

HI307 Science Faces Trial: Early Modern Thinkers and the Roman Inquisition

Weekly Schedule: Wed & Fri 10:45-12:15

Credits: 8 ECTS, 4 U.S. credits

Seminar Leader: Andrea Ottone

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Office Hours: Tu-Fr, by appointment

Course Description

During the Renaissance and Baroque periods, Western culture experienced a burst in philosophical and scientific innovation. While the embryonic form of modern empirical science was taking shape, the Roman Church was realigning its ideological and institutional structure in the pursuit of a restrictive definition of moral and religious orthodoxy. The premises and outcomes of these two readjustments clashed repeatedly over time in a process of progressive separation. When collisions occur, the traces that remain can serve the purpose of factual investigation. This seminar will investigate these traces to define the identity of both parties to the conflict, and to outline the nature of the ongoing struggle between them. Ultimately, this will be a tangential way of looking at the process of the secularization of western society. To present the two contenders at play, we will consider an overview of the structure and purpose of the early modern scientific community as well as the structure and function of the Roman Inquisition. We will take both phenomena on their own terms and examine the seriousness and coherence of their irreconcilable approaches. We will then look at a few illuminating cases. Secondary sources will consolidate our understanding of the general framework. Later in the semester we will undertake a close reading of primary sources such as inquisitorial trials and apologetic texts.

Requirements

Students are expected to attend classes regularly and actively participate in discussion having critically read the assigned material. As part of their classwork, students are also expected to complete five writing assignments.

Academic Integrity

Bard College Berlin maintains the highest standards of academic integrity and expects students to always adhere to these standards. Instances in which students fail to meet the expected standards of academic integrity will be dealt with under the Code of Student Conduct, Section 14.3 (Academic Misconduct) in the Student Handbook.

Attendance

Attendance at all classes is a crucial part of the education offered by Bard College Berlin. To account for minor circumstances, two absences from twice-per-week courses or the equivalent (e.g. one absence from a once-per-week course) should not affect the participation grade or require documentation.

Bard College Berlin does not offer credit for any course in which a student has missed more than 30% of classes, regardless of the reasons for the absences. The full Bard College Berlin attendance policy can be found in the Student Handbook, Section 2.8.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR FALL 2022: Some students may need to begin the semester remotely

due to travel restrictions caused by the pandemic. In addition, all students and instructors must refrain from in-person attendance if they are feeling ill. Instructors should make efforts to offer alternatives to in-person attendance where needed, including remote participation or asynchronous options.

Assignments

Writing assignments will consist of five papers.

Paper 1: summary

Source: Hubert Jedin, *Catholic Reformation or Counterreformation?* (Luzern: Stocker, 1946).

Due: September 14, before class.

Length: 500 words

Worth: 5% of the final grade

Paper 2: position paper

Source: Ames, Christine Caldwell. "Does Inquisition Belong to Religious History?" *American Historical Review* 110 (2005): 11-37.

Length: 500 words

Due: September 16, BC

Worth: 5% of the final grade

Paper 3: reaction paper

Source: Allyson F. Creasman, *Censorship and Civic Order in Reformation Germany: 1517 – 1648*. Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2012, pp. 109-47.

Length: 1000 words

Due: October 12, BC

Worth: 10% of the final grade

Paper 4: review paper

Source: Hannah Marcus and Paula Findlen, "Deciphering Galileo: Communication and Secrecy before and after the Trial," *Renaissance Quarterly* 72 (2019): 953-95.

Length: 1000 words

Due: November 11

Worth: 20% of the final grade

Paper 5: research paper.

Topic: TBA

Source: Maurice A. Finocchiaro, *The Trial of Galileo: Essential Documents* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2014).

Length: 2000 words

Due: December 16

Worth: 30% of the final grade

Definitions

Paper 1 (summary): condense in one piece the most relevant information derived from the source of reference.

Paper 2: (position paper): extract the key argument proposed by the source of reference.

Paper 3 (reaction paper): extract the key argument proposed by the source of reference and critique the argument and the evidence upon said argument is based.

Paper 4 (review paper): ideally it merges the tasks required by papers 1-3. Examples will be provided before the essay is due.

Paper 5 (research paper): it is based on primary sources, and it aims to respond to a research question. The research question will be formulated by the student and reviewed by the instructor.

Policy on Late Submission of Papers

Essays that are up to 24 hours late can be downgraded up to one full grade (from B+ to C+, for example). Instructors are not obliged to accept essays that are more than 24 hours late. Where an instructor agrees to accept a late essay, it must be submitted within four weeks of the deadline. Thereafter, the student will receive a failing grade for the assignment. Grades and comments will be returned to students in a timely fashion. Students are also entitled to make an appointment to discuss essay assignments and feedback during instructors' office hours.

Students receive mid- and end-of-semester grades for their seminar work. Students are entitled to make an appointment with an instructor to discuss seminar participation, or may be asked to meet with the instructor at any stage in the semester regarding class progress.

Grade Breakdown

30% active participation to class discussion

70% five writing assignments (see breakdown for each assignment in the "Assignments" section)

Schedule

Week 1

Political Background and Theory

31 August: Introduction to the Course

02 September: The Reformation

Andrew Pettegree, *Europe in the Sixteenth Century*. Blackwell, 2002, ch. 5.

Week 2

Political Background and Theory

07 September: Catholic Response

Hubert Jedin, *Catholic Reformation or Counterreformation?* (Luzern: Stocker, 1946).

09 September: Did Repression Make Sense?

Ames, Christine Caldwell. "Does Inquisition Belong to Religious History?" *American Historical Review* 110 (2005): 11-37.

Week 3

Face Off

14 September: The Inquisitor at Work I

Carlo Ginzburg, *The Night Battles: Witchcraft & Agrarian Cults in the Sixteenth & Seventeenth Centuries*. London: Routledge, 2015, pp. 1-32.

16 September: The Inquisitor at Work II

Carlo Ginzburg, *The Night Battles: Witchcraft & Agrarian Cults in the Sixteenth & Seventeenth Centuries* (London: Routledge, 2015), pp. 33-68.

Week 4
Face Off

21 September The Inquisitor at Work III

Carlo Ginzburg, *The Night Battles: Witchcraft & Agrarian Cults in the Sixteenth & Seventeenth Centuries*. London: Routledge, 2015, pp. 69-97.

23 September: The Inquisitor at Work IV

Carlo Ginzburg, *The Night Battles: Witchcraft & Agrarian Cults in the Sixteenth & Seventeenth Centuries*. London: Routledge, 2015, pp. 99-125.

Week 5
Face Off

28 September: The Inquisitor at Work V

Carlo Ginzburg, *The Night Battles: Witchcraft & Agrarian Cults in the Sixteenth & Seventeenth Centuries*. London: Routledge, 2015, pp. 125-145.

30 September: Censorship and Repression

Gigliola Fragnito, "The central and peripheral organization of censorship" in *Church, Censorship and Culture in Early Modern Italy*, Adrian Belton and Gigliola Fragnito (eds.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011, pp. 13-49.

Week 6
Face Off

05 October: Censorship and Peacekeeping

Allyson F. Creasman, *Censorship and Civic Order in Reformation Germany: 1517 – 1648*. Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2012, pp. 109-47.

07 October: Were Catholics so Medieval?

Stefania Tutino, *Shadows of Doubt: Language and Truth in Post-Reformation Catholic Culture*. Oxford - New York: Oxford University Press, 2014, pp. 40-73

Week7
Face Off

12 October: The Scientific Revolution: Irresistible Force or Unmovable Object? I

Paolo Rossi, *The Birth of Modern Science*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007, pp. 7-40.

14 October The Scientific Revolution: Irresistible Force or Unmovable Object? II

Paolo Rossi, *The Birth of Modern Science*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007, pp. 41-72.

Week 8
Face Off

19 October: The Scientific Revolution: Irresistible Force or Unmovable Object? III

Paolo Rossi, *The Birth of Modern Science*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007, pp. 73-107.

21 October: The Scientific Revolution: Irresistible Force or Unmovable Object? IV

Paolo Rossi, *The Birth of Modern Science*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007, pp. 108-121; 183-202.

Week 9

Avoiding conflict

02 November: Deceiving the Truth

Perez Zagorin, *Ways of Lying: Dissimulation, Persecution, and Conformity in Early Modern Europe*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014 (reprint of 1990), ch. 11

04 November: Gibberish and Riddles

Hannah Marcus and Paula Findlen, "Deciphering Galileo: Communication and Secrecy before and after the Trial," *Renaissance Quarterly* 72 (2019): 953-995.

Week 10

Clash of the Titans

09 November: Sweetest Taboos

Andrea Carlino, *Books of the Body. Anatomical Ritual and Renaissance Learning*. Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press, 1999: 187-225.

11 November: Bruno and a Burning Defeat

Maifreda, Germano, *The Trial of Giordano Bruno*. New York: Routledge; 2022, pp. 81-109.

Week 11

Clash of the Titans

16 November: Bruno and a Burning Defeat

Maifreda, Germano, *The Trial of Giordano Bruno*. New York: Routledge; 2022, pp. 110-152.

18 November: Bruno and a Burning Defeat

Maifreda, Germano, *The Trial of Giordano Bruno*. New York: Routledge; 2022, pp. 155-192.

Week 12

Clash of the Titans

23 November: Bruno and a Burning Defeat

Maifreda, Germano, *The Trial of Giordano Bruno*. New York: Routledge; 2022, 193-231.

25 November: The Trouble with Galilei

Maurice A. Finocchiaro, *The Trial of Galileo: Essential Documents*. Indianapolis: Hackett, 2014, 48-77.

Week 13

Clash of the Titans

30 November: The Trouble with Galilei

Maurice A. Finocchiaro, *The Trial of Galileo: Essential Documents*. Indianapolis: Hackett, 2014, pp. 43-47, 78-95.

02 December: The Trouble with Galilei

Maurice A. Finocchiaro, *The Trial of Galileo: Essential Documents*. Indianapolis: Hackett, 2014, 96-118.

Week 14

Clash of the Titans

07 December: The Trouble with Galilei

Maurice A. Finocchiaro, *The Trial of Galileo: Essential Documents*. Indianapolis: Hackett, 2014, pp. 119-138.

09 December: The Trouble with Galilei

Maurice A. Finocchiaro, *The Trial of Galileo: Essential Documents*. Indianapolis: Hackett, 2014, pp. 140-151.

Scheduled class times will be available online under the relevant course heading:

<https://berlin.bard.edu/academics/courses/>

All assigned readings will be made available digitally.