

Department of History
University of Wisconsin
Semester 1, 1988-9

Prof. Johann Sommerville
5214 Humanities

Office Hours: Wednesday 12-1, and by appointment

HISTORY 367: SOCIETY AND IDEAS IN SHAKESPEARE'S ENGLAND

This course will explore the social, intellectual and cultural history of England in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In particular, it will deal with the interplay between ideas and social and political realities. The class will begin with a broad survey of English society in the early modern period, and with an outline account of the major political, religious and economic developments of the Tudor and Stuart ages. Then we will investigate the realm of ideas, including attitudes towards science, magic and witchcraft, but concentrating on thoughts about society and government. Amongst other topics we will discuss the Reformation, ideas of religious toleration, heresy and persecution, theories of absolute monarchical power, and the advent of popular religious radicalism in the decades of the English Revolution

Required texts:

Alan G.R. Smith, The emergence of a nation state
Keith Wrightson, English Society 1550-1680
David Wootton (ed.) Divine Right and Democracy
Christopher Hill, The World turned upside down
Keith Thomas, Religion and the Decline of Magic, chs.1-9,
14-18

Written assignments:

Students taking the course for three credits will take two mid-term exams (dates: 10/14 and 11/23) and a final. Students taking the class for four credits will also write a term paper or two short essays.

Schedule of readings and topics:

Unit 1: (9/7 to 9/23) English Society
Introduction
Social structure of early modern England
The family
The economy

Readings: Wrightson, pp.11-148
Smith, pp.10-17, 165-187

Unit 2: (9/26 to 10/14) Society, government and ideas:
the Tudor age

Humanism, education and literacy
The structure of government
The Reformation
Tudor rebellions
Catholics, Protestants and Puritans
The Divine Right of Kings and James I

Readings: Smith, pp.18 161, 188-203, 210-18
Thomas, chs. 1-6
Wootton, pp.22-38, 91-128
Wrightson, pp.149-221

Unit 3: (10/24 to 11/18) Ideas and society in Stuart
England

monarchy The common law and contract: ideas of limited
The English Civil War
Royalists and Tories: conservative ideology
Presbyterians and Independents
Levellers: political radicalism in the English
Revolution
Erastians

Readings: Smith, pp.233-374
Wootton, pp.38-77, 129-211, 273-503
Hill, chs.1-7

Unit 4: (11/21 to 12/14) Science, magic, witchcraft and
radical religion Radical religion: Quakers,
Ranters and the English Revolution

Millenariansim
Antichrist
Heresy, blasphemy and toleration
Witchcraft
Magic
Science

Readings: Thomas, chs. 7-9, 14-18
Hill, chs.8-18
Wootton, pp.214-271
Smith, pp.204-209