



HST 361 & REL 374
Witchcraft and Heresy in Europe
Summer 2026
Session B (7/1 - 8/11)
Sections # 40097, 41511, 43130, 43129

General Studies: (L, or HU), H

Credits: 3

Prerequisites: ENG 102, 105 or 108 with a C or better; Minimum 30 hours.

Instructor: Eric Breault

Email: ebreault@asu.edu

Office Hours: via email

Required Reading:

- Deane: A History of Medieval Heresy and Inquisition, ISBN 9780742555761 (the text is free as an unlimited-user eBook title through ASU Libraries).
- Other assigned readings to be found on Canvas under **Modules**

Course Description:

We will be investigating the ways in which religion answers the question of what it means to be a human in relationship with other human beings and other-than-human beings. Religion conveys an understanding of particular identities, constructed out of claims of authenticity, which are legitimized through authoritative power. Our main interest will be how the identity of heretic and witch was constructed against their binary opposite—the “orthodox” Christian—in a particular time and place. A more practical inquiry will thus be centered on the discourse of religious “Othering” within a particular group striving for homogeneity, with a specific emphasis on the female as Other.

Course Objectives:

At the completion of this course, students will be able to think critically about the overarching social and cultural issues that contributed to Christian notions of heretics and witches in Europe. Students will also be expected to articulate how the persecution of heretics and witches in medieval and early modern Europe still affects their own world and experience. Students will be assessed on discussions based on weekly readings and a final essay on a topic of the student’s choosing.

Requirements & Grading:

- 5 Weekly discussion postings worth 50 points total (each round of discussions worth 10 points, 5 points for initial post, 3 points for response post to classmate, 2 points for secondary response to a conversation taking place in discussion board).
- A Final paper project worth 50 points total (topic proposal worth 5 points, bibliography of at least **five** outside sources worth 5 points, introductory paragraph with thesis statement worth 5 points, rough draft worth 10 points, and final draft worth 25 points).
- Total: 100 points
- Grading Scale: less than 60 points = failing; 60-69 =D; 70-76 points =C; 77-79 points =C+; 80-82 points =B-; 83-86 points =B; 87-89 points =B+; 90-93 points =A-; 94-97 points =A; 98-100 points =A+

Final Paper

Your final paper will be a short research paper that may include course materials. The point of the paper is for you to showcase your understanding and engagement of course materials, to demonstrate that you have performed outside research, and finally that you have the ability to compose and execute an academic paper. The paper will be on a topic of one's own choosing that has been approved by the instructor. Any paper that has not been approved first by the instructor will receive the grade of zero. The paper must pertain to witchcraft or heresy either in the historical period covered in class, in a relevant way to a more contemporary issue, or a student may choose to write on the problematic nature of religious categories such as "religion," "magic," "witchcraft," and "heresy." **The paper will be no less than six full pages (cover page and bibliography not included) and no more than nine pages in length. Students must use five academic sources external to the materials used in the course.** The papers will be constructed on a week by week basis as outlined above in the course schedule.

Some general notes on papers:

- A grading rubric and MLA, APA, Turbrian, and Chicago citation and style guide examples are provided for you on Blackboard.
- All papers and paper related assignments are due on the due dates listed above. Late assignments will not be accepted.
- All papers will be submitted through the assignment drop box in Blackboard in only doc., docx., pdf, or rtf formatting.
- All papers should be double-spaced with 12-point Times New Roman font. I will not accept any other formats.
- Wikipedia, or any other internet based encyclopedia, blog, etc. will not be allowed as a resource unless approved prior to due date by the instructor. I want you to use the ASU Library and look for academic articles, ebooks, etc. – I am more than happy to help you in this regard.
- I expect students to be attentive to grammar and style in their papers, see the OWL at Purdue University. <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>
- You must always cite sources. Any idea or thought that is not your own must be cited in this class, students are never scored down for over-citing in my course. Plagiarism will result in failure for the assignment and the class.

Discussion Board Assignments

After reading the course materials for the week, students will be required to write three posts: an initial post of 500 words or more due on Friday before midnight; the second, which is a response to another students post, that is to be at least 200 words in length and is due on Saturday before midnight; and third post, which will be a response to the student who responded to your initial post (if no one responds to you then you may respond to anyone), this final post needs to be at least 100 words in length and is due on Sunday before midnight. During the first week due dates will be extended.

- **Important to note: While your opinions are both warranted and expected, you must back up you opinions with evidence from the course material and cite where you found the information.**
- Every Monday morning, I will begin the discussion for the week by highlighting key aspects of the reading and I will pose a few questions that students are to respond to in the initial posting.
- I will monitor and engage in, the course discussion throughout the week, prompting discussion as need be and answering any questions students may have concerning the course content.
- The point of these discussion board exercises is to simulate a “brick and mortar” type classroom discussion. Students will be expected, however, to write academically and will be graded on content, grammar, and spelling. Students are encouraged to write their posts first in a word document and then copy and paste those posts into the discussion board area.

See Course Schedule below.

UNIT/WEEK	TOPICS	ACTIVITIES/ASSIGNMENTS All assignments are due at 11:59pm AZ time, on the date specified
WEEK 1 7/1-7/7	Introduction & Orientation: Why is the study of religion concerned with notions of magic, witchcraft, and heresy?	READ: • Syllabus • McCutcheon, "What is the Academic Study of Religion?" • Wiener, "Making Worlds Through Religion, Science, and Magic" • Lambert, "Medieval Heresy" • Kieckhefer, "The Holy and the Unholy" ASSIGNMENTS: • Introduction Discussion Posting • Week 1 Discussion (10 points - 3 parts – initial post due SUN 7/5 (5pts) & primary response MON 7/6 (3pts.) & secondary response TUES 7/7 (2pts.))
WEEK 2 7/7-7/12	Introducing Persecution	READ: • Deane: Introduction, Chapter 1 + Chapter 2 ASSIGNMENTS: • Discussion 2 (10 points – Due initial post FRI 7/10 (5 pts) & primary response SAT 7/11 (3pts) & secondary response SUN 7/12 (2pts.)) • Paper topic proposal (5 points, Due SUN 7/12 before 11:59 PM). This is typically the toughest step. Students may choose any historical or modern topic pertaining to witchcraft, heresy, magic, religion, socially marginalized people, the Protestant Reformation, demonism, Satanism, witch trials, witch hunts, the occult, the Scientific Revolution, intellectual shifts to modernity, etc. Proposals should be written out explaining interests (do not just write something like "occult" or "magic") and submitted in Week 2 under Weekly Content. Your instructor will provide feedback to assist you.

WEEK 3 7/13-7/19	Inquisition, Apocalypse, and Pacts with the Devil	READ: • Deane: Chapter 3 & Chapter 4 ASSIGNMENTS: • Discussion 3 (10 points – Due initial post FRI 7/17 (5 pts) & primary response SAT 7/18 (3pts) & secondary response SUN 7/19 (2pts.)) • Bibliography of at least 5 sources (5 points, Due SUN 7/20 before 11:59 PM). Students will submit in Week 3 under Weekly Content a word document containing at least 5 sources accessed from ASU's Library through Blackboard. No internet sources (like Wikipedia or an online encyclopedia will be permitted for credit).
WEEK 4 7/20-7/26	Women and Witches	READ: • Deane: Chapter 5 + Chapter 6 + Chapter 7 ASSIGNMENTS: • Discussion 4 (10 points – Due initial post FRI 7/24 (5 pts) & primary response SAT 7/25 (3pts) & secondary response SUN 7/26 (2pts.)) • Introductory paragraph with thesis statement (5 points, Due SUN 7/26 before 11:59 PM). Students will submit in Week 4 under Weekly Content a word document of their proposed introductory paragraph. The introductory paragraph should also contain, a topic sentence introducing the project, a supporting sentence (optional only if necessary), a thesis statement highlighted in bold or <i>italicized</i> font, and a road map sentence (e.g., "I will show how the occult developed from the Protestant Reformation using the work of Randall Styers, Carlos Eire, and Wouter Hanegraaff.") First person is obviously allowed but not required.

WEEK 5 7/27-8/5	Witchcraft and Reforms	READ: - Deane: Chapter 8 + Epilogue ASSIGNMENTS: - Discussion 5 (10 points – Due initial post FRI 7/31 (5 pts) & primary response SAT 8/1 (3pts) & secondary response SUN 8/2 (2pts.)) Rough Draft or Outline due (10 points, Due Wednesday 8/5 before 11:59 PM). Students will submit in the Week 5 Module a word document of a rough draft or outline. The student does not need a complete rough draft, although this will help their grade tremendously. A working outline works better for some students, however to receive the full 10 points for this assignment, the instructor will require the student demonstrates that their ideas are developing and are ready to be written out fully over the next few upcoming days. Email your instructor with any and all questions for specific projects.
WEEK 6 8/5-8/11	Last Week	ASSIGNMENT: Final Paper Due 11:59 PST Tuesday August 11th, 2026. 25 points.

Technical Support: For technical assistance 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, please contact the University Technology Office Help Desk:
Phone: 855-ASU-5080 (855-278-5080)
Web: links.asu.edu/myasuservice
For information on systems outages see the ASU systems status calendar, please visit <http://syshealth.asu.edu/> and <http://systemstatus.asu.edu/status/calendar.asp>

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism: The Department of Religious Studies abides by ASU's Office of Student Life: "Student Academic Integrity Policy."

See: <http://provost.asu.edu/academicintegrity/policy>

Plagiarism may be defined in the following ways:

- Submitting another's work as your own
- Failing to credit the source when you copy someone else's words
- Omitting quotation marks when using someone else's words
- When changing a few words while leaving the majority of content the same please cite like this: (Rice: 2012)

If you are unsure what plagiarism is or if you are committing it, please contact me immediately. Plagiarism will not be tolerated.

Make-up Discussions or Exams: I only administer "make-ups," or late assignments or exams under **extreme** circumstances. I will require official documentation and you must contact me as early as possible regarding your situation.

Withdrawals, and Incompletes: There is a limited timeline to drop or add the course (<https://students.asu.edu/academic-calendar>). Consult with your advisor and notify your instructor to add or drop this course. If you are considering a withdrawal, review the following ASU policies:

- Withdrawal from Classes (<http://www.asu.edu/aad/manuals/ssm/ssm201-08.html>)
- Medical/Compassionate Withdrawal (<http://www.asu.edu/aad/manuals/ssm/ssm201-09.html>)
- Grade of Incomplete (<http://www.asu.edu/aad/manuals/ssm/ssm203-09.html>)

E-mails: I do my best to respond within 24 hours.

When you e-mail me, you **MUST** include a subject line and signature (your full name). I *will not respond* to emails without subjects and signatures.

Accessibility: Every effort has been made to ensure that this online course meets the accessibility standards of Section 504, and the W3 Consortium. Should you require additional support, please contact the Disability Resource Center. It is important to register with them as soon as possible, so there is time to access the services needed.

In compliance with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, professional disability specialists and support staff at the Disability Resource Centers (DRC) facilitate a comprehensive range of academic support services and accommodations for qualified students with disabilities.

Qualified students with disabilities may be eligible to receive academic support services and accommodations (<http://www.asu.edu/aad/manuals/ssm/ssm701-01.html>).

Eligibility is based on qualifying disability documentation and assessment of individual need. The DRC will make every effort to provide reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities.

Qualified students who wish to request an accommodation for a disability should contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC):

Website: <http://www.asu.edu/studentaffairs/ed/drc/>

Phone: 480-965-1234 (Voice)

480-965-9000 (TTY)

Accommodations for Religious Observances and Military Personnel: Students who need to arrange alternative dates for assignments due to religious obligations must notify the instructor at the beginning of the session in order to make arrangements.

Students who are members of the National Guard, Reserve, or other U.S. Armed Forces must notify the instructor as soon as possible if they need to make alternative arrangements for assignments.

Title IX Information: Title IX is a federal law that provides that no person be excluded on the basis of sex from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity. Both Title IX and university policy make clear that sexual violence and harassment based on sex is prohibited. An individual who believes they have been subjected to sexual violence or harassed on the basis of sex can seek support, including counseling and academic support, from the university. If you or someone you know has been harassed on the basis of sex or sexually assaulted, you can find information and resources at <https://sexualviolenceprevention.asu.edu/faqs>

Syllabus Disclaimer: The instructor retains the right to make changes to the syllabus and schedule as she deems appropriate to enhance the learning experience of students. Any changes will be announced beforehand.