REL 3132

Witchcraft and Neopaganism

Section: RVC

Internet/Fully Online

Spring Term 2027

Course Time Zone: Eastern Time (ET). Course due dates and times are according to this time zone.

Professor Information

Erin Weston

Roles: Primary Instructor

Email: eweston@fiu.edu

Phone: (305) 348-1329

Office Hours: By Appointment

Office Location: DM 322B (MMC)

Department or Academic Unit: Department of Religious

Studies

Course Prerequisites

Course prerequisites, if any, are listed below.

Course Description

This course will provide a historical and cultural overview of witchcraft ranging from the Middle Ages and Early Modern Period through to the present. Students will look at several theories about the cause of the European witchcraze. After providing a historical context, we will explore contemporary beliefs, practices, and theories about Witchcraft and Neopaganism. We will also explore Paganism as a general concept in the context of global religious traditions.

Textbook and Course Materials

Seeking the Mystery: An Introduction to Pagan Theologies

Required/Recommended: Required

Authors: Christine Hoff Kraemer

Publisher: Patheos Press

Publication Date: 2012

Copyright Date: 2012

ISBN 10: 1939221188

ISBN 13: 978-1939221186

Chapters/Pages: N/A

Pagan Theology: Paganism as a World Religion

Required/Recommended: Required

Authors: Michael York

Publisher: NYU Press

Publication Date: 2005

Copyright Date: 2004

ISBN 10: 0814797083

ISBN 13: 978-0814797082

Chapters/Pages: Complete text

Witchcraze: A New History of the European Witch Hunts

Required/Recommended: Required

Authors: Barstow, Anne Llewellyn

Publisher: Pandora

Publication Date: 1994

Copyright Date: 1994

ISBN 10: 0062510363

ISBN 13: 9780062510365

Chapters/Pages: Complete Text

Introduction to Pagan Studies

Required/Recommended: Required

Authors: Davy, Barbara Jane

Publisher: AltaMira Press

Publication Date: 2007

Copyright Date: 2007

ISBN 10: 0759108196

ISBN 13: 9780759108189

Chapters/Pages: Complete text

Panther Book Pack

Get all required course materials for $22 per undergrad credit hour through Panther Book Pack. You'll be charged automatically unless you opt out within 3 days after the add/drop deadline.

For more details, to compare costs, and to learn how to access your course materials, visit the Panther Book Pack information page on FIU OneStop.

Student Learning Outcomes/Objectives

- identify several key theories about the causes of the European witchcraze and the Salem Witch Trials
- analyze the role of gender in historical witch-hunting and in contemporary witchcraft
- compare and contrast various pagan religions

- recognize and understand different forms of contemporary pagan and earth-centered religions; and review contemporary literature on “Pagan Studies.”

Expectations of this Course

This is an online course, meaning that most of the course work will be conducted online. Expectations for performance in an online course are the same as for a traditional course; in fact, online courses require a degree of self-motivation, self-discipline, and technology skills that can make them more demanding for some students.

In addition to the completion of writing assignments and exams, the primary requirement for successful completion of this course will be an open mind. Students are expected to exhibit respect to all religious traditions and peoples at all times. Thus, disrespectful or derisive commentary will not be tolerated in this course. Religion is, after all, a very personal and sensitive subject for many.

On the other hand, class participants can expect academic freedom to express their views. Although religion can be personal, this is an academic course taken for college credit and thus students are expected to examine the topics rigorously. Religion shall not be exempt from the scrutiny placed on any and all academic subjects. Students will be responsible for all materials covered in class. Exams may include any and all of the aforementioned materials.

Students are expected to:

- **Review** the how to get started information located in the course content
- **Introduce** yourself to the class during the first week by posting a self introduction in the appropriate discussion forum
- **Take** the practice quiz to ensure that your computer is compatible with Canvas
- **Interact** online with instructor and peers
- **Review and follow** the course calendar
- **Log in** to the course at least **5 times per week**
- **Respond** to discussion boards, blogs and journal postings **by the deadline**.
- **Respond** to **messages** within **3 days or sooner**.
- **Submit** assignments by the **corresponding deadline**

The instructor will:

- **Log in** to the course **4 times per week**
- **Respond** to blogs and journal postings **within 1 week**.
- **Respond** to messages within **3 days or sooner**.
- **Grade** assignments **within 2 weeks** of the assignment deadline.

Assignments & Assessments

Discussion Forums

Keep in mind that your discussion forum postings will likely be seen by other members of the course. Care should be taken when determining what to post.

Assignments

Weekly Blogs

Blogs are an open communications tool for students to share their thoughts. Here you can post text, images, links and attachments, open for comments.

1. Within the Module 1 folder you will find information on how to upload a video to YouTube and how to upload a video through Video Everywhere into the Introduce Yourself blog. Students will upload all course videos to their personal YouTube channel and then into the assignment's particular blog due date noted in course schedule of this syllabus:

- Introduce Yourself Video Blog

2. Blogs can be found in the Blog portion of the course menu or within the content area of the course.

- There will be **eight** course blog topics. The topics will be posted on "Course Blogs" folder in the Course Content. Students must post well thought-out comments based on the required work throughout the semester. Participation is required and represents 10% of your final grade. Both the quantity and the quality of your posts will contribute to your grade. All students are required to participate in all the five topics (at least 200 words). Please see the blog samples and the blog rubric to see what components are expected. Blogs must be posted during the period they are assigned and are due by 11:59 pm on the Monday which ends that particular lesson.
- Once you have composed your original posting, take some time to carefully review other postings within your discussion group. Pick two that are most interesting to you and provide meaningful, detailed, and constructive feedback.
- Keep in mind that your course blog postings will likely be seen by other members of the course. Care should be taken when determining what to post.

Annotation Assignments

You will access the book chapters through Perusall, a tool for collaborative annotations. You are required to contribute at least 4 high-quality annotations for every chapter in the *Introduction to Pagan Studies* book and are encouraged to interact with your peers by commenting on their annotations. There will be one for each chapter and combined the Perusall Annotations are worth 10% of your overall grade.

Witchcraze Wiki

'Students will work together in groups of 4 students on theories of witch hunts. Students must self-enroll in a group during the first week of the module.

Students will be able to sign up for available groups from week 1 - week 3 in the groups section of the course. If you do not choose a group in time, you will be assigned to a group.

For class we have read Anne Llewellyn Barstow's book *Witchcraze: A New History of the European Witch Hunts* where she writes about the role of gender in the witch hunts. However, historians do not all agree about what were primary causes of the witch hunts in Europe and in the United States. Now you will do your own research and explore other possible theories. In groups of four, students will create wiki pages to explore a theory. Each page will consist of a summary of their theory, problems or criticisms of the theory, examples of the theory and a conclusion. Additionally, wikis should include relevant sources either as a bibliography or in text url links, as well as relevant pictures, videos,

and related resources.

Summary of :

1. **theory,**
2. **problems and criticisms of the theory,**
3. **examples of theory,**
4. **conclusion**

Theories

- For possible theories see: Ten General Historical Theories about the Origins and Causes of the Witch Hunts (Groups may also ask to do another unlisted theory but must get it approved by the professor.)

Adapted from James Howe. *21A.211 Magic, Witchcraft, and the Spirit World.* Fall 2003. Massachusetts Institute of Technology: MIT OpenCourseWare, https://ocw.mit.edu License: Creative Commons BY-NC-SA

For critiques and one historian's analysis also see Ten Common Errors and Myths about the Witch Hunts

Game - "A Witch Hunt: Germany 1628

Important:

- You will need to do research; your textbook and required

readings will not have enough information about the topic. You will need to consult a minimum of three outside sources and one must be a book reference. You will also need notes in your paper, and a Bibliography/Works Cited page in MLA style.

- Do not use Wikipedia as an internet source. You may use internet sources, but use only academic sources from the internet. (Academic sources list individual authors, name their sources, and have institutional affiliations.) Points will be deducted for infractions of these rules.
- The wiki tool allows the professor the ability to see each students contributions to the group wiki. Group members are encouraged to equally contribute content to the wiki, as group participation will be factored into your final grade.
- Furthermore, students will have the ability to evaluate their group members' contributions to the final project utilizing the **Kritik** evaluation tool. This group evaluation assignment is worth 50% of the wiki total grade and must be completed by the wiki due date. **The assignments in Kritik, unfortunately, cannot be late, since Kritik doesn't allow late submissions.**

Paganism as World Religion - Student Debate

During week 2 students will be randomly assigned to a group. Each group will consist of 4 students and students within each group must respond to each other. Students will use this group and its corresponding video blog in order to participate in the course debate. Each group will represent a specific debate topic and within the first blog post for each group, students will be able to identify their specific debate position (i.e. pro, or con). Students will be expected to post their debate video on the appropriate date for their assigned position.

Topic-
In this book *Pagan Theology: Paganism as World Religion*, Michael York argues that Paganism is really the root of religion. He breaks his argument down to three main factors: religion, behavior, and theology. Do you agree with York? Is his argument successful, or does he fall short? Why or why not? Provide examples to support your answer.

Students will choose between:

- Student 1 - Paganism as Religion - Pro or Con
- Student 2 - Paganism as Behavior - Pro or Con
- Student 3 - Paganism as Theology - Pro or Con
- Student 4 - Summary / Conclusion - Which argument was the most persuasive, and why?

Each original video should be around 2 to 3 minutes and no more than 5 minutes in length. After each person has presented their initial video, group members should post short response videos

around 1 minute in length.

Students will be expected to review the debate video blogs of other groups after the end of the module. Students will be expected to comment on other groups videos and give suggestions, constructive criticisms, and commendations on their debate videos.

Research Paper

There will be one essay assigned throughout the semester, which is aimed at assisting in the comprehension and synthesis of the concepts presented throughout the course.

There will be **four main choices** for the paper topic.

1. **Extensive Analysis into the Witch Hunts** – In this option, you may choose to extend your research from the earlier part of the semester and go in depth into one of theories on the Witch Hunts. Please make sure that your research extends beyond the cursory presentation expected in the group wiki project. (Historical or Sociological Perspectives)

2. **Theological Analysis of a Contemporary Religious Group** – In this option, you choose a particular group or denomination and analyze their specific beliefs. You can utilize the ideas in Michael York and Christine Hoff Kraemer's books to explore the specific theological beliefs

and structures in a particular group. (Theological Perspective)

3. **Historical Analysis of a Contemporary Religious Group** – In this option, you will choose one Neopagan group and write a historical analysis tracing the group's development. This analysis should clearly illustrate the theological and philosophical changes that occurred over time. Students must clearly address the relationship between the new group, the parent group, and the local society out of which it developed. In other words, what factors, both external and internal, caused the need for the development of the new form of Neopaganism or Witchcraft, and what is distinct about their teachings. (Historical or Sociological Perspectives)

4. **Participant Observation** –In this option, students will observe and analyze a local coven or group's ritual. This will probably not be easy to find, but if you can find a group willing to allow you to come, then I wanted to give you this option. Your paper will include background information about the particular group, as well as description and analysis from your experience. (Anthropological Perspective)

You must utilize at least three academic sources.

This essay will be at least 1500-2000 words long (6 pages double-spaced) and will be worth 20% of your grade. This is a formal academic essay and students must cite their sources. MLA is the preferred citation style in Religious Studies.

Submission: Students must submit their essays to the Turnitin Assignment Dropbox

This assignment requires three separate submissions in order to receive full credit for this assignment.

1. The first requires you to submit your complete paper to the "Initial Research Paper Submission" in the Turnitin Assignment Dropbox so that your paper can be sent your classmates for Review. It is imperative that you submit this assignment on-time, since if you do not you will be unable to complete the second portion of this three part assignment (5%).
2. In the second portion of this assignment you must access the "Research Paper Peer-Review" link in the Turnitin Assignment Dropbox area of the course. You will be directed to review three of your classmate's papers. In order to receive full credit for this portion of the activity you must answer all questions presented to you for each paper (5%).
3. Lastly, you will evaluate your reviewed paper and make any

necessary edits to it. You will then submit your final version to the "Research Paper Final Submission" link in the Turnitin Assignment Dropbox area of the course (10%).

Late Papers: Late papers are only accepted under extreme and verifiable conditions. Papers are deducted 1 letter grade per calendar day and are only accepted within the first 3 days late.

Students are responsible for reading their messages and all announcements posted by the instructor. The instructor also reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus by means of announcements or messages with ample time allowed for students to respond and adjust appropriately.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Plagiarism, or attempting to pass off another's work as your own, falls into three different categories:

1. A written work that is entirely stolen from another source;
2. Using quotations from another source without properly citing them; and
3. Paraphrasing from another source without proper citations.

Students are expected to understand the definition of plagiarism. See the University Code of Academic Integrity if you need further clarification. Offenders will receive a grade of F for the plagiarized assignment, and possibly the course

Important:
You will need to do research; your textbook and required readings

will not have enough information about the topic. You will need to consult a minimum of three outside sources and one must be a book reference. You will also need notes in your paper, and a Bibliography/Works Cited page in MLA style.

Do not use Wikipedia as an internet source. You may use internet sources, but use only academic sources from the internet. (Academic sources list individual authors, name their sources, and have institutional affiliations.) Points will be deducted for infractions of these rules.

If you have questions regarding how to cite or what to cite, ask me BEFORE you submit your essay. If you turn in your paper and you "accidentally" plagiarize parts of your essay, you will fail the assignment and possibly the course. Better safe than sorry! To reiterate, ask me before the due date if you are unsure about how to cite your sources.

**Students may not submit work from a previous semester or from another class for this assignment or any other assignment in this course. It will be flagged for plagiarism by Turnitin.

Review the detailed Turnitin Instructions. on how to submit your assignments and how to review the Grademark comments (feedback) from your professor.

PRESENTATIONS

After completion of the paper, students will do a virtual presentation for the class. Class presentations may take a variety of forms, including: videos posted on to YouTube, or a PowerPoint. I am open to other possibilities, but you must obtain permission

from me before proceeding. Students are expected to review their classmates' presentations.

Assessments

In order to mitigate any issues with your computer and online assessments, it is very important that you take the "Practice Quiz" from each computer you will be using to take your graded quizzes and exams. It is your responsibility to make sure your computer meets the minimum hardware requirements .

All assessments will auto-submit when (1) the timer runs out OR (2) the closing date/time is reached, **whichever happens first**. For example, if a quiz has a closing time of 5:00 pm but the student begins the exam at 4:55 pm, the student will only have 5 minutes to complete the quiz.

Assessments in this course are not compatible with mobile devices and should not be taken through a mobile phone or a tablet. If you need further assistance please contact FIU Online Support Services .

Quizzes

There will be fully online quizzes covering each section. Your quiz scores will be averaged together for a final quiz score worth 10% of your final grade. All quizzes consist of 10 multiple-choice questions, and each question will be worth 10 points. A quiz will be available from Monday 12:00 am till Monday 12:00 noon of the

given week. Once you open a quiz, you will have 20 minutes to complete and submit it. You will have two attempts to take a quiz. The highest score will be counted.

Final Exam

The final exam will be cumulative. The exam will consist of 51 questions and utilize Honorlock, for more information, please refer to Honorlock FAQ page. Question distribution will be as follows: 40 multiple choice, 10 true/false, and 1 essay question. The multiple choice questions will be worth 2 points, the true/false questions will be worth 1 point and the essay question will be worth 10 points.

Grading

Course Grades Distribution Table

Course Requirements	Number of Items	Points for Each	Weight
Total	**10**	**—**	**100%**

Course Requirements	Number of Items	Points for Each	Weight
Introduce Yourself Video Blog	1	10	2%
Witchcraze Wiki	2	100	10%
Paganism as World Religion - Student Debate	1	100	10%
Blogs	8	10	10%
Annotations	6	10	10%
Quizzes	8	100	10%
Final Exam	1	100	15%
Total	**10**	**—**	**100%**

Course Requirements	Number of Items	Points for Each	Weight
Research Paper (5% Initial submission/ 5% Peer-Review/10% Final submission)	3	100	20%
Presentation	1	100	13%
Total	**10**	**—**	**100%**

Letter Grade Distribution Table

Letter Grade	Sample Range %
A	95 or above
A-	90 to 94
B+	87 to 89
B	83 to 86
B-	80 to 82

Letter Grade	Sample Range %
C+	77 to 79
C	70 to 76
D	60 to 69
F	0 to 59

Proctored Exams

This course uses Honorlock on the exams. For more information, please refer to Honorlock FAQ page.

Please visit our Student Proctored Exam Instructions webpage for important information concerning proctored exams, proctoring centers, and important forms.

Schedule of Topics

Course Calendar

Module 1: Paganism as World Religion

Weeks 1-3

Weeks 1-3

Readings

- Paganism as Religion
- Paganism as Behavior
- Paganism as Theology
- Supplementary readings

Assignments:

- Introduce Yourself Video Blog
- Pagan Theology Blog
- Pagan Theology Quiz
- Student Debate

Module 2: The European Witchcraze

Weeks 4 - 6

Weeks 4 - 6

Readings:

- Textbook: Witchcraze, Chapters 1 - 8
- PDF: Demon Lovers, Chapter 1

Assignments:

- Students must sign up for Witchcraze wiki group
- Witchcraze Blog
- Witchcraze Quiz
- Witchcraze Wiki
- iPeer Group Evaluation

Module 3: Contemporary Witchcraft and Neopaganism

Weeks 6-7: *Goes into Spring Break*

Topic: Beliefs

Readings:

- Textbook: Seeking the Mystery, Chapters 1 -2
- Textbook: Introduction to Pagan Studies, Chapters 1 - 2
- PDF: New Age and Neopagan Religions in America – Early Varieties of Alternative Spirituality in American Religious History

Assignments:

- Beliefs Blog
- Beliefs Quiz
- Annotations: Introduction to Pagan Studies, Chapters 1 - 2

Weeks 8-9:

Topic: Magic and Rituals

Readings:

- Textbook: Seeking the Mystery, Chapters 3 - 4
- Textbook: Introduction to Pagan Studies, Chapters 3 - 4
- PDF: Ritual is My Chosen Art Form: The Creation of Ritual as Folk Art Among Contemporary Pagans

Assignments:

- Magic and Rituals Blog
- Magic and Rituals Quiz
- Annotations: Introduction to Pagan Studies, Chapters 3 - 4

Weeks 10-11:

Topic: Historical and Literary Influences

Readings:

- Textbook: Introduction to Pagan Studies, Chapters 5 - 7

Assignments:

- Research Paper Draft
- Historical and Literary Influences Blog
- Historical and Literary Influences Quiz
- Annotations: Introduction to Pagan Studies, Chapters 5 - 7

Week 12:

Topic: Denominations

Readings:

- Textbook: Introduction to Pagan Studies, Chapters 8
- PDFs: Contemporary Paganism - Druidry, Contemporary Paganism - Heathens, and Contemporary Paganism - Goddess Spirituality, Black Magic - Our Religion and Superstition Was All Mixed Up

Assignments:

- Denominations Blog
- Denominations Quiz
- Research Paper Peer-Review
- Annotations: Introduction to Pagan Studies, Chapters 8

Week 13:

Topic: Ethical and Current Issues

Readings:

- Textbook: Seeking the Mystery, Chapter 5
- Textbook: Introduction to Pagan Studies, Chapters 9 - 10

Assignments:

- Ethical and Current Issues Blog
- Ethical and Current Issues Quiz
- Research Paper Final Draft
- Annotations: Introduction to Pagan Studies, Chapters 9 - 10

Week 14:

Topic: Literature Review

Readings:

- Textbook: Introduction to Pagan Studies, Chapter 11
- PDF: Practitioners of Paganism and Wiccan Spirituality in Contemporary Society: A Review of the Literature
- PDF: Practical Strategies to Engage your Audience and Enhance your Presentations

Assignments:

- Literature Review Blog
- Literature Review Quiz
- Research Paper Presentation
- Annotations: Introduction to Pagan Studies, Chapter 11

Module 4: Presentations

Week 15

Week 15
Readings: Assignments: • Final Exam

Course Communication

Communication in this course will take place via **the Canvas Inbox**. Check out the Canvas Conversations Tutorial or Canvas Guide to learn how to communicate with your instructor and peers using Announcements, Discussions, and the Inbox.

I will respond to all correspondence within **48 hours.**

Policies & Resources

Before starting this course, please review the Policies & Resources Page in Canvas, which includes comprehensive information on various University and Course Level Policies, such as:

- University Policies
- Accessibility and Accommodations
- Online Etiquette
- Technical Requirements and Skills

- Computer & Digital Literacy Skills
- Course Technology Accessibility Statements and Privacy Policies
- Academic Integrity
- Copyright Statement
- Nondiscrimination Statement
- Panthers Care & Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)
- Fair Use Policy

Zoom Video Conference

Zoom is a video conference tool that you can use to interact with your professor and fellow students by sharing screens, chatting, broadcasting live video/audio, and taking part in other interactive online activities.

Zoom meetings can be accessed via the Zoom link in the course navigation menu. Once you click on the Zoom link, it will route you to join the meeting for the respective class session. You will also be able to view upcoming meetings, previous meetings that you have already joined, and meeting recordings. Before joining an actual class session:

- Reference the Zoom Student Tutorials to learn about the tool,

how to access your meeting room, and share your screen.

- Access the Zoom Test Meeting Room to test out the software before joining an actual session.

If you encounter any technical difficulties, please contact the FIU Canvas Help Team. Please ensure you contact support immediately upon the issue occurring.