

RELI 386 Witchcraft, Magic, and Religion
Wednesdays 8:30 p.m. to 10:45 p.m. Hall Building H-535

Instructor: Cimminnee Holt, email: cim.holt@gmail.com
Office hours: Wed. 6:30-7:30 p.m. R-202 (2050 MacKay)
Mailbox: F Building (2060 Mackay, 1st floor in the back)

Teaching Assistants:

Lindsey Jackson: Office hours: Tues. 3:00-4:00 p.m. R-07 (in the basement)
Email: jackson.hall.lindsey@gmail.com

Chloé Collier: Office hours: Tues. 11:00-12:00 a.m. R-07 (in the basement)
Email: chloe.collier@hotmail.com

Email policy: we will respond to emails from Mon. to Fri., between 9:00-5:00. Please allow 48 hours for a response. If we do not respond after that, email again.

Description: This course takes a broad historical survey of the notions of witchcraft and magic from a social scientific perspective. It will touch upon ideas about magic and witchcraft from: late antiquity; throughout the Middle Ages culminating in the witchcraft trials; early twenty-first century anthropological studies on witchcraft in Oceania and Africa; and finally, contemporary magical practices in western society. It will ask questions such as: Who practices magic and witchcraft, if at all? Who defines the terms, and how do these definitions interact with each other, and influence the social dynamic? What is the disjoint (if any), between their popular depiction and actual practice (if any)? How are witchcraft and magic discussed by different authors, from both primary and scholarly sources alike? How do these (at times conflicting) definitions shape and influence magicians and witches? Are witchcraft and magic solely western concepts? Why or why not?

Requirements: This is a reading intensive class, and students should come prepared having read the assigned materials. Class discussions will incorporate parts of the readings, but also expand on the topics in integral ways. It is necessary that students attend class so as not to miss out on important information.

Required readings: All readings are electronic versions (downloadable pdf or url) made available through Course Reserves on the Library website, or via Moodle.

Evaluation: Four assignments, #1= 20%, #2 and #3 = 25% each, and final examination (research paper) 30% = 100%

Short Assignments: 5-6 pages each (approx. 1250 to 1500 words – *maximum*).

Format: typewritten, double-spaced, one-inch margins, twelve-point TNR font.

Short assignment due dates are listed in the lecture outline below, further details to be handed out two weeks before they are due. You will not require other sources besides the required/recommended texts to answer the assignments. All due in class.

Final (take-home) Examination: Research Paper: 12-15 pages maximum, format as per assignments. The examination will be discussed in class and posted on Moodle on **April 6**. Submit a **hard (paper) copy in my mailbox** (Department of Religion, FA building). Submission

deadline: **5:00 P.M., Wednesday April 27, 2016.** Early submissions are accepted. Late or electronic submissions cannot be accepted.

Late papers: Papers are due in hardcopy, in class. There will be a lateness penalty of one grade per day (a B to a B-, etc.), excluding weekends. The department of religion closes by 5:00, and is locked on weekends. It is up to students to ensure that their paper is received on time. Unless you have a medical note or official documentation, the lateness penalty will be strictly enforced. No electronic copies will be accepted, no exceptions. *YOU MUST* email us to let us know your paper is dropped off in the mailbox if your paper is late. Otherwise, we will mark it on the day it was retrieved, not the day it was dropped off. The department of religion does not stamp papers. ***Papers emailed to us on the day they are due will be considered one day late.***

Reading schedule:

Jan. 6:

Davies, Owen. "Introduction: Initial Observation." In Owen Davies, *Magic: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press: 1-13.

Jan. 13:

Levack, Brian P. 2003. "Witchcraft and Magic in the Ancient World." In Brian P. Levack, *The Witchcraft Sourcebook*. New York: Routledge: 4-30.

Jan. 20:

Kieckhefer, Richard. 1994. "The Specific Rationality of Medieval Magic," *American Historical Review*, v. 99, n. 3 (June): 813-836.

Jan. 27:

Stephens, Walter. 2002. "Introduction: Sex Fiends";
"Witchcraft Theory: Copulation with Demons as Carnal Knowledge";
"Why Women? The Malleus maleficarum";
"Sexy Devils: How They Got Bodies."
In Walter Stephens, *Demon Lovers: Witchcraft, Sex, and the Crisis of Belief*.
Chicago: The University of Chicago Press: 1-12, 13-31, 32-57, 58-86.

Feb. 3:

Coudert, Alison. 2011. "Probing Women and Penetrating Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe." In Wouter J. Hanegraaff and Jeffrey J. Kripal, eds. *Hidden Intercourse*. New York: Fordham University Press: 231-280.

DUE: Assignment #1: TBA. Worth 20%

Feb. 10:

Evans-Pritchard, E. E. 1929. "Witchcraft (Mangu) Among the A-Zande," in E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *Sudan Notes and Records*, v. 12, n. 2. *University of Karthoum*: 163-249.

Feb. 17:

Marwick, Max. 1970. "Witchcraft as a Social Strain-Gauge." In Max Marwick, ed. *Witchcraft and Sorcery*, Baltimore, Md: Penguin Books, Ltd.: 281-295.

Feb. 24: *Mid-term break. No class*

Mar. 2:

Long, Carolyn Morrow. 2002. "Perceptions of New Orleans Voodoo: Sin, Fraud, Entertainment, and Religion," *Nova Religio: The Journal of Alternative and Emergent Religions*, v. 6, n. 1 (October): 86-101.

Osbey, Brenda Marie. 2011. "Why We Can't Talk to You about Voodoo," *The Southern Literary Journal*, v. 43, n. 2 (Spring): 1-11.

DUE: Assignment #2. TBA. Worth 25%

Mar. 9: Guest Speaker: JD Hobbes

Berger, Helen A. 2003. "Wicca." *World Religions and Spirituality Project*. Virginia Commonwealth University.

Mar. 16:

Asprem, Egil. 2008. "Heathens Up North: Politics, Polemics, and Contemporary Norse Paganism in Norway," *Pomegranate*, v. 10, n. 1: 41-69.

Mar. 23:

Petersen, Jesper Aagaard. 2012. "The Seeds of Satan: Conceptions of Magic in Contemporary Satanism," *Aries*, v. 12, n. 2: 91-129.

DUE: Assignment #3: TBA. Worth 25%

Mar. 30:

Feldt, Laura. 2016. "Harry Potter and Contemporary Magic: Fantasy Literature, Popular Culture, and the Representation of Religion," *Journal of Contemporary Religion*, v. 31, n. 1: 101-114.

April 6: Discussion and workshop of final research paper.

End of Classes

April 27: **DUE: Assignment #4**, Final research paper. 12-15 pages. Worth 30%

In my mailbox at 2060 MacKay, by 5:00 p.m.

No electronic copies will be accepted. Include a S.A.S.E. with sufficient postage if you want the paper returned.

Plagiarism: The most common offense under the Academic Code of Conduct is plagiarism, which the Code defines as "the presentation of the work of another person as one's own or without proper acknowledgement." This includes material copied word-for-word or paraphrased without citation from books, journals, internet sites, a professor's course notes, another student's notes or work, etc. Plagiarism can also refer to copying images, graphs, tables, and ideas. Do not copy, paraphrase, or translate anything from anywhere without explicitly indicating from where you obtained it. (text edited from <http://provost.concordia.ca/academicintegrity/plagiarism>)