

From Tracey Pepper's UCOR 1440: The European Witch Hunts

Classroom Discussions:

Since this course is an online seminar with a student enrollment maximum of 19, our primary mode of classroom learning will be through discussions. In order to make this a successful learning and teaching experience, active participation by everyone is essential. The key to this is preparedness and a willingness to take chances. Challenge your assumptions. Challenge your student colleagues. Challenge your professor. You will soon find out that there are very few "right" and "wrong" answers to historical questions. We are, after all, studying the human past, with all of the complexities of human perspective and experience to muddy our interpretations. Our challenge will be to make substantive claims based upon careful analysis of evidence.

Discussion Guidelines:

- Think of the discussions as an opportunity to learn through the exchange of ideas, not as simply an assignment to complete.
- Make substantive contributions to the discussions that are analytical or theoretical, not descriptive. This means that you add something that furthers the conversation, rather than merely summarizing the readings or re-wording what your classmates already said.
- Use scholarly language.
- Keep discussions historical. We are not critiquing contemporary American witchcraft or witch beliefs. Rather, we are seeking to understand the history of magic and the rise of legal structures that persecuted (primarily female) people for witchcraft in early modern Europe.

Discussion Papers and Presentations:

Each week you will be expected to turn in a one-page, single-spaced discussion paper or a 5-minute presentation, for a total of 8 throughout the term. Of these 8, at least 4 must be papers. This means that you may turn in a maximum of 4 presentations (or 2 presentations and 6 papers, or 1 presentation and 7 papers, etc.). These papers/presentations reflect on the classroom discussions held during the week. They should provide a short summary of the topics covered, citing the specific contributions made by your classmates (ie: John and Susan argued..., while Charles and Anna made the claim that...). Then they should explain your contribution to the conversations (ie: I furthered John and Susan's argument when I pointed out that...). The papers/presentations should also analyze the conclusions the class came to in the discussions (ie: What do the discussions add to the scholarship of witchcraft studies? What provocative ideas emerged? What unanswered questions remain?). Each discussion paper/presentation will be due by Saturday at midnight and is worth 10 points towards your discussion paper/presentation grade.