

Fall 2019
Graduate Seminar

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Eng 8855 Early American Literature Salem Witchcraft: Fact & Fiction

Salem Witchcraft (1691-1693) has become a permanent fixture in our national mythology, yet many questions remain unanswered: Was witchcraft really practiced among God-fearing New-England Puritans at the time? Who were the Accusers, who the Accused? How many victims and victimizers were involved? Could the accused have saved themselves? Was the clergy tacitly complicit in the outbreak? Were the executions a miscarriage of justice? Although a minor event in the annals of our country, the enigma the Salem Witch Hunt has long become a cultural bugbear and pointed weapon for numerous social, religious, and political groups over the past three hundred years. It is fair to argue that the events of 1692-93 constitute a principal cornerstone in the foundation of American literature.

Required Texts:

- (1) George Lincoln Burr, *Narratives of the New England Witchcraft Cases* (1914; Dover, 2002)

https://books.google.com/books?id=yFwmAQAAMAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false

- (2) John Neal, *Rachel Dyer* (1828)
 (3) Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The House of the Seven Gables* (1851)
 (4) John W. De Forest, *Witching Times* (1856-57)
 (5) Maryse Condé, *I, Tituba: Black Witch of Salem* (1986, 1992)
 (6) **PDF copies of the original 17th-century documents and select articles**

Assignments: In addition to weekly readings, you are asked to demonstrate your understanding of the material through in-class discussions, one take-home midterm, a presentation on a previously agreed-upon secondary work, and a final research paper. Please see me to discuss your research interests before you begin writing your paper.

Attendance: Mandatory

Grading:	1 take-home midterm (c. 10-12 pp)	30%
	1 oral presentation (c. 15 minutes + handouts)	20%
	1 research paper (c. 20 pp.)	50%

N.B. The English Department guidelines on attendances and essay writing apply. Plagiarism will result in an “F” for the course.

Syllabus

(I reserve the right to substitute readings)

- 8/26 Introduction
- 8/28 Salem Witchcraft: Fact & Fiction (Power Point Presentation)
- 9/1 LABOR DAY
- 9/4, 9 William Perkins, *Discourse of the Damned Art of Witchcraft* (1608, 1610) (PDF copy)
J. Overhoff, "The Theology of Thomas Hobbes's *Leviathan*" (PDF copy)
Journal of Ecclesiastical History 51.3 (2000): 527-55
- 9/11, 16 Joseph Glanvill, *Sadducism Triumphatus* (1682-1689) (PDF copy)
Selections: "The Notion of the Nature of a Spirit" (pp. 133-253)
- 9/16, 18, 23 Increase Mather, *Remarkable Providences* (1684)
In Burr, *Narratives*, pp. 1-38
Cotton Mather, *Memorable Providences* (1689)
In Burr, *Narratives*, pp. 89-143
- 9/25 Deodat Lawson, *Brief and True Narrative* (1692)
In Burr, *Narratives* pp. 145-164
Letter of Thomas Brattle (1692)
In Burr, *Narratives*, pp. 165-190
Letters of Governor Phips (1692-93)
In Burr, *Narratives*, pp. 191-202
- 9/30, 10/2 Cotton Mather, *Wonders of the Invisible World* (1693)
<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1019&context=etas>
- 10/7, 9 Case Study of 5 Trials: Records of the Salem Witch Hunt
In Burr, *Narratives*, pp. 202-51
Paul Boyer and Stephen Nissenbaum, *The Salem Witchcraft Papers* (1977)
<http://salem.lib.virginia.edu/category/swp.html>
William Perkins, "An Abstract of Perkin's Discovery of Witches" (PDF)
Richard Bernard, *A Guide to Grand-Jury Men* (1627)
Matthew Hale, *A Trial of Witches, at the Assizes* (1682)
- 10/14, 16 Robert Calef, *More Wonders of the Invisible World* (1697, 1700)
In Burr, *Narratives*, pp. 289-393
- 10/16 Take-home essay questions distributed (due 10/23, in class)**
- 10/21 John Hale, *A Modest Inquiry into the Nature of Witchcraft* (1702)
In Burr, *Narratives*, pp. 395-432
- 10/23 G. H. Orians, "New England Witchcraft in Fiction" (PDF)
T. Boone, "Narrating the Apparition: The Rise of Gothic Fiction" (PDF)

- J. Bath and J. Newton, “Sensible Proof of Spirits” Ghost Belief” (PDF)
 J. Barry, “New from the Invisible World” (PDF)
- 10/23 Benjamin Franklin, “A Witch Trail at Mount Holly” (1730)
 Documentary: *Three Sovereigns for Sarah* (1972)
- 10/28, 30 John Neal, *Rachel Dyer* (1828)
- 11/4 Hawthorne, “The Hollow of Three Hills” (1830)
 “Young Goodman Brown” (1835)
 “Alice Doane’s Appeal” (1835)
- 11/6, 11, 13 Hawthorne, *The House of the Seven Gables* (1851)
- 11/18, 20 John De Forest, *Witching Times* (1856-57)
- 11/25—11/30 THANKSGIVING
- 12/2, 4 Maryse Condé, *I. Tituba: Black Witch of Salem* (1986, 1992)
- 12/9 Last Day of Classes

Oral Presentations: TBA

Research Paper Due Date: TBA

Selective Bibliography Salem Witchcraft: Fact & Fiction

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