

**History 4416F, Fall 2026**  
**Witchcraft in the Early Modern World**

**Stevenson Hall 3166    Thursdays 1:30-3:30**

**Instructor: Dr. Mitchell Hammond    Email: mhammo42@uwo.ca**

**Office: Department of History, Lawson Hall Room 2218**

**Office Hours: Mondays 2:00-3:00 or by appointment**

**Course Description**

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, thousands of people—mostly women—were tried and executed for the crime of witchcraft in Europe and beyond. Why were Europeans and their descendants so fearful of witchcraft? What do accusations and trials reveal about the beliefs and social structures of the early modern world? Our course will explore these questions and also focus on developing and drafting an original research essay.

**Course Syllabus**

In this class students will build the following competencies and skills:

1. Identify and describe key events and concepts related to witchcraft in the early modern world.
2. Evaluate diverse forms of historical evidence and cultivate interpretive skills.
3. Strengthen writing skills in history and related disciplines.
4. Engage with faculty and peers in a collaborative, respectful atmosphere.

**Methods of Evaluation:**

Seminar Attendance and Participation including the components below:	30%
General participation (20%)	
Leadership in one class (5%)	
Rough draft evaluation exercise (5%) on Thursday, November 19	
~1200-word assignment (due Friday, October 2)	10%
~5000-word essay, including the components below:	60%
Prospectus (10%), due Thursday, October 22	
<b>(5% for the written prospectus, 5% for the presentation)</b>	
<b>Rough draft (20%), due Friday, November 13 (crucial deadline)</b>	
Final essay (30%), due Friday, December 4	

### **Attendance and Extension Policies**

- Students must submit all assignments to pass the course. In this seminar, class participation is especially important. Students are expected to attend weekly seminars throughout the term and to prepare for the discussions, rough draft exercise, and other activities. **Attendance is flexible but there will be no academic considerations.** Students may miss any 2 meetings without penalty (**excluding** the rough draft exercise session on November 19). Thereafter, 5 points will be deducted from the course grade for the third and fourth absences. Students who have a fifth absence will fail the class.
- **Late papers (but not rough drafts) may be submitted up to three days past the stated deadline and will receive a 10% deduction.** For other approved extensions, students must apply to Academic Counselling for a **documented** consideration. Otherwise, no written work will be accepted after three days past the stated deadline.

### **Course Materials**

Reading and advance preparation are essential for a successful class. Assignments will be based on class readings or materials that students find in their own research.

*Required Text:*

Brian Levack, *The Witch-Hunt in Early Modern Europe*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Routledge, 2016) \$110.70. E-book:\$114.00. **Purchase the paperback if you can.**

Other readings will be made available in Brightspace and through Weldon Library.

### **Additional Statements**

- Students are responsible for the ideas, compositional quality and accuracy of everything they submit. Accurate use and citation of other scholars' work is central to this research seminar. Serious lapses in documentation may result in failure or a scholastic offense.
- During class, please limit use of electronic devices such as phones to note-taking and course-related activities.
- Please review the Department of History's shared policies and statements for all undergraduate courses at:  
[https://history.uwo.ca/undergraduate/program\\_module\\_information/policies.html](https://history.uwo.ca/undergraduate/program_module_information/policies.html) for important information regarding accessibility options, make-up exams, medical accommodations, health and wellness, academic integrity, plagiarism, and more.