

**Eastern Illinois University**  
**Course Proposal**  
**EIU 4155G, The European Witchhunts**

**1. Catalog Description**

- a. EIU 4155G
- b. The European Witchhunts
- c. 3-0-3
- d. F, S, Su
- e. Europe Witchhunt
- f. Through a study of the events and circumstances surrounding the European Witchhunts, this course will explore the roles that misogyny, social dislocation, economic crisis, religious belief, and challenges to authority played in the age of intolerance that resulted in the execution of many thousands of women and men.
- g. History majors are excluded
- h. Writing-intensive

**2. Student Learning Objectives**

- a. In accordance with the goals of general education, students will
  1. Learn to read critically and analytically through a hands-on study of primary sources dealing with the witchhunts. Students will learn the skills necessary for evaluating primary sources (documents, letters, diaries, treatises, etc.). (critical thinking)
  2. Discuss and assess the content of primary sources in small-group projects. (critical thinking)
  3. Write several essays including a large research paper calling for extensive research and analysis of materials. (writing)
  4. Present the findings of their research to the class in oral reports. (speaking)
  5. Reflect on the issue of intolerance. (citizenship)
- b. As they study the historical event known as the European Witchhunts, students will also
  1. Become familiar with the political, social, cultural, and economic factors that allowed for the European Witchhunts.

**3. Course Outline**

This course will meet each week (for fifteen weeks) for 150-minute class periods. Week twelve will be devoted to assessment, specifically the TASKS test.

**Week 1**

What is a miracle? What is magic? What is a witch?

The Witchcraft enigma: paganism and the witch. Week one will provide an introduction to the idea of the popular belief in witches and provide the historical context through a discussion of ancient accusations of witchcraft.

**Week 2**

Medieval Catholicism, misogyny, and popular attitudes about women. St. Augustine and the origins of original sin. Contrasting images of womanhood: the virgin and the whore.

**Week 3**

The Inquisition and the crime of witchcraft. *The Malleus Maleficarum*. The role of the Dominicans and secular judges ("witch-finders") in prosecuting witches.

#### Week 4

Joan of Arc: a case study of one medieval woman. Other medieval “witches”: Jews, lepers, and heretics.

#### Week 5

The stereotype of the witch: the Devil’s pact, the reality of the demonic world, and the Witches’ Sabbath.

#### Week 6

Classic witches and accusers. Those most commonly accused (beggars, midwives, and elderly women), their accusers (neighbors, priests, family members), and the social context that made the accusations possible.

#### Week 7

Demonic possession and the charge of witchcraft. Possession in the cloister (the Devils of Loudon).

#### Week 8

The impact of the Protestant Reformation on the witchhunts. Martin Luther’s writings on women and witches.

#### Week 9

Criminal procedure, courts of law, and the use of torture in prosecuting the accused. The legal foundations of the witchhunt.

#### Week 10

The chronology and geography of the witchhunts: England & Scotland, Germany, Spain, Italy, and France, 1300-1750.

#### Week 11

The decline of the witchhunts. The intellectual, cultural, and legal causes for the end of the witch trials.

#### Week 12

Assessment activities.

#### Week 13

The Salem Witch Trials: a comparative study.

#### Weeks 14 & 15

Oral Reports

### 4. Evaluation of student learning

a. Achievement of student learning will be evaluated based on the following:

Critical analysis paper (on article or articles).....	20%
Primary source papers.....	20%
In-class discussion & participation.....	15%
Research paper.....	35%
Oral report.....	10%
Total	100%

b. This course satisfies the criteria for a writing-intensive course through the critical analysis paper, primary source papers, and the research paper. The professor will work with students while they identify, research, and write a paper on a topic of their choosing. A rough draft of the research paper will be evaluated and returned to each student.

## **5. Rationale**

- a. Senior Seminar
- b. Prerequisite: 75 hours completed
- c. This course does not duplicate any current offerings.
- d. Course will not be required in any majors or programs other than the general education senior seminar.

## **6. Implementation**

- a. Initial instructor: Joy Kammerling
- b. Textbooks:
  - Robin Briggs, *Witches & Neighbors: A History of European Witchcraft*, 1998.
  - Joseph Klaits, *Servants of Satan: The Age of the Witchhunts*, 1985
  - Alan Kors & Edward Peters, *Witchcraft in Europe, 1100-1700: A Documentary History*, 1992.
  - Marc Mappen, ed., *Witches & Historians: Interpretations of Salem*, 1996.
- c. No additional costs
- d. Fall 2001

## **7. Community College Transfer**

Not applicable

**8. Date Approved by College Curriculum Committee:** April 12, 2000

**9. Date Approved by Senior Seminar Advisory Committee:** April 20, 2000

**10. Date Approved by CAA:** October 19, 2000

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