

**History 4994W. Senior Seminar:
Witch-hunting in Europe and Early America**

**University of Connecticut
Department of History**

Spring 2007

Tues 2-4:30 p.m.

Storrs Hall 011

Off. hrs.: Mon 3-4, Tu 1-2

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This seminar is designed, first, to expose participants to primary documents and major scholarly interpretations of witchcraft belief and witch-hunts in early modern Europe and in colonial North America, and second, to provide a structure in which each student will write an 18-22 page research paper on a related topic of their choosing.

The 4994W course provides you with a chance to craft a research project around a precise question set in a delimited time period, locate and analyze a well-selected set of primary documents that might help answer your question, critically assess the secondary sources that are most relevant to your topic, and, finally, tell a story about your materials that weaves in your original interpretation linking its points to other historians' conversations about the past.

In your paper, you will be developing and defending a position on your research questions, just as a professional historian does. Here's the goal: In its final form, your paper should be of such professional quality that you could either submit it to an on-line undergraduate history journal for publishing consideration or submit it as a writing sample for an application to a graduate or professional degree program.

Class meetings will be discussions, workshops, and methods labs, with students considering and debating historical evidence, various research methods, and different historians' interpretations. It is essential that everyone be well-prepared for each class and be ready to raise their own questions and participate actively in each week's discussion. Each week, please bring the day's reading to class with you! In some weeks, we will hold workshops on the how-to's of research using on-line databases, good writing practices, and citation formats. Towards the end of the semester, we will not meet for three weeks in a row (from mid-March to early April), so that students can maximize the time spent on drafting their papers.

Assignments: **Exercise #1** will be completed by everyone in either week 2 or week 3. Your task is to carefully read the titles of scholarly books and articles on witch-hunting and early modern witchcraft beliefs, noting the range and types of topics and questions that researchers address. After this survey, type up 1) a list of 4-8 topics or questions that intrigue you on and which you *might* want to

base your H4994W paper; and 2) a list of 6-8 scholarly books or articles that interested you, including the author/title/publishing information (journal title and year; book's publisher and year). If possible, note the place/region/nation and temporal bounds of the topic as you imagine it. Your instructions are to look for titles of secondary works on witchcraft in the early modern period in FIVE PLACES: 1) Brian Levack's book—the chapters we are reading, and his footnotes; 2) the Bibliography I will post on our course Vista site by Thurs morning 1/18 (over the semester, the bibliography will grow!); 3) book titles in HOMER: use Advanced search and enter keywords you pick-up from Levack; 4) JSTOR or Academic Search Premier for article titles; enter these through the Library's Research Database locator; use Advanced Search and keywords related to our course's subject that interest you. Another written assignment that comes up early in the semester is a four-page paper based on Brian Levack's book, due in class in Week 3. During class in Week 4, pairs of students will give oral presentations on articles relating to patterns in European witch-hunting. Note that in some weeks, we will have small group exercises or in-class writings.

The major assignment is the research paper, to be completed in stages. These stages are geared to help you to identify a topic, use library resources to locate a wide range of relevant secondary and primary sources, and compose an outline and draft so that you can use constructive feedback from me and a fellow student reader in polishing your final paper and oral presentation. Paper topics must be developed in consultation with the instructor and receive my final approval. Note that students will complete:

1. a 3-page proposal with Annotated Bibliography in Week 6;
2. a revised proposal in the form of a 3-4 page Progress Report, with Working Title and paper Outline and updated, annotated Bibliography, due on March 23;
3. a Draft of the paper (12 page minimum) on Friday morning April 13;
4. an oral presentation on your research in Week 12, 13, or 14;
5. the Final Paper on Thursday May 3

Alternative possibility: If you have some background in web design *and can* convince me that you have the necessary resources and skills, *plus* a topic suited to an analytical website, you may be able to get my approval to work on a final project that would be both a website that including a 12-page analytical, footnoted paper in addition to bibliography, links, and possibly images, primary documents, etc. (For an introductory blueprint on designing websites, see Presnell, 218-37.) Students who are approved for this Alternative must hand in all assignments, including the Draft. If you undertake the design of a professional-quality website for H4994W, you must pledge to maintain the website as publicly accessible for at least one year.

Each student will work with a **Peer Partner** through the stages of developing their research project. Thus, partners should arrange to exchange Paper Assignments #1 & 2 (on the list above) and meet to discuss these and exchange ideas and tips. You should write up at least a paragraph of constructive advice in response to Assignments #1 and 2 and give it to your Peer Partner; also, email a copy of these comments to the instructor. When you receive your partner's DRAFT, your task as a reviewer is to critically proofread, edit, analyze, and constructively critique it—how effective is the organization, the evidence marshaled, the presentation of argument and thesis? You have a maximum of *5 days* to return your comments to your partner; these must come in 2 forms: 1) a marked-up copy of the draft (draft's author must keep this and turn it in to me at the end of the semester, with the final paper), and 2) a page of commentary and tips (send this electronically to me, also). Peer partners are encouraged to continue their conversations and mutual support through the final weeks of the course, although no written copies of your feedback to one another need be handed in.

Grades in the seminar will be apportioned on the following scale: 10% for the short paper on judicial torture and your Week 4 report, 5% each for the three-page proposal plus bibliography and for the revised proposal, 10% for the Rough Draft, 5% for the quality of your feedback to your peer partner, 40% for the quality of the final paper (and oral presentation), and 20% for class participation. For the remaining 5% you receive an A if you meet all the deadlines marked with an @ on the syllabus; a B if you meet all but one; and much lower grade or F if there are serious lateness problems. (In addition, notice that lateness penalties pertain for all written assignments; see below.) Note that class participation is an important part of your grade, and that unexcused absences will mean a student's grade will suffer noticeably. As in all W classes, if you never hand in or receive an "F" on any part of the "W" portion of the course (the proposals, the draft, the final paper), you cannot pass the course.

Lateness policy: I accept late papers only for emergency situations. If such a situation is not communicated to me *before* the time the paper is due, the paper will lose 1/3 of a grade every 24 hours. If you are encountering difficulties meeting a deadline, you should contact me by email or phone to explain the situation.

All through our lifetimes, we continue to learn to edit and improve our writing. In this course, you will be receiving tips on writing from your classmates in our class sessions, from the instructor, and from the peer partner. In addition, wise students realize they can benefit from the perspectives of the trained students at the Writing Center on campus, especially with those pesky

grammar rules we tend to forget and with good organizing principles. Drop by, or better yet, make an appointment a few days in advance: the Writing Center is at www.writingcenter.uconn.edu, and at CLAS 159 (phone: 486-2143), with additional locations in Babbidge Library, CUE, and Young. Also, I receive a notice telling me you've consulted at the Center for an assignment in the course, which is always a welcome.

Before you start work on your written assignments, I want you to be sure that you know what plagiarism, cheating, and other forms of academic misconduct are. A brief, pungent definition is: "Presenting someone else's words or ideas as your own--in any form." This includes doing unauthorized academic work for which another person will receive credit or be evaluated; presenting the same or substantially the same papers or projects in two or more courses without the instructor's knowledge or permission; submitting a paper that contains phrases, sentences, ideas that you gathered from a website, book, article, or even a friend or parent and which you did not put in quotation marks and properly attribute. When you turn a paper in, *make sure it is your own work* and that you have cited legal and scholarly authorities correctly. Note that the UConn library has a helpful webpage and quick checklist/tutorial: go to <http://www.lib.uconn.edu/using/tutorials/LILT/plagiarism.htm>. In class, we will discuss practices of note-taking and citation that allow us all to avoid unwitting plagiarism, but **do** raise any questions or concerns you have either in class or in individual conferences, at any time you wish. Don't be hesitant to bring up your questions, because this helps everyone to think through the ethical dilemmas and issues involved.

Required Reading for the course includes Reserve Articles and documents (available on the Vista course site), one on-line book (by Prof. Patrick Rael, see below), and the following 4 books available for purchase at the University Co-Op (all are also on Library Reserve):

Brian P. Levack, *The Witch-Hunt in Early Modern Europe*, 3rd edition (Boston: Pearson Education Ltd., 2006; orig. publ. 1993) [Note: the Library Reserve copy is the 2d edition, which has slightly different pagination]

Carol F. Karlsen, *The Devil in the Shape of A Woman: Witchcraft in Colonial New England* (New York: Norton, 1998; orig. pub. 1987)

Peter Charles Hoffer, *The Salem Witchcraft Trials: A Legal History* (Lawrence, KS: Univ. of Kansas Press, 1997)

Jenny L. Presnell, *The Information-Literate Historian: A Guide to Research for History Students* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007)

and the on-line writing guide by a history Professor at Bowdoin College:

Patrick Rael, *Reading, Writing, and Researching for History: A Guide for College Students* (2004): at <http://academic.bowdoin.edu/WritingGuides/>

Schedule of Meetings and Readings

Week 1 January 16: Introductory meeting in Storrs 011

Week 2 January 23: European Witch-hunting I

Read: LEVACK, Preface to First Edition; the MAP (study it!); and 1-133

Rael (see link above), 2a, b, c (optional)

On Vista (under Course materials): excerpt from Joseph Klait's 1985 book, *Servants of Satan*, on modern-day parallels (4 pp)

On-line (see Reading Links on Vista, under Course materials): excerpt from a 1485 treatise, *The Malleus* (10 pp); two *New York Times* articles, one short essay reflecting on the life of Peggy Buckley who was accused in the 1980s McMartin case, the other on the Placebo effect

On-line search exercise: Using the Library website (its E-Journal locator), find and print out the full text of the following *New York Times* article, Robert Reinhold, "Collapse of Child-Abuse Case..." Jan. 24, 1990. Read it and **Bring** it to class!

Presnell, Introduction and Chapter 1

TIP for reading Levack: look for his list and discussion of the *preconditions* for witch-hunts

Exercise #1: Students with surnames A-M be ready in class on Jan. 23!

Week 3 January 30: European Witch-hunting II

Read: LEVACK, 134-308

Rael, 1c and 6a

Presnell, Chap. 3

On Vista: 1) Michael Dalton's "The Discovery of Witches," (2 pp); 2) Chelmsford, England, cases from the year 1566 [from Rosen, *Witchcraft in England*] (9 pp); 3) Joseph Klait's, "In the Torture Chamber" (30 pp)

Exercise #1: Students with surnames N-Z be ready in class on Jan. 30!

**** DUE IN CLASS:** a 4-page paper on the use of judicial torture based on Levack & Klait's (See Topic for Paper #1, attached to syllabus)

Week 4 February 6: Team Reports on Topics

Read: Rael, 5d, 9b; 2d is optional
Presnell, Chaps. 4 & 5

Each team will read a cluster of articles on a specific topic and give a joint presentation to the class. This can be in the form of an oral report (with handouts), a poster session, or a power-point presentation.

Week 5 February 13: Themes in New England Witch-Hunting

Read: KARLSEN, Preface & Chaps. 1-6 (227 pp)
Presnell, Chap. 7, also pp. 216-18

Due Monday evening by 9 p.m.: E-Posting to the Vista Discussions by Peer partner pairs **describing two scholarly or substantial websites** related to the history of witch-hunting (1-2 substantial paragraphs per website). Point out the notable features of each site—what is especially good, and also what is annoying, absent, or reflective of bad practice. You should search for a site that is particularly geared to or helpful for the Paper Topic you are developing. Work with your peer partner to identify sites that contain materials addressing each student's topic. Tip: Use Advanced Search and limit the domain to .edu and .org.

Week 6 February 20: Seventeenth-Century New England Culture

READ: KARLSEN, Chap. 7 & Epilogue (35 pp)
Rael, 3c-3

On Vista: 1) Documents for the Hartford Witch Hunt of 1662-1665 (15 pp). 2) David D. Hall, "A World of Wonders" (30 pp.)

****DUE on MONDAY Feb. 19** by noon, submitted electronically: 3-page Paper Proposal with Annotated Bibliography@. Remember to send it to your peer partner!

** I will hold Individual Conferences with students about their Proposals on
Tues & Wed Feb 20-21**

Week 7 February 27: Salem I (and half-hour Workshop on Citations)

Read: HOFFER, Chronology (147-51), Intro, and Chaps. 1-8 (pp. 1-107)
 On Vista: documents for Rebecca Nurse's trial
 Rael, Chap. 4 (all)

****Expect an in-class quiz on Bibliographic and Footnote form, based on your Library handout on citation forms according to *The Chicago Manual of Style***

****SPRING BREAK: Week of March 5th****

Week 8 March 13: Salem II

Read: HOFFER, Chaps. 9-12 and Conclusion (pp. 108-46)
 Rael, 5 a&b
 On Vista: Boyer and Nissenbaum, "Salem Possessed" (30 pp)

Week 9 March 20: No Class Meeting; Work on your Outline!

****DUE on FRIDAY March 23rd by noon:** Progress Report (3 pages), working Title, OUTLINE of Paper, and updated Annotated Bibliography@. The Proposal should contain sections on the most relevant secondary literature, the primary sources you are relying on, and your key analytical questions. Submit electronically or in hard copy at my office or to my mailbox.

Week 10 March 27: No class meeting

- ❖ Individual conferences this week with Prof. Dayton
- ❖ Peer partners are encouraged to meet during our Tues. class time

Week 11 April 3: No class meeting; WORK on your papers!

Week 12 April 10: Student Presentations

Read (by this week): Rael 5c, Chaps. 6-7 (all), 8a-c

****DUE FRIDAY APRIL 13 by 9 a.m.:** a **DRAFT@** of your paper, with revised Outline@, and a Bibliography@. Submit this electronically, and send a copy to your peer partner. Peer partners: see page 2 of this syllabus for further instructions on your task as a helpful reviewer

Week 13 April 17: Student Presentations

Sign up for Individual Conferences with me this week

****Consult the sources I will recommend on Revising****

Week 14 April 24: Student Presentations

**** Final Paper@ Due in my office THURSDAY MAY 3 by 5 p.m.****

(Hard copies only. You must attach your draft with my comments to the final version, plus your peer-reviewer's marked-up copy of your draft.)