Course Description:
The popularity of the witch as a literary and theatrical subject is undeniable. From classical times, when witches like Hecate and Erictho made appearances in works by authors such as Euripides and Lucan, through the Enlightenment, concerns about witches and their craft were taken seriously by authors as well as the public at large. Since women were accused and executed for suspected acts of witchcraft throughout Europe and North America from as early as the 1480s through the 1750s, their presence in literature and on the stage is perhaps unsurprising— but their many representations often are. We will explore this subject as we read a variety of works that include characterizations of these remarkable figures. By examining fictional representations of witches in tandem with anti-witchcraft polemics, we will attempt to better understand why early modern people in particular felt witches posed such a real and dangerous threat to the community. Through our study of literary works featuring witches, and supplementary material written on the subject of witchcraft, we will also consider what fictional depictions of witches tell us about the lives of the very real women persecuted for these “crimes”.

By the end of the semester, students will be able to effectively analyze the elements of drama and demonstrate an understanding of the conventions of the genre and how it has changed over time. They will demonstrate their ability to use supplementary readings and research materials to support their own carefully crafted analyses as they work to develop their own theory of the significance of fictionalized representations of historical events and the impact of theatrical performance on contemporary audiences. All students will also present their final research projects to the class, demonstrating their ability to construct and articulate complex arguments.

Additionally, graduate students will be able to effectively demonstrate advanced research skills by compiling an annotated bibliography and completing a longer final project essay.

Texts:

Please note that students are responsible for obtaining their own texts before arriving in Cork. In addition, I encourage you to read all of the texts, or as many as possible, beforehand, so that you may take full advantage of the many wonderful opportunities afforded by the program.


Additional text: Fletcher and Massinger’s The Prophetess available at www.luminarium.org

*any additional readings will be made available online as needed
Preliminary Schedule of Readings:

**Week 1: Introduction and Classical Sources**
- Book X of Homer’s *Odyssey*
- Euripides’ and Seneca’s versions of *Medea*

**Week 2: Witchcraft in England, Part One**
- Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*
- Selections from: Scot’s *Discoverie* and King James I’s *Daemonologie* (in *Penguin Book of Witches*)

**Week 3: Witchcraft in England, Part Two**
- Rowley, Dekker and Ford’s *Witch of Edmonton*, and source pamphlet, Goodcole’s *Wonderfull Discoverie* (in *Three Jacobean Witchcraft Plays*)
- Fletcher and Massinger’s *The Prophetess*

**Week 4: Witchcraft in the Atlantic World**
- Miller’s *The Crucible*
- *Penguin Book of Witches* (Selections)
- Additional readings TBA

**Assignments:**
Response Papers: Each student will complete and submit short, informal, response papers (2-3 pages) at the end of each week. If you would prefer to think of this as a reading journal, then that is fine. In any case, I encourage you to begin this work before the course begins. For example, you should plan to turn in a response to the Seneca and Euripides versions of *Medea* by the end of week one, a response to *Macbeth* week two, etc.

Essays: Each student will complete one short (4-6 page) essay, focused on attentive close reading and one longer (8-10 page) researched essay, which may have more of a focus on creative writing. Final essays will also include a class presentation.

*Graduate students will be expected to complete a longer final essay (14-18 pages) and annotated bibliography of source material.*

**Course Requirements:**
Students are responsible for all assigned reading and should be prepared to discuss the literature and supplementary reading as indicated on the syllabus each class day. Students must complete all assigned work (including in-class and homework assignments) in order to receive credit for this course. Please be aware that attendance at weekly Tuesday night readings is mandatory for all program participants and that faculty will be notified of student absences.

**Breakdown of Grades:**
- Class discussion: 20%
- Written response essays: 20%
- Paper #1: 20%
- Final Project: 40%