

HIISTORY 367, Syllabus; Fall 2018

## ***J.P.SOMMERVILLE***

### **367 Course Requirements**

**NOTE THAT THIS IS A THREE CREDIT COURSE; UNDERGRADUATES CAN TAKE IT WITH OR WITHOUT HONORS .**

**Instructor:** Johann Sommerville  
Email: jsommerv@wisc.edu  
Office: 4127 Mosse Humanities  
Mailbox: 4001  
Office Hours: Tuesdays at 12:20 to 1:20, and by appointment.

### **LECTURE SLIDES ARE HERE**

*Undergraduates:*

**This is a 3 credit course; you can take it with or without Honors**

**Requirements:**

- **Undergraduates (Graduates:** see the end of this page)
- attend **lectures (1221 Mosse Humanities, 4-5:15 Tuesdays and Thursdays)**
- do the reading (for details see the [course schedule](#)) and explore this web site.
- two midterms (in class; 10/11 and 11/13.)
- a final exam (12:25PM, Monday, 12/17; place to be announced.)
- **Honors students** do a term paper of 5-6 pages, double-spaced, 10-12 point font; include a list of books and articles you use (due 12/11)
- If you cannot complete the Honors paper by December 11, make sure to drop the Honors credit in good time! To do this please visit your [MyUW site](#) and follow the links to update your current course information.
- **Reading:** the [course schedule](#) lists readings for each week. In addition, your term paper will need to cite at least two books and/or articles (but not web sites) in addition to these readings. Here are three books that you might find useful, both in doing your term paper and more generally; all are available on reserve in College Library: (1) Keith Wrightson, *English Society 1580-1680*; (2) Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*; (3) J. P. Sommerville, *Royalists and Patriots. Politics and Ideology in England 1603-1640*.

Visit [here](#) for information on how to get a good grade.

## Honors Term paper: write on one of these topics

- (1) How and why did English society change in the century between 1580 and 1680?
- (2) What arguments did people in the seventeenth century use in favor of and against the Divine Right of Kings? How convincing were the arguments, and why did people find them persuasive?
- (3) Why did religious and political radicalism spread in England in the mid-seventeenth century, what did the radicals want, and why did they fail to attain their objectives
- (4) another topic, by arrangement.

### A note on term papers and the Internet:

The term paper should cite at least two sources in addition to the course reading. You can find many sources in the footnotes and endnotes of the course reading, and in the three books listed above under "Reading." There is an excellent search engine at [this link](#). A good link for buying books is [here](#).

Be careful about using sources from the Internet, as they are not always reliable. As a general rule, use printed, published sources (though it's fine to use them in pdf versions available on the Internet.)

An extensive reading list on various aspects of early modern Britain, arranged by topic, is [here](#).

Some useful web sites are: The *Dictionary of National Biography* (known as DNB): DA 28 D48 2 (Reference Room; 2S). This is a comprehensive, multi-volume work. It has been updated and is available electronically to UW students by clicking the link above; [British History Online](#).  
[British and US constitutional history](#)  
Centred on [English dissenters](#) but with web links to many other English history topics.  
[History online](#).

A good guide on questions of style, grammar etc. is available at [The UW Writer's Handbook](#).

Finally, be aware that you should be careful to give proper citations for things you take from the Internet or from printed books and articles; take a look at [this information on academic misconduct](#).

### How much are the exams (etc.) worth?

Non-honors students: each mid-term 25%; final 50%

Honors students: term paper term paper 25%; each mid-term 18.75%; final 37.5%.

### Important information:

This course meets as a group (or with dedicated online time) for 2 75 minute sessions per week and carries the expectation that you will spend an average of 2 hours outside of class for each class period. In other words, in addition to class time, plan to allot an average of 6 hours per week for reading, writing, preparing for discussions, and/or studying for quizzes and exams for this class.

**Graduates:**

- attend lectures
- 2 term papers (12-15 pp. including notes and bibliography; due 10/18; 12/11.)

Topics by arrangement. (Total grade consists of 50% for each paper.)

## ***J.P.SOMMERVILLE***

367

### **SOCIETY AND IDEAS IN SHAKESPEARE'S ENGLAND**



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## **OUTLINE**

Instructor: Johann Sommerville (email [jsommerv@wisc.edu](mailto:jsommerv@wisc.edu))

Office Hours: 4127 Mosse Humanities, Tuesdays 12:20-1:20 and by appointment.

This course is about society and ideas in England during Shakespeare's lifetime (1564-1616) and, more generally, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as a whole. In that period, English population doubled, and though the economy grew more sophisticated, the country's resources were barely sufficient to feed the increased population. Poverty and vagrancy spread. People competed for scarce jobs, and to gain an advantage in the competition tried to improve their educational attainments. In order to get more food from the soil people became increasingly interested in new agricultural techniques and scientific ideas. As education and science spread, so old attitudes came under attack. The ferment in ideas contributed to political conflict which culminated in the Civil War of 1642-6 and the execution of the king (and abolition of monarchy) in 1649. Intellectual and social changes were also closely linked to the great flowering of English literature and culture in the age of Shakespeare, Donne, Milton, Hobbes and Locke.

The course will explore the nature and development of English society, and the emergence of new social, political and religious ideas. Themes surveyed will include the impact of massive population growth on the English economy and social structure; the spread of scientific thinking and the decay of belief in witchcraft; patriarchalist social and political theories; radical and

democratic political ideas, including the thinking of the Levellers (who advocated manhood suffrage), and Diggers (who wanted the abolition of private property); new religious groups such as the Quakers (who included revolutionaries as well as pacifists), and Fifth Monarchists (who expected the imminent second coming of Christ); and the contrasting political thinking of authoritarians like Hobbes and anti-authoritarians like Locke.

In addition to surveying social history in Shakespeare's England, and the history of ideas about society and politics, the course will also discuss the religious thinking of Catholics, Anglicans, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Baptists, and various radical groups which emerged in the mid-seventeenth century. It was from the struggle between these various groups that religious toleration emerged by the end of the seventeenth century. It was also in the late-seventeenth century that belief in witchcraft faded amongst educated people. The final part of the course will discuss popular and elite ideas about witches, and about such things as ghosts, fairies, omens and astrology.

Course objectives include (1) to foster an understanding of societies very different from our own; (2) to enrich appreciation of Shakespeare and other writers of the period by investigating their context; (3) to show how and why attitudes which we take for granted first came into being; and (4) to enhance critical and analytical thinking, and communication skills.

Course requirements

Course schedule

