

WITCHCRAFT AND ITS INTERPRETERS

RELG 273-01, 273-02, Spring Semester, 2013

Instructor: Douglas Winiarski

Course Meeting Times: TR 12:00–1:15 (Section 01); TR 1:30–2:45 (Section 02)

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Office Hours: by appointment

Few events in American religious history have attracted more attention than the notorious 1692 Salem witch-hunt. From Cotton Mather's published apologetics and Arthur Miller's incendiary play, *The Crucible*, to contemporary movies, novels, sitcoms, and cartoons, the image of the witch continues to haunt the American psyche. This course examines the historical roots of America's fascination with witchcraft. We will be reading the original texts of the Salem trials, as well as court records, sermons, diaries, letters, and related documents from earlier witchcraft incidents in seventeenth-century England and British North America. In addition, course participants will evaluate scholarly books and articles that assess witchcraft from a variety of methodological perspectives, including theology, social history, psychology, gender studies, legal history, popular culture studies, and ethnohistory. I anticipate that this course will appeal to students who are interested in the history of witchcraft, popular magic, demonic possession, and supernatural hauntings during the early modern period, as well as those who seek a "behind the scenes" look at the process through which scholars have interpreted these unique religious phenomena.

Blackboard

Please note that the information on this paper version of the RELG 273 syllabus is also available on our course Blackboard website. For the rest of the semester, Blackboard will serve as the official clearinghouse for all course-related information and resources, including announcements, grade reports, email communications, paper assignments, handouts, slide show presentations, and links to course-related websites. To access this material, login using the link in the upper right corner of the UR homepage (www.richmond.edu). Please be sure to familiarize yourself with our Blackboard website at the beginning of the semester. Contact me immediately if you encounter any difficulties with the login screen.

Historical Studies (FHST) Objectives

In addition to the specific topics described above, this course is designed to acquaint students with the various methodological approaches and contextual frames employed by scholars who study incidents of witchcraft, popular magic, demonic possession, and supernatural hauntings in early modern England and British North America. The FHST component of RELG 273 may be divided into four learning objectives:

- Analyzing different types of seventeenth-century texts, including church, court, probate, tax, and town records; sermons and theological treatises; and personal diaries, autobiographies, and letters.
- Identifying the contextual approaches employed by scholars who study early modern Anglo-American witchcraft and allied occult phenomena: social history, legal history, gender theory, psychohistory, intellectual history, popular culture studies, and race and ethnicity studies.
- Applying these different methodological and contextual frames to unfamiliar, but well documented cases of witchcraft that we have not discussed as a class.
- Differentiating historical *interpretation* from historical *causation*. We will pay close attention to the ways in which witchcraft, popular magic, demonic possession, and supernatural hauntings “made sense” to people in seventeenth-century England and British North America (rather than what caused the Salem witch-Hunt) and why occult lore frequently provided a compelling cultural lens through which they understood misfortune, pain, illness, and other temporal afflictions.

Liberal Arts “Competencies”

By the end of the semester, it is my hope that you will have developed a general interest in the study of early modern witchcraft and its contemporary interpreters. But this is not all that I hope you will take away from our seminar. Throughout the semester, we will be working together to hone your analytical, writing, and communication skills. These are the basic building blocks of a liberal arts education; they are also “competencies” that are highly prized by staffing agents in corporations, law firms, and other professions.

Success in this class will hinge on your ability to master the art of historical interpretation. No component of the course will require you to memorize “facts” and restate them in timed exams. Instead, I will be evaluating your intellectual growth in these core competencies:

- Comparing and contrasting primary texts;
- Summarizing, judging, and articulating cogent criticism of scholarly arguments;
- Applying the analysis of one set of materials to a different situation;
- Forming coherent arguments and communicating those ideas persuasively to others.

In short, it is my firm belief that our bi-weekly discussions will help to prepare you for post-collegiate careers.

Course Procedures and Requirements

RELG 273 has no prerequisites and assumes no prior knowledge of the subject. Our bi-weekly meetings will consist of short presentations and seminar-style discussions. Keeping up with the scheduled reading assignments is crucial. I expect that you will spend *an average of three to four hours preparing for each class and roughly two hours per page when writing papers for class.*

Attendance is mandatory. I will evaluate the quality of your participation in our discussions after each class using the following scale: 5 (multiple informed/insightful comments), 3 (moderate contributions), 1 (minimal participation), and 0 (absent). *Please do not email me to explain class absences other than those involving approved University of Richmond events/activities.*

During the semester, each student will write two short position papers (one during each half of the semester), and two longer essays. For writing assignment guidelines, see our course BlackBoard website.

Final grades for the semester will be calculated as follows:

Class Attendance and Informed Participation	35%
Position Paper Assignment A, B, C, D or E (2 pages)	10%
Position Paper Assignment F, G, H, or I (2 pages)	10%
Scholars and Their Sources Project	5%
Midterm Case Analysis Paper (5–7 pages)	20%
Final Paper (5–7 pages)	20%

Required Texts

The following books are available for purchase in the campus bookstore, or from major internet distributors. Students can also obtain used textbooks at discounted prices at www.abebooks.com and www.amazon.com. Readings on the schedule of assignments are keyed to author's last name.

1. Breslaw, Elaine G., ed. *Witches of the Atlantic World: A Historical Reader & Primary Sourcebook*. New York: New York University Press, 2000. ISBN: 0814798519.
2. Hall, David D., ed. *Witch-Hunting in Seventeenth-Century New England: A Documentary History, 1638–1693*, 2d ed. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2005. ISBN: 0822336138.
3. Norton, Mary Beth. *In the Devil's Snare: The Salem Witchcraft Crisis of 1692*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2002. ISBN: 9780375706905.
4. Sharpe, James. *Instruments of Darkness: Witchcraft in Early Modern England*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996. ISBN: 0812216334.
5. Hacker, Diana T. *A Pocket Style Manual*, 5th ed. New York: Bedford Books, 2009. ISBN: 0312593244. (Optional, but strongly recommended.)

In addition, we will be reading scholarly articles and other documents that are available on BlackBoard (see bibliography below). You will need to download and print copies of these texts and bring them with you to class.

Disability Accommodations

Students with disabilities for whom accommodations have been formally granted by a University of Richmond Disability Advisor must present a copy of their “Disability Accommodation Notice” to each professor within the first week of the academic term. Accommodations must be negotiated in advance for each assignment. Students should plan to consult with me *at least one week prior* to any scheduled deadline.

Cell Phones & Laptops

While in class, please disable all cell phones, pagers, Blackberries, and other communication devices. In addition, I ask that all students refrain from using laptop computers, which may create distractions that will disrupt the flow of our discussions.

Grade Scale

Final grades will be assigned based on the following grade scale: A+ (98–100); A (93–97); A– (91–92); B+ (88–90); B (83–87); B– (81–82); C+ (78–80); C (73–77); C– (71–72); D+ (68–70); D (63–67); D– (61–62); F (60 and below).

Course Schedule

January 15	Introduction to the Course
January 17	Puzzling through Early Modern Witchcraft <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sharpe, <i>Instruments of Darkness</i>, pp. 1–32.
January 22	Witches of the Atlantic World <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Winiarski, ed., “Bermuda Witch-Hunt,” pp. 1–36 (BlackBoard). ▪ Sharpe, <i>Instruments of Darkness</i>, pp. 58–79.
January 24	Theological & Legal Aspects of Witch Hunting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Breslaw, ed., <i>Witches of the Atlantic World</i>, pp. 37–41 (Hopkins); 365–68 (Dalton); 369–374 (Perkins). ▪ Sharpe, <i>Instruments of Darkness</i>, pp. 80–101.
January 29	New England Puritanism: An Overview <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cohen, “Puritanism,” pp. 577–593 (BlackBoard). ▪ Breslaw, ed., <i>Witches of the Atlantic World</i>, pp. 77–88 (Weisman).
January 31	The Usual Suspects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hall, ed., <i>Witch-Hunting in Seventeenth-Century New England</i>, pp. 115–133 (John Godfrey). ▪ Demos, “John Godfrey,” pp. 242–265 (BlackBoard).

- February 5** **Social Dimensions of Witchcraft I**
- Winiarski, ed., “Documents Relating to the Witchcraft Case of Elizabeth Garlick,” pp. 1–12 (BlackBoard).
- February 7** **Social Dimensions of Witchcraft II**
- Browse the *Records of the Town of Easthampton* (BlackBoard).
 - Demos, “Mind of Our Town,” pp. 213–245 (BlackBoard).
- February 12** **Witchcraft & Gender I**
- Demos, ed., “Sinner Cast Out,” pp. 262–282 (BlackBoard).
 - Hall, ed., *Witch-Hunting in Seventeenth-Century New England*, pp. 89–91 (Ann Hibbins).
 - Breslaw, ed., *Witches of the Atlantic World*, pp. 322–329 (Reis); 330–336 (Kamensky).
- POSITION PAPER ASSIGNMENT B.
- February 14** **Witchcraft & Gender II**
- Hall, ed., *Witch-Hunting in Seventeenth-Century New England*, pp. 213–229 (Eunice Cole); 191–196 (Rachel Fuller & Isabelle Towle).
 - Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness*, pp. 169–189.
 - Breslaw, ed., *Witches of the Atlantic World*, pp. 337–346 (Karlsen).
- POSITION PAPER ASSIGNMENT C.
- February 19** **Magic, Wonders & Popular Culture I**
- Demos, ed., “Ipswich Tailor,” pp. 59–69 (BlackBoard).
 - Breslaw, ed., *Witches of the Atlantic World*, pp. 89–95 (Hall).
- February 21** **Beyond New England**
- Winiarski, ed., “Witchcraft in Virginia,” pp. 1–18 (BlackBoard).
 - Breslaw, ed., *Witches of the Atlantic World*, pp. 126–31 (Kittredge).
 - Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness*, pp. 148–68.
- POSITION PAPER ASSIGNMENT D.
- February 25** **Special Evening Event**
- Professor Richard Godbeer (Department of History, University of Miami) will present a public lecture entitled “‘Your wife will be your biggest accuser’: Reinforcing Codes of Manhood at New England Witch Trials.”
 - Location & Time: International Center Commons, Carole Weinstein International Center, 5:30–6:30 P.M.
- February 26** **Magic, Wonders & Popular Culture II (w/Richard Godbeer)**
- Breslaw, ed., *Witches of the Atlantic World*, pp. 132–142 (Godbeer).
 - Godbeer, “Sin, Suffering, and Countermagic,” pp. 85–121 (BlackBoard).

- February 28** **Demonic Possession**
- Hall, ed., *Witch-Hunting in Seventeenth-Century New England*, pp. 197–212 (Elizabeth Knapp).
 - Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness*, pp. 190–210.
- POSITION PAPER ASSIGNMENT E.
- March 5** **Hauntings & Poltergeists**
- [Chamberlain], *Lithobolia*, pp. 1–16 (download PDF from Early English Books online database).
 - St. George, “Witchcraft, Bodily Affliction, and Domestic Space,” pp. 13–27 (BlackBoard).
- March 7** **Mid-Term Case Analysis I**
- Hall, ed., *Witch-Hunting in Seventeenth-Century New England*, pp. 230–59 (Elizabeth Morse).
 - Winiarski, ed., “Letter from Samuel Phillips,” pp. 1–5 (BlackBoard).
 - Demos, “Let Me Do What I Could,” pp. 132–152 (BlackBoard).
- March 12** **Spring Break (No Class)**
- March 14** **Spring Break (No Class)**
- March 19** **Mid-Term Case Analysis II/Writing Workshop**
- March 21** **Mid-Term Case Analysis III/Salem Overview**
- MID-TERM CASE ANALYSIS PAPER DUE IN CLASS.
- March 26** **Salem Begins**
- Hall, ed., *Witch-Hunting in Seventeenth-Century New England*, 280–290 (Lawson’s Brief and True Narrative).
 - Norton, *In the Devil’s Snare*, pp. 3–81.
- March 28** **Salem II/Using the *Records of the Salem Witch-Hunt***
- Norton, *In the Devil’s Snare*, pp. 82–231 (begin).
- April 2** **Salem III (No Class)**
- Norton, *In the Devil’s Snare*, pp. 82–231 (complete).
- April 4** **Salem IV (No Class)**
- Norton, *In the Devil’s Snare*, pp. 232–294.
- SCHOLARS & THEIR SOURCES PROJECT DUE.
- April 9** **Racial Outsiders & the Making of a Witch-Hunt**
- Read Tituba’s case file online at UVA’s *Salem Witch Trials Documentary Archive* (External Links).
 - “Tituba and the Witchcake,” 1–3 (Handout).
 - Breslaw, ed., *Witches of the Atlantic World*, pp. 444–453 (Breslaw).
- POSITION PAPER ASSIGNMENT F.

April 11

Social History & the Salem Witch-Hunt I

- Boyer and Nissenbaum, “Salem Possessed,” 343–372 (BlackBoard).
- Boyer and Nissenbaum, “Joseph and His Brothers,” 133–152 (BlackBoard).

April 16

Social History & the Salem Witch-Hunt II

- Boyer and Nissenbaum, ed., “Putnam Family,” pp. 202–25 (BlackBoard).

POSITION PAPER ASSIGNMENT G.

April 18

Ministers & Magistrates ReactREAD ALL OF THESE

- Boyer and Nissenbaum, ed., “Three Sermons on Salem-Village Witchcraft,” pp. 124–136 (BlackBoard).
- Silverman, *Selected Letters of Cotton Mather*, selections T.B.A. (BlackBoard).
- Breslaw, ed., *Witches of the Atlantic World*, pp. 407–408 (Advice of the Clergy); 411–419 (Brattle).

THEN READ TWO OF THESE

- Robbins, “Samuel Willard and the Spectres of God’s Wrathful Lion,” pp. 596–603 (BlackBoard).
- “Letter from R.P. to Jonathan Corwin.” pp. 538–544 (BlackBoard).
- “Letters of Governor Phips to the Home Government,” pp. 193–202 (BlackBoard).
- Haefeli, “Dutch New York and the Salem Witch Trials, pp. 303–308 (Handout).

POSITION PAPER ASSIGNMENT H.

April 23

The Andover Confessions

- Read the confession of Mary Toothaker online at UVA’s *Salem Witch Trials Documentary Archive* (External Links).
- Then select four additional confessors and read the confession narratives for each.
- Winiarski, ed., “Rowley Relations” 1–20 (BlackBoard).

POSITION PAPER ASSIGNMENT I.

April 25

After Salem

- Norton, *In the Devil’s Snare*, pp. 295–313.
- Breslaw, ed., *Witches of the Atlantic World*, pp. 420–421 (Apology of the Jury); 422–26 (Hale); 512–515 (Weisman).
- Thomas, ed., *Diary of Samuel Sewall*, pp. 366–367 (Handout).
- Rosenthal, *Salem Story*, pp. 36–37 (Handout).

BlackBoard Bibliography

Boyer, Paul, and Stephen Nissenbaum. “Joseph and His Brothers.” In *Salem Possessed: The Social Origins of Witchcraft*, 133–152. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1974.

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- Boyer, Paul, and Stephen Nissenbaum, eds. "The Putnam Family." In *Salem-Village Witchcraft: A Documentary Record of Local Conflict in Colonial New England*, 202–225. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1993.
- Boyer, Paul, and Stephen Nissenbaum, eds. "Three Sermons on Salem-Village Witchcraft." In *Salem-Village Witchcraft: A Documentary Record of Local Conflict in Colonial New England*, 124–136. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1993.
- Cohen, Charles L. "Puritanism." In *Encyclopedia of the North American Colonies*, ed. Jacob Ernest Cooke, 577–593. New York: S. Scribner's Sons, 1993.
- Demos, John. "John Godfrey and His Neighbors: Witchcraft and the Social Web in Colonial Massachusetts." *William & Mary Quarterly*, 3d ser., 33 (1976): 242–265.
- Demos, John Putnam. "Let Me Do What I Could." In *Entertaining Satan: Witchcraft and the Culture of Early New England*, 132–152. New York: Oxford University Press, 1982.
- Demos, John Putnam. "The Mind of Our Town." In *Entertaining Satan: Witchcraft and the Culture of Early New England*, 213–245. New York: Oxford University Press, 1982.
- Demos, John, ed. "An Ipswich Tailor." In *Remarkable Providences: Reading on Early American History*, rev. ed., 59–69. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1991.
- Demos, John, ed. "A Sinner Cast Out." In *Remarkable Providences: Reading on Early American History*, rev. ed., 262–282. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1991.
- Godbeer, Richard. "Sin, Suffering, and Countermagic." In *The Devil's Dominion: Magic and Religion in Early Modern New England*, 85–121. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- Haefeli, Evan. "Dutch New York and the Salem Witch Trials: Some New Evidence." *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* 110 (2000): 303–308.
- "Letter from R. P. to Jonathan Corwin." In Charles W. Upham, *Salem Witchcraft*, 2:538–544. Boston: Wiggint & Lunt, 1867.
- "Letters of Governor Phips." In *Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1648–1706*, ed. George Lincoln Burr, 193–202. New York: Charles B. Scribner's Sons, 1914.
- Records of the Town of East-Hampton, Long Island, Suffolk Co., N.Y.*, vol. 1. Sag-Harbor, N.Y.: John H. Hunt, 1887.
- Robbins, Stephen L. "Samuel Willard and the Spectres of God's Wrathful Lion." *New England Quarterly* 60 (1987): 596–603.
- Silverman, Kenneth, ed. *Selected Letters of Cotton Mather*, 30–52. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1971.
- St. George, Robert Blair. "Witchcraft, Bodily Affliction, and Domestic Space in Seventeenth-Century New England." In *A Centre of Wonders: The Body in Early America*, ed. Janet Moore Lindman and Michele Lise Tarter, 13–27. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2001.
- Winiarski, Douglas L., ed. "A Bermuda Witch-Hunt, 1653: Selected Documents." Unpublished ms., 2003.
- Winiarski, Douglas L., ed. "Documents Relating to the Witchcraft Case of Elizabeth Garlick, Easthampton, New York, 1657." Unpublished ms., 2000.
- Winiarski, Douglas L., ed. "A Letter from Samuel Phillips Relating to the Witchcraft Case of Elizabeth Morse (May 25, 1680)." Unpublished ms., 2006.
- Winiarski, Douglas L., ed. "The Rowley Relations." Unpublished ms., 2005.
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