

History 400W:

The Historian's Craft-- Seminar in the Historiography of Witchcraft in the Western Tradition

Fall 2003 TTH 11:00-12:15 in SS 2532

Course Webpage: blackboard.sdsu.edu (then enter SDSU username and password;
select Historian's Craft from "My Courses")

e-mail: epollard@mail.sdsu.edu Phone: (619) 594-6992

Office hours: AH 4194, Wednesdays 11:00 AM - 2:00 PM
(also by appointment and in Bb virtual chat)

Course Description:

History 400W is the gateway course for the major in history at San Diego State University. The course is designed to introduce majors to historical methods, theory, and writing in the discipline of history through a close examination of one field of historical inquiry. Our field of inquiry for this section of 400W this semester is the historiography of witchcraft in the western tradition, from the Greco-Roman World, through Medieval Europe, Early-Modern Europe, and Colonial America. In this writing-intensive course you will learn how to conduct historical research, how to apply historical methods to that research, how to read and ask questions of scholarly articles and books and well as of primary and secondary sources, and how to produce a historiographic assessment of a given topic. These skills are essential for papers you will write in history classes here at SDSU and beyond.

Although the work of a historian is sometimes conducted in isolation, his/her work is evaluated and discussed within the wider community of academia. The grading and assignments for this course will reflect that collegiate discourse. This course will attempt to create a learning-community of historians through: 1) your participation (in-class and on-line), 2) your journal writing which encourages you to interact with scholarly ideas and with one another in class, 3) your presentations of book reviews where you share with our smaller community of scholars in-class while placing the book you have read within the larger context of witchcraft studies, and 4) a peer-reviewed historiographical essay (with presentation and bibliography) which will require you to find your own place and voice within the scholarly community.

Grading:

10% Participation (In-Class and On-Line)

Class participation will be measured on the basis of the value of the contributions you make to discussions both in-class and on-line, including your 300-word summary of two class meetings posted to Bb and any peer reviewing conducted for the written version of the book review assignment. Regular attendance is vital for consistent and valuable participation in-class. Class time will focus on 1) discussing the critical scholarship and other readings and 2) on developing interpretive skills vital to pursuing the study of history.

Attendance at lectures IS REQUIRED. As a general rule, extensions on paper/assignment due dates (both draft and final) will **not** be granted. PLAN AHEAD. Late work will result in a lowered grade (one letter-grade reduction for each day late). Among other uses, Blackboard will be actively employed for the distribution of handouts, peer reviewing of papers, posting of class summaries by students, continuation of classroom discussion, and posting of assignment guidelines and help-sheets.

20% Weekly Journal Writing (500-750 words each "***")

Getting into the habit of writing is one of the best ways to become more confident in expressing your ideas and your critical analysis in writing. For this reason, a central component of this 400W class will be to keep a written journal in response to the readings you are completing each week for weeks 1-10. Ideally, you would write a response to every "***" on the syllabus. These response questions will form the basis of our classroom discussions. Having a clearly articulated position will allow you to excel at participation. I will collect only ONE from you EACH WEEK. You may choose which one (unless the "***" is designated as "(required)").

20% Critical Evaluation of Book and 2 Book Reviews (1500 words)

During weeks 7-10, members of the class will present book reviews of scholarly books that are illustrative of trends in historical methods in general and in witchcraft studies in particular. Every student will conduct a book review assignment for ONE of these books. You will be responsible for acquiring, either at the library or by means of a book vendor such as amazon.com or bn.com, the book assigned to you. The book assignments will be distributed such that each book is reviewed by two students. Each week during this four week period, we will focus

on a different period of witchcraft in history: the Greco-Roman World, Medieval Europe, Early Modern Europe, and Colonial America. Each class over the course of this four week period, the two students responsible for the book on the syllabus will present their review of the book and will help to lead discussion. These book review assignments will involve finding two book reviews of the book you have chosen as well as writing your own review of the book that interacts with the findings of the other reviewers you have found. Detailed guidelines for the presentation and written book review will be posted to Bb. The final written version of the assignment is due to the professor no later than noon, on Friday, 11/7.

15% Presentation of Research (including Outline and working Bibliography to be submitted to the professor at the beginning of class on the day of the presentation)

During the weeks of the book reviews, you should begin focusing on the period of witchcraft in which the historiographical issues interest you. As each period comes under discussion, take careful notes about the issues that arise, the ways that those issues are discussed by the scholars of the period, and how those issues and debates might intersect with your own period. You should begin compiling a bibliography of books, articles and sources (primary and secondary) that are central to the historiographic debates on witchcraft studies in the period you have chosen. During week 11, you will meet individually with the professor about your on-going research. During weeks 12 and 13, each student will conduct a 12-minute presentation of his/her on-going historiographic study. This presentation should focus on sharing with your peers the central debates you are encountering as you pursue your research, as well as some of the unresolved research problems you are still attempting to address. Your presentation should be well-structured and delivered from a detailed outline that highlights the points you wish to make and the citations for the sources supporting those points. At the beginning of class on the day of your presentation, you will submit to the professor a copy of this presentation outline and working bibliography. Detailed guidelines for the presentation, outline, and bibliography will be posted to Bb.

35% Historiographical Essay and Bibliography (4000 words, bibliography not included; grade includes active participation in the draft and review process)

From week 7 on, you should be thinking in an even more focused way about the period (Greco-Roman World, Medieval Europe, Early Modern Europe, and Colonial America) and precise issue on which you will focus your historiography of witchcraft studies. For this assignment, you will assemble a bibliography of the works that are central to your topic. You will analyze how those scholarly works construct their arguments, make use of sources, and interact with one another. You will then compose an original historiographical essay that summarizes the central issues, arguments, source materials for your topic AND takes a stand on the central debates as you have defined them. Detailed guidelines for the historiographical essay and bibliography will be posted to Bb. A guided draft and peer review process will take place during the final three weeks of the course. The final paper is due to the instructor on Tuesday, December 16, by noon.

In your written work and in your classroom involvement (both in person and on-line) you will be expected to adhere to "acceptable standards of conduct" as discussed on the web page for the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities (<http://www.sa.sdsu.edu/srr/>).

Readings:

The following texts are available at KB Books (5187 College Ave. or www.kbbooks.com).

Gilderhus, Mark T. *History and Historians: A Historiographic Introduction*, 5th Edition. Upper Saddle River, NJ:

Prentice Hall, 2002.

(Recommended) Marius, Richard and Melvin E. Page. *A Short Guide to Writing About History*, 4th Edition. New

York, NY: Longman Press, 2001.

Turabian, Kate L. *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 6th Edition. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1996.

Williams, Robert C. *The Historian's Toolbox: A Student's Guide to the Theory and Craft of History*. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe Publishers, 2003.

(R) *History 400W: Reader* (KB Books)

Calendar of Readings and Assignments

(Note: Readings and your responses to the "*" should be completed by the time you come to class on the day for which the reading is listed.)

Week One: What is History?

9/2 Introduction to the Course

9/4 What is History?

Readings: Williams xiii-46, Gilderhus 1-50.

**What are some of the ways that Williams and Gilderhus attempt to make sense of the study of history? Include a list of at least five questions that your readings in Williams and Gilderhus raised for you.

Week Two: Defining the Problem

9/9 What is Magic?

Readings: (R) Alan Segal. "On the Nature of Magic: A Report on a Dialogue between a Historian and a Sociologist," 275-92.

**What seem to be the stumbling blocks for Segal and his colleague in this dialogue? How do they attempt to address those problems? To what extent is this dialogue bound to a particular historical period?

9/11 Interdisciplinary Approaches to History (and Magic/Witches in particular)

Readings: (R) Geertz, Hildred. "An Anthropology of Religion and Magic, I." *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 6 (1975), 71-89; (R) Thomas, K.V. "An Anthropology of Religion and Magic, II." *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 6 (1975), 91-109; (R) Diane Purkiss. "The Witch in the Hands of Historians: A Tale of Prejudice and Fear," 59-88.

**In what specific ways do Geertz, Thomas, and Purkiss adopt interdisciplinary approaches to the study of magic? How could their approaches be useful to the historian who is exploring the issue of magic as a historical phenomenon? Include at least four questions that these articles raise for you.

Week Three: Picking a Topic and Pursuing Your Research

9/16 Williams 49-57, Gilderhus 91-106, (Rec: Marius 72-108).

** (required) Of the many tips that Williams and Gilderhus suggest for helping students write quality research papers, from which three do you think you could most benefit and why?

9/18 Library Session in LA 76 (Meet in Library)

** (required) Bring with you to the library a list of three skills for researching history about which you would like to learn more. Consider the upcoming assignments in this class as you compile your list.

Week Four: Evidence, Citation, and Telling a Story

9/23 Evidence and Citation

Readings: Williams 58-80 (Rec: Marius 29-71); Williams 81-93 (Rec: Marius 136-145), Turabian.

** (required) Using the skills that you learned in the library session, for the period of history that corresponds with the book you are reviewing for weeks 7-10, find at least three of the seven types of evidence described in Williams. Use Turabian to create a bibliography for your book, the three pieces of evidence you have found, and reviews you have found for your book. As you try to use Turabian to provide proper citation, make a list of questions that arise for you.

9/25 Telling a story (narrative and explanation)

Readings: Williams 94-113, Gilderhus 73-90 (Rec: Marius 13-28).

** (required) What are some of the central points of the narrative so far in the book you are reading for weeks 7-10? To what extent is your author focusing on narrative and/or explanation?

Week Five: Doing History: Interpretation

9/30 Consensus and Conflict in the Community of Scholars

Readings: Williams 114-125; (R) Levack, Brian P. Review of *Witches of the Atlantic World: A Historical Reader and Primary Sourcebook*, by Elaine G. Breslaw; (R) Rowland, Ingrid and Anthony Grafton. Review of *Demon Lovers: Witchcraft, Sex, and the Crisis of Belief*, by Walter Stephens; (R) Dickie, M.W. Review of *Greek and Roman Necromancy*, by Daniel Ogden; (R) Griffin, Jasper. "That Old Black Magic." Review of

Greek and Roman Necromancy, by Daniel Ogden.

**After reading each of the reviews, thinking about how each attempts to place the book being reviewed into the wider field of scholarship, focus in on two of the reviews. Who is the author of the review and what are his/her credentials to write the review? Where was each review published and how does that impact the types of feedback that the authors give about the book under review? In what ways could you use these reviews to help you guide your research?

10/2 Gender and History

Readings: Williams 125-29; (R) Garrett, Clarke. "Women and Witches: Patterns of Analysis."; (R) Balfe, Judith F. "Comment on Clarke Garrett's 'Women and Witches.'"; (R) Honnegger, Claudia. "Comment on Garrett's 'Women and Witches.'"; (R) Moia, Nelly. "Comment on Garrett's 'Women and Witches.'"; (R) Garrett, Clarke "Reply to Honnegger and Moia."; (R) Purkiss, Diane. "A Holocaust of One's Own: The Myth of the Burning Times."

**What seems to be at stake in the debate generated by Garrett in *Signs* (i.e. what has gotten these scholars so worked up)? How does Purkiss' chapter, written more than fifteen years later, relate to that debate?

Week Six: Doing History: Speculation

10/7 Types of Speculation

Readings: Williams 130-49, Gilderhus 51-72.

**How does the historical speculation described by Williams compare with the ways that Gilderhus discusses historical speculation?

10/9 **Think back to a fiction book you have read or a movie you have viewed in which magic, magic accusations, or witches/warlocks have played a role. Apply the questions on Williams pp. 148-49 to your experience of that fictional depiction. If you cannot answer all of Williams' questions, make a list of research questions you would have to address in order to be able to answer Williams' questions.

Over the next four weeks, class members will review books on witchcraft during each of the historical periods we are covering in this class. Each week, there is an approximately 90-100 page reading that everyone in the class will do for background on the period. Then, two students will review the book for each day.

Week Seven: Historiography of Greco-Roman Witchcraft

10/14 (R) Daniel Ogden. "Binding Spells: Curse Tablets and Voodoo Dolls in the Greek and Roman Worlds," 3-90.

**How does Ogden attempt to define and bound the issue of magic in ancient Greece and Rome?

Review: Faraone, C.A., *Ancient Greek Love Magic*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999.

10/16 Review: Janowitz, Naomi. *Magic in the Roman World: Pagans, Jews, and Christians*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2001.

Week Eight: Historiography of Magic in the Medieval Period

10/21 (R) Edward Peters. "The Medieval Church and State on Superstition, Magic, and Witchcraft: From Augustine to the Sixteenth Century," 175-245.

**What seem to be the central issues for Peters in discussing magic and witchcraft accusations in the medieval period?

Review: Bailey, M. *Battling Demons: Witchcraft, Heresy, and Reform in the Late Middle Ages*. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003.

10/23 Review: Kieckhefer, Richard. *Magic in the Middle Ages*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

Week Nine: Historiography of Magic in the Early Modern Period

10/28 (R) Stuart Clark. "Witchcraft and Magic in Early Modern Culture," 98-169.

**How does Clark's approach to "Witchcraft and Magic in Early Modern Culture" help you to think about the period on which you would like to focus your own historiographic essay (i.e. how does it help you begin to define central issues, think about sources, etc.)?

Review: Ruggiero, G. *Binding Passions: Tales of Magic, Marriage, and Power at the End of the Renaissance*. New York, NY: Oxford, 1993.

10/30 Review: Willis, Deborah. *Malevolent Nurture: Witch-Hunting and Maternal Power in Early Modern England*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995.

Week Ten: Historiography of Witchcraft in Colonial America

11/4 (R) Elaine G. Breslaw. Excerpt from *Witches of the Atlantic World: A Historical Reader & Primary Sourcebook*, 427-511.

**How does the historical study of the Salem witchcraft trials vary depending on whether you focus on the phenomenon, the victims, the accusers, or the accused? How does this variation in perspective apply to the period you are planning to study in detail?

Review: Karlsen, Carol F. *The Devil in the Shape of a Woman: Witchcraft in Colonial New England*. New York, NY: Norton, 1987.

11/6 Review: Norton, Mary Beth. *In the Devil's Snare: The Salem Witchcraft Crisis of 1692*. New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 2002.

11/7 **Written Book Review Due to professor: by Friday, November 7, noon**

(deliver to Adams Humanities 4210, History Department Office, for time/date stamp)

Week Eleven: Planning Research

11/11 Individual Meetings with Instructor about on-going research

11/13 Individual Meetings with Instructor about on-going research

Week Twelve: Sharing Research

11/18 In-class 12-minute Presentations of on-going research

11/20 In-class 12-minute Presentations of on-going research

Week Thirteen: Sharing Research (continued)

11/25 In-class 12-minute Presentations of on-going research

11/26 **Post Draft of Paper, with writer review, to your peer group on Bb by noon**

11/27 No Class- Thanksgiving Day

Week Fourteen: Participating in a Community of Historians

12/1 **Post review of peers' papers by 5PM**

12/2 In-Class Peer Review in small groups

**Bring to class copies of the reviews that you wrote for those in your peer group AND copies of responses to your own paper. Be ready to ask questions of your reviewers and to answer questions about the feedback you have offered to others.

12/4 Discussion of Feedback: What to do with it?

Week Fifteen: Conclusions

12/9 Synthesis of Historiographic Trends in the Study of Witchcraft in the Western Tradition

12/11 Overview of the Course: Review of Skills Acquisition and How to Take These Skills into Your Future Studies in History

Final Paper Due: Tuesday, December 16 by noon

(deliver to Adams Humanities 4210, History Department Office, for time/date stamp)