

THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY
Undergraduate Course Outline 2011-2012

Philosophy 2006: The Metaphysics and Epistemology of Witchcraft
Previously Philosophy 145

Fall/Winter 2011/2012 Tuesday & Thursday, 1:30pm-2:30pm Classroom: Bio. & Geo. Science, Rm. 1056	Instructor: Sean Coughlin Office Number: Stevenson Hall 4136 Office Hours: Tues/Thurs 2:30-3:30pm Phone: 519 661-2111x87767 E-mail: scoughl@uwo.ca
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is an introduction to the philosophical, sociological, theological and psychological origins of the 16th-17th Century Witch Hunts in Western Europe. The course challenges the common characterization of the period as one of mass-insanity – as a “Witch Craze.” Instead, it will explore the underlying worldview and beliefs which were used to justify persecution, torture and mass execution. Particular interest will be paid to the Western intellectual tradition including classical mythology and biblical writings; Medieval and Renaissance theology and natural philosophy (including magic and demonology); the nature of evil; the ethics of torture; the reliability of testimony; and the origins and impact of the scientific revolution and the rise of philosophical scepticism. The course will also look to contemporary treatments and interpretations of the Witch Hunts through the study of economic, social, feminist and political history. No background knowledge of philosophy, witchcraft, or Harry Potter is presupposed in this course, and there are no pre-requisites.

TEXTS

Klaits, Joseph. Servants of Satan: The Age of the Witch Hunts. Bloomington, IN: University of Indiana Press, 1987. ISBN: 978-0253204226.

Kors & Peters (eds.). Witchcraft in Europe, 400-1700: A Documentary History. 2nd Edition. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000. ISBN: 978-0812217513

Coursepack

Additional readings will be posted on WebCT.

All texts are available for purchase at the University Book Store. The coursepack is available for purchase at Inprint. The texts (excluding the coursepack) will be available on reserve at Weldon. Please see me if you have any problems.

REQUIREMENTS

Mid-Term Exam (Fall):	20%
Mid-Year Exam:	30%
Mid-Term Exam (Winter):	20%
Final Exam:	30%

AUDIT

Students wishing to audit the course should consult with the instructor prior to or during the first week of classes.

The University requires me to include the following:

“The **Department of Philosophy Policies** which govern the conduct, standards, and expectations for student participation in Philosophy courses is available in the Undergraduate section of the Department of Philosophy website at <http://uwo.ca/philosophy/undergraduate/proceduresappeals.html>. It is your responsibility to understand the policies set out by the Senate and the Department of Philosophy, and thus cannot be used as grounds of appeal.”