustolerance.org/witchca.htm) [US: Wicca; information, also commercial products]
   - [http://www.witchvox.com/xbasics.html](http://www.witchvox.com/xbasics.html) [US; mainly information]
   - [http://www.witchcraft.org/](http://www.witchcraft.org/) [British; magazine plus information]

   Thinking:
   - What was/is witchcraft? Who were/are witches? What was/is a witchhunt?
   - How can we study these topics? What issues would you like to consider?

2. (28 January) Medieval Transmissions, Transmutations, and Inquisitions
   Reading:
   - *Witchcraft in Europe, 400-1700*, docs. 2, 5-24, 34 (pp. 204-229), 35, and illustrations on pp. 139-148
   - *The witchcraft reader*, Part One
3. (4 February) Demonology and Diabolism
   Reading:
   *Witchcraft in Europe, 400-1700*, docs. 12, 17, 33, 34 (pp. 193-204), 37-39, 49-51, 58-59
   *The witchcraft reader*, Part Six

4. (11 February) Witchcraft, Magic, and Elite and Popular Culture
   Reading:
   *Witchcraft in Europe, 400-1700*, docs. 5-9, 36
   *The witchcraft reader*, Part Two
   Briggs, *Witches and Neighbors*, chap. III
   **ESSAY DUE AT BEGINNING OF CLASS** (see requirement #3, above)

5. (18 February) Witches, Sects, and Sabbats: Did Real Witches Do Real Things?
   Reading:
   *Witchcraft in Europe, 400-1700*, Part V and illustrations on pp. 380-391
   *The witchcraft reader*, Part Three
   Briggs, *Witches and Neighbors*, chaps. II, X, Conclusion

6. (25 February) Witchhunts and Religious Reform
   Reading:
   *Witchcraft in Europe, 400-1700*, docs. 37, 40-43, and illustrations on pp. 249-258
   *The witchcraft reader*, Part Four

7. (3 March) Who Were Identified as Witches?
   Reading:
   *Witchcraft in Europe, 400-1700*, docs. 8, 24, 30, 34 (pp. 181-193), 37, 43 (pp. 275-277), 44 (pp. 287-289)
   *The witchcraft reader*, Part Seven
   **ESSAY DUE AT BEGINNING OF CLASS** (see requirement #4, above)

**SPRING VACATION**

8. (17 March) Prosecutions and Confessions
   Reading:
   *Witchcraft in Europe, 400-1700*, docs. 46-48, 52-57
   *The witchcraft reader*, Parts Five and Eight

9. (24 March) The Salem Witchcraze: History
   Reading:
   *Witchcraft in Europe, 400-1700*, docs. 58, 67
   *Salem Witch Trials Documentary Archive and Transcription Project* (selections)
   http://etext.virginia.edu/salem/witchcraft/home.html
   See separate sheet on Blackboard for detailed assignment.
10. (31 March) The Salem Witchcraze: Historiography
   Reading:
   Either choice from separate posting on Blackboard for required reading choices,
   or choice for essay from additional assignment sheet (also on Blackboard).
   ESSAY DUE AT BEGINNING OF CLASS (see requirement #5, above)

11. (7 April) Skepticism and the Decline of the European Witchcraze
   Reading:
   *Witchcraft in Europe, 400-1700*, docs. 44, 60-69
   *The witchcraft reader*, Part Nine

12. (14 April) Witchcraft in Latin America
   Reading:
   Either two articles or chapters from the following list:
   Fernando Cervantes, “The Devils of Querétaro: scepticism and credulity in late
   seventeenth-century Mexico,” *Past and Present*, no. 130 (Feb. 1991), pp. 51-69
   Stable URL: http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0031-2746%28199102%290%3A130%3C51%3ATDOQSA%3E2.0.CO%3B2-P
   Irene Silverblatt, “The Inca's Witches: Gender and the Cultural Work of Colonization
   in Seventeenth-Century Peru,” in *Possible Pasts: becoming colonial in early
   America*, ed. Robert Blair St. George, pp. 109-130 (Honors Reserve, History
   130)
   Irene Silverblatt, “Moon, sun, and witches,” in *The Peru Reader*, ed. O. Starn, C.
   Degregori, and R. Kirk (Honors Reserve, History 148)
   or Choice from additional assignment sheet for essay writers (Blackboard)
   ESSAY DUE AT BEGINNING OF CLASS (see requirement #5, above)

13. (21 April) Witchcraft in Africa
   Reading:
   Either two articles or chapters from the following list (no more than one chapter from
   any individual book):
   Peter Geschiere, *The modernity of witchcraft: politics and the occult in
   postcolonial Africa*, chaps. 1, 3, 4, 5, or 6 (Honors Reserve: History 140)
   Comaroff and John Comaroff, any one of chaps. 4-7 (Honors Reserve: History
   140)
   *Witchcraft and sorcery in East Africa*, ed. J. Middleton and E. H. Winter, any
   chap. except Introduction, pp. 1-26 (General Reserve)
   or Choice from additional assignment sheet for essay writers (Blackboard)
   ESSAY DUE AT BEGINNING OF CLASS (see requirement #5, above)

   Reading:
   *The witchcraft reader*, Part Ten

5 May, 5 p. m.     FINAL PAPERS DUE (see requirement #6, above)