Course Description

The traditions and beliefs of ordinary men and women, including popular religion, festivals, magic, violence, rebellions, and family life. After assessing definitions of popular culture and discussing the sense of insecurity and fear that marked the lives of most Europeans, we will examine several major themes: rural and urban communities, women, marriage and family, popular religion, magic and superstition, witchcraft, old age, attitudes toward death, popular violence and crime, games, rituals, festivals, food, the rhythms of work, and popular uprisings. Throughout the semester, we will consider the complex relationship between elite and popular cultures and the concept of cultural repression, as well as the methodologies used by historians interested in the traditions and beliefs of ordinary people.

Required Course Texts (Books)

Robert Darnton, *The Great Cat Massacre and other Episodes in French Cultural History*

Peter Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe*

Constance Classen, *The Deepest Sense: A Cultural History of Touch*

Natalie Zemon Davis, *The Return of Martin Guerre*

Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller*

Julius Ruff, *Violence in Early Modern Europe*

Merry Wiesner-Hanks, *Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe*

Richard Wunderli, *Peasant Fires: The Drummer of Niklashausen*
Assignments and Grades

Your semester grade will be broken down as follows:

Chapter/Article Résumés 240 points

You will write a brief résumé, or summary, of the assigned reading in ten weeks of our semester. Your résumé should be 600 to 800 words in length.

Book Review One 140 points

You will write a longer review (1400 – 1600 words) on Richard Wunderli’s book. This will be a critical book review, following the specific guidelines posted in Module 3, and will be due on September 24.

Book Review Two 140 points

Your second longer book review will be over Natalie Zemon Davis’s book and will be due on October 22.

Book Review Three 140 points

The third longer book review will be over Carlo Ginzburg’s book and will be due on November 12.

Zoom Sessions 140 points

There will be fourteen required Zoom sessions during the semester, and your participation in these sessions will be graded as a form of class participation.

Seminar Paper 200 points

This will be a longer paper devoted to a historiographical debate in the field of early modern European popular culture. You will choose a topic, with my approval, that involves an argument among historians. Your paper (1800 – 2000 words) will evaluate that debate, identifying the main points of contention and analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of the arguments on both sides. The paper will be due at the end of the semester.

Grading Scale

900 points or above = A
800 – 899 points = B
700 – 799 points = C
600 – 699 points = D
Below 600 points = F
**Course Calendar with Assignments:**

Aug 28  Introduction

  Zoom class, 2 pm
  No assigned reading

Sept 3  First résumé uploaded to D2L by 11:59 pm

  Classen, ch. 1, "A Place by the Fire"
  Burke, ch. 1, "The Discovery of the People"

Sept 4  Discussion of Classen and Burke

  Zoom class, 2 pm

Sept 10  Second résumé uploaded to D2L by 11:59 pm

  Ruff, Introduction and ch. 1, "Representations of Violence"

Sept 11  Discussion of Ruff

  Zoom class, 2 pm

Sept 17  Third résumé uploaded to D2L by 11:59 pm

  Burke, ch. 2, "Unity and Variety in Popular Culture"

Sept 18  Discussion of Burke

  Zoom class, 2 pm

Sept 24  Book Review One uploaded to D2L by 11:59 pm

  Richard Wunderli, *Peasant Fires* (entire)

Sept 25  Discussion of Richard Wunderli

  Zoom class, 2 pm
Oct 1  Fourth résumé uploaded to D2L by 11:59 pm  
Classen, ch. 2, "A Touchable God"

Oct 2  Discussion of Classen  
Zoom class, 2 pm

Oct 8  Fifth résumé uploaded to D2L by 11:59 pm  
Frank Trentmann pdf, "Three Cultures of Consumption"

Oct 9  Discussion of Trentmann  
Zoom class, 2 pm

Oct 15  Sixth résumé uploaded to D2L by 11:59 pm  
Ruff, ch. 2, "States, Arms, and Armies"  
Classen, ch. 3, "Painful Times"

Oct 16  Discussion of Ruff and Classen  
Zoom class, 2 pm

Oct 22  Book Review Two uploaded to D2L by 11:59 pm  
Natalie Zemon Davis, The Return of Martin Guerre (entire)

Oct 23  Discussion of Natalie Zemon Davis  
Zoom class, 2 pm

Oct 29  Seventh résumé uploaded to D2L by 11:59 pm  
Lyndal Roper and Diane Purkiss pdfs (on witchcraft, women, and motherhood) OR Classen, ch. 4, "A Woman's Touch"

Oct 30  Discussion of Roper, Purkiss, Classen
Nov 5
Eight résumé uploaded to D2L by 11:59 pm
Ruff, ch. 4, "The Discourse of Interpersonal Violence"

Nov 6
Discussion of Ruff
Zoom class, 2 pm

Nov 12
Book Review Three uploaded to D2L by 11:59 pm
Carlo Ginzburg, The Cheese and the Worms (entire)

Nov 13
Discussion of Carlo Ginzburg
Zoom class, 2 pm

Nov 19
Ninth résumé uploaded to D2L by 11:59 pm
Burke, ch. 6, "Popular Protest"
Burke, ch. 8, "The Reform of Popular Culture"

Nov 20
Discussion of Burke
Zoom class, 2 pm

Dec 3
Tenth résumé uploaded to D2L by 11:59 pm
Classen, ch. 8, "Sensations of a New Age"
Burke, ch. 9, "Popular Culture and Social Change"

Dec 4
Discussion of Classen and Burke
Zoom class, 2 pm

Dec 11
Research paper uploaded to D2L by 11:59 pm
Deadlines Policy

All of the assignments are required for students to pass the course, and you are responsible for meeting all assignment deadlines. You are expected to keep an eye on the Course Schedule and to complete your work on time. If you need a short extension for any assignment (aside from Zoom sessions, which are required), please contact me at least two or three days ahead of time so that we can make reasonable alternate arrangements.

Attendance Policy

This course is entirely online and does not require any "face-to-face" meetings but does require a Zoom meeting each Friday at 2 pm. Participants are expected to log in regularly, multiple times per week, in order to keep up with course news, emails, and assignment deadlines, but all of the assignments this semester are listed in the Course Calendar with Assignments.

Technical Support

If you experience technical difficulties with Brightspace, please let me know immediately. You can also contact SFA’s Brightspace support team by calling (936) 468-1919.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members promote academic integrity in multiple ways including instruction on the components of academic honesty, as well as abiding by university policy on penalties for cheating and plagiarism.

Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes but is not limited to (1) using or attempting to use unauthorized materials to aid in achieving a better grade on a component of a class; (2) the falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assigned exercise; and/or (3) helping or attempting to help another in an act of cheating or plagiarism. Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were your own. Examples of plagiarism are (1) submitting an assignment as if it were one’s own work when, in fact, it is at least partly the work of another; (2) submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from an Internet source or another source; and (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one’s paper without giving the author due credit. Please read the complete policy at http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/4.1-student-academic-dishonesty.pdf
Students with Disabilities

In this course, as in all SFA classes, we strive to ensure that course materials are accessible to all students. If you require accommodations due to a disability, please contact me at the beginning of the semester and also contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-1004 (TDD) so that the necessary arrangements can be made. For additional information, go to http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/.

Program Learning Outcomes

The SFA History Department has identified the following Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) for all SFA students earning an M.A. degree in History:

1. The student will be able to explain the key issues and developments in at least two historical periods (one per course).
2. The student will be able to identify the main historical works and interpretive debates associated with an event or period.
3. The student will be able to explain the main causes and sources of violence in early modern Europe.
4. The student will be able to present written work in an appropriate academic style, including the proper citation of sources using Chicago Manual of Style (15th or most recent edition).

This section of this course will focus on PLOs 2, 4, and 5.

Student Learning Outcomes

The specific Student Learning Outcomes for this particular graduate course are:

1. The student will be able to evaluate the methodologies used by historians of popular culture.
2. The student will be able to analyze widely held beliefs and values of early modern European men and women.
3. The student will be able to explain the main causes and sources of violence in early modern Europe.
4. The student will be able to explain how early modern popular culture weakened and declined.