



## History 560: Witchcraft in Colonial New England

Spring 2012  
 Prof. Paula A. Treckel  
 W 3:00-5:30pm

### Course Description and Learning Outcomes:

This seminar investigates the social, political, economic, and religious reasons for the witchcraft trials in seventeenth century New England. The religious and folk beliefs of the Puritans and the culture they created in North America will be explored. The structure of the Puritan family and gender relations will also be studied as factors influencing the outbreak of

witchcraft accusation in New England. Historians' interpretations of the witchcraft trials at Salem, Massachusetts will be analyzed and discussed.

In this course, students will:

- Learn how historical interpretations are developed.
- Facilitate and participate in class discussions on chosen readings.
- Conduct primary and secondary research on a chosen topic related to the subject.
- Develop a formal paper proposal with a bibliography on their topic.
- Write a formal research paper utilizing proper citation methods.
- Present their findings to their classmates in an oral presentation.

### Required Reading:

Boyer, Paul and Stephen Nissenbaum. *Salem Possessed: The Social Origins of Witchcraft*.

Godbeer, Richard. *The Devil's Dominion: Magic and Religion in Early New England*.

Karlsen, Carol. *The Devil in the Shape of a Woman*.

Morgan, Edmund. *The Puritan Family*.

Norton, Mary Beth. *In the Devil's Snare*.

Starkey, Marion. *The Devil in Massachusetts*.

Ulrich, Laurel T. *Good Wives: Image and Reality in the Lives of Women in Northern New England, 1650-1750*.

### Discussion Topics and Reading Assignments:

- 1/18 Witchcraft and American History  
 1/25 The Puritan Family (Morgan)  
 2/1 Goodwives and Goodmen (Ulrich)  
 2/8 Magic and Religion in New England (Godbeer)  
 2/15 Worlds of Wonder—Meet in Pelletier Library, Room 224  
 2/22 The Devil in Massachusetts (Starkey)  
 2/28 "Sovereigns for Sarah"---6:30-9:30pm Arter 201  
 2/29 Salem Town and Salem Village (Boyer and Nissenbaum)  
 3/7 Women and Witchcraft (Karlsen) --Paper Proposals due.  
 3/14 The Frontier and Witchcraft (Norton)  
 3/21 Spring Break—no class.  
 3/28 Thesis Statements are due.  
 4/6 New Frontiers in Witchcraft Studies

4/11 Oral Presentations---**Seminar Papers are due.**  
4/18 Oral Presentations  
4/25 Oral Presentations

**Course Requirements:**

You are to attend and participate in all class discussions, read the assigned words by the date indicated on the syllabus, facilitate class discussion on one assigned book with classmates, present the findings of one chapter in the Demos book, and research and write a Seminar Paper (minimum 20-25 pages, including endnotes and bibliography). The Seminar Paper will be based upon both primary and secondary sources and devoted to some aspect of early American history related to this course. It is due on **4/11**. **No** late papers will be accepted. You will be evaluated on your participation in and leadership of class discussions and the oral presentation of your Seminar Paper (1/5 of your final grade); your Seminar Paper Proposal and Bibliography (1/5 of your final grade); and your Seminar Paper (3/5 of your final grade.)

**Office Hours:**

203 Arter Hall  
M 1:00-3:00  
T 9:30-12:00  
W 8:00-11:00; 1:30-3:00  
& by appointment

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