HS1824

Witchcraft and Witch-Hunting in Early Modern Europe

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1. Table of Contents

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2. Aims and Outline of the Module

The early modern witch-hunt has puzzled historians for decades. Why were between 40 and 50,000 women and men executed for a fictitious crime? A crime that was not only imaginary but the worst combination of murder and devil worship, cannibalism and sodomy? The witch was the ultimate outsider; she was, in the words of the Puritan divine William Perkins, 'the most notorious traitor and rebel that can be'. How could she[*] emerge in the period of the Renaissance and thrive during the Scientific Revolution? This module will study these questions and the wide range of methodological approaches that have been used to answer them. Literary and gender theories jostle with readings inspired by anthropology and psychoanalysis. Students will be encouraged to engage with these approaches critically. A selection of primary sources will allow them to study first-hand how witches were seen by visual artists and depicted on stage, but they will also examine the writings of demonologists and sceptics, and attempt to recover the voices of individual accusers and accused.

The aim of this module, then, is to get to grips with one of the most alien aspects of pre-modern society, a phenomenon that was surprisingly diverse. Indeed, as we shall see, even at the time there was remarkably little agreement as to what a witch <u>was</u> or how to define her. Her neighbours feared her for her deadly powers, mothers regarded her as a threat to infants and fertility, magistrates considered her to be the ultimate deviant, theologians saw her as the devil's most dangerous ally, and sceptical physicians considered her mentally ill, the product of the traditional female 'illnesses' of melancholy and hysteria. Added to this difficulty is the substantial regional and geographical variation. Why, for instance, did so-called 'super-hunts' break out in some territories, while neighbouring states saw almost no trials? Why did women make up the vast majority of victims in England, Scotland and Germany, but male victims dominate in Normandy, Iceland and Finland? What role, if any, was played by that most important event of the early modern period—the Protestant Reformation? Did it encourage or hamper persecutions?

Historians have only partial answers to these questions and, despite much progress, still often disagree amongst themselves. The historiography, however, is only part of what makes the early modern witch-hunt a challenging and engaging subject of study. There is a second important reason why the early modern witch-hunt matters, which is often overlooked: precisely *because* witchcraft is so alien to us, it provides a unique entry point into early modern society, religion, and politics, alerting us to the fact that even what may seem familiar may not be. The early modern witch-hunt offers us a window onto the gender relations between men and women and the interactions between elite and popular beliefs. Witch-hunting reveals what early modern society feared and desired most. Witchcraft accusations show ordinary human beings trying to make sense of the world and attempt to control forces that would otherwise be beyond their reach.

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[*] I am using 'she' here in the way that 'he' was traditionally used to refer to a person whose gender is unknown. Given the context 'she' is more appropriate, as the person referred to is more likely to be female.

Of course, there have been accusations that witchcraft's importance has been overstated. Outside 'non-witchcraft' ('normal', 'ordinary', 'traditional', 'boring') historians have complained that the witch-hunt has been given much more attention than it deserves. Sir John Elliott, for instance, lamented in 2012 that 'the study of early modern Europe has been reduced to a study of its witches.' This is true up to point. Certainly, the number of victims of the witch-hunt is relatively small in modern terms – the 2010 Haiti earthquake killed at least twice as many people in a single instant than were ever executed for witchcraft in Europe. As we shall see, there is also little mileage in comparing the witch-hunt to the holocaust, nor was the witch-hunt an act of 'gendercide'. What these far-fetched comparisons (and, in a way, also John Elliott's disdain) have in common is that they show how important witchcraft still is to our understanding of humanity, rationality, and modernity. Witchcraft, because it did *not* exist, remains something other against which we still define ourselves; whether it is by contrasting our rational selves favourably to our irrational ancestors, or by fostering our contemporary (say, Wiccan or feminist) beliefs with the blood of adopted martyrs.

These three inter-related reasons are why the early modern witch-hunt is worth studying, and they underpin some of the themes that this module will seek to explore. Naturally, given the complexity of the subject, it will take some setting up. The first weeks of the **autumn semester** will focus on some of the important religious beliefs – in particular, belief in the devil and the end of the world – and the social conditions of the early modern period, which, with some justification, has been called an 'iron' age. We will also look at witchcraft as a legal crime, before looking at its role in the medical market place and in village life. We will study some of the gender stereotypes and attitudes that shaped witchcraft accusations, though some of that discussion will be saved for the spring semester.

In the **spring semester,** we will continue to look at the role of gender (including masculinity) as well as the role of age in witch-hunting. We will also study adjacent fields (especially demonic possession and werewolves) and representations of witchcraft. We will also look at some of the scholarly debates surrounding witchcraft, and in particular at the different modes of scepticism that existed at the time. We will explore the reasons for the decline of witchcraft belief and witch-hunting (an issue, as we shall see, that is surprisingly different from scepticism).

3. Outcomes

Learning outcomes are attainable through a combination of formal teaching, your participation in classes, and your own private study beyond contact hours. At the end of the period of learning, you will be expected to:

- ✓ Demonstrate a detailed understanding of early modern witchcraft beliefs and persecutions, at both the popular and elite level, and the wider social, political, and religious factors that encouraged or discouraged witch-hunting;

- ✓ Assess critically the different factors that contributed to the emergence and decline of witchcraft persecutions;

✓ Engage critically with the historical debates and (anthropological, gender, psychoanalytical, and literary) approaches to which the study of the early modern witch-hunt gave rise;

✓ Study closely a range of primary source documents to shed light on the versatility of the figure of the witch, the intellectual foundations of witchcraft belief, and the interpersonal dynamics that led to individual witchcraft accusations.

✓ Formulate and justify your own arguments and conclusions about the themes and issues that arise during the module, and to present your arguments clearly and concisely in seminar discussions, in coursework and in written examination.

4. Assessment

Students will be assessed by means of a combination of one essay relating to primary sources [20%], an assessed essay [30%] and an examination paper [50%].

Course assignments:

1. **Assessed Essay relating to primary sources** will contribute 20% of the final mark for the module and must be no longer than 1,000 words, **excluding appendices, bibliography and footnotes**.

NB: Students can choose any source from Brian P. Levack's *The Witchcraft Sourcebook* (1st ed., London, 2004; 2nd ed., London, 2015), except the two sources discussed in class.

Please consult the separate advice sheet on Learning Central on how best to write a source analysis.

2. The **Assessed Essay** will contribute 30% of the final mark for the module. It is designed to give students the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to review evidence, draw appropriate conclusions from it and employ the formal conventions of scholarly presentation. It must be no longer than 2,000 words, **excluding appendices, bibliography and footnotes**.

3. The **Examination** [50%] will take place during the second assessment period and will consist of an unseen two-hour paper that will contribute the remaining 50% of the final mark for this module. Students must write 2 answers in total.

Questions for Assessed Essay #2 and a specimen exam paper are included at the end of this Handbook.

Please consult the separate advice sheet on Learning Central for tips on how best to prepare for the exam.

For essay deadlines, notes on presentation and referencing, and procedures for submitting coursework, please refer to the Year Three Handbook on Learning Central.

5. Learning and Teaching

Teaching will take the form of (i) formal lectures, and (ii) seminars for group discussion of issues arising from primary sources and secondary reading, and the themes relating to the week's lecture. The reading list will vary in length depending on the week. However, you are expected to read at least **three** articles or chapters, including any items listed as obligatory.

You should also read the set primary source **before coming to class**. The source will be discussed in class and has been chosen to illustrate the week's topic, for instance by showing how abstract ideas worked (or did not work) in practice, or *vice versa* how practice shaped abstract ideas. It will act as a spring board for discussion of the more general themes of the week. **Please make sure that you bring a (paper or electronic) copy of the source with you to class. You WILL need to refer to it during seminar discussions.**

Remember that you should be spending around ten hours per week throughout both semesters, including the assessment periods, on this 30-credit module.

6. Resources

There is no set textbook for this module. However, should you like to read or even buy an introduction to the subject, the module convenor recommends Brian Levack, *The Witch-Hunt in Early Modern Europe*, 4th ed. (London, 2016). It provides a comprehensive introduction and it does a good job at making the subject sound technical and dry. (It is a textbook, after all.) A better read and in some ways also more enlightening is Robin Briggs, *Witches and Neighbours*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 2002).

If you are looking for a good holiday read, I would recommend the following three books: Malcolm Gaskill, *Witchfinders: A Seventeenth-century English Tragedy* (London, 2005), Thomas Robisheaux, *The Last Witch of Langenburg: Murder in a German Village* (New York, 2009), and Ulinka Rublack, *The Astronomer and the Witch: Johannes Kepler's Fight for His Mother* (Oxford, 2015). These are all exemplary case studies of individual witch-trials or hunts. The subject of the last two books is evident enough from the title; Gaskill's book studies the infamous witch-hunt conducted by Matthew Hopkins and his colleagues in Essex in the 1640s. While a limited number of copies of these books are available in the library, they are also affordably priced and would make a splendid birthday or Christmas present. None of these books are a requirement, but students are expected to engage in background reading to expand their knowledge of the period and core themes throughout the year.

If you are looking for background information or further reading on any topic related to this module, a good first port of call (other than harassing the module convenor ☺) is Brian Levack, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe and Colonial America* (Oxford, 2013), which contains both thematic chapters and geographic surveys and which is now available on-line through the University's library catalogue. Another valuable resource is Richard Golden, ed., *Encyclopedia of Witchcraft: The Western Tradition*, 4 vols (Santa Barbara, CA, 2006). You can consult physical copies of both works

in the reference section on the ground floor of the Arts and Social Sciences Library. **Needless to say, much of what you will find on-line about the early modern witch-hunt is biased, blinkered, sensationalist, out-dated, wrong-headed, ill-informed, or a combination of some or all of these things. Please use the internet with great care.**

Those seeking additional reading in preparation for their second assessed essay can also consult the separate extensive bibliography on Learning Central. If you experience any difficulties obtaining a particular text or volume, please get in touch with the module convenor. You may also wish to look at present or past issues of the journal *Magic, Ritual and Witchcraft* to which Cardiff University has a digital subscription. It may give you an idea as to current research trends.

7. Possible Sources for Witchcraft Dissertation

For those doing a witchcraft dissertation, there are plenty of primary sources available, though it can be a challenge to come up with a good project, given that the historiography is just so plentiful, especially where witchcraft in Britain and its colonies are concerned. The best projects, in my view, will try to approach the subject from something of a tangent, by focussing on a particular aspect of witchcraft (animal familiars, fairies, etc.) or allied beliefs (ghosts), or will attempt something comparative (comparing crimes or jurisdictions). If you are interested in demonology, you might similarly consider a biographical approach: situating a particular work of demonology within its author's wider corpus. Finally, some of the earliest historians of witchcraft (William Lecky, Andrew Dickson White, Montague Summers, Margaret Murray, etc.) are fascinating and often eccentric persons in their own right and well worth studying. You could also study the historical use of witch-hunting as a metaphor for other 'irrational' persecutions. (But let's steer clear of Donald Trump!)

Below you will find references to collections of primary sources. You may wish to have a look at them and come up with some of your own ideas, prior to our first meeting.

General Early Modern Sources:

- Early Modern English Books Online: http://eebo.chadwyck.com/home (including the works of Reginald Scot, George Gifford, James VI and I, John Cotta, Robert Filmer, Joseph Glanvill, etc.);
- The Cornell University Witchcraft Collection: http://ebooks.library.cornell.edu/w/witch/
- Eighteenth Century Collections On-Line (through Library Search);
- Oxford Dictionary of National Biography: http://www.oxforddnb.com/ (biographies of British individuals);

Demonology (in roughly chronological order):

- Andrew Colin Gow, ed. and trans., *The Arras Witch Treatises: Johannes Tinctor's Invectives contre la secte de vauderie and the Recollectio casus, status et condicionis Valdensium ydolatrarum by the Anonymous of Arras (1460)* (University Park, PA, 2016);

- Heinrich Institoris, *Malleus maleficarum*, trans. Christopher S. Mackay (Cambridge, 2006);
- Jean Bodin, *On the Demon-mania of Witches*, trans. Randy A. Scott and Jonathan L. Pearl (Toronto, 2001);
- Girolamo Menghi, *Devil's Scourge: Exorcism During the Italian Renaissance*, trans. Gaetano Paxia (York Beach, ME, 2002);
- Nicolas Remy, *Demonolatry*, trans. E. Allen Ashwin (many reprint editions);
- Henry Boguet, *An Examen of Witches, drawn from Various Trials of Many of This Sect in the District of Saint Oyan de Joux*, trans. E. Allen Ashwin (many reprint editions);
- Martin Delrio, *Investigations into Magic*, trans. P. G Maxwell-Stuart (Manchester, 2000);
- Francesco Maria Guazzo, *Compendium Maleficarum Collected in Three Books from Many Sources*, trans. E. Allen Ashwin (many reprint editions);
- Pierre de Lancre, *On the Inconstancy of Witches*, trans. Gerhild Scholz Williams (Tempe, AZ, 2006); also available in full on Google Books;
- Friedrich Spee, *Cautio Criminalis, or, A Book on Witch Trials*, trans. Marcus Hellyer (Charlottesville, VA, 2003);
- T.P., *Cas Gan Gythraul: Demonology, Witchcraft and Popular Magic in Eighteenth-century Wales*, ed. and trans. Lisa Tallis (Newport, 2015).

English witchcraft trials:

- J.S. Cockburn, ed., *Calendars of Assize Records* (various editions per county; of all crimes, witchcraft included); for background, see: 'Criminal trials in the assize courts 1559-1971', http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/criminal-trials-assize-courts-1559-1971/;
- C. L'Estrange Ewen, *Witch hunting and Witch Trials: The Indictments for Witchcraft from the Records of 1373 Assizes held for the Home Circuit AD 1559-1736* (London: Routledge, 2011 [original ed. 1929]); and earlier inventory of only witchcraft trials;
- The Proceedings of the Old Bailey, 1674–1913: https://www.oldbaileyonline.org/index.jsp;

English witchcraft pamphlets:

- Marion Gibson, ed., *Early Modern Witches: Witchcraft Cases in Contemporary Writing* (London, 2000); also on EEBO but annotated and introduced;
- For an inventory of all printed English witchcraft pamphlets, see Charlotte-Rose Millar, *Witchcraft, the Devil, and Emotions in Early Modern England* (Abingdon, 2017), 187–198 (Appendix A).

Scottish witchcraft trials:

- The Survey of Scottish Witchcraft, 1563–1736: http://www.shca.ed.ac.uk/Research/witches/;

- Lawrence Normand and Gareth Roberts, eds, *Witchcraft in Early Modern Scotland: James VI's Demonology and the North Berwick Witches* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2000);

New England witchcraft trials:

- Salem Witch Trials: Documentary Archive and Transcription Project: http://salem.lib.virginia.edu/home.html

European witchcraft trials:

- Lorraine Witchcraft Trials, edited, translated and transcribed by Robin Briggs: http://witchcraft.history.ox.ac.uk/;
- Gustav Henningsen, ed., *The Salazar Documents: Inquisitor Alonso de Salazar Frías and Others on the Basque Witch Persecution* (Leiden: Brill, 2004).

8. Time Table

Autumn Semester 2018

Week	Date	Topic
Week 1	2 October	Early Modern Witchcraft: An Introduction
Week 2	9 October	The Devil: A Biography
Week 3	16 October	The Early Modern Period: Bad Weather and Bad People
Week 4	23 October	The Law I: Theory versus Practice
Week 5	30 October	The Law II: How to Interpret Legal Sources
Week 6	6 November	**Reading Week**
Week 7	13 November	Gender I: Good Women-Hunting
Week 8	20 November	Village Life I: Anger Management Issues
Week 9	27 November	Village Life II: Witches as Healers?
Week 10	4 December	Mega-Hunts: A Mega-Mystery?
Week 11	11 December	A Case Study: Terror in the French Basque Country

Spring Semester 2019

Week	Date	Topic
Week 1	29 January	Witchcraft Representations: Witches on Display and on Stage
Week 2	5 February	Gender II: Abnormal (?) Male Witches
Week 3	12 February	Gender III: Youth and Old Age
Week 4	19 February	Gender IV: Werewolves
Week 5	26 February	Demonology: Why did Elite Men believe in Witches?
Week 6	6 March	Scepticism I: Sceptical Physicians and Philosophers
Week 7	12 March	Scepticism II: Judicial Scepticism
Week 8	19 March	**NO CLASS**
Week 9	26 March	**NO CLASS**
Week 10	2 April	Demonic Possession: Bodies Possessed
Week 11	9 April	The Decline of Witch-Hunting: The End?
Week 11	10 April	Revision

Autumn Semester 2018

Week 1 2 October	Early Modern Witchcraft: An Introduction

The first lecture will give an overview of the main features of the early modern witch-hunt, give you a sense of variations across time and space, and set up some of the different approaches historians have used during the past fifty or so years. Both the primary and secondary readings explore the same themes. Reading them, ask yourself how we as historians *and* as human beings establish connections between events. How do we know something is true? (Only when we can see it with our own eyes?) How do we determine whether one cause is more important than another? How can we guard against our own biases?

> In future classes, there will be fewer questions already formulated. Instead we will brain storm 'research' questions together as a group at the end of the previous class.

The two pieces of secondary reading offer opposing arguments. It may be readily apparent to you where my sympathies lie (especially once you know that the author of one of these texts was my doctoral supervisor ☺), but studying the _types_ of argument made by both sides will help you with your studies. Robin Briggs outlines some of the reasons why witchcraft has proved to be a particularly difficult problem for historians. Whitney offers a provocative thought piece, arguing that multi-causal (that is, 'many reasons why') approaches are the result of the refusal of (male) historians to put gender at the heart of their analysis.

(Obligatory) Secondary Reading:
- ✓ Robin Briggs, '"Many Reasons Why": Witchcraft and the Problem of Multiple Explanation', in Jonathan Barry, Marianne Hester and Gareth Roberts, eds, *Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe: Studies in Culture and Belief* (Cambridge, 1996), 49–63;
- ✓ Elspeth Whitney, 'The Witch "She"/The Historian "He": Gender and the Historiography of the European Witch-Hunts', *Journal of Women's History*, 7/ 3 (1995): 77–101.

Meanwhile, our first source text is the record of a (relatively early) debate by a group of Spanish theologians and inquisitors about the reality of witchcraft, the scope of the witch's powers and the extent of her moral and legal responsibility. In the popular imagination, the Spanish Inquisition is often perceived of as an incarnation of Catholic cruelty (*e.g.* this very funny Monty Python sketch). Yet, historians have recognized its extraordinary mildness in cases of witchcraft from the late nineteenth century onwards. We now know that the Inquisition only executed about 1.8% of those it tried (across all criminal cases within its jurisdiction, not just witchcraft). What do you make of the disagreements between these men?

> Please make sure you bring an (electronic or paper) copy of this source text with you to class and that you have read it **carefully** beforehand. Note that this also applies to **all future weeks** but this health warning will not endlessly be repeated.

Source Text:

✓ Translation adapted from Lu Ann Homza, ed., 'Deliberations on the Reality and Heresy of Witchcraft, 1526', in *The Spanish Inquisition, 1478–1614* (Indianapolis/Cambridge, 2006), 153–63.

Week 2 9 October	The Devil: A Biography

Most undergraduate surveys of early modern witchcraft—and many textbooks about the subject—begin almost inevitably with a lecture on demonology (literally, the science of demons) or on the 'learned foundations' of witchcraft belief, even though the relative importance of learned beliefs over popular ones is by no means self-evident. This module convenor therefore, being himself both rebellious and contrarian, will reserve discussions about demonology for the spring semester. However, we cannot ignore until then the fact that witchcraft was also a religious crime. By renouncing God and making a pact with the devil, the witch abandoned her baptism, worthy (in the eyes of the law and of many theologians at least) to die for her apostasy alone.

There can be no witchcraft in Christendom without the devil, then, and he remains to this day an uncomfortable figure. His name is mentioned both in the Old Testament and (more frequently) in the New. Looking at witchcraft through the eyes of the Devil can teach us much. We realize that witchcraft was not some sort of 'stand-alone' option but a part of a demonic package deal. The devil was a prominent feature in medieval saints' lives, where he appeared in all sorts of guises to lead saints into temptation. In the early modern period, Puritans imagined their inner temptations to be 'from the devil'. All sides of the religious divide considered opponents to be 'of the devil'—this was demonization in the literal sense of the word.

Questions:

- ✓ Who was this elusive figure?
- ✓ ....
- ✓ ....
- ✓ ....
- ✓ ....

Norman Cohn's otherwise rather outdated work gives a very good sense of the importance of the devil in pre-modern society, while Richard Raiswell and Peter Dendle's provocative thought piece gives some idea as to the malleability (flexibility) of the devil as a figure in Christian thought. Johnstone's introduction provides a very good historiographical survey.

Secondary Reading (Please read at least THREE of the following)::
- ✓ Norman Cohn, *Europe's Inner Demons: The Demonisation of Christians in Medieval Christendom*, 2nd ed. (London, 1993), 16–35.
- ✓ Nathan Johnstone, *The Devil and Demonism in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2006), 1–26.
- ✓ Charlotte-Rose Millar, *Witchcraft, the Devil, and Emotions in Early Modern England* (Abingdon, 2017), 29–47.
- ✓ Richard Raiswell and Peter Dendle, 'Inscribing the Devil in Cultural Contexts', in Richard Raiswell, ed., *The Devil in Society in Premodern Europe* (Toronto, 2012), 537–52.

Thomas Stapleton (1535–1598) was an English Catholic who fled to the continent on the accession of the Protestant Elizabeth I as Queen of England. He found employment at various universities in the Spanish Netherlands (roughly present-day Belgium) and eventually became Regius Professor of Scripture at the University of Louvain/Leuven (as it happens, Cardiff's European partner university). There, in the summer of 1594, Stapleton delivered a public lecture, entitled 'Why magic has grown today together with heresy?'. (If you are interested in Stapleton, or would like more background information on him, you could read: Jan Machielsen, 'The Lion, the Witch, and the King: Thomas Stapleton's "Apologia pro Rege Catholico Philippo II" (1592)', *English Historical Review,* 129 (2014): 19-46, as well as Marvin O'Connell's entry on him in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.)

Source Text:

- ✓ Thomas Stapleton, 'Cur magia pariter cum haeresi hodie creverit' ('Why magic has grown today together with heresy?') in his *Opera omnia*, vol. 2 (Paris, 1620), 502–507. Translated by Jan Machielsen.

Week 3 16 October	The Early Modern Period: Bad Weather and Bad People

Last week, we discussed some of the ways in which witchcraft was a particularly Christian product. This week, we look at some of the ways it was not. In fact, the pioneering work by Keith Thomas and Alan Macfarlane was inspired by anthropologists studying witchcraft in pre-modern societies across the globe and motivated by the belief that these insights could be applied to our early modern past. (The term 'sorcery' was traditionally used as a more general term, with witchcraft referring to a specifically Christian context but this distinction has lost most of its meaning.) Thomas's *Religion and the Decline of Witchcraft*, in particular, is laced with comments such as '*as is the case with his modern African counterpart*, it was relatively unusual for a wizard to subsist entirely upon the proceeds of his magical activities' (emphasis added). Thomas and Macfarlane showed how belief in occult (that is, secret) powers allowed early modern Europeans to make sense of the world and (in a way) to control it.

That the early modern period was a time of severe social, religious, and economic crisis has long been clear. Already in the 1970s, Henry Kamen described the period 1550–1660 as an 'Iron Century'. Since then, historians have come to appreciate more fully the extent of the changes that reshaped the European countryside and spurred the growth of towns. The early modern period has rather begun to resemble our own: a time of religious violence, forced migration, growing income inequality and climate change (though then the world was getting cooler, rather than warming up). No wonder that many people believed the End was near and that witches had been let loose on the world.

So, this week we will—quite ambitiously—try to do two things: first, get a sense of these major changes that early modern society was going through, and second, study how these changes were understood and responded to at the time. Bear in mind that scientific fields such as demographics and economics did not exist in the early modern period. The reading list is accordingly split up into two, and you are free to choose your reading freely according to your interests. (Remember that you are still expected to read at least three chapters/articles.)

Questions:

- ✓ What problems do historians face when they try to connect social changes to witchcraft fears?
- ✓ ....
- ✓ ....
- ✓ ....
- ✓ ....

Secondary Reading — Part I:

- ✓ Andrew Cunningham and Ole Peter Grell, *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse: Religion, War, Famine and Death in Reformation Europe* (Cambridge, 2000), in particular chaps 1 and 2;

- ✓ Keith Wrightson, *Earthly Necessities: Economic Lives in Early Modern Britain* (New Haven, 2000), chap. 8;
- ✓ Geoffrey Parker, 'Crisis and Catastrophe: The Global Crisis of the Seventeenth Century Reconsidered', *The American Historical Review*, 113/4 (2008): 1053–1079.
- ✓ Geoffrey Parker, *Global Crisis: War, Climate Change and Catastrophe in the Seventeenth Century* (New Haven, 2014).

Part II:

- ✓ Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic: Studies in Popular Beliefs in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century England* (London, 1971 [1st ed.; many reprints since]), in particular chaps 1, 16 and 17;
- ✓ Alan Macfarlane, *Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England: A Regional and Comparative Study* (London, 1970 [also many eds since]), chaps 10, 17;
- ✓ E. E Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft, Oracles, and Magic among the Azande*, ed. Eva Gillies (Oxford, 1976 [abridged ed.; original ed. 1937]), chaps 2 and 3. This is the original anthropological study that inspired Thomas and Macfarlane's work;
- ✓ Wolfgang Behringer, 'Weather, Hunger and Fear: Origins of the European Witch-Hunts in Climate, Society and Mentality', *German History*, 13/1 (1995): 1-27. A brave attempt to connect patterns of witch-persecution to the changing climate.
- ✓ Ronald Hutton, *The Witch: A History of Fear, from Ancient Times to the Present* (New Haven, 2017), chap. 1.

And then, of course, in case you had thought (hoped) the module convenor had forgotten, there is our primary source of the week: a 1539 sermon by the German Protestant pastor Johann Brenz on the subject of weather magic. Brenz was rather sceptical whether witches could, in fact, control the weather, but still more critical of the response of his parishioners to bad weather events. What (or who) does Brenz hold responsible for bad weather? What role does he attribute to the devil? How are his parishioners responding to bad weather events, and how should they?

Source Text:

- ✓ Johann Brenz, 'On Hailstorms: A Sermon', appendix to H. C. Erik Midelfort, 'Were There Really Witches?' in Robert M. Kingdon, ed, *Transition and Revolution: Problems and Issues of European Renaissance and Reformation History* (Minneapolis, MN, 1974), 214–19.

Week 4	
23 October	The Law I: Theory versus Practice

Many legal theorists described witchcraft in Latin as a 'crimen exceptum', an 'excepted crime' for which the ordinary rules of evidence did not apply (i.e. an exception). The reason for this was fairly simple: witchcraft was an occult (*which, please remember, is a fancy word for 'secret'*) crime. Where witchcraft was suspected, there was no 'crime scene' that could be scrutinized, no murder weapon (the devil?!?) that could be found, no alibi that could be established, no witnesses to be interrogated (with the exception, of course, of fellow witches present at the sabbat(h), a subject we will return to in future weeks). Indeed, witchcraft was unlike any other crime because it was unclear even whether a crime had actually been *committed*. The existence of a crime had to be established from the circumstances, deduced more from emotional responses than from facts—an angry exchange with a neighbour with an ill reputation perhaps?

The question, then, becomes: how was this evidentiary problem (i.e., a problem to do with evidence) solved? In one sense, the answer is very obvious: torture played an important role in extracting confessions, not only on the continent and in Scotland but also in some English witch-hunts. Our primary source of the week provides a very good example of how torture was used to 'create' a truth that the judges wanted to hear, confirming them in their already formed opinions. Yet, torture is not the universal answer to all questions and its use raises or reinforces others, such as:

Questions:

✓ What impact did different legal procedures have on conviction rates?

✓ ....

✓ ....

✓ ....

✓ ....

Secondary Reading (Please read at least THREE of the following):

✓ Brian Levack, *The Witch-Hunt in Early Modern Europe*, 4th ed. (London, 2016), chap. 3;
✓ Brian Levack, 'Witchcraft and the Law', in Brian P. Levack, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe and Colonial America* (Oxford, 2013), chap. 26;
✓ Robin Briggs, *Witches and Neighbours: The Social and Cultural Context of European Witchcraft*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 2002), chap. 4;
✓ Alfred Soman, 'The Parlement of Paris and the Great Witch Hunt (1565–1640)', *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 9/2 (1978): 31–44;
✓ Malcolm Gaskill, 'Witchcraft and Evidence in Early Modern England', *Past and Present,* 198 (2008): 33-70;
✓ Jan Machielsen, *Martin Delrio: Demonology and Scholarship in the Counter-Reformation* (Oxford, 2015), chap. 11;

- ✓ John Tedeschi, 'Inquisitorial Law and the Witch', in Bengt Ankarloo and Gustav Henningsen, *Early Modern European Witchcraft: Centres and Peripheries* (Oxford, 1990), 83–120.

This week we will read our first witchcraft trial, set in 1627 Eichstätt (not 1637, Levack misread the date), a small independent prince-bishopric (a territory ruled by a Catholic bishop) in present-day Bavaria, which saw a lot of witch-hunting. Contrary to what Levack claims, we do know the name of the accused witch: Maria Richter. If the witch-hunt in Eichstätt (on how to pronounce ä, click here) is of interest to you, have a look at Jonathan Durrant, *Witchcraft, Gender and Society in Early Modern Germany* (Boston, 2007), which we will be reading parts of later this semester. Unfortunately, reading trial records can be grim business, as it is in this instance. Please do try to read it closely, its awful subject matter notwithstanding. If you can, try and imagine yourself not only in the role of the witch but also place yourself in the shoes of her persecutors.

One tip: perhaps what is *not* said is more noticeable and more important than what is said?

Source Text:

- ✓ 'The Witch-Hunt in Eichstätt, 1637' in Brian Levack, *The Witchcraft Sourcebook*, 2nd ed. (London, 2015), 219–26.

Week 5 30 October	The Law II: How to Interpret Legal Sources

This week we will continue with the legal aspects of witchcraft, but we will change tack, focussing our attention on issues of methodology and the question of how (witchcraft) historians can best approach legal evidence. For historians interested in the lives of ordinary folk, no type of sources is more important than legal documents. Trial documents give us a glimpse of the lives of ordinary people, who could not read or write, and whose perspective would otherwise have been almost impossible to recover.

And yet, before we start counting our chickens and our lucky stars, we need to confront the difficulties inherent in using legal documents. It might be very tempting to treat them as sworn statements of the truth, in front of witnesses no less. But no, we know this will not do—as the trial we looked at last week shows, these statements are *not* truthful accounts. We need to be just as careful with those parts of the testimony <u>before</u> torture commences and the broomsticks start flying. These documents are, after all, recorded by the interrogators. Also, we should not forget that both accusers and accused have their own agendas, presenting the other side in the worst possible light. We will also reflect on the role of the law in witchcraft. Does the fact that trial records are such an important source mean that witchcraft was primarily a legal/criminal problem?

Secondary Literature (only two items this week, don't get used to it!):

- ✓ Marion Gibson, *Reading Witchcraft: Stories of Early English Witches* (London, 1999), chap. 2. This chapter focuses on trials as reported in pamphlets but the issues at stake are virtually identical;
- ✓ John Arnold, 'The Historian as Inquisitor: The Ethics of Interrogating Subaltern Voices', *Rethinking History*, 2/3 (1998): 379–86. This article does not discuss witchcraft, but rather the persecution of the Cathars, a late medieval heretical group in southwestern France. The issue of how to interpret legal sources, however, is much the same.

Both secondary sources discuss some of the issues historians face when they try to interpret legal sources. Bear these problems in mind when you read our primary source. We will spend the majority of our seminar discussing in depth one witchcraft trial (to illustrate how much can be learned from it, if we are patient and attentive). Jeanne, the wife of Demenge Mercier from the small village of Autrepierre in Lorraine (now eastern France) appears to have killed herself in prison on 7 September 1613 to avoid execution for witchcraft.

I would like you to choose one of the main four characters in this drama: Jeanne, and three of her principal accusers, Anne and Claude Jean Clerc, and Demenge de Nohegny. Be prepared to speak for about **five** minutes about 'your' character's point of view. (We will need four short presentations, so perhaps agree who does what amongst yourselves?)

Source Text:

- ✓ Case B 3345; trial of Jeanne wife of Demenge Mercier, d'Autrepierre. Transcribed and translated by Robin Briggs. (Not to be reproduced without prior permission.)

Week 7 13 November	Gender I: Good Women-Hunting

Why were the vast majority of victims of the early modern witch-hunt women? What can the witch-hunt tell us about early modern gender relations? We already touched on these questions in passing in previous weeks. Now it is time to face them and others head on:

Questions:

- ✓ Was the witch-hunt the product of misogyny?
- ✓ ....
- ✓ ....
- ✓ ....
- ✓ ....

The role of gender in the early modern witch-hunt is a complicated issue. The worldviews of historians have shaped their perspective of the witch-hunt. Also, there are many interrelated strands to this story. Belief in the inferiority of women was rooted in the Bible and the Church Fathers, in particular the story of Adam and Eve. Saint Augustine, the most influential of all the Fathers, felt that 'if God had wanted Adam to have a partner in scintillating conversation he would have created another man.' Misogynistic beliefs were also sustained by medical theories (we shall discuss the female maladies of hysteria and melancholy some other week), by philosophy, and by the law. Double standards, accordingly, were everywhere: married women were punished much more harshly for adultery, they were often not allowed to own property or even testify in court (witchcraft was one exception). Even in witchcraft cases, demonologists argued that their testimony should count as one-third or one-fourth of that of a man.

You may disagree with some of the texts on the reading list below and find others disagreeable. Indeed, if you do not disagree with some of the authors below, you have not read widely enough. Remember to focus on the underlying issues and to identify the underlying assumptions made by each scholar.

Secondary Literature (Please read at least THREE of the following):

- ✓ Lyndal Roper, *Witch Craze: Terror and Fantasy in Baroque Germany* (New Haven, 2004), esp. chap. 6;
- ✓ Alison Rowlands, 'Witchcraft and Gender in Early Modern Europe' in Brian Levack, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe and Colonial America* (Oxford, 2013), 449-467;
- ✓ Marianne Hester, 'Patriarchal reconstruction and witch hunting', in Barry et al., eds., *Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe: Studies in Culture and Belief* (Cambridge, 1996), 288-308;
- ✓ Anne Barstow, *Witchcraze: A New History of the European Witch Hunts* (San Francisco, 1994);

- ✓ Alison Rowlands, 'Witchcraft and Old Women in Early Modern Germany', *Past and Present*, 173 (2001): 50-89;
- ✓ Clive Holmes, 'Women: Witnesses and Witches', *Past and Present*, 140 (1993): 45–78;
- ✓ Stuart Clark, 'The "Gendering" of Witchcraft in French Demonology: Misogyny or Polarity?', *French History*, 5/4 (1991): 426-37.

PS If you have never 'done' gender before, please make sure to read the following two important essays by way of introduction: Joan W. Scott, 'Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis', *The American Historical Review*, 91/5 (1986): 1053–75; Natalie Zemon Davis, 'Women on Top', in her *Society and Culture in Early Modern France: Eight Essays* (London, 1975), 124–51.

Ursula Götz, whose 1627 trial for witchcraft we will be looking at this week, may seem to fit the stereotype of the witch almost completely. (Indeed, Lyndal Roper used the trial to introduce her *Witch Craze* book, so you may wish to compare your interpretation of the trial with hers.) Ursula, who in the trial documents is called Götzin (-in being a feminine ending in German), was an elderly unmarried woman who was perceived as a threat by society. Yet, not every elderly woman was deemed a witch. Witches were *made*. They were a product of (dysfunctional) relationships. When reading the trial, therefore, look closely at Ursula's relationship with others, in particular her relatives. Why did her family and neighbours fear her so much? How did they (re-)interpret her behaviour as witchcraft? What was the trigger that led to her persecution? And why was she not persecuted earlier?

Source Text:

- ✓ The trial for the crime of witchcraft of Ursula Götz(-in) of Marchtal, in Southwest Germany in 1627. Transcribed and translated by Lyndal Roper. (Not to be reproduced without prior permission.)

Week 8 20 November	Village Life I: Anger Management Issues

Witchcraft was quintessentially a rural crime. This is not to say that no witchcraft persecutions took place in towns and cities. Some cities saw extensive witch-hunting, but most saw very few or even no trials, in part because town magistrates were wary of them. Towns and cities were proverbial and real tinderboxes. Magistrates knew that witch-hunting could release forces beyond their control. By contrast, on the countryside judges were often barely educated and cared less about proper procedure. (This is why an overwhelmingly rural territory with weak rulers like the Duchy of Lorraine which saw no major panics, still had a high persecution and execution rate.) Yet, there are other factors that contributed to rural witch-hunting, more important and less condescending than the lack of education.

The relationships between villagers make up one important factor. If you (like the module convenor) hail from a small village, you will have experienced the necessity of living in forced and close proximity with narrow-minded neighbours whom you can neither stand nor avoid. Perhaps, the most striking aspect of witchcraft accusations is how long-standing some of suspicions were—in some cases, going back generations before the witch was even born. At the same time, as we noted, the European countryside was perceptibly changing, generating winners and (many more) losers but the nature and cause of these changes were not fully understood and inspired fear and anxiety. Bear all these issues in mind while reading the secondary sources and the source text.

Questions:

- ✓ Why were villagers willing to tolerate suspected witches amongst their midst?
- ✓ ....
- ✓ ....
- ✓ ....
- ✓ ....

(Obligatory) Secondary Literature:

- ✓ Annabel Gregory, 'Witchcraft, Politics and "Good Neighbourhood" in early 17th-century Rye', *Past and Present*, 133 (1991): 31-66. Admittedly, Rye is a town, not a village, but Gregory's still apply;
- ✓ Edward Bever, 'Witchcraft, Female Aggression, and Power in the Early Modern Community,' *Journal of Social History*, 35/4 (2002): 955-988;
- ✓ Lauren Martin, 'The Devil and the Domestic: Witchcraft, Quarrels and Women's Work in Scotland', in Julian Goodare, ed., *The Scottish Witch-hunt in Context* (Manchester, 2002), 73-89.

Our primary source of the week is the somewhat happier case (because it ended in a release under caution) of the servant woman Mengeotte, the daughter of Didier Le Compaing, from the tiny Lorraine hamlet of Develine, not far from Strassburg. Pay attention to the relationships between accusers and accused, but also note how suspicions were activated through the exchange of food and services. As in previous cases, the witnesses

imply causal connections without making them clear. Why do you think Mengeotte was released?

Source Text:

- ✓ B 8669 no 4; Mengeotte daughter of Didier Le Compaing, of Develine, ban d'Anould. Transcribed and translated by Robin Briggs. (Not to be reproduced without prior permission.)

Week 9 27 November	Village Life II: Witches as Healers?

Witchcraft was a legal crime but, as we have seen, the villagers of early modern Europe only resorted to it in extreme cases. They had a whole range of informal strategies at their exposal, alternately placating, threatening or abusing suspected witches, to get their way. This also suggests that more was at stake than justice. Many of the crimes of witches revolved about the health and/or death of livestock and family. The belief that she who harms can also cure (and *vice versa*) motivated the actions of many who believed they were afflicted with witchcraft. Restoration, then, was often more important than retribution, and health often trumped justice. Even court cases—and perhaps the trial of Johannes Kepler's mother is the most famous example of this—were often prompted by 'victims' who simply wanted to be cured. (There was a widespread belief that a witch's curses would stop with her death.)

So-called 'white witches' or cunning folk played a role in the medical marketplace. They did not only act as healers, they also helped to identify 'real' witches and recover stolen treasure. Before we denounce them as charlatans we should remember that the practices of licensed physicians at the time were hardly more successful (and that the NHS still funds three homeopathy hospitals today). They also had plenty of enemies at the time. In the eyes of some theologians, white witches were even worse than 'black' ones (because they were in essence 'black' demonic witches in disguise, wolves in sheep clothing, tempting people away from the true faith). However, the fact that they often operated with impunity tells us that the picture was much more complex.

Questions:

- ✓ What can these white witches tell us about witchcraft belief more widely?
- ✓ In what ways can we see witchcraft accusations as an attempted cure?
- ✓ ....
- ✓ ....
- ✓ ....

Secondary Literature (Please read at least THREE of the following):

- ✓ Sally Scully, 'Marriage or a Career? Witchcraft as an Alternative in Seventeenth-Century Venice', *Journal of Social History* 28/4 (1995): 857–76. Obviously, Venice is not a village but the argument of the essay applies more widely;
- ✓ Robin Briggs, *The Witches of Lorraine* (Oxford, 2007), chap. 7;
- ✓ Owen Davies, *Cunning-folk: Popular Magic in English History* (London, 2003), chap. 2;
- ✓ David Harley, 'Historians as Demonologists: The Myth of the Midwife Witch', *Social History of Medicine*, 3/1 (1990): 1–26;
- ✓ Thomas Robisheaux, 'Witchcraft and Forensic Medicine in Seventeenth-Century Germany' in Stuart Clark, ed., *Languages of Witchcraft* (Basingstoke, 2001): 197–216;
- ✓ Emma Wilby, *Cunning Folk and Familiar Spirits: Shamanistic Visionary Traditions in Early Modern British Witchcraft and Magic* (Brighton, 2005), chap. 2;

- ✓ Willem de Blécourt, 'Witch Doctors, Soothsayers, and Priests. On Cunning Folk in European Historiography and Tradition', *Social History* 19/3 (1994): 285–303.
- ✓ Amos Megged, 'Magic, Popular Medicine and Gender in Seventeenth-Century Mexico: The Case of Isobel de Montoya', *Social History* 19/ 2 (1994): 189-207.

Instead of a trial document, our source for the week is an extract from George Gifford's *A Dialogue concerning Witches* (1593) in which a number of fictional characters discuss the best course of action in an equally fictitious case of witchcraft, including the consultation of cunning folk. Gifford was a Puritan minister in the village (now town) of Maldon and in his book (through the figure of the schoolmaster), he took on a didactic tone, attempting to teach his readers the right course of action when witchcraft was suspected. (This type of work is often described as 'pastoral demonology'.) What makes Gifford's text truly remarkable is that his analysis feels very 'modern', yet he never rejects the possibility of witchcraft. Why does Gifford think that villagers believe witchcraft was at play? Why does he think they villagers consult cunning folk? What does he object to most? And what would he like his flock to do instead? How would you characterize Gifford's own witchcraft beliefs?

Source Text:

- ✓ George Gifford, *A Dialogue concerning Witches and Witchcrafts* (London, 1593). Extract on Learning Central.

Week 10 4 December	Mega-Hunts: A Mega-Mystery?

What we have learned over the preceding few weeks is that we can actually understand the motivations of individual accusers and accused relatively well. Of course, there are limitations to what we can learn and we cannot really predict the when, where, and who. (Or why witchcraft accusations did not happen after other misfortunes?). We have also seen more than a glimpse of the strategy of accusers, the behaviour that 'makes' a witch, and the legal procedure used against her. The more we understand trials of this sort, self-contained as they often are, the less we seem to understand those so-called 'super-hunts' that saw the deaths of dozens or hundreds of people.

When considering these under-studied 'super-hunts', political circumstances often seem very important, especially when we recognize that some of the largest hunts took place in one particular type of territory in Germany, the so-called prince-bishoprics, where secular (state) and religious power were confined in the hands of the same person (see the table to the right, taken from Wolfgang Behinger's not unproblematic *Witches and Witch-Hunts: A Global History*).

We may also consider physical geography. Some of the great hunts (like the one in the Basque country, which we will look at next week, or the Pendle witch-hunt in Lancashire) took place in

Table 4.2 The witch-bishops

Victims	State	Ruling bishop	Persecution
2,000	Electorate Cologne	Ferdinand von Bayern	1624–34
900	Bishopric Würzburg	Philipp Adolf von Ehrenberg	1626–30
768	Electorate Mainz	Georg Friedrich von Greiffenklau	1626–9
650	Electorate Mainz	Johann Adam von Bicken	1602–4
600	Bishopric Bamberg	Johann Georg II Fuchs von Dornheim	1626–30
550	Ellwangen/Eichstätt	Johann Christoph von Westerstetten	1611–30
361	Electorate Mainz	Johann Schweikhard von Cronberg	1616–18
350	Electorate Trier	Johann VII von Schönenberg	1581–99
300	Bishopric Würzburg	Julius Echter von Mespelbrunn	1616–18

border regions. Salem, of course, lay at the very edge of the known world. Other witch-hunts, (think the Essex/East Anglia witch-hunt of the 1640s) took place during times of political instability or when central authority collapsed. We may also look at the types of accusers and accused for commonalities. For instance, children played a role in a number of witch-hunts (the Basque country, Trier in the 1580s, Sweden in the 1670s, the Zaubererjackl trials in Salzburg in the 1670s and 80s) either as accusers or as accused. When you do your reading, then, try and look for as many similarities and differences as you can.

Questions:

✓ How did these panics differ from 'normal' (endemic rather than epidemic) levels of witch-hunting?

✓ ....

✓ ....

✓ ....

✓ ....

Secondary Literature (Please read at least THREE of the following):

- ✓ Wolfgang Behringer, *Witches and Witch-Hunts: A Global History* (Cambridge, 2004), chap. 4. This is not a study of one witch-hunt but rather a panorama overview of the early modern witch-hunt, which focusses on large-scale hunts to the point of obsession. (Yes, I have strong reservations, but it can still make a useful intro);
- ✓ Bengt Ankarloo, 'Sweden: The Mass Burnings (1668-1676)', in Bengt Ankarloo and Gustav Henningsen, eds, *Early Modern European Witchcraft: Centres and Peripheries* (Oxford, 1990), 285–317;
- ✓ Wolfgang Behringer, *Witchcraft Persecutions in Bavaria: Popular Magic, Religious Zealotry and Reason of State in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, 1997), chap. 3;
- ✓ Brian Levack, 'The Great Scottish Witch Hunt of 1661–1662', *Journal of British Studies*, 20/1 (1980): 90-108;
- ✓ Julian Goodare, 'The Scottish Witchcraft Panic of 1597', in Julian Goodare, ed., *The Scottish Witch-Hunt in Context* (Manchester, 2002), 51–72.
- ✓ Jonathan Durrant, *Witchcraft, Gender and Society in Early Modern Germany* (Leiden, 2007), introduction and chap. 1. [On the witch-hunt in Eichstätt].

The witch-hunt in Trier, another prince-bishopric, was one of the most ferocious in history, the product of extraordinary bad weather and failed harvests, fears about attacks on the prince-bishop, and the setting up of special commissions. Although particularly deadly and relatively early (see the table above), the hunt is most notable for its unusual number of high-profile elite male victims, including the figure of Dr Dietrich Flade, a former University vice-chancellor, law professor, and judge (responsible actually for a number of witchcraft executions). Flade's reputation as a witch also plays a role in the confession below. How does this trial differ from the ones we have looked at before? What do you make of the actions of the village mayor?

Source Text:

- ✓ 'Confession of Niclas Fiedler at Trier, 1591', in Brian Levack, *The Witchcraft Sourcebook*, 2nd ed. (Routledge, 2015), 198–201.

Week 11	
11 December	A Case Study: Terror in the French Basque Country

The witch-hunt that shook the territory of the Pays de Labourd (pronounce: Pay-EE de La-BOOO-r) in the south-west of France in the summer and autumn of 1609 was without parallel in the history of the French *ancien régime* and has long ranked amongst continental Europe's most infamous. It was the sole hunt in the kingdom of France to result in mass executions, with at least eighty women and men losing their lives. The persecution is inextricably linked to one man, the Bordeaux judge Pierre de Lancre (1556-1631), who presided over trials there in 1609. His subsequent account, the *Tableau de l'inconstance des mauvais anges et démons* (A Tableau [Portrait?] of the inconstancy of evil angels and demons, 1612) is well-known for its gendered and highly eroticised depiction of the witches' sabbat. Yet, despite De Lancre's vivid account, historians know very little about what happened in the French Basque country (more is known about Basque witchcraft on the Spanish side). Much of our knowledge is based on assumptions, and on trusting Pierre de Lancre's account—essentially condemning him out of his own mouth or hanging him with his own rope. My current research project is a new history of this witch-hunt. The reading below provides some important background information. During your reading, reflect on what ingredients are needed for a witch-hunt and on what makes a witch-hunter.

Questions:

- ✓ How have historians' assumptions shaped our understanding of the witch-hunt in the French Basque country?
- ✓ What was the role of geography?
- ✓ What role do you think children play in this witch-hunt?

(Obligatory) Secondary Literature:

- ✓ Julio Caro Baroja, *The World of the Witches* (Chicago, 1965), chaps 11–12;
- ✓ Margaret M. McGowan, 'Pierre de Lancre's Tableau de l'Inconstance des Mauvais Anges et Demons: The Sabbat Sensationalised', in Sydney Anglo, ed., *The Damned Art: Essays in The Literature of Witchcraft* (London, 1977), 182–201;
- ✓ Jan Machielsen, 'Thinking with Montaigne: Evidence, Scepticism and Meaning in Early Modern Demonology', *French History*, 25/4 (2011): 427–452.

The last article is *very* difficult. (I should know, I wrote it!) Michel de Montaigne was the most famous French author of the sixteenth century. He was a famous sceptic—his motto was 'What do I know?'—and he was the 'inventor' of the essay ('essay' in French means 'attempt'). However, Montaigne was also curiously related to not one, but two demonologists, including De Lancre. This article explores how Martin Delrio and Pierre de Lancre discussed Montaigne and argues that in their method of argument they are more similar to him than you might think.

Pierre de Lancre was more than simply a judge, he was also an author, known for its very Baroque style (that is, rich in metaphors and other stylistic figures). In France, he is more often read in literature than history departments. In his *Tableau*, De Lancre also approached the Pays de Labourd almost as a modern anthropologist would and tried to

explain why witchcraft was particularly prominent there. How did he contrast himself, as an elite French male, against the Basque-speaking inhabitants of the Pays de Labourd? What reasons did he offer for the existence of Basque witchcraft? And what role does gender play in his analysis?

Source Text:

✓ Translation (considerably) adapted from Pierre de Lancre, *On the Inconstancy of Witches*, transl. Harriet Stone and Gerhild Scholz Williams (Tempe AZ, 2006), Book 1, Discourse II = pp. 47-65.

Spring Semester 2019

Week 1 29 January	Witchcraft Representations: Witches on Display and on Stage

Pierre de Lancre's *Tableau* teaches us that demonological literature, perhaps unexpectedly, could also be part of the culture of entertainment. We may find this distasteful, but it should not surprise us for a variety of reasons. First of all, it is neither strange nor improbable that the early modern witch-hunt caught the attention of artists, playwrights and pamphleteers. Secondly, as we have already seen, witchcraft elicited a wide range of emotions, not simply fear. (And in any case, the exploration of fear is also part of entertainment – take modern horror films, for example.) Witchcraft pamphlets, although also part of the emerging news culture, were certainly sensationalist as titles such as *A Most Wicked Worke of a Wretched Witch* (1592) and *The Wonderfull Discoverie of Witches* (1612) already suggest. (Clearly, *The Daily Mail* did not invent the wheel.)

This week, we will be looking at how visual artists and playwrights used witchcraft to tell their own stories, how they disseminated ideas about witchcraft, and how in some cases they even conveyed a measure of scepticism. Art, of course, not only reflects society but also seeks to change or critique it. It is unfortunate, then, that we very rarely know how contemporary audiences responded to plays and images. (This is even true for famous plays, like Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, partly because they only became really famous after his death.)

Questions:

- ✓ What can plays and images teach us about witchcraft belief in general?
- ✓ ....
- ✓ ....
- ✓ ....
- ✓ ....

Secondary Reading:

Please read:

- ✓ Lyndal Roper, 'Witchcraft and the Western Imagination', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 6th Series, 16, (2006): 117-141.

And then read at least TWO of the following:

- ✓ Charles Zika, *The Appearance of Witchcraft* (London, 2007), chap. 1;
- ✓ Diane Purkiss, *The Witch in History: Early Modern and Twentieth-Century Representations* (London, 1996), chaps. 8 and 9;
- ✓ Charles Zika 'Cannibalism and Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe: Reading the Visual Images', *History Workshop Journal*, 44 (1997): 77-105;
- ✓ Chris Brooks, 'Witchcraft and Stage Spectacle: Spectacular Witches after 1604', in John Newton and Jo Bath, eds, *Witchcraft and the Act of 1604* (Leiden, 2008), 147-160;
- ✓ Stuart Clark, *Vanities of the Eye: Vision in Early Modern European Culture* (Oxford, 2007), chap. 7 [on Macbeth].

Our primary source text is *The Witch of Edmonton*, a play written by Thomas Dekker and others, and based on a true story (there really is nothing new under the sun). Its main character, an old woman called Elizabeth Sawyer, had been executed for witchcraft on 19 April 1621. The play draws heavily on Henry Goodcole's *The Wonderful Discoverie of Elizabeth Sawyer, Witch* (1621) (edited by Marion Gibson in her collection of witchcraft pamphlets, if you are interested) and performed later that same year. Unlike the pamphlet on which it was based, however, *The Witch of Edmonton* presents a surprisingly sympathetic, 'human' version of Elizabeth Sawyer. During your reading compare what you know about the image of the early modern witch with your impression of Sawyer. Who was ultimately responsible for her becoming a witch? And how appropriate is the description 'a tragi-comedy' on the title page (above)?

Source Text:
- ✓ William Rowley, Thomas Dekker and John Ford, *Witch of Edmonton* (1999), Act 2:1 (pp. 50-63).

Week 2 5 February	Gender II: Abnormal (?) Male Witches

Women made up about 80% of victims of the early modern witch-hunt. If historians, such as Keith Thomas and Alan Macfarlane, originally saw no need to explain this, male witches only started receiving proper historical attention in the early 2000s. Before then, attempts were made to explain 'away' their existence. Men accused of witchcraft, it was argued, were often related to female witches or fell victim to the witch-hunt as it spiralled out of control when gendered stereotypes broke down (remember Dr Flade?). Although these arguments certainly hold true in some or many cases (we have learned that witchcraft suspicions often centred on families, for instance), we have come to realize that they do not capture the whole picture and that men certainly could be suspected and accused of witchcraft in their own right. If witchcraft suspicions quite often occurred in the domestic sphere and centred on issues of health and well-being, then it should not surprise us that particular groups (priests, shepherd boys) were also regular subjects of suspicion.

In addition, there is the more difficult issue of whether, as Lara Apps and Andrew Gow argue, male and female witches shared certain feminine characteristics: 'Women were by pre-modern lights more prone to weak-mindedness, but men were by no means immune; and, like women, foolish men represented threats to the (patriarchal) social order.'[1] Or were male witches, as Alison Rowlands put it, 'perceived to have contravened the norms of *masculine* behaviour'?[2] (Or both?) In your reading, you will have to evaluate how convincing you find these arguments.

Questions:

- ✓ What, if anything, did male and female witches share?
- ✓ ....
- ✓ ....
- ✓ ....
- ✓ ....

Secondary Reading:

Please read:

- ✓ Lara Apps and Andrew Gow, *Male Witches in Early Modern Europe* (Manchester, 2003), pp. 1–24;
- ✓ Alison Rowlands, ed., introduction to *Witchcraft and Masculinities in Early Modern Europe* (Basingstoke, 2009), pp. 1–30.

And then choose ONE case study:

- ✓ Rita Voltmer, 'Men as Accused Witches in the Holy Roman Empire', in Alison Rowlands, ed., *Witchcraft and Masculinities in Early Modern Europe*, pp. 52–73;

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[1] Lara Apps and Andrew Gow, *Male Witches in Early Modern Europe* (Manchester, 2003), p. 13.

[2] Alison Rowlands, ed., introduction to *Witchcraft and Masculinities in Early Modern Europe* (Basingstoke, 2009), p. 17. Emphasis added.

- ✓ Jonathan Durrant, 'Why Some Men and Not Others? The Male Witches of Eichstätt', in Rowlands, ed., *Witchcraft and Masculinities*, pp. 100–120;
- ✓ Malcolm Gaskill, 'Masculinity and Witchcraft in Seventeenth-Century England', in Rowlands, ed., *Witchcraft and Masculinities*, pp. 171–190;
- ✓ Robin Briggs, 'Male Witches', in his *Witches of Lorraine* (Oxford, 2007), pp. 331–368.

The Tragicall History of the Life and Death of Doctor Faustus. With new Additions. Written by Ch. Mar.

Printed at London for *John Wright*, and are to be sold at his shop without Newgate, 1624.

One particularly 'male' version of the witch was that of the learned (or at least, literate) male magician. Late medieval and early modern manuscript spell books abound, and there is some good evidence that Reginald Scot's sceptical *The Discoverie of Witchcraft* (1584), which discussed spells rather too openly, was used as a practical manual. Perhaps the most well-known early modern *magus* (whose story seems to have some basis in fact) was the figure of Dr Johann Faustus. His story was brought to the English stage by Christopher Marlowe, a direct contemporary of Shakespeare. During your reading ask yourself, why Faust made a pact with the devil? What was he after? How does his story, and his attributes, differ from that of the 'feminine' witch?
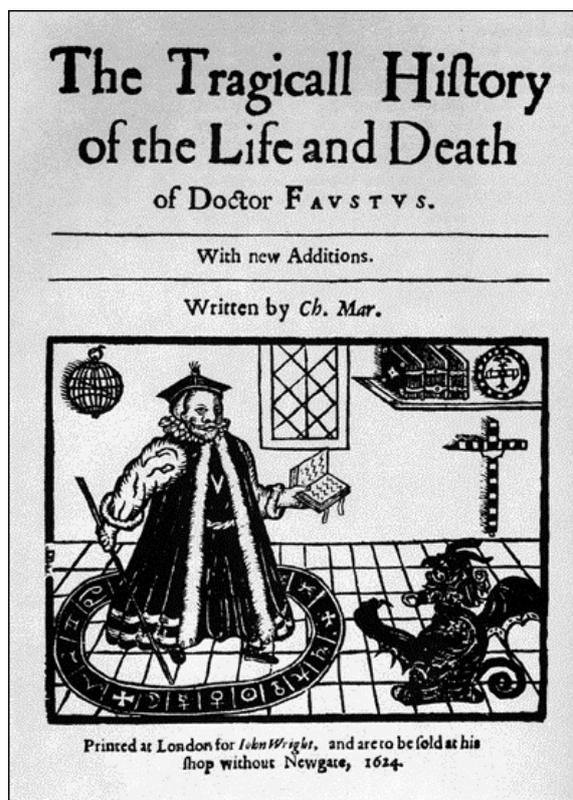
Source Text:

- ✓ Christopher Marlowe, *Doctor Faustus with the English Faust Book*, ed. David Wootton (2005), Acts II.i (pp. 22-29), III.i (pp. 38-43), V.ii (pp. 60-65).

Week 3 12 February	Gender III: Youth and Old Age

The standard image of a witch was a woman who, as the witchcraft sceptic Reginald Scot pointed out, 'be commonly old, lame, blear-eyed, pale, foul, and full of wrinkles'. Older women were a likely target for witchcraft accusations, partly because suspicions took a long time to build up, but also because the post-menopausal body inspired fear and revulsion, in ways that we have not quite yet studied properly. Less attention, still, has been paid to the role played by children and teenagers in the early modern witch-hunt. Both as accusers and as accused, children and their fantasies could act as a catalyst for witch-hunting. This week we will be looking at the role played by the young and the old in the early modern witch-hunt, and ask whether there is anything that ties them together.

To do so, we need to delve into the subconscious fears of the early modern period even more than we usually do. This will be the week, then, when we employ psychological and psychoanalytical approaches most explicitly. We need to try and understand what made the bodies of old women especially repugnant in the eyes of contemporaries. The subject of child witchcraft, in particular, presents us with some of the most gut wrenching questions we will be facing this year, and their potential contemporary relevance is clear (*e.g.* the panic surrounding alleged Satanic ritual abuse in the 1980s) but must not be overstated.

Questions:

✓ What caused children to voluntarily confess or to accuse others?

✓ ....

✓ ....

✓ ....

✓ ....

Secondary Reading (Please read at least THREE of the following):

✓ Lyndal Roper, '"Evil Imaginings and Fantasies": Child-Witches and the End of the Witch Craze', *Past & Present*, 167 (2000): 107–139;

✓ Anita M. Walker and Edmund H. Dickerman, 'Magdeleine des Aymards: Demonism or Child Abuse in Early Modern France', *The Psychohistory Review*, 24/3 (1996): 239–264;

✓ Robert S. Walinski-Kiehl, 'The Devil's Children: Child Witch-Trials in Early Modern Germany', *Continuity and Change*, 11/2 (1996): 171–189;

✓ Liv Helene Willumsen, 'Children accused of witchcraft in 17th-century Finnmark', *Scandinavian Journal of History*, 38/1 (2013): 18-41;

✓ Alison Rowlands, 'Witchcraft and Old Women in Early Modern Germany', *Past and Present*, 173 (2001): 50-89.

Our next witchcraft trial is that of Juditha Wagner in the German Imperial town of Augsburg in 1689. Juditha is twenty-years old at the time, but the judges record that this 'is hardly to be believed because of the smallness of her stature.' Her behaviour may also strike you as childlike. Certainly, the accusations against her emerge in part out of her childhood and

her interaction with other children. One thing that you will also find noticeable is the rather strange (and strained) family dynamic out of which the accusations against Juditha seem to emerge. What, you think, prompted the accusations against her? What led Juditha to confess? Where do you think these stories came from? And why did the judges, knowing of 'the smallness of her stature', take her account seriously? (Lyndal Roper discusses this case in her *Witch Craze* book – you can find a scan of the pages containing her interpretation on Learning Central.)

Source Text:
- ✓ The trial of Juditha Wagner. Transcribed and translated by Lyndal Roper. (Not to be reproduced without prior permission.)

Week 4	
19 February	Gender IV: Werewolves

Where witches were overwhelmingly female, werewolves were almost exclusively male. Of course, there were considerably fewer of them. It has been estimated that there were no more than 300 werewolf trials across Europe over the early modern period. Partly because of the sensationalist nature of the accused crimes, some of these trials were highly publicized. For contemporaries, werewolves raised a number of tricky questions that witches that witchcraft did not. The concept of animal transformation was distasteful for both philosophical and religious reasons, so how these transformations actually happened or appeared to happen was actively debated. In other respects though, werewolves as allies of the devil were very much like witches. Given the similarities and differences, the comparison between witches and werewolves can inform our understanding of many aspects of their alleged crimes, perhaps especially the different gendered nature of both.

Questions:

- ✓ Why were werewolves more often men?
- ✓ ....
- ✓ ....
- ✓ ....
- ✓ ....

Secondary Reading (Please read at least THREE of the following):

- ✓ Jan Machielsen, 'The Making of a Teen Wolf: Pierre de Lancre's Confrontation with Jean Grenier (1603-1610)', *Folklore* (forthcoming; final pre-published version on Learning Central);
- ✓ Willem de Blécourt, 'The Werewolf, the Witch, and the Warlock: Aspects of Gender in the Early Modern Period', in Alison Rowlands, ed., *Witchcraft and Masculinities in Early Modern Europe* (Basingstoke, 2009), pp. 191–214;
- ✓ Willem de Blécourt, 'A Journey to Hell: Reconsidering the Livonian "Werewolf"', *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft* 2/1 (2007): 49–67;
- ✓ Rolf Schulte, 'The Persecution of Men as Werewolves in Burgundy', in his *Man as Witch: Male Witches in Central Europe* (Basingstoke, 2009), pp. 8–35;
- ✓ Brett D. Hirsch, 'Lycanthropy in Early Modern England: The Case of John Webster's The Duchess of Malfi' in Yasmin Haskell, ed., *Diseases of the Imagination and Imaginary Disease in the Early Modern Period* (Turnhout, 2011), pp. 297–337.
- ✓ Willem de Blécourt, ed., *Werewolf Histories* (Basingstoke, 2015).

The case of Peter Stumpp, who was executed in a small town near Cologne in 1589, was perhaps the most famous werewolf case of the entire early modern period. In fact, the case was so famous that one pamphlet was even translated into English the following year.

Source Text:

- ✓ 'A True Discourse Declaring the Damnable Life and Death of One Stubbe Peeter, A Most Wicked Sorcerer, Who in the Likeness of a Wolf Committed Many Murders', in Charlotte F. Otten, ed., *A Lycanthropy Reader: Werewolves in Western Culture* (Syracuse, NY, 1986), pp. 69–76.

Week 5 26 February	Demonology: Why did Elite Men believe in Witches?

As you will have seen, most hand- and textbooks of the early modern witch-hunt open with a chapter on demonology or 'intellectual foundations'. The reasons for this are various. Social historians are not very comfortable with intellectual history and would rather like to get the subject out of the way first. Demonology may also seem irrelevant to the wider story of the witch-hunt. Hugh Trevor-Roper's claims about the influence of particular authors on particular territories (*e.g.* 'the Catholic reconquest which introduced witch-burning into Flanders, and the Jesuit del Rio who would keep it up') are now met mostly with derision. The link between the realm of (elite) ideas and that of actual beliefs and practices was by no means as straightforward. Nor was it one-way. As we have seen with the case of Pierre de Lancre, demonological texts could also *reflect* witch-hunts, rather than promote them.

Yet, demonological ideas were by no means insignificant. Without an intellectual rationale, without the demonic pact and criminal law codes, there would have been no witch-hunting. Just as importantly, the study of demonology also teaches us (or reminds us of) the versatility of beliefs about witches and demons. As we saw when we discussed representations of witchcraft, witches elicited a wide range of emotions beyond fear and this is borne out in the demonological literature as well. Pierre de Lancre's *Tableau* has been labelled a work of 'scholarly pornography', Nicolas Remy turned demonology into neo-Latin poetry during his vacations. The work of Stuart Clark and others (ahem, me) has shown how demonology, far from the fringe concern of fringe figures, was intimately connected to early modern debates about politics, science, and religion. Seen in this way, demonology—and the devil—serve as a reminder that the early modern period was a different country, whose less savoury aspects cannot be ignored.

The subject of early modern demonology also lends itself to (post-modern) literary approaches, perhaps because witchcraft did *not* exist, and postmodernism sees language as a self-contained system that does not refer to an outside reality anyway. Some of the complexities of this approach, advocated by Stuart Clark, will be unpacked in the lecture, as will be its main advantages and some of the principal criticisms. But please try and bear all of these issues in mind during your reading.

Questions:

- ✓ ....
- ✓ ....
- ✓ ....
- ✓ ....

(Obligatory) Secondary Literature:

- ✓ Stuart Clark, *Thinking with Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford, 1997), chap. 1;
- ✓ Gerhild Scholz Williams, 'Demonologies', in Brian Levack, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe and Colonial America* (Oxford, 2013), pp. 69–83;

✓ Jan Machielsen, *Martin Delrio: Demonology and Scholarship in the Counter-Reformation* (Oxford, 2015), introduction.

Demonology was, almost by definition, all about the defence of orthodoxy against the principal adversaries of both God and mankind, namely the devil and his allies. This makes the demonological treatise by the famous French political thinker Jean Bodin (1530–1596) particularly remarkable because Bodin was anything but orthodox. In his youth, Bodin seemed to have flirted with Protestantism. Later in life, his house was actually searched on suspicion of witchcraft. After his death, a manuscript surfaced which suggested that Bodin had secretly converted to Judaism (needless to say, a much bigger deal then than now). Yet, his decision to write a book about witchcraft is also curious for a second reason. Bodin had established his reputation as a political theorist. His *Six Books of the Commonwealth* (1576) established the absolute authority of monarchs but also contained a passionate plea for religious toleration. What made witches different from heretics? Why did this seemingly tolerant free-thinker take up his pen against them? Which of their crimes did he deem particularly heinous? The two chapters below contain part of the answer to these questions.

Source Text:

✓ Jean Bodin, *On the Demon-Mania of Witches*, trans. Randy A. Scott (Toronto, 2001), bk. 1, chap. 2 (pp. 55–62); bk. 4, chap. 5 (pp. 203–207).

On **Wednesday 27 February at 13:30**, in collaboration with Dr Lisa Tallis, I am organizing an excursion to SCOLAR (Cardiff University Special Collections), where we will look at some of the sixteenth and seventeenth-century witchcraft books in the University collections. The excursion is voluntary, but the idea is that this will give us a chance to talk about books as material objects and as mediators of ideas.

Week 6	
5 March	Scepticism I: Sceptical Physicians and Philosophers

When we discuss witchcraft scepticism, we generally divide the subject between philosophical and judicial scepticism (which we will discuss next week). Judicial scepticism did not question the reality of witchcraft, but rather cast doubt on whether a case of witchcraft could ever be successfully prosecuted. By contrast, philosophical scepticism was much more radical, questioning whether witchcraft was actually possible. As a label though, scepticism is rather misleading for two reasons. Firstly, not all outright scepticism was based on the acceptance of philosophical systems. The new philosophical systems of the seventeenth century developed by René Descartes and Baruch Spinoza significantly *post*-dated the sceptical writings of Reginald Scot and Johann Weyer. Their scepticism was inspired by their religious positions and, in Weyer's case, medical opinions. Secondly, as this already suggests, there was not a single form of scepticism — scepticism<u>s</u> might be just as apt a label.

Questions:

- ✓ What precisely are sceptics sceptical of?
- ✓ ....
- ✓ ....
- ✓ ....
- ✓ ....

Secondary Reading (Please read at least THREE of the following):

- ✓ Walter Stephens, 'The Sceptical Tradition', in Brian Levack, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe and Colonial America* (Oxford, 2013), pp. 101–21;
- ✓ Sydney Anglo, 'Reginald Scot's Discoverie of Witchcraft: Scepticism and Sadduceeism', in Sydney Anglo, ed., *The Damned Art: Essays in the Literature of Witchcraft* (London, 1977), pp. 106–39;
- ✓ G.K. Waite, '"Man is a Devil to Himself'; David Joris and the Rise of a Sceptical Tradition towards the Devil in the Early Modern Netherlands', *Dutch Review of Church History*, 75 (1995): 1–30;
- ✓ Philip C. Almond, *England's First Demonologist: Reginald Scot and 'The Discoverie of Witchcraft'* (London, 2011), chap. 5;
- ✓ Robin Attfield, 'Balthasar Bekker and the Decline of the Witch-Craze: The Old Demonology and the New Philosophy', *Annals of Science* 42, no. 4 (1985): 383–395.

Our source text for this week is an opinion issued on 9 January 1594 by the medical and philosophical faculties of the University of Leiden, the oldest university of the Netherlands, which effectively banned the swimming and ducking of witches. The University had been consulted on the matter by the Court of Holland, shortly after its judges had banned torture in cases of witchcraft trials (in 1593). The two rulings combined (on torture and on the swimming of witches) effectively ended the possibility of successful witchcraft prosecutions in Holland, the most populous and wealthy province of the Netherlands. (There was only one more conviction, in 1608, based on an apparently voluntary confession.) How convincing do you find the reasoning of the University's opinion? Why do

you think took this point of view? And what does it tell you about the use of medical and philosophical knowledge in the wider witchcraft debate?

- ✓ 'Advijs der Hoogleeraren in de Geneeskundige en Wijsgeerige faculteiten te Leyden, aangaande de Waterproef' (Advice of the Professors of the Medical and Philosophical Faculties of Leiden concerning the Swimming of Witches) in Jacobus Scheltema, *Geschiedenis der heksenprocessen: Eene bijdrage tot den roem des Vaderlands* (A History of the Witch Trials: A Contribution to the Glory of the Fatherland, Haarlem, 1828), pp. 81–89. Translated by Jan Machielsen.

Week 7 12 March	Scepticism II: Judicial Scepticism

As already discussed, judicial scepticism centred on whether the crime of witchcraft could ever successfully be proven in a court of law. As you already know, a confession was needed to secure a conviction for the crime of witchcraft, for which torture in turn was generally indispensable. One source of concern for judicial sceptics, accordingly, centred on the reliability of confessions extracted under torture. A second source for concern, however, flowed quite naturally from concerns about the devil's powers of deception. Where 'philosophical' sceptics might want to deny the devil any power at all, their judicial counterparts instead pointed out that Satan could appear as an 'angel of light' (2 Corinthians 11:14) and that he was the 'father of lies' (John 8:44). How could his testimony be trusted? Could the devil masquerade as an innocent person, perhaps, to implicate them in a witchcraft trial?

Questions:

  ✓ What form of scepticism (judicial or philosophical) do you think was more effective?
  ✓ ....
  ✓ ....
  ✓ ....
  ✓ ....

(Obligatory) Secondary Literature:

  ✓ Brian P. Levack, *The Witch-Hunt in Early Modern Europe*, chap. 8;
  ✓ Jan Machielsen, *Martin Delrio: Demonology and Scholarship in the Counter-Reformation* (Oxford, 2015), chap. 11;
  ✓ James S. Amelang, 'Between Doubt and Discretion: Revising the Rules for Prosecuting Spanish Witches', in Günther Lottes et al., eds., *Making, Using and Resisting the Law in European History* (Pisa, 2008), 77–92.

The Scottish judge Sir George Mackenzie (1636/1638–1691) was (at least, seemingly) not a radical witchcraft sceptic. He had been involved in the Great Witch-Hunt of 1660–1661 and the experience made him cautious to say the least. In one of his published pleadings he defended a witch (whom he called 'Maevia' and whose real name, as far as I know, has been lost). What do you make of Mackenzie's pleading? What rhetorical strategies did he employ? What types of evidence does he use? What pitfalls did he avoid? And finally, how persuasive do you find his argument?

Source Text:

  ✓ Sir George Mackenzie, 'For Maevia, Accused of Witchcraft', in *Pleadings, in Some Remarkable Cases, before the Supreme Courts of Scotland, since the year, 1661 to which, the Decisions Are Subjoyn'd* (Edinburgh, 1672), pp. 185–197.

Week 10 2 April	Demonic Possession: Bodies Possessed

Demonic possession and witchcraft are often grouped and discussed together for obvious reasons: both involved the devil and both were essentially gendered phenomena. Like witchcraft, the majority of possession cases involved women. The two were also linked. A witch could be held responsible for cases of possession. It has therefore been argued — not completely convincingly — that cases of mass demonic possession, which could be spectacular public affairs, engendered scepticism about the reality of witchcraft.

Yet, when examined closely, the differences between witchcraft and possession are more striking than the similarities. Two are worth highlighting straightaway. First of all, demonic possession has existed throughout the history of Christianity. It was reported in the New Testament and exorcisms continue to be practised by many different branches of Christianity to this day. Secondly, the possessed, unlike witches, were the devil's *victims*, not his allies. They needed to be healed (exorcized), rather than prosecuted.

Questions:

- ✓ What other similarities and differences between witchcraft and demonic possession can you identify?
- ✓ ....
- ✓ ....
- ✓ ....
- ✓ ....

Secondary Reading (Please read at least THREE of the following):

- ✓ Moshe Sluhovsky, *"Believe not Every Spirit": Diabolic Possession, Mysticism, and the Discernment of Spirits in Early Modern Catholicism* (Chicago, 2007), chap. 8;
- ✓ Brian P. Levack, *The Devil Within: Possession and Exorcism in the Christian West* (New Haven, 2013), chap. 6;
- ✓ Sarah Ferber, *Demonic Possession and Exorcism in Early Modern France* (London, 2004), chap. 3;
- ✓ Stuart Clark, *Thinking with Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford, 1997), chap 26;
- ✓ Marion Gibson, *Possession, Puritanism and Print: Darrell, Harsnett, Shakespeare and the Elizabethan Exorcism Controversy* (London, 2006), introduction.

The most famous instance of demonic possession in the early modern period was the 'Late Woeful' case of young Mary Glover, who accused an elderly neighbour, Elizabeth Jackson, of causing her possession and who would enter into some sort of seizure whenever Jackson was in the room. The trial, which ultimately led to Jackson's conviction (though she escaped with her life) provoked considerable religious and medical controversy. What, do you think, made her case so controversial? How would you explain Mary's behaviour? And what do you make of the behaviour of the learned men who argued over her diagnosis?

Source Text:

✓ Stephen Bradwell, ed., 'Mary Glovers Late Woeful Case': The Narration, pp. 3–10, 24-32, in Michael Macdonald, ed., *Witchcraft and Hysteria in Elizabethan London* (London, 1991).

Week 11 9 April	The Decline of Witch-Hunting: The End?

The end is in sight! Now we just need to try and explain it. In fact, we already have pretty much all the ingredients: different types of scepticism, elite and popular attitudes, changing social conditions. The question is mostly about how to weigh the importance of these causes and try to fit them together. If witchcraft was a complex phenomenon, then its decline also cannot be explained by a single cause. But we must not only try and understand the causes of the decline of witch-hunting and witchcraft belief, we must also try and measure the speed and extent of the decline. So for the last set of questions:

Questions:

- ✓ Why did witchcraft belief linger as long as it did?
- ✓ ....
- ✓ ....
- ✓ ....
- ✓ ....

Secondary Reading (Please read at least THREE of the following):

- ✓ Brian P. Levack, 'The Decline and End of Witchcraft Prosecutions', in Brian P. Levack, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe and Colonial America* (Oxford, 2013), chap. 24;
- ✓ Ian Bostridge, *Witchcraft and Its Transformations, c.1650-c.1750* (Oxford, 1997)
- ✓ Phyllis J. Guskin, 'The Context of Witchcraft: The Case of Jane Wenham (1712)', *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 15, no. 1 (1981): 48-71;
- ✓ Willem de Blécourt, 'On the Continuation of Witchcraft', in Jonathan Barry et al, eds., *Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe: Studies in Belief* (Cambridge, 1996), 335–52;
- ✓ Thomas Waters, 'Magic and the British Middle Classes, 1750–1900', *Journal of British Studies* 54, no. 3 (2015): 632–53;
- ✓ Owen Davies, 'Witchcraft Accusations in France, 1850–1990', in Willem de Blécourt and Owen Davies, eds., *Witchcraft Continued: Popular Magic in Modern Europe* (Manchester, 2004), pp. 107–32;
- ✓ Edward Bever, 'Witchcraft Prosecutions and the Decline of Magic', *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 40, no. 2 (2009): 263–93.

Our final case is not, in fact, a witchcraft trial, although it did follow the acquittal for the crime of witchcraft of Sarah Morduck (or Moredike), the wife of a waterman. In 1700, Richard Hathaway, a blacksmith's apprentice of Southwark, had fallen severely ill and claimed Morduck had bewitched him until 'scratching' her cured him. After Morduck fled for London, Hathaway followed her and caused a disturbance. Morduck was arrested for witchcraft and acquitted in 1701, which led, in turn, to Hathaway being charged as an imposter. He was charged with inventing his afflictions. He was convicted on indictments for imposture, riot and assault on 8 May 1702 and sentenced to stand in the pillory at Southwark, to be flogged and to six months of hard labour. No more is heard of him after that.

The trial survives in its entirety and was reported on widely in print. I have excerpted the case made by Hathaway's defence lawyer (speaking after the prosecution had rested), and the judge's very sceptical instruction to the jury (Chief Justice Holt). Note that witchcraft remained a crime punishable by death in England and Wales until 1736. How do the various sides deal with the continued 'reality' of witchcraft? What arguments are advanced to prove that Hathaway is a cheat? How did his lawyer defend his integrity? What does this trial reveal about changing popular and elite ideas about the reality of witchcraft?

Source Text:
- ✓ The King *v*. Richard Hathaway, for an Impostor (1702). Transcription by Jan Machielsen.

Week 11 10 April	Revision

The finish line! Get your questions ready. ☺

9. Questions for Assessed Essay #2

Please consult the Year Three Handbook for deadlines.

The questions below link to topics you will have covered prior to the essay deadline. **Please feel free to illustrate your answers with references to the primary sources, but you are under no obligation to do so.** The main focus of your essay should be on the secondary literature. Please consult the bibliography on Learning Central for further reading on the subjects below.

1.   Why did the early modern period fear witches so much?

2.   In what circumstances were witchcraft accusations most likely to emerge?

3.   How useful have anthropological approaches been to understanding popular attitudes towards witchcraft?

4.   What are the biggest difficulties witchcraft historians encounter when they use trial records?

5.   Were male witches in any way 'abnormal'?

6.   To what extent was the witch simply a 'bad mother'?

7.   How useful is the distinction between white and black witches?

8.   To what extent was lycanthropy (werewolves) a different phenomenon from witchcraft?

9.   What can witchcraft trials teach us about early modern village life?

10.Specimen Exam Paper

Instructions to and information for students:

Answer TWO Questions.

You will be penalised if there is substantial overlap between your examination answers and material already used in assessed coursework.

1. Were Catholic and Protestant clergy preoccupied by cases of demonic possession for the same reasons?

2. Why had the elites become more sceptical about the reality of witchcraft by the end of this period?

3. When were healers most likely to be viewed as witches?

4. What impact did different legal systems have on conviction rates for witchcraft?

5. When were EITHER the elderly OR children a particular focus of witchcraft accusations?

6. Why were demonologists and court officials so interested in sex with the devil?

7. Was witch-hunting really woman-hunting?

8. What intellectual resources were available to sixteenth-century sceptical writers on witchcraft?

9. 'As a collective representation, the witch was the product of an age of cognitive extremism' (CLARK). Do you agree?

10. Should historians of witchcraft banish any mention of 'credulity'?