

KULH 2012 Witchcraft and Magic - spring 2026 – Exam assessment guidelines (sensorveiledning)

Assessment guidelines assignment 1

What they are asked to do:

In this assignment, students are challenged to engage in historicisation. They are required to contextualise the text in terms of time, place, and social environment in order to acknowledge its historicity. In addition, they should identify the broader intellectual climate in which it may have been written. This will vary from century to century. To the extent that students analyse the individual recipe or recipes that have been transcribed, this will primarily be relevant if they are able to relate these to contemporary views on magical practice at the time the text was produced.

How they should be assessed:

Strong assignments are able to situate the text historically and draw on the syllabus to demonstrate an understanding of views on magic in the period in which the text was produced, as well as the particular magical discourse taking place at that time. Since the students have been given texts from the seventeenth, eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries, the relevant contexts may range from a tense intellectual climate during the witch persecutions to a more playful, exploratory, and ritualised magical practice associated with occultism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Particularly strong assignments demonstrate an ability to engage in historical contextualisation in depth. These assignments show maturity and historical understanding by drawing on specific debates related to witchcraft and magic to which the transcribed text may implicitly be connected, and by making use of a broader range of the syllabus.

Assignments that make no use of, and do not refer to, the syllabus should be considered for a fail. Assignments that rely solely on literature other than the syllabus should likewise be assessed among the weakest or as fail, particularly since the assignment explicitly requires engagement with the syllabus. Strong assignments are those which, in addition to the above, demonstrate familiarity with and orientation in the prescribed literature and, where supplementary literature is used, employ it only to further strengthen the discussion.

Assessment guidelines, assignment 2

What they are asked to do:

In this assignment, students are expected to engage in source analysis. They should demonstrate the ability to connect specific features of their chosen primary source (a trial record) to the broader tendencies of the early modern witch-hunts, in accordance with the course literature. They are required to identify prominent motifs, concepts, and the like that reflect contemporary

ideas and definitions around witches and witchcraft, as well as the typical procedural aspects of a witch trial. In doing so, they should present potentially contrasting scholarly interpretations of why the witch-hunts emerged, ideally concluding that a cumulative conceptualization of witchcraft and the witch-hunts is necessary when analyzing case studies concerning the topic.

How they should be assessed:

Strong assignments demonstrate the ability to situate their chosen case study within the broader context of the early modern witch-hunts, treating witch trials not as isolated anomalies but as the cumulation of various (for instance: legal, religious, social, economic, etc.) converging historical developments in late medieval and early modern Europe and its colonies. They identify motifs and concepts in their chosen source material that speak to prominent themes in the historical record on witchcraft, such as the demonic pact, the stereotypical image of the witch (including questions of gender), acts of maleficium, neighbours' testimonies, and the use of torture. Strong assignments also draw on a broader range of the syllabus, contrast opposing scholarly interpretations of the emergence of the witch-hunts, and reflect on how a cumulative conceptualization of witchcraft and the witch-hunts can best tackle the problem of their origin and dynamics. Particularly strong assignments are also able to detect discrepancies between the local specificities of their case study and the general tendencies of the early modern witch-hunts as a wider phenomenon.

Assignments that make no use of, and do not refer to, the syllabus should be considered for a fail. Assignments that rely solely on literature other than the syllabus should likewise be assessed among the weakest or as fail, particularly since the assignment explicitly requires engagement with the syllabus. Strong assignments are those which, in addition to the above, demonstrate familiarity with and orientation in the prescribed literature and, where supplementary literature is used, employ it only to further strengthen the discussion.