



Magic, Religion and Inquisition

Course Number

MEDI-UA 9995 F01

Instruction Mode:

Online

Brightspace course site<https://brightspace.nyu.edu/d2l/home/164408>**Spring 2022**

If you are enrolled in this course 100% remotely and are not a Study Away student for NYU Florence, please make sure that you've completed the online academic orientation via Brightspace so you are aware of site specific support structure, policies and procedures. Please contact florence.academicssupport@nyu.edu if you have trouble accessing the Brightspace site.

Syllabus last updated on: 26 January 2022

Lecturer Contact Information

TBA

Prerequisites

N/A

Units earned

4

Course Details

- **Tuesday and Thursday from 9:00am to 10:15am**
- All times are Central European Time (CET) Please note that there is a gap in when Daylight Savings Time (DST) begins in Europe and the U.S. In the U.S., DST begins on Sunday, 13 March 2022 when clocks will be set 1 hour forward. In Europe, DST begins Sunday, 27 March 2022.
- Remote Participants: Your instructor will provide you with the Zoom link via NYU Brightspace.
- COVID-related details: In the interest of protecting the NYU Florence community, we are closely following CDC guidance around COVID-19 and adjusting our recommendations and policies accordingly. Your health and well-being is our top priority.



Course Description

In the last three decades, the history of magic, of witchcraft, and of their repression has been analyzed from a variety of viewpoints. Correspondingly, we will look at this elusive topic from various, different perspectives, trying to capture as much as possible of its multifaceted essence.

This course is made up of four sections. The first opens with an analysis of the intellectual foundations of the witch-hunt from the later Middle Ages to the early Renaissance. It traces the development of the elite's opinions with respect to popular superstition, magic and heresy, and their evolution into the belief in the witches' plot to destroy Christendom.

The second section will concentrate on the most famous handbook for witch-hunters, *Malleus Maleficarum* ("The Hammer of the Witches") and on the roots of medieval misogyny.

In the third section we will look at the mass witch-hunts of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries on the backdrop of the break between Protestant and Catholic Europe, and examine the connections linking witch-hunting to the momentous social, political and religious changes of the times.

In the fourth part, thanks to the contribution of anthropology and sociology, we will shed light on the economic and social mechanisms which lead a community to "make a witch", singling out one of its members and accusing him (but more often her) of anti-social, and indeed anti-human deeds. On the other hand, the tools of gender history will enable us to understand why witches were often accused by other women, and to read the witches' confessions with psychoanalytical tools.

Course Objectives

On completion of this course, students should:

- be able to contextualize the discourse on magic and witchcraft in the wider framework of early modern culture, from natural philosophy to politics, from language to gender;
- be able to distinguish and comprehend the various historiographical approaches which enable our present understanding of the subject;
- have a clear sense of the different factors that, through their complex interplay, lead to the age of the witch-hunts
- have improved their understanding of the methodologies of research on the course's topics.

Assessment Components

- Attendance and Participation: 12,5%
- Two 5-page reaction papers: 25%
- Midterm Exam: 20%
- Class Presentation: 12,5%
- Final Exam: 30%

You are expected to attend class in person or remote synchronously. Failure to submit or fulfill any required component may result in failure of the class, regardless of grades achieved in other assignments.

Class presentations: Students will present to the class on a theme chosen among the weekly topics listed on the syllabus. They are first to show clearly the main points discussed by the author(s), expressing their personal point of view, comparing the readings examined to other texts read in class, and explaining whether they are convinced of the authors' opinion and why. Presentations must be an exercise in critical thinking, not a mere repetition of the readings' contents; they will have to be concise (max. 30 minutes), lively and to the point. After their presentation, students will chair the class discussion, that is, questions and comments from their peers. PowerPoint, handouts, and other creative methods of interaction/presentation are encouraged but must be discussed with the professor. Students may have to read



additional bibliography to prepare for presentation, and in any case must meet with professor beforehand. Presentations must be done normally in pairs, on the first class of the week chosen. The first week available for presentations is that of Feb. 15, the last one that of May 3. No presentations will be scheduled in the week of March 22. **All students MUST sign up for a presentation by Feb. 10** via a signup sheet on Gdrive. No rescheduling of presentations will be allowed. Please refer to presentation guidelines for details.

In-class Examinations: The midterm exam will consist of two parts. The first part will be a list of names, dates and events which students will have to identify with short definitions - 2-3 complete sentences each. The second part will be composed of four essay questions. Students will choose two, and answer them fully, that is, with essays approx. two pages long each. The final exam will consist of a list of two short and four long essay questions: students will do both short essays (ca. 150 words, or one page, each), and will choose two out of the four long questions (approx. two pages long each). Professor will hand out study sheets before both exams.

Reaction papers: These are reviews of readings, each ca. 5 pages, typewritten, double-spaced. The paper must include a summary of the main points of the reading, and a critical comment by the student explaining why text is relevant to the course, best if linked to other readings and/or lectures (in case with bibliographical references). Each paper must refer to a single text, either an article/essay, or a chapter from a book. The students must write two papers during the semester: one must refer to a reading from the first half of the course (deadline for submission: Mar. 3); the other to a reading from the second half (deadline: Apr. 21). Papers must be written in clear, correct English, and to be typed with care. Grammatical and spelling mistakes and sloppy writing will result in the lowering of the grade. You cannot choose readings from either the course textbook, *The Witch-hunt in Early Modern Europe* by B. P. Levack, or *Under the Devil's Spell* by M. Duni, for a review paper. Please refer to paper guidelines for more information.

Attendance Policy

In order to keep each other safe, if you are not feeling well, we encourage you to remain in your residence and, if possible, attend class remotely.

Please make sure to inform your professor in advance so that they can turn on Zoom. Remote attendance is counted as regular attendance. You will not be marked absent.

For a detailed explanation of the global attendance policy, see the NYU Florence [Present vs. Absent Flowchart](#).

Exams, tests and quizzes, deadlines, and oral presentations that are missed due to illness always require a doctor's note as documentation.

The Global Attendance Policy is posted in the Academic Policies tab in [Brightspace](#), on the [NYU Florence Student Portal](#) website, and is posted around campus.

After you have read and reviewed the policies, if there is anything that still needs further clarification or raises a question, please reach out to florence.academicsupport@nyu.edu.

Final exams

Final exams must be taken at their designated times. Should there be a conflict between your final exams, please bring this to the attention of the Academics team. Final exams may not be taken early, and students should not plan to leave the site before the end of the finals period.

Late Submission of Work

Please refer to Academic Policies in [Brightspace](#).

**Required Text(s)**

All readings are available online on the NYU Brightspace course site. Hard copies of some textbooks are available for consultation and semester-long loans in the Villa Ulivi Library. Please email florence.library@nyu.edu to reserve a copy. To request scans from books on reserve please fill out the Ulivi Library Book Scan Form.

Session 1 – 27 January. Introduction: themes, focus and format of the course**Session 2 – 1-3 February.****Magic and Witchcraft in the Early Times of Christianity**

Tues.: Levack, *The Witch Hunt*, chap. 1; Th.: “Sorcerers” in Brucker, *The Society of Renaissance Florence*, 260-273; Duni, *Under the Devil’s Spell*, 80-84, 110-112, 118-120

Session 3 – 8-10 February.**The Catholic Church and Popular Culture in the late Middle Ages**

Tues.: Prof.’s lecture; Th.: Gurevich, “Popular Culture in the Mirror of Penitentials”, 78-103; “Canon *Episcop*” in Kors & Peters, *Witchcraft in Europe*, 60-63.

Session 4 - Make-Up Day: Friday, February 11.

Watch movie “The Name of The Rose”

Session 5 – 15-17 February.**The Folkloric Roots of Witchcraft**

Ginzburg, *The Night Battles*, chaps. 1-2

Session 6 – 22-24 February.**Jews, Heretics, Witches: The “Diabolical Sect” and the Inquisition**

Levack, *The Witch-Hunt*, chap. 2; Cohn, “The Demonization of Mediaeval Heretics”, 35-78, 242-8; Duni, *Under the Devil’s Spell*, 23-32

Session 7 – 1-3 March.**Women and Demons: The *Malleus Maleficarum***

Malleus Maleficarum and other authors in Kors & Peters, *Witchcraft in Europe*, 176-204; Broedel, *The Malleus Maleficarum*, 167-88

FIRST PAPER DUE**Session 8 – 8-10 March****REVIEW AND MIDTERM EXAM**

SPRING BREAK, MARCH 14 – 20

**Session 9 – 22-24 March.****Magicians, Philosophers, Inquisitors and Witches in the Renaissance**

Clark, "Natural Magic", "Demonic Magic", 214-250; Burke, "Witchcraft and Magic in Renaissance Italy: Gianfrancesco Pico and his Strix", 32-52; Duni, *Under the Devil's Spell*, 20-22, 118-123.

Session 10 – 29-31 March.**The Witch-hunt and the Protestant Reformation**

Levack, *The Witch-Hunt*, chap. 4; Martin Luther, John Calvin in Kors & Peters, 261-270; Clark, "Protestant Witchcraft, Catholic Witchcraft", 526-45; Waite, "Between the Devil and the Inquisitor", 189-99

Session 11 – 5-7 April.**Images of Witchcraft**

Zika, "Dürer's Witch", 305-32, and "She-Man: Visual Representations of Witchcraft and Sexuality", 269-304; Sullivan, "The Witches of Dürer and Hans Baldung Grien"

Session 12 – 12-14 April.**Demography, Economy, and Witch-hunting**

Levack, *The Witch-Hunt*, chap. 5; Behringer, "Weather, Hunger and Fear", 69-86; Roper, "Fertility", 128-159

Session 13 – 19-21 April.**Who Were the "Witches"? Gender and Society**

Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, chap. 17, 638-80; Hester, "Patriarchal Reconstruction and Witch-hunting", 288-306; Larner, "Was Witch-hunting Woman-hunting?", 273-5.

SECOND PAPER DUE**Session 14 – 26-28 April. Watch movie "The Crucible"****Session 15 – 3-5 May.****What Did the "Witches" Do? Varieties of Magic and the Inquisition's response**

Duni, *Under the Devil's Spell*, 32-38, 52-71, 85-109; Ruggiero, *Binding Passions*, 130-174

10 May– Reading Day: NO CLASS**Session 16 - 12 May -- FINAL EXAM****Suggested Co-Curricular Activities**

Suggested optional co-curricular activities will be announced in class and/or via email by the professor throughout the semester.



Your Lecturer

Matteo Duni received his PhD in History and Civilization from the European University Institute, Florence. His research interests focus on the history of religious beliefs and practices in late medieval and early modern Italy and Europe. His publications include the books *Tra religione e magia: Storia del prete Guglielmo Campana* (Firenze, 1999), *Under the Devil's Spell: Witches, Sorcerers and the Inquisition in Renaissance Italy* (Syracuse, 2007), and the proceedings of the international conference *Non lasciar vivere la malefica* (Firenze, 2008).

Academic Honesty & Plagiarism

As the University's policy on "Academic Integrity for Students at NYU" states: "At NYU, a commitment to excellence, fairness, honesty, and respect within and outside the classroom is essential to maintaining the integrity of our community. By accepting membership in this community, students take responsibility for demonstrating these values in their own conduct and for recognizing and supporting these values in others." Students at Global Academic Centers must follow the University and school policies.

NYU takes plagiarism very seriously; penalties follow and may exceed those set out by your home school. Your lecturer may ask you to sign a declaration of authorship form, and may check your assignments by using TurnItIn or another software designed to detect offences against academic integrity.

The presentation of another person's words, ideas, judgment, images, or data as though they were your own, whether intentionally or unintentionally, constitutes an act of plagiarism. It is also an offense to submit work for assignments from two different courses that is substantially the same (be it oral presentations or written work). If there is an overlap of the subject of your assignment with one that you produced for another course (either in the current or any previous semester), you **MUST** inform your professor.

For guidelines on academic honesty, clarification of the definition of plagiarism, examples of procedures and sanctions, and resources to support proper citation, please see:

[NYU Academic Integrity Policies and Guidelines](#)

[NYU Library Guides](#)

Inclusivity Policies and Priorities

NYU's Office of Global Programs and NYU's global sites are committed to equity, diversity, and inclusion. In order to nurture a more inclusive global university, NYU affirms the value of sharing differing perspectives and encourages open dialogue through a variety of pedagogical approaches. Our goal is to make all students feel included and welcome in all aspects of academic life, including our syllabi, classrooms, and educational activities/spaces.

Attendance Rules on Religious Holidays

Members of any religious group may, without penalty, excuse themselves from classes when required in compliance with their religious obligations. Students who anticipate being absent due to religious observance should notify their lecturer and Office of Academic Support in writing via email one week in advance. If examinations or assignment deadlines are scheduled on the day the student will be absent, the Academics Office will schedule a make-up examination or extend the deadline for assignments. Please note that an absence is only



excused for the holiday but not for any days of travel that may come before and/or after the holiday. See also [University Calendar Policy on Religious Holidays](#)

Pronouns and Name Pronunciation (Albert and Zoom)

Students, staff, and faculty have the opportunity to add their pronouns, as well as the pronunciation of their names, into Albert. Students can have this information displayed to faculty, advisors, and administrators in Albert, NYU Brightspace, the NYU Home internal directory, as well as other NYU systems. Students can also opt out of having their pronouns viewed by their instructors, in case they feel more comfortable sharing their pronouns outside of the classroom. For more information on how to change this information for your Albert account, please see the [Pronouns and Name Pronunciation website](#).

Students, staff, and faculty are also encouraged, though not required, to list their pronouns, and update their names in the name display for Zoom. For more information on how to make this change, please see the [Personalizing Zoom Display Names website](#).

Moses Accommodations Statement

Academic accommodations are available for students with documented and registered disabilities. Please contact the Moses Center for Student Accessibility (+1 212-998-4980 or mosescsd@nyu.edu) for further information. Students who are requesting academic accommodations are advised to reach out to the Moses Center as early as possible in the semester for assistance. Accommodations for this course are managed through NYU Florence.

Bias Response

The New York University Bias Response Line provides a mechanism through which members of our community can share or report experiences and concerns of bias, discrimination, or harassing behavior that may occur within our community.

Experienced administrators in the Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO) receive and assess reports, and then help facilitate responses, which may include referral to another University school or unit, or investigation if warranted according to the University's existing Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy.

The Bias Response Line is designed to enable the University to provide an open forum that helps to ensure that our community is equitable and inclusive.

To report an incident, you may do so in one of three ways:

- Online using the [Web Form \(link\)](#)
- Email: bias.response@nyu.edu
- Phone: 212-998-2277
- Local Telephone: 055 5007277