

Listen

ENGL 4/5385-01W: Special Topics

English Witch Plays: Beyond *Macbeth*

Fall 2017 TR 11am-12:15pm HUM 209

Instructor Professor Meg Pearson	Office TLC 2234
Office Hours* in person: TR 9-11 am and by appointment online: TR 1-2 pm and by appointment <i>*My administrative duties will sometimes take precedence over office hours. However, if you make an appointment to see me or tell me you're coming by, I will ALWAYS be there. Thanks for understanding if I'm not always there if you drop in.</i>	To Reach Me email: megp@westga.edu (mfpearson@gmail.com if UWG servers are down) Do NOT use CourseDen email; I check it only rarely.

Description of Class MA Students: Check the blue ink for your additions

Witches in early modern England could be sex-crazed man-eaters, fearsome magicians, embittered grannies, or bored housewives. This class will consider these baffling differences by examining the peculiarly Jacobean genre of witch plays as well as early English tabloid journalism, court masques, and the disturbing sixteenth- and seventeenth-century transcripts of actual English witch trials and the many contemporary reflections upon these trials. Using this evidence, we will attempt to piece together a definition of "witchcraft" that accounts for England's national obsession with the supernatural.

Course Learning Outcomes ([MA Students](#))

Students in the class will be able to:

1. Understand and assess the traditions, conventions, and contexts associated with the study of the English language and its literatures, particularly that of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England as well as contemporary adaptations.
2. Apply critical thinking skills to the analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of information and ideas from diverse oral, written, and/or visual sources.
3. Conduct research, develop organizational strategies, and compose professional documents using the academic conventions of English Studies as a discipline.
4. Students will demonstrate that the study of literature and language can transcend the boundaries established by the fixed curriculum.

Texts

William Shakespeare, *Macbeth* (available in bookstore/online – any critical edition [w/introduction, footnotes] acceptable)

Three Jacobean Witchcraft Plays, edited by Peter Corbin and Douglas Sedge (available in bookstore/online -- we will be reading *The Witch* and *The Witch of Edmonton* in this text)

Thomas Heywood and Richard Brome, *The Witches of Lancashire* (available via CourseDen under "Readings")

All secondary readings available via COURSE DEN

Course Requirements and Grade Percentages

Short projects (40% of final grade): Students will have the choice of either writing two 500-750 word analytical responses to the course readings (about 2-3 pages each) OR writing one short paper and doing one creative project. These will be 20% each:

*The paper (500-750 words) requires you to analyze part of a text from class. They are to be careful readings – almost dissections – of passages that you feel are important to look at closely. Each close reading will make a claim about how a certain line or passage or poem should be understood, and then use careful analysis of the text to prove that claim. **MA STUDENTS: Your paper will be 4-6 pages and incorporate historical and/or critical secondary readings.**

*The creative project can take several forms, including a filmed recitation and explication of a passage, a staging of a scene or part of a scene, a musical performance of one of the witches' songs with associated rationale, or a modernization of part of a play (written or filmed) with rationale. The creative project may be a small group project, but you should choose your group very wisely indeed as you will all receive the same grade.

Both essays may be revised. The creative project cannot.

Research Essay (40% of final grade): Each of you will write a seven-eight page (1750-2000 words) critical analysis paper on a topic of your own choosing related to one of the texts on this syllabus; alternately students may compare two texts or authors from the reading list. You will submit a one to two page proposal (see syllabus for dates) introducing the topic and describing the major points, historical data, and texts you think your essay will use to elaborate that topic. Your paper should not just reiterate subjects or ideas that we have discussed in class. Rather, use class discussions, online discussions, and your reading to find and define your own niche in the course material.

If you are seeking to use this special topics course for either your Brit I or your American I literary history requirement, your final paper will have to cover the appropriate period. In other words, an American I credit-seeker would need to do a paper that considers in detail the New England witch-craze. Those seeking Brit I will have somewhat of an easier time, but they will need to focus on 16th- and 17th- century texts. See me with questions!

As a formal writing assignment, your paper must argue a specific thesis and support that thesis with clearly organized paragraphs containing appropriate examples and textual analysis. Your writing must be free of grammatical errors and should demonstrate stylistic clarity. Formal papers must document their sources using MLA style citations and notes. I expect these papers to be researched, and I will anticipate a minimum of 5 significant secondary sources. Further details about this assignment will be discussed and distributed in class. We will workshop these essays the last week of class. See syllabus for due dates. **MA STUDENTS: Your paper will be 10-12 pages with at least 8-10 sources.**

Class participation/Online Work/Homework (20% of final grade):

First, come to class every day. Second, come to class having read all the assigned material. Third, come to class ready and willing to discuss the texts you've read and to engage with your colleagues and your instructor in a mature manner. I will quiz you from time to time to make sure you're involved with all three. If you worry that you are not participating in class, do use the online discussion area (such as the Pendle Witch Pub) to bring up questions. If we're ever forced to move the course online for a class or two (due to emergencies on my part or the weather's), we'll use those discussion sections extensively. **Keep an eye on CourseDen. Discussion Kickstarter (10 of this 20%): Each MA student will be responsible for starting two-three of our discussions by sharing focused observations and questions about the texts read for that day. You should consult two additional scholarly sources while preparing for your "kickstarter," which should last between ten and fifteen minutes. I'll do sign-up sheets, and you'll likely do one play and one secondary source.**

Course Policies

Attendance and Tardiness:

You are expected to attend every class session regularly. What we cover in class is what you need to know. If you are absent, it is your responsibility to contact another student for an explanation of what was covered. I offer you 4 absences to do with as you like—use them wisely for the inevitable "stuff" that will mess up your semester: illness, traffic, death in the family, etc. I do not care whether they are excused or not. If you miss 5 classes for whatever reason, you will likely not pass this class. I dislike late arrivals; they are distracting. If you come in late more than twice, I'll start counting them as absences. Also, missed appointments with me outside of class will be treated as class absences.

Deadlines and Late Papers:

The short papers and projects and the final paper will be due online via Course Den (or via email in case of server trouble) at a deadline established on the syllabus and will be graded via turnitin.com. On class days, papers will be due before class. On non-class days, we will vote on a fair time. Every day that passes after the due date means that your work loses a letter grade. Extensions will be granted only in cases of verifiable emergency and/or if we have spoken about it beforehand.

Formatting and Submitting Papers:

All take-home papers will be submitted via CourseDen and Turnitin.

All take-home papers will have all the appropriate formatting required by MLA standards. All papers should be typed in a simple font in 10-12 point typeface. Always leave one-inch margins on each side. Papers are always to be double-spaced. Always cite your sources. And finally, always make a back-up copy of every paper you write.

The departmental grading rubric for all upper-division written work may be found [here](#). You will sometimes find it useful or necessary to email me your papers, such as when you would like me to look over your draft. Please send papers to megp@westga.edu or, if that's not working, to mfpearson@gmail.com. When I receive your email with an attachment, I will email you back right away to say "Got it." If you submit something to me, not to CourseDen, and I do not email you back within 24 hours, I have not received your paper. Resend it. CourseDen will let you know when you've submitted, and you can double

check it yourself. If you have having troubles with CourseDen, please get in touch with the University ITS people or Distance Learning (<http://uwgonline.westga.edu/>). I cannot help you, sadly. Plan for such technological failures. They are part of life.

Academic Honesty:

Plagiarism or cheating, whether it is using the words and/or ideas of another without properly giving credit to the source(s), submitting someone else's work as your own, submitting your own work completed for another class without my permission, collaborating on individual exercises, or otherwise violating the university's code of academic integrity will not be tolerated, and infractions will be severely punished. Familiarize yourself with the proper rules for citation for the English department (MLA) and the university's policy on academic dishonesty: <http://www.westga.edu/~engdept/Plagiarism/pladef.html>.

If an idea does not come fully-sprung from your own skull, you need to figure out whose idea it is and give them credit through citation. If you do not do so, it is considered cheating. If you cheat in my class, you will receive an automatic F for the class. Do not test this. If you're ever in doubt, PLEASE ASK ME.

Extra Help:

If you feel you need help or if you have any questions regarding the class, come by my office, 2234 in the TLC. I will be in my office and prepared to offer assistance during my office hours. If for some reason you are unable to see me during my office hours, we will arrange an alternative meeting time. Contact me via email to set up an appointment. Also, do not forget about the Writing Center where the instructors and staff work to assist writers at any point in the writing process. For more information or to make an appointment, e-mail the Writing Center at writing@westga.edu or call: 678-839-6513.

Contacting Me:

I am most easily tracked down using email: megp@westga.edu. (Please note that mpearson@westga.edu is NOT ME.) You may contact me using the email function in CourseDen, although I **do not** check that account regularly. Please e-mail me from your university account in order to make it easier to identify the sender of the e-mail and to avoid unnecessary security or virus risks.

Special Needs:

The University of West Georgia adheres to the Americans for Disabilities Act, known as ADA, which requires that all programs at the university be accessible to people with disabilities. If you have a registered disability that will require accommodation, please see me in my office at the beginning of the semester. If you have a disability that you have not yet registered through the Accessibility Services Office, please contact the Counseling Center (I cannot offer any accommodations without their official report):

Location: 123 Row Hall

Office Hours:

M-F 8am-5pm

Tel: 678-839-6428

Fax: 678-839-6429

E-mail: counseling@westga.edu

Campus Carry:

If you have any questions about carrying a concealed firearm on campus or in class, please look [here](#).

Course Syllabus

(Note: Please have the assignment completed or read on the day it is listed unless told otherwise. Individual homework assignments and group work will be announced in class or via email or via CourseDen announcement. This syllabus is subject to change; all changes will be announced in class and on CourseDen.)

TUESDAY	THURSDAY
	8/10 First Day of class Open Drop/Add (Drop ends at 4 pm on Friday, August 11th; Add ends at 4 pm on Monday, August 14th.)
8/15 Homework on Contemporary Witches Due (here) READ FOR CLASS: Stavreva, "Fighting Words: Witch-Speak in Late Elizabethan Docu-fiction" (here)	8/17 READ FOR CLASS: Witchcraft Documents 1. Malleus Maleficarum 2. Weyer, Melancholia 3. Reginald Scot, Unrealistic Witches
8/22 READ: Middleton, <i>The Witch</i> (Acts 1-3)	8/24 READ: <i>The Witch</i> (Acts 4-5)

(This is in our textbook, <i>Three Jacobean Witchcraft Plays</i> , but you can also access the complete text online here .) Cute Cliff Notesy summary of play Here	
8/29 READ: Reginald Scot Book X Ch 8... READ: European witchcraft docs	8/31 READ: Yachnin, "Scandalous trades: Middleton's <i>The Witch</i> , the 'populuxe' market and the politics of the theater."(here) Short Paper One Drafting Work
9/5 READ <i>The Witch of Edmonton</i> (Acts 1-3) This is also in our textbook, but an electronic copy may be found here . Quicky plot summary . Short Paper One Due	9/7 READ <i>The Witch of Edmonton</i> (Acts 4-5)
9/12 READ (article on Edmonton source) READ: Familiars and UK Witches	9/14 READ (article on Edmonton)
9/19 READ <i>Late Witches of Lancashire</i> (Acts 1-3) ONLINE Plot summary	9/21 READ <i>Witches of Lancashire</i> (Acts 4-5)
9/26 READ (sources of Lancashire)	9/28 READ (secondary on Lancashire) W Deadline for full Fall term is Friday, 9/29, at 4 pm.
10/3 READ (contemporary witches)	10/5 Fall Break - No Class
10/10 READ: <i>Macbeth</i> (Acts 1-3)	10/12 READ: <i>Macbeth</i> (Acts 4-5) Short paper/Project Two Due
10/17 READ: Scottish witches and James I	10/19 READ: Secondary on Macbeth
10/24 American witchcraft	10/26 American Witchcraft
10/31	11/2

Contemporary witches	Catch up and discuss research
11/7 No Class -- Paper meetings	11/9 No Class for Paper Meetings
11/14 Final Paper Proposals Due Monday morning, 8 am Workshopping Final Paper Proposals	11/16 Setting up structure for final papers based on revised proposals
11/21 Thanksgiving Break - No Class	11/23 Thanksgiving Break - No Class
11/28 Draft Workshop for Final Paper Evaluations	11/30 Last Day of Class Final Paper Presentations
12/5 Final Exam Week - No Class	12/7 Final Exam Week - No Class