The Sacred and the Social in Early Modern Europe

This course will provide a comparative study of belief and practice in Europe between the late fifteenth and eighteenth centuries. Discussions, readings, and essays are intended to acquaint you with original sources, important historiographical controversies, and recent scholarship.

The requirements for the course include:
1) Regular attendance in class.
2) Informed participation in the discussions. Assignments must be read carefully before class meetings.
3) A 4-page (ca. 1000 words) analysis of a primary document, due in class on 25 September. Full details are given on a separate sheet.
4) An evaluation of Carlo Ginzburg, The Cheese and the Worms, due in class on 25 October. These papers, of 5-6 pages (ca. 1500 words), will serve as the basis of our discussion on 25 October.
5) A report of 5-6 pages (ca. 1500 words) on the relation between religion and witchcraft, due in class on 15 November. These reports will serve as the basis of discussions on 15 and 20 November.
6) A research paper of 20-25 pages (ca. 6000 words), due on 21 December at 5 pm in my office. Again, a separate sheet will provide the details.

All students should purchase the following paperback books:
- Euan Cameron, The European Reformation
- Carlo Ginzburg, The Cheese and the Worms
- Martin Luther, Selections from his Writings, ed. J. Dillenberger
- Kenneth R. Stow, Theater of Acculturation: the Roman Ghetto in the 16th Century
- Keith Thomas, Religion and the Decline of Magic
- Lee Palmer Wandel, Voracious Idols & Violent Hands

All other readings are online, at http://trires.brynmawr.edu/coursepage.asp?cid=205. Password: sacred. The handout “A QUICK GUIDE TO USING E-RESERVES” provides a quick summary of what you need to know. In order to read articles accessed through library databases like JSTOR or Historical Abstracts, off-campus students will have to call 610-328-8513 (Help Desk) and get Virtual Private Network software. See http://www.swarthmore.edu/cc/docs/index.html

There is a massive literature on the subjects covered in this course. Most of the works on the syllabus contain bibliographies and suggestions for further reading, and the instructor can provide additional assistance.
SCHEDULE OF READINGS, LECTURES, AND DISCUSSIONS

I. 4 Sept. Introduction: New Approaches to Early Modern Religious History
   6 Medieval Beliefs and Practices: “Popular” and Official Religion
      Reading: Cameron, European Reformation, Introduction, chaps. 1 and 6
      Thomas, Religion and Decline of Magic, pp. 3-50
      Discussion topic: The main attributes of late medieval Christianity

II. 11 Sept. Medieval Discontents: The Church
      Reading: Cameron, European Reformation, chaps. 2, 3, and 4 parts 1, 2, 5
      Erasmus, “The Paraclesis”
      Erasmus, The Praise of Folly, selections
      Colet, “Sermon...at St. Paul’s”
      Discussion topic: Dissent within the established church

III. 18 Sept. Medieval Discontents: The Laity
      Reading: Cameron, European Reformation, chap. 4, parts 3-4, and chap. 5
      “Grievances Presented to Diet of Worms,” selections
      Discussion topic: Popular disaffection with church practices and policies

IV. 20 Sept. Martin Luther: How Are We Saved?
      Reading: Martin Luther, Selections, pp. 3-12, 19-37, 42-96, 171-203
      Cameron, European Reformation, chaps. 8, 9
      Discussion topic: Luther’s critique of Christian theology

IV. 25 Sept. Reforming Symbols, Ritual, and Practice
      Reading: Martin Luther, Selections, pp. 454-65 (nos. 18-23)
      Thomas, Religion and Decline of Magic, pp. 51-150, 177-279
      Bob Scribner, “Ritual and Reformation”
      Discussion topic: Luther’s critique of Christian practice
      Paper Due (see no. 3 on first page)

V. 27 Sept. Reforming the Sacraments
      Reading: Martin Luther, Selections, pp. 228-39, 256-359
      Cameron, European Reformation, chap. 11
      Discussion topic: Luther’s new religious practice

      Reading: Wandel, Voracious Idols and Violent Hands, pp. 1-101
      Huldrych Zwingli, selections on images
      Discussion topic: What was iconoclasm?

V. 4 Oct. Making the Reformation: Popular Motives
      Reading: Wandel, Voracious Idols and Violent Hands, pp. 103-198
      Discussion: Why was iconoclasm enacted? What was its appeal?
VI. 9 Oct. Reforming the Magisterial Church
   Reading: Martin Luther, Selections, pp. 432-54 (nos. 1-17)
   Cameron, European Reformation, chap. 10
   Discussion topic: What a correct Protestant church should be like

11 Catholic and Counter Reformation
   Reading: Cameron, European Reformation, chap. 13
   John Bossy, “Counter-Reformation and the People”
   “Consilium de emendanda ecclesia”
   “First Sketch of...the Society of Jesus”
   Ignatius of Loyola, Spiritual Exercises, selections
   “Reform Decrees of Trent, 1563,” selections
   Teresa of Avila, Life, selections
   Discussion topic: Catholic or Counter reformation?

FALL BREAK

VII. 23 Oct. Popular Religion and Catholic Orthodoxy
   Reading: Ginzburg, The Cheese and the Worms, pp. viii-xxvi, 1-95, 129-66
   Discussion topic: Was Menocchio a heretic?

25 The Inquisition: An Evaluation
   Reading: Ginzburg, The Cheese and the Worms, pp. 95-128, 166-72
   Discussion topic: Inquisitions
   Paper due (see no. 4, above)

VIII. 30 Oct. Magisterial Reform Is Not Enough: Anabaptists and Spirituals
   Reading: Cameron, European Reformation, ch. 18
   Balthasar Hübmaier, “Eighteen Theses”
   “The Schleitheim Confession”
   “Trial and Martyrdom of Michael Sattler”
   Ulrich Stadler, “Cherished Instructions”
   Felix Mantz, “A Declaration of Faith and Defense”
   Discussion topics: The religious radicals compared with both magisterial and
   Catholic reformers

1 Nov. Religion and Rebellion: The Reformed Act
   Reading: Cameron, European Reformation, chaps. 14, 19, 20 pt. 3
   Martin Luther, Selections, pp. 365-402
   “Articles of the Bundschuh in the Bishopric of Speyer”
   “The Twelve Articles of the German Peasants”
   “The Mühlhausen Articles”
   Discussion topic: Was the Peasants’ War caused by the Reformation?

IX. 6 Nov. Religious Choice: The Faithful
   Reading: Cameron, European Reformation, pp. 197-8, chaps. 15-17
   Discussion topic: What did “religious choice” mean for the mass of the laity?

8 Religious Choice: The Reformers
   Reading: Cameron, European Reformation, chaps. 7, 12
   Discussion topic: What did “religious choice” mean for the reformers?
X.  13 Nov.  Witches and Religion: A Hypothesis Proposed
    Reading: Thomas, Religion and Decline of Magic, pp. 435-583
    Discussion topic: Thomas’s thesis

15  Witches and Religion: A Hypothesis Tested I
    Reports Due (see no. 5 on first page)
    Discussion topic: How well does Thomas’s thesis stand up?

XII. 20 Nov.  Witches and Religion: A Hypothesis Tested II
    Discussion topic: Continuing evaluation of Thomas

THANKSGIVING

XIII. 27 Nov.  Protestant Reformation: A Success?
    Reading: Cameron, European Reformation, chaps. 20 (sections, 1, 2, 4), 21
    Thomas, Religion & Decline of Magic, pp. 151-73, 358-85, 631-68
    Discussion topic: What would “success” in reformation mean?

29  Protestant Reformation: A Success?
    Reading: Gerald Strauss, “Success and Failure in the German Reformation”
    James Kittelson, “Successes and Failures in the German Reformation”
    Geoffrey Parker, “Success and Failure during the First Century of the Reformation”
    Discussion topic: Was the Reformation a failure in its own terms?

XIV. 4 Dec.  Ghet and Ghetto
    Reading: Stow, Theater of Acculturation, pp. 3-98
    Discussion topic: Jewish strategies of cultural survival

6  Early Modern Judaism and Christianity Compared
    Reading: Stow, Theater of Acculturation, pp. 99-133
    Discussion topic: The results of “acculturation”

XV. 11 Dec.  What Changed and What Remained the Same in Early Modern Religion?
    Reading: Cameron, European Reformation, Introduction, chap. 22
    Discussion topic: What did the Reformations reform?

21 Dec.  Paper Due (see no. 6 on first page)