This course explores the ways in which boundaries defining and separating magic, science, and religion emerged in western thought and culture from late antiquity through the European Enlightenment, when the definitions generally recognized in western culture today were delineated. We will consider the nature of "magic," "science" and "religion" in historical context, the relationship between learned and popular thought and practice, and the interplay of disciplines we would define oppositionally (e.g., astrology and astral magic with astronomy, medicine and healing), while exploring underlying assumptions about God, Nature and natural forces.

Required Texts

Richard C. Dales, *The Scientific Achievement of the Middle Ages* 978-0812210576
Richard Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages* 978-0521785761

Steven Shapin, *The Scientific Revolution* 978-0226750217

Voltaire, *Candide, Zadig and Other Stories* (Signet ed.) 978-0451528094

Also: a set of readings available in pdf format on our Blackboard Learn site and a number of documents linked to the syllabus here

Please bring reading materials to class on the day(s) they are assigned

**Course Requirements**

Students are expected to attend and participate in every class. All reading is to be completed before the class for which it is assigned.

Graded work for the class will consist of one short (4- to 5-page) analytical paper, a midterm exam, a 7-8 page research paper, and a final exam. In addition, there will also be a grade for participation, which will be based on attendance, preparation of materials for class, and general engagement in the course. The grading for the course will be as follows: 10% for class participation, 20% for the short paper, 25% for the midterm exam, 20% for the research paper, and 25% for the final.

If you know that you will miss class because you are sick or are away from school for an emergency, please try to let me know ahead of time, if possible, via phone or e-mail. **More than three unapproved absences during the semester may result in a lowered overall grade in addition to an unsatisfactory class participation grade.**

**Expectation of Integrity:** All students should familiarize themselves with the Boston University Academic Conduct Code and adhere to it. I am obligated to report suspected cases of plagiarism or academic misconduct to the College of Arts and Sciences Dean’s Office – no exceptions. If you think you are falling behind or otherwise in trouble with this course, come talk to me so we can work out a plan.

**Students with Disabilities:** Any student with a documented disability who requires academic accommodations should bring me a letter from Disability Services outlining authorized accommodations as soon as possible. If you suspect that you may have an undiagnosed disability (whether physical, learning, or psychological) that is interfering with your success in your coursework and you are, please feel free to come see me and I will help direct you to the appropriate resources at BU. You may also contact disability services directly and ask them for guidance.

**Schedule**

**Tues Sept 6:** Introduction: Magic, Science, & Religion as Cultural Constructs

**Thurs Sept 8:** Magic and Modernity


**Tues Sept 13:** Magic and Miracle in Late Antiquity

Reading: Richard Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages*, Chapter 2

**Thurs Sept 15:** Magic and Miracle in Late Antiquity

Reading: Biblical Texts on Sorcery, Magic, and Miracle [Blackboard]; The Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles Peter and Paul [Blackboard]

**Tues Sept 20:** Paganism, Christianization, & Magic in the Early Middle Ages

Reading: Kieckhefer, *Magic*, Chapter 3; Gregory of Tours, Eight Books of Miracles [Blackboard]

**Thurs Sept 22:** Paganism, Christianization, & Magic in the Early Middle Ages

Reading: Anglo Saxon Charms: Field Remedy Ritual; Lacnunga Elf Charms; Leechbook, Book 3 Elf Charms
Tues Sept 27: Learning, "Science," & the Church in the Early Middle Ages

Reading: R. C. Dales, The Scientific Achievement of the Middle Ages, Introduction and Chapter 1; Richer of Rheims' Journey to the School at Chartres (10th century)

**Tuesday, September 27, first paper due, 11:59 PM**

Thur Sept 29: Twelfth-Century Learning & Arabic Science: The Islamic World


Tues Oct 4: Breakout sessions with Teaching Fellows

Thurs Oct 6: Twelfth-Century Learning and Arabic Science

Reading: Kieckhefer, 116–119; R. C. Dales, Scientific Achievement, Chapter 2 Excerpt from Peter Abelard, Sic et Non [Blackboard]

Tues Oct 11: Monday Schedule: No class

Thurs Oct 13: The Rise of Universities and Control of Knowledge

Reading: E. Grant, The Foundations of Modern Science in the Middle Ages, 33–53 [Blackboard]; Stephen of Tournai, An Invective Against the New Learning [Blackboard]; Jacques de Vitry’s description of students

Tues Oct 18: Observing the Natural World: Experimental Science

Reading: R. C. Dales, Scientific Achievement, Chapter 3; Roger Bacon, On Experimental Science [Blackboard]

Thurs Oct 20: MIDTERM EXAM in class

Tues Oct 25: Astronomy, Astrology, and Astral Magic

Reading: Kieckhefer, 120–133; Dales, Scientific Achievement, Chapter 7 and also Chapter 8, pp. 139–146; 151 (last two lines on page)–157; Marsilio Ficino: Three Books of Life [Blackboard]

Thurs Oct 27: Medieval Medicine and Healing

Reading: The case of a woman doctor in Paris [Blackboard]; N. Siraisi, Medieval and Early Renaissance Medicine, Chapters 1 & 2 [Blackboard]

Tues Nov 1: Alchemy and Alchemists

Reading: Kieckhefer, 133–139; Roger Bacon, excerpts from Radix mundi (Root of the world), in Stanton J. Linden, The Alchemy Reader, 111–122 [Blackboard]

**Thursday, November 1 research proposals due 11:59 PM**

Thurs Nov 3: Common Magic: Thirteenth to Fifteenth Centuries

Reading: Kieckhefer, Ch. 4; Stephen of Bourbon’s account of the cult of the Holy Greyhound (St. Guinefort) [Blackboard]

Tues Nov 8: Learned Magic: Thirteenth to Fifteenth Centuries

Reading: Kieckhefer, 140–144 and Ch. 7; Honorius of Thebes, The Sworn Book [Blackboard]

Thurs Nov 10: Legal Processes Against Magic
Reading: Kieckhefer, Ch. 8; Documents from the trial of Tempel Anneke [Blackboard]

Tues Nov 15: From Magus to Scientist: The Yates Thesis


Thurs Nov 17: Scientific Revolution (??)

Reading: Steven Shapin, The Scientific Revolution, pp. 1–8 and 15-64

Tues Nov 22: Galileo Galilei: Reading the Book of Nature

Reading: Shapin, pp. 65–80; 135–142; Galileo’s Letter to the Grand Duchess Christina [Blackboard]

Thurs Nov 24: Happy Thanksgiving! No class!

Tues Nov 29: Francis Bacon and The New Atlantis: Science as a Collective Endeavor

Reading: Francis Bacon, The Great Instauration, excerpts [Blackboard]

Thurs Dec 1: Isaac Newton: Mechanism, Mathematics, and “Occult” Forces in Nature

Reading: John Henry, Newton, Matter, and Magic [Blackboard]: Isaac Newton, General Scholium, published as an appendix to the second edition of the Principia (1713)

Thursday, December 1 research papers due 11:59 PM

Tues Dec 6: The Enlightened Rationalist in a Superstitious World

Reading: Voltaire, Zadig

Thurs Dec 8: Disenchantment? Secularization? Magic and Religion in a Scientific World

Final Exam: Tuesday, December 20, 12:30-2:30 in our usual classroom