

The History of Witchcraft: From Myth to Modernity

Week 1: Origins and Ancient Practices

Session 1: Witchcraft in the Ancient World

- Mesopotamian, Egyptian, and Greco-Roman magical traditions
- Early magical texts and rituals
- Role of priestesses, oracles, and cunning folk

Session 2: Folk Magic and Pagan Roots

- Celtic Druidry, Norse Seiðr, and Slavic magic
- Seasonal festivals and nature-based spirituality
- The concept of sacred feminine and animism

Session 3: Early Christian Encounters

- Transition from paganism to Christianity
- Demonization of magic and the rise of heresy
- Saints vs. sorcerers: blurred lines in early medieval Europe

Week 2: Persecution and Power

Session 4: The Witch Hunts

- The Malleus Maleficarum and its impact
- European witch trials (Salem, Pendle, Bamberg)
- Gender, fear, and control: why women were targeted

Session 5: Witchcraft in Colonial and Global Contexts

- Witchcraft in Africa, the Americas, and Asia

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- Indigenous spiritual practices and colonial suppression
- Syncretism: blending of magical traditions

Session 6: Enlightenment and Decline of Persecution

- Rise of rationalism and science
- Occult revival: alchemy, astrology, and secret societies
- Witchcraft in literature and folklore

Week 3: Revival and Reimagination

Session 7: Modern Witchcraft Movements

- Wicca, Neo-Paganism, and contemporary covens
- Gerald Gardner, Doreen Valiente, and the 20th-century revival
- Rituals, ethics, and beliefs in modern practice

Session 8: Witchcraft in Pop Culture

- Witches in film, TV, and literature
- The archetype of the witch: villain, healer, rebel
- Influence on fashion, music, and identity

Session 9: Witchcraft Today

- Digital witchcraft and online communities
- Intersectionality and empowerment
- Witchcraft as resistance, healing, and spirituality

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Optional Activities & Assignments

- Create a personal grimoire or magical journal
- Analyze a historical witch trial
- Explore local folklore or magical traditions
- Group ritual design or symbolic art project