

Fall 2015

## **ENGL 2090**

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English 2090-001  
Fall 2015 9-9:50am MWF LA 262  
Instructor: Dr. Shelby Richardson  
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### **Crafting the Witch: The Witch in Literature**

The popularity of the witch as a literary and theatrical subject is undeniable. From classical times, when witches like Hecate and Erichtho made appearances in works by authors such as Euripides and Lucan, through the Enlightenment, concerns about witches and their craft were taken seriously by authors as well as the public at large. Since women were accused of and executed for suspected acts of witchcraft throughout Europe and North America from as early as the 1480s through the 1750s, their presence in literature and on the stage is perhaps unsurprising-- but their many representations often are. We will explore this subject throughout the semester as we read a variety of works that include characterizations of these remarkable figures. By examining fictional representations of witches in tandem with anti-witchcraft polemics, we will attempt to better understand why early modern people in particular felt witches posed such a real and dangerous threat to the community. Through our study of literary works featuring witches, and supplementary material written on the subject of witchcraft, we will also consider what fictional depictions of witches tell us about the lives of the very real women persecuted for these "crimes".

By the end of the semester, students will be able to effectively analyze the elements of drama and demonstrate an understanding of the conventions of the genre and how it has changed over time. They will demonstrate their ability to use supplementary readings and research materials to support their own carefully crafted analyses as they work to develop their own theory of the significance of fictionalized representations of historical events and the impact of theatrical performance on contemporary audiences. All students will also present their final research projects to the class, demonstrating their ability to construct and articulate complex arguments.

#### **Texts:**

*Macbeth*. (Ed. Catherine Rowe. Evans Shakespeare Editions. 2012). ISBN: 978-0495911203  
*Medea and Other Plays*. (Ed. James Morewood. Oxford World's Classics, 2009). ISBN: 978-0199537969  
*Penguin Book of Witches*. (Ed. Catherine Rowe. Penguin Books, 2014). ISBN: 978-0-14-310618-0  
*Six Tragedies*, (Ed. Emily Wilson. Oxford World's Classics, 2010). ISBN: 978-0192807069  
*The Crucible*. (Ed. Christopher Bigsby ) ISBN: 978-0142437339  
*The Odyssey*, (Ed. Robert Fitzgerald. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1998). ISBN: 978-0374525743  
*Three Jacobean Witchcraft Plays*. (Eds. Peter Corbin and Douglas Sedge. Manchester UP, 1986). ISBN: 978-0719019531

Additional text:

Fletcher and Massinger's *The Prophetess* available at [www.luminarium.org](http://www.luminarium.org)

\*All readings will be posted on Moodle or made available online

**Course Requirements:** Students are responsible for all assigned reading and are expected to be prepared to discuss the literature and supplementary reading as indicated on the syllabus. You must complete all assigned work (including in-class and homework assignments) in order to receive credit for this course. Students will write regular response papers, as well as two 4-6 page essays and complete a midterm and final exam.

## Breakdown of Grades:

Participation and written responses: 20%  
Paper #1 and #2: 20% each  
Midterm and Final: 20% each

## Course Policy:

**Participation:** Students are expected to actively participate in every aspect of this class. Be prepared to speak and write each day, both in class and outside. Participation includes in-class writing assignments and written responses. Come prepared, having done the reading and/or writing assignment for the day. You must complete all assigned work (including in-class and homework assignments) in order to receive credit for this course. **Cell phones and personal computers: Cell phones and personal computers disrupt class work and should be turned off during class sessions. They should be put away at the beginning of class. Do not leave phones on vibrate unless there is a genuine emergency you have discussed with me in advance.**

**Attendance:** I expect everyone to come to class every day and to attend meetings when scheduled. Because class participation is crucial to your performance, any absences will negatively impact your final grade. After nine absences--three full weeks of class--the student will receive an F in the class. Excessive lateness or departures from class will be counted as absences.

**Plagiarism:** Do not consider it. If I have any suspicion that your work is not original I will not hesitate to report you. Academic dishonesty simply will not be tolerated. Refer to the UNO judicial Code for further information (see attachment).

## Preliminary Syllabus

### Fall 2015

#### August

W	19	Course Introduction; HW: Homer's <i>Odyssey</i> Book 10
F	21	Discussion: <i>The Odyssey</i> ; HW: Euripides's <i>Medea</i>
M	24	Discussion: Euripides' <i>Medea</i> ; HW: TBA
W	26	Discussion: Euripides's <i>Medea</i> ; HW: Seneca's <i>Medea</i> Act 1
F	28	Discussion: Seneca's <i>Medea</i> Act 1; HW: Seneca's <i>Medea</i>
M	31	Discussion: Seneca's <i>Medea</i> ; HW: TBA

#### September

W	2	Discussion: <i>Medea</i> ; HW: Lucan's <i>Pharsalia</i> Book VI, lines 413-830
F	4	Discussion: <i>Pharsalia</i> ; HW: <i>The Malleus Maleficarum</i> selections
M	7	No Class: Labor Day Holiday
W	9	Discussion: <i>The Malleus Maleficarum</i> ; HW: <i>Daemonologie</i> selections
F	11	Discussion: <i>Daemonologie</i> ; HW: <i>Macbeth</i>
M	14	Discussion: <i>Macbeth</i> ; HW: TBA
W	16	Discussion: <i>Macbeth</i> ; HW: TBA
F	18	Discussion: <i>Macbeth</i> ; HW: Complete Topic Proposals for Paper #1
M	21	Discussion: Topic Proposals; HW: Goodcole's <i>Discoverie</i>
W	23	Discussion: Goodcole; HW: Complete Draft of Paper #1
F	25	Discussion: Drafts; HW: Complete Paper #1 and read Acts 1 & 2 of <i>WOE</i>
M	28	<b>Paper #1 Due</b> ; Discussion: <i>Witch of Edmonton</i> ; HW: complete <i>WOE</i>
W	30	Discussion: <i>WOE</i> ; HW: TBA

#### October

F	2	Discussion: <i>WOE</i> and Midterm Exam; HW: Prepare for Exam
M	5	Midterm Exam: Part 1
W	7	Midterm Exam: Part 2; HW: Darr's <i>The Devil's Mark</i>
F	9	Discussion: <i>The Devil's Mark</i> ; HW: <i>The Prophetesse</i>

