



English 5307

Witchcraft and Women:

Unveiling the Historical, Cultural, and Empowering Connections

Summer I, 2023

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Required texts (*please ensure you acquire the correct editions!*)

1) *The Oxford Handbook of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe and Colonial America*

2) *Brujerías: Stories of Witchcraft, and The Supernatural in the American Southwest and Beyond* (these are anecdotal in nature and are therefore, quite short)

3) *Toil and Trouble : 15 Tales of Women and Witchcraft*

4) *Witches, Sluts, and Feminists*

5) Several other required readings will be posted under READINGS in Blackboard. Some other material (such as PowerPoints, video clips, etc.) will be posted in Audio/Visual tab in Bb.



Course description: The intertwining narratives of witchcraft and women form a captivating and complex tapestry throughout history. Within the realm of academia, the study of witchcraft has expanded far beyond its traditional associations with the supernatural and dark arts. Instead, scholars have delved into the multifaceted dimensions of witchcraft, examining its sociopolitical implications, its relationship with women's roles and empowerment, and its portrayal in various cultural contexts. This course aims to unravel the intricate web of witchcraft and its significance to women, exploring the diverse narratives, experiences, and perceptions that have shaped this profound connection. By delving into historical, cultural, and anthropological perspectives, we will navigate the shifting meanings of witchcraft, not only as a system of belief or superstition but as a lens through which women's lives

and social dynamics can be critically examined. Additionally, we will critically analyze the portrayal of witches in literature, art, and popular culture, uncovering the complex interplay between myth, imagination, and societal attitudes towards women. Lastly, this course seeks to empower students to engage in contemporary conversations surrounding witchcraft and women. By examining the resurgence of witchcraft in modern feminist movements and the appropriation of witchcraft symbols in popular culture, we will critically analyze the implications of reclaiming witchcraft as a symbol of resistance and liberation. Students will have the opportunity to engage with ongoing debates, explore

the relationship between witchcraft and activism, and reflect on the ways in which these discussions intersect with broader gender and social justice movements.

Marketable Skills

1. Students will communicate effectively in writing and speaking.
2. Students will use different research strategies to address problems and develop ideas that engage a variety of perspectives.
3. Students will recognize how social and cultural contexts shape meaning and language.

Student Learning Outcomes

SLO 1 – Students will demonstrate a critical understanding of the significance of major authors, literary works in different genres, and definitive literary movements in literature, theory, and writing, as focused by their programs.

SLO 2 – Students will demonstrate the ability to critically analyze and interpret literature, theory, and writing, as focused by their programs.

SLO 3 – Students will demonstrate the ability to conduct and utilize research methodologies in the study of literature, theory, and writing, as focused by their programs.

Course Learning Outcomes

Historical Understanding: Students will acquire a comprehensive understanding of the historical foundations and developments of witchcraft, including its origins in various ancient civilizations, its evolution through the medieval and early modern periods, and its impact on women's lives and societal dynamics. They will analyze the socio-political contexts and power structures that shaped witchcraft beliefs, persecution, and witch trials.

Cultural Perspectives: Students will explore diverse cultural perspectives on witchcraft and its relationship to women across different regions and time periods. By examining non-Western traditions and indigenous practices, students will develop a nuanced understanding of the cultural variations, interpretations, and roles of witchcraft in different societies. They will critically analyze the ways in which cultural beliefs and practices intersect with women's identities, agency, and empowerment.

Gender and Power Dynamics: Students will critically analyze the gendered power dynamics inherent in witchcraft narratives and historical events. They will examine the ways in which witchcraft was intertwined with women's social roles, sexuality, and perceptions of female power. Through class discussions and assignments, students will explore the ways in which patriarchy, misogyny, and societal fears influenced the perception and persecution of women as witches.

Literature and Representation: Students will analyze the portrayal of witches in literature, art, and popular culture. They will critically examine the construction of witchcraft stereotypes and archetypes, and the ways in which these representations have influenced societal perceptions of women's power and agency. Students will engage in close readings of selected texts, artworks, and media, and develop their ability to interpret and analyze the portrayal of witches in various contexts.

1. **Intersectionality and Feminist Perspectives:** Students will explore the intersectionality of witchcraft and women's experiences, considering how race, class, and other social categories intersect with gender in the context of witchcraft beliefs and practices. They will examine feminist perspectives on witchcraft, analyzing the ways in which it has been reclaimed as a symbol of resistance, empowerment, and spirituality within contemporary feminist movements. Students will critically reflect on the complex relationships between witchcraft, activism, and social justice.
2. **Research and Scholarship:** Students will develop advanced research skills by engaging with primary and secondary sources related to witchcraft and women. They will learn how to critically evaluate and analyze scholarly works, historical documents, and ethnographic accounts. Through research projects and assignments, students will demonstrate their ability to synthesize information, develop coherent arguments, and contribute to the existing body of knowledge on witchcraft and women.
3. **Ethical Considerations:** Students will explore the ethical implications of studying witchcraft and its impact on women. They will critically reflect on the biases and stereotypes perpetuated in academic research, media, and public discourse regarding witchcraft. Students will engage in discussions and assignments focused on addressing these ethical concerns, fostering a deeper understanding of the responsibilities and potential harm that can arise from the study of witchcraft and its portrayal of women.
4. **Critical Thinking and Reflection:** Students will develop critical thinking skills by interrogating and challenging dominant narratives surrounding witchcraft and women. They will learn to analyze complex historical and cultural phenomena, evaluate multiple perspectives, and construct reasoned arguments. Through class discussions, written assignments, and presentations, students will cultivate their ability to think critically and reflectively, while actively engaging in respectful and constructive dialogue with peers.

By the end of the course, students will have gained a comprehensive understanding of the historical, cultural, and empowering dimensions of witchcraft and its connection to women. They will be equipped with the knowledge, analytical skills, and ethical awareness necessary to engage in nuanced discussions, research, and scholarship on the complex interplay between witchcraft, gender, power, and identity.

In this course students will be expected to...

Course requirements: ***This web course is not a self-paced course. Pay close attention to due dates (and times) for all assignments.*** Web-delivered courses differ from face-to-face courses in that almost all contact between instructor and students and between students will be electronic. If you have not taken a Web course before this semester, or if you need to refresh your memory about the electronic requirements for an online course and about the tools you will be required to use in Blackboard, review the "Getting Started" information on our course homepage. *You are expected to be familiar with Blackboard; not knowing how Blackboard works is not an excuse for turning in work late!* **If you have difficulties submitting an assignment, contact me immediately, NOT AFTER THE DUE DATE, as notifying me of a problem after the deadline negates any opportunity for possible makeup work.**

Required Format for Turning in Assignments

Please turn in all of your assignments in either **Microsoft Word OR PDF formats ONLY**. I have a lot of trouble opening any other kind of format.

Due Dates, Time, and Life in General

Assignments will have very specific due dates, but in most cases, most assignments will be due on a **SUNDAY no later than 11:59 pm.** **WARNING! DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE TO TURN IN YOUR WORK.** As has happened in the past—many times, students who wait until the last minute sometimes run into unforeseen problems, such as: running out of battery life, PC dies, PC is stolen, a virus hits, a meeting at work goes into overtime, a child or two becomes ill, but none of these are valid reasons and will not be honored as excuses for turning in work late. You are given ample time in which to work on and complete these assignments ahead of time, *if you wait until the last minute, and something unforeseen happens, it's your fault.*

I know most graduate students have full time jobs (some of you have more than one job), and some of you have families, but you must negotiate your time properly, in a manner that does not sacrifice the quality of your work. Life and work will always be a juggling act; it's up to you to take care of business.

Tech Assistance

If you need help with the technology when submitting an assignment, contact the Lobo Technology Assistance Center (see below) immediately. If you need technical assistance, contact the Support Staff at the Lobo Technology Assistance Center (LTAC): **Online:** Contact us (24x7x365): <http://www.sulross.edu/pages/4401.asp>. Please use your email/ domain credentials to log in. Our website (www.sulross.edu/oit) has “how to” information on using the online system, which is designed to help you avail quicker service and responses from OIT staffs. **Phone:** 432-837-8888 (x8888/8765). Hours (Subject to change): Weekday (Mon-Fri): 8am-6pm Weekend (Sat-Sun): 11am to 4 pm. **In-person:** LTAC support counters will provide in-person/ walk-in helpdesk services and technology consultation. LTAC counters are located at: BAB 101 and Library ground floor in the back of the building. Hours: 8am to 5pm (Mon- Fri).

Absences

Sul Ross State University allows a maximum of 20% absences in a course before an instructor drops a student for excessive absences. In this online course, "excessive absences" is defined as non-participation in the course for three (3) weeks or more. Any student dropped for non-participation will receive an F in the course.

To avoid being dropped, you must participate regularly. Participation in the course is defined as

- logging in to the course to check activities and to read discussion boards,
- gaining access to and using supplemental materials,
- posting on discussion boards as scheduled, and
- turning in assignments in a timely manner.

Professor e-communication

I will communicate with the class through Announcements and by e-mail, so be sure to log in daily to

check for announcements on the course home page and to check your Sul Ross e-mail account regularly. **REMEMBER: this is NOT a self-paced course, which means assignments and deadlines will be posted with specific deadlines and times.** You will find specific assignment details, due dates, and times in TENTATIVE ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE.

Makeup Work

Opportunities to make up assignments are available only in extreme, urgent circumstances. It is your responsibility to turn in your work **on or before the deadline**. If the assignment is not turned in by the deadline, work MIGHT be accepted but ONE WHOLE LETTER grade (10 points) will be deducted *per day* the assignment is late, weekends count. *Makeup work is granted at the professor's discretion.* To be eligible for possible makeup work, you MUST contact me in a reasonable time BEFORE the deadline (not an hour before the deadline, not five mins before, and certainly not AFTER the deadline). *If you contact me after the deadline, you will not be considered eligible to makeup that assignment, so don't ask.*

No Late Work Policy

Late work is not accepted for any reason due to **student negligence** (forgetting to turn in an assignment, forgetting to log in, waiting until the last minute to begin assignments, not knowing how to use Blackboard, etc).

Student integrity and responsibility

Web-delivered courses are similar to face-to-face courses in that students are expected to exhibit academic integrity by respecting the discussion of their colleagues in the class, presenting as their own work only content that they have generated, scrupulously attributing and documenting all outside sources in their papers and discussion, and, in general, adhering to the ethical standards of scholars. I expect you to be responsible for your own learning, and follow all of the course requirements and procedures. Failure to abide by these regulations can result in failure in the course.

Personal Responsibility

It is your responsibility to check Blackboard and your email/Announcements frequently! I leave detailed instructions and details in the Announcements/email feature and in the Tentative Assignment Schedule in Blackboard; it's up to you to check in and find out what's due, when, and how to turn in assignments.

Online Classroom Expectations

DAILY, FREQUENT CHECK-INS: You must check into Blackboard 9 frequently/daily. I write detailed summaries of objectives for the day/week under the Announcements/email feature in Blackboard 9; it is your responsibility to read them. I will not review any assignment/lecture materials AFTER the due date.

REASONABLE TIME CHECKS: What this means is, don't contact me *late in the evenings* and expect me to respond. I have two sons (ages 5 and 2 years old), so I am in bed early and get up early,. It's best to contact me via email early in the morning, or during office hours. I will always email you in a timely fashion, so look for my response as soon as you contact me. If you need to speak with me, call me during office hours, and/or leave a message. For students living in Alpine, I encourage you to stop by my office! If my office hours don't work for you, you can always make an appointment with me. I'd be happy to meet you in person!

Community decorum: In respecting others opinions, we will cultivate a virtual classroom environment that fosters communal learning. No one is allowed to bully, intimidate, or make disparaging comments/remarks. Everyone is expected to maintain a level of respect which fosters a sense of community and equable learning. If you cannot maintain common decency, you will be barred from participating in online discussion for that session. If you continue disrespecting others, you will be barred from the course entirely, and you will earn an “F” for the course.

Individual decorum: Online courses do share some characteristics of traditional classroom environments, but are still quite unique in their operations, especially in that success in online courses depends on individual responsibility, more so than in a traditional face-to-face classroom. You are required to master time management, as well as make a conscious decision to **CHECK IN DAILY**. In order to achieve success in this course, please ensure you do the following:

- read assignments as they are assigned. Keeping up with the reading schedule is **absolutely vital to your success in this course**. If you do not consider the reading schedule a priority, your grade will suffer because quizzes, assignments, and major papers, revolve around the reading schedule
- turn in assignments by the due dates
- check your email/ Blackboard Announcements on a *daily* basis
- participate respectfully during forums. Your input, thoughts, and ideas relative to course readings and other course materials, are an important part of this course.
- DO NOT interfere with others’ ability to learn; this means, you cannot monopolize the online classroom conversation, rudely interrupt others, shame or intimidate others, or otherwise prohibit or interrupt the learning process with disrespectful and/or disruptive behavior.

Academic Honesty

I expect each student to strictly adhere to the rules and regulations regarding academic pursuits. The University expects all students to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is beyond reproach and to maintain complete honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of their classroom. The University may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty, including but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work, plagiarism, collusion, and the abuse of resource materials. Please see page 82 in the SRSU

Student Handbook: for complete information.

http://www.sulross.edu/sites/default/files//sites/default/files/users/docs/records_srsu/handbook_2012-2013-complete.pdf

1. “Cheating” includes:

- a. Copying from another student’s test paper, laboratory report, other report, or computer files, data listings, and/or programs, or allowing another student to copy from same.
- b. Using, during a test, materials not authorized by the person giving the test.
- c. Collaborating, without authorization, with another person during an examination or in preparing academic work.
- d. Knowingly, and without authorization, using, buying, selling, stealing, transporting, soliciting, copying, or possessing, in whole or in part, the contents of an unadministered test.
- e. Substituting for another student; permitting any other person, or otherwise assisting any other person to substitute for oneself or for another student in the taking of an examination or test or the preparation of academic work to be submitted for academic credit.
- f. Bribing another person to obtain an unadministered test or information about an unadministered test.
- g. Purchasing, or otherwise acquiring and submitting as one’s own work any research paper or other

writing assignment prepared by an individual or firm. This section does not apply to the typing of the rough and/or final versions of an assignment by a professional typist.

h. "Plagiarism" means the appropriation and the unacknowledged incorporation of another's work or idea in one's own written work offered for credit.

i. "Collusion" means the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing written work offered for credit.

j. "Abuse of resource materials" means the mutilation, destruction, concealment, theft or alteration of materials provided to assist students in the mastery of course materials.

k. "Academic work" means the preparation of an essay, dissertation, thesis, report, problem, assignment, or other project that the student submits as a course requirement or for a grade.

Plagiarism Policy

As a simple guideline, if you submit your own work, you will avoid all serious types of plagiarism. Nevertheless, a responsible student should also consider the less obvious variants of plagiarism, especially when writing research papers that require citations.

Instances of plagiarism, such as submitting an essay with sentences or passages cut and pasted from an online source, or a paper obtained from an online "paper mill," students in this course will automatically fail the assignment, receive a final grade of F, and be recommended for dismissal from the university. There is no excuse for serious plagiarism. I will also regard unattributed citations – verbatim copying of another's person's work without some indication of the source – as a serious form of plagiarism. In other words, don't insert any text in a paper that is not your own without also noting the source. You can email me with a question before an assignment is due, stop by my office during my office hours, or even parenthetically raise the question in your paper. *It's your responsibility to comply with principles of academic honesty; it's my responsibility to see that every student receives a fair and accurate grade.* **Here is my policy on plagiarism for this course:**



The *first offense* of plagiarism or academic dishonesty (collusion, paying an editing service, having someone else write or otherwise edit your work), in part or in whole, will result in a failing grade on that assignment(s). The *second offense*, in part or in whole, will result in a final grade of "F," and the student will be recommended for dismissal from the university. The student has the right to appeal to the Dept. Chair, then Provost, and eventually to the Provost and VP for Academic and Student Affairs before imposition of the penalty. The decision of the Provost and VP for Academic Affairs is final.

ADA Accommodation

Sul Ross State University is committed to equal access in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1973. It is the student's responsibility to initiate a request for accessibility services. Students seeking accessibility services must contact the Counseling and Accessibility Services, Ferguson Hall, Room 112. The mailing address is P. O. Box C-171, Sul Ross State University, Alpine, TX 79832. The telephone number is 432-837-8203.

Graded Course Requirements

40%.....2 Essays These consist of analysis essays (minimum of 8-10 pages, double spaced, not including Works Cited page) on source materials will be assigned at least four times.

30%..... 2 Discussion forums /participation You will be required to participate in discussion boards during the semester, usually with specific content, length, and participation requirements. In order to receive credit for discussion boards, **you must post a minimum of three times *per discussion board post assignment***: an initial posting responding to the assignment prompt and two peer responses (one response each to two other students). You may respond to more than two persons, if you choose. You should continue to read discussion boards even after you have completed your postings. Generally, your postings should be approximately **1000 words (your first response, then approximately half that on your second and third responses)** and must be comprised of statements that are on topic and of a depth and a scope sufficient to elicit thoughtful responses from your colleagues. You will need to cite from readings to validate your responses. When you respond to your peers, you have the option to cite or not. Additionally, your responses to your peers must be at **least 250 words**, **Please end your postings with your name and Word Count EACH TIME**. Responses to other students must begin with that person's name; for example, a response might begin "John, I agree that Voice of the Shuttle is a good place to go for critical theory resources, but I found a better source on the Internet at . . ." Responses to the initial postings of other students that essentially say nothing but "I agree with John" are unacceptable; your response should add to the discussion.

IMPORTANT: All postings must be in paragraph form, comprised of complete sentences, and couched in language that is courteous and respectful of others' opinions. Topics for discussion are usually centered around specific readings.

30%.....Reading Journal Every reading must be entered in the Reading Journal. Students must begin the entry with an MLA bibliographic entry. Use MLA, 12 pt font. Also, please personalize the cover page. Be creative. Use different fonts, different sizes, use images, color, etc. For specific info regarding this assignment, please go to Reading Journal in Bb. **Single spaced.**

Each entry should follow this format:

- Begin with an MLA bibliographic entry
- Min of 500 words per entry
- single space everything
- Times New Roman 12 or Arial 11 (for the actual entries but be creative elsewhere)
- Highlight important concepts, vocabulary, names, dates, etc.
 - -5 for missing highlighting
 - -5 for missing word count
 - -5 for missing questions

PART 1: Summarize the reading.

PART 2: Illustrate student engagement with the reading. What did you think? How did you analyze the reading? How does the reading compare and contrast to other readings, concepts? How did the reading affect you outside of class in a personal way?

PART 3: -----leave some white space here----

PART 4: Pose 1-2 questions based on the reading

PART 5: Provide a word count

Grades

- A 90-100:** Outstanding performance in mastering of the subject. Achievement of superior quality. (4 grade : points per credit hour)
- B 80-89:** Consistent performance in achievement beyond the usual requirements of the course. Achievement of high quality. (3 grade points per credit hour)
- C 70-79:** Performance of a satisfactory nature. Achievement demonstrating an understanding of the subject sufficient for continued study in the discipline. (2 grade points per credit hour)
- D 60-69:** Minimally acceptable performance. Achievement demonstrating below average understanding of the basic elements of the course. (1 grade point per credit hour)
- F 50-59:** Achievement at a level insufficient to demonstrate understanding of the basic elements of the course. (0 grade points)

Incomplete grade(I):The grade of "I" is given by the instructor upon consultation with the student. The work to be completed and deadline for completion must be specified on the grade report to the Director of Records and Registration. A student may have a maximum of one academic year in which to remove an I during which time the "I" will not be calculated in the student's grade point average. If the work is not completed by the deadline set by the instructor, the "I" will be converted to an "F" and will be calculated in the student's grade point average for the semester in which the "I" was given. Normally, an incomplete grade will be awarded only for situations such as illness, family emergencies, or unusual circumstances which prevent a student from completing a course in a semester or summer term. Incomplete grades must be removed prior to graduation.

Withdrawal grade (W): The grade of "W" is given for courses dropped after the 12th/4th class days through the last day to drop a course with a "W" as published in the University's calendar. Students who wait until the published deadline must have complied with the class attendance policy of this catalog. An instructor is not obligated to recommend a "W" for a class if excessive absences have occurred. Students will not be permitted to drop a course or withdraw from the University after the published deadline.

Final Note

It's worth noting that there's a predictable and positive correlation between careful time management and academic success. I encourage you to make a wise decision as to what kind of student you will be early on and to plan accordingly. *No extra points, no extra credit work will be assigned, so don't ask.* **You are completely responsible for meeting all deadlines and keeping track of any changes made to the course schedule.** You have several resources made available to you to ensure your success in

this course, so I strongly encourage you to take advantage of them.

Tentative Semester Calendar

Subject to change

IMPORTANT

Please refer to Tentative Assignment Schedule in Blackboard for all assigned work; there you will find all specific directions and due dates. *The link will go live at 8 am on the first class day.*

- 1) **DUE June 4 @11:59 pm** Academic Integrity Policy.
- 2) Discussion Board #1 **DUE, Sun, June 11 @11:59 pm.**
- 3) Major Essay #1 **DUE on M, June 19 @11:59 pm**
- 4) Discussion Board #2 **DUE on F, June 23 @11:59 pm**
- 5) Reading Journal **DUE on M, July 3 @11:59 pm**
- 6) Major Essay #2 **DUE on W, July 5 @11:59 pm.**

-----END OF SEMESTER-----