

**English 383/583:**  
**Witchcraft and Witch-Hunts in Literature**  
**Fall 2017**

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**Course Description:**

From the witch-hunts of medieval times to the attempts to ban Harry Potter in our own day, the idea of witchcraft has been a lightning rod for social and cultural anxieties and these discomforts and fantasies as they appear in literature are our focus for this course. Stories about witchcraft and witch-hunts do not spring from a vacuum, they are integrally connected to the cultural forces which surround them. Therefore, in this course we will



be reading not only the written stories about witchcraft, but we will also be exploring other types of texts. Some of these will be primary sources, such as the manual for witch-hunters, the *Malleus Malleficarum* and the transcripts of the Salem Witch Trials. Other types will be cultural representations of witches and witchcraft in image and film, as well as in literature. The readings and coursework will help us consider the political, and social debates, especially those related to gender, surrounding the figure of the witch through history; the materials will also help us explore why a preoccupation with witchcraft surfaces again and again in very different cultural contexts.



**Course Texts:**

*Purchase:*

- Shakespeare, William (Ed. William Carroll). *Macbeth: Texts and Contexts*. Bedford St. Martin's, 1999.
- Condé, Maryse. *I, Tituba, Black Witch of Salem*. Trans. Richard Philcox. University of Virginia Press, 1992.
- Picoult, Jodi. *Salem Falls*. Washington Square Press, 2001.
- Rowling, J.K. *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*. Scholastic, 2002.

*Other Materials:*

- E-Reserves: A number of articles have been placed on electronic reserve through the UWSP library. To access these documents when assigned, go to the UWSP library web site and click on the E-Reserves link. You will be prompted to login and then the list of materials for this course should appear.
- In addition, other assigned readings will be posted in the D2L content area or distributed as handouts in class.

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**COURSEWORK:*****Reading Responses (40%)***

Each week you will be writing and posting to D2L short journal-entry type responses to the reading and to others' ideas about what we've read. To help pace the readings, I've divided up each week's assignments. The process for the responses will be the following:

1. For the readings **marked with an asterisk on the course calendar** you will need to post **by 9 p.m. Monday** a short (200 words minimum) response to what you've read. These responses should reflect your reaction to the reading and may include questions that the reading raised for you; these can be quite informal, but they should be spellchecked and otherwise made readable and should demonstrate clearly that you've read and reflected thoughtfully about the readings. At this point, you don't need to worry about reading others' postings.
2. **After Wednesday's class but before 9:00 p.m. on Fridays**, you will need to complete a second posting of at least the same length. This posting should both reflect upon and synthesize the readings, activities, and discussions for the week, including responding to at least two comments made by your classmates either in their Monday postings or in class.

Responses will be graded E(excellent), S(satisfactory) or N(no credit), and the rubric I will use to determine these grades is found in the D2L Content area.

***Group Presentation (25%)***

For this presentation, each group will be choosing a representation of witches, witchcraft, or witch-hunting to analyze as a group. These representations may be from TV, film, other books, physical spaces...the list is open to your groups' creativity. Your group will then look for information to effectively analyze the cultural significance of your representation; you will ultimately present the example and research to the rest of the class in some dynamic way. We will be looking at an example of this in class and I will be giving you a separate assignment sheet that details the expectations and grading criteria for this project more completely. We will also have group conferences where I will meet with your group to help you plan your topic and presentation.

**583 Students: (10% collaborative; 15% individual)** You will complete an additional presentation on a text of your choice that you'll assign to the class; the reading will be distributed to the class the week preceding your presentation and we'll work together on the timing and details of your presentation.

***Final Take Home Exam (20%)***

For your final exam for the class, you will be writing a take home paper that synthesizes your representation, research into an area of the class themes, and the other readings for the class into an paper that reflects what you've learned from the class. Again, you will receive a separate sheet with details as the end of the semester gets closer.

**583 Students:** Your paper will be longer and more substantial; approximately 15 pages written about a text from the class and a related text of your choice not covered in class, including additional independent research. We will be conferencing to discuss your papers and topics.

***Class Participation/Collaboration (15%)***

I hope that you'll find this a fun and exciting class—the best way to make sure that happens is for each of us to come prepared for discussion and to be willing to risk speaking out when we have something to say. Please plan on contributing to the fullest in whole class and small group work and if you find that you having difficulties with the material that prevent you from contributing, please talk to me.

Regarding attendance, please note that if you miss more than 1 class your participation grade will begin to diminish by 1/2 grade for each additional absence and if you miss more than 6 classes you may fail the class.

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**COURSE POLICIES:**

***Class Etiquette*** Literature can deal with sensitive and controversial subjects, so it is crucial that we create a climate conducive to safe and open discussion. It is expected that you will engage with the material with an open mind and a critical lens. It is equally important that you respect your classmates and their opinions. Listen to what others have to say and if you disagree with something, discuss it respectfully and openly—do not attack. Try to understand and empathize with others' experiences.

***Electronic Devices/Video*** Electronic devices are distracting and their use while others are speaking is impolite; unless you are asked to use them for a class activity, turn off cell phones and put them out of sight. Laptops are not allowed unless you have an Accommodations Request requiring use for a disability; if you use a tablet for notetaking, please sit in the front row. Violating the device policy will result in an absence for the day.

To respect the privacy of those in the class, students may not make audio or video recordings of lectures or other class activities without written permission from the instructor. Anyone violating this policy will be asked to turn off the device being used. Refusal to comply with the policy will result in the student being asked to leave the classroom, and possibly being referred to the Dean of Students.

***Email*** I will do my best to respond to emails within 24 hours (or within 48 hours on weekends), except in the following situations: you are asking for information that can be found on the syllabus, you are asking me to cover an entire class period via email because you have missed a class (please visit my office hours or make an appointment to discuss what you've missed), or the tone of your email is rude or disrespectful.

## Course Calendar

This schedule may be changed at the discretion of the instructor.

Week/Date	Assignments
<b>1</b> 9/6	<b>Course Introduction</b>
<b>2</b> 9/13	<b>Early Witchcraft</b> (E-Reserve): *"Ancient Demons, Archaic Gods" *"The Transformation of Paganism" "Gratian: A Warning to Bishops" "The Inquisition of Toulouse" From <i>Malleus Malificarum</i> "The Classical Formulation of the Witch Phenomenon"
<b>3</b> 9/20	<b>Witchcraft in the Renaissance</b> * <i>Macbeth</i> , Acts 1-3 <i>Macbeth</i> , Acts 4-5
<b>4</b> 9/27	* <i>Macbeth</i> , Witchcraft and Prophecy, pp. 301-343 <i>Macbeth</i> , Discourses of the Feminine, pp. 344-357
<b>5</b> 10/4	<b>The Salem Witch Trials</b> *Transcripts (handout) Scholarly interpretations of Salem (handout)
<b>6</b> 10/11	Miller <i>The Crucible</i> (D2L) *Acts I & II Acts III & IV
<b>7</b> 10/18	<b>Puritans in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Century</b> *Freeman, "The Witch's Daughter" (E-Reserve) <i>I, Tituba, Black Witch of Salem</i> , Part I, pp. 1-86
<b>8</b> 10/25	* <i>I, Tituba, Black Witch of Salem</i> , Part II, pp. 89-end and Afterword <b>African Americans and Witchcraft</b> Hurston (D2L) Macie and Boo Hag (D2L)
<b>9</b> 11/1	<b>Contemporary Witchcraft</b> *"Witchcraft as Goddess Religion" (E-Reserve) *"Contemporary Paganism" (D2L) "The Scholars and the Goddess" (E-Reserve) "Affinities and Appropriations in Feminist Spirituality" (E-Reserve)
<b>10</b> 11/8	<b>Salem Revisited</b> * <i>Salem Falls</i> , Part I, pp. 1-159 <i>Salem Falls</i> , Part II, pp. 163-281
<b>11</b> 11/15	<i>Salem Falls</i> , Part III, pp. 285-434 Popaganda Podcast Post 2 only
<b>12</b> 11/22	Group Presentation Conferences (Meet in my office at scheduled time in lieu of regularly scheduled class) <b>Contemporary Witch-Hunts</b> <i>Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire</i> Ch. 1-19 (Post by Wednesday 6:00 p.m. only)
<b>13</b> 11/29	* <i>Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire</i> Ch. 20-37 The Censorship of Harry Potter (D2L) Presentation work time
<b>14</b> 12/6	<b>Presentations</b>
<b>15</b> 12/13	<b>Presentations</b>
<b>12/18- 12/22</b>	<b>FINALS WEEK:</b> <b>Final Take Home Exam due at or before scheduled exam time</b> Friday, 12/22 12:30-2:30