A great many theories have been advanced to explain the witch hunts in Europe and colonial New England. In addition, dramatic and literary presentations of the crazes often suggest implicit theories. For this assignment most students will take one theory or account, usually one that emphasizes a single cause or slant on the subject.

See the list of books on reserve in the course syllabus for some topics. For other topics, the books you want will be on the shelves in the Humanities Library. If you can't find an important source, I may have a copy you can consult, but only as a last resort.

A few students will instead take one topic and contrast two or more theories or approaches to that topic (see below, page four).

Discuss the theory or presentation chosen. How does it explain the witch hunt in question? What features of the craze does it play up or play down? How adequate is the explanation? Be sure you communicate the main features of the explanation without getting mired down in excess detail. The theories in question vary from plausible and sophisticated to simplistic and silly, but in all cases discuss them critically. Make absolutely sure that you consider the theory in the light of the required reading for the course, especially Levack. It will be disastrous to ignore a discussion in the required reading relevant to your topic.

Try to go to the heart of the theory, its implications, and its strengths and weakness. Do not get bogged down in details, especially not in your class presentation.

Write a paper of at least three double-spaced pages. In addition, be prepared to give a concise summary and critique of the theory in class.

Written assignment due November 4.
For class presentations on Europe, you must be ready by October 17
For class presentations on Salem, you must be ready by November 13

FOR EUROPE


3. WITCHES AS COMMUNAL CLOTH WEAVERS. Jane Schneider, "Rumpelstiltskin's Bargain," in A. Weiner & J. Schneider eds., *Cloth and Human Experience*, chap.6 (also intro. to volume)


6. WITCHES AS PERSECUTED HOMOSEXUALS. Arthur Evans, *Witchcraft and the Gay Counterculture*. (I have a copy to loan.)

7. WITCHES AS MIDWIVES AND CURERS. Barbara Ehrenreich & Deirdre English, "Witches, Midwives, and Nurses" (Humanities Library may have copy.) Mary Nelson, "Why Witches were Women," in *Women, a Feminist Perspective*, Jo Freeman, editor. Anne Llewellyn Barstow, *Witchcraze*, chap. 6, “from Healers into Witches.” Be sure to see criticisms in Deborah Willis, *Malevolent Nurture*, p.5. See also Briggs in required reading.

8. REAL SATANIC WITCHES WERE REALLY HURTING PEOPLE. The (supposed) Reverend Montagu Summers, any of his works. See Cohn, *Europe's Inner Demons*, for commentary.


10. WITCHES AS REBELS. J. Russell, *Witchcraft in the Middle Ages*


12. A NOVEL OF WITCHCRAFT. Michael Kunze, *Highroad to the Stake*

13. THE REALITY OF WITCH CULTS. Carlo Ginzburg, *Ecstasies: Deciphering the Witches' Sabbath*

15. ANIMALS AS WITCHES. E.P. Evans, *The Criminal Prosecution and Capital Punishment of Animals* (I have a copy).

FOR NEW ENGLAND


3. AN EPIDEMIC OF ENCEPHALITIS. Laurie Winn Carlson, *A Fever in Salem*.


6. “WITCH HUNTS” & MCCARTHYISM. Arthur Miller, *The Crucible*. See also the volumes of critical essays on this play.


CONTRASTING THEORIES

For the few of you who will take this option: Discuss the differences and similarities among the competing theories or interpretations of a single topic. Where possible, discuss the kinds of evidence the different authors consider and the ways they interpret it. As with other topics, concentrate on the main points and do not get lost in the detail.

1. CONFESSION IN NEW ENGLAND WITCH TRIALS. Contrast the positions of Boyer and Nissenbaum (pp.214-216); Bernard Rosenthal, Salem Story, pp.42-43, 151-152, Richard Godbeer, The Devil's Dominion, pp.204-211, and Elizabeth Reis, Damned Women, chap. 4.

2. GENDER IN WITCH TRIALS IN ENGLAND AND NEW ENGLAND. Contrast the positions of several (not all) of the following: Carol Karlsen, The Devil in the Shape of a Woman; John Demos, Entertaining Satan, pp.60-70, 153-165, 197-206, Briggs (required reading), Willis (required reading), Lyle Koehler, A Search for Power, and the articles in Levack, New Perspectives, v.4

3. WITCHES AND SEXUALITY. Contrast the positions of Anne Llewellyn Barstow, Witchcraze, pp.129-145, Briggs, Witches and Neighbors (see index), Levack (see index)