

# Mercenaries, Ice, and Dark Magic

## The Crisis of the Seventeenth Century

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Maryland 104, Wednesday and Friday 3:00-4:15 PM

Office hours: Thursday 3-4 PM in Gilman atrium

### Course Description

This course will introduce students to the world of the seventeenth century and the historiographical debate surrounding the concept of the “general crisis.” Students will engage with primary sources to immerse themselves in the seventeenth century world, making their way between Germany in the midst of the Thirty Years’ War, Poland-Lithuania under the so-called “Deluge,” and China in its transition from Ming to Qing rule. We will also discuss intellectual and artistic responses to crisis, views of magic, millenarian upheaval, and the ways in which early modern elites worked to stabilize their world. Students will eventually choose a subsection of special interest and create an independently-researched paper on the topic.

### Class Schedule and Readings

#### Pt. I: The “General Crisis”

##### **Week 1: Introduction — Everything is Awful and We’re All Going to Die**

- Hans von Grimmelshausen, *The Adventurous Simplicius* (1669), chapters 1-16.
- H. R. Trevor-Roper, “The General Crisis of the 17th Century”; Niels Steensgaard, “The Seventeenth-Century Crisis and the Unity of Eurasian History”; Geoffrey Parker, “Crisis and Catastrophe: The Global Crisis of the Seventeenth Century Reconsidered.”

##### **Week 2: The Age of Iron**

- Julius Ruff, *Violence in Early Modern Europe*, p. 44-73; Stuart Carroll, *Enmity and Violence in Early Modern Europe*, pp. 1-19
- Jean Nicolas de Parival, *The history of this iron age* (1656), Book 1 (all) and Book 3, chapter 1

### **Week 3: The Thirty Years' War**

- Tryntje Helfferich, *The Thirty Years War: A Documentary History*, pp. ix-xxii, 1-14, 56-60, 67-77, 107-113, 124-137.
- Helfferich, *The Thirty Years War: A Documentary History*, pp. 153-165, 274-324.

## **Pt. II: A "Global" Crisis?**

### **Week 4: The Triumph of Raiders**

- William Okeley, *Ebenezer (1676)*; Mario Klarer, *Piracy and Captivity in the Mediterranean: 1550-1810*, pp. 1-22.
- Guillaume le Vasseur de Beauplan, *A Description of Ukraine (1651)*, pp. 26-44; Dariusz Kołodziejczyk, "Slave Hunting and Slave Redemption as a Business Enterprise: the Northern Black Sea Region in the Sixteenth to Seventeenth Centuries."

### **Week 5: The Crisis in Eastern Europe**

- Rabbi Natan Hannover, *Abyss of Despair (1653)*, pp. 23-61; Natalia Yakovenko, "The Events of 1648-1649: Contemporary Reports and the Problem of Verification."
- Patrick Gordon, *Diary of Patrick Gordon*, pp. 1-53 [Skim editor's summaries].

### **Week 6: The Crisis in China**

- Frederic Wakeman, *The Great Enterprise*, pp. 1-20; William Atwill, "A Seventeenth-Century 'General Crisis' in East Asia?"; Lynn Struve, *Voices from the Ming-Qing Cataclysm: China in Tigers' Jaws*, pp. 1-28.
- Lynn Struve, *Voices from the Ming-Qing Cataclysm: China in Tigers' Jaws*, pp. 28-49, 156-203.

### **Week 7: Crisis on Sea and Steppe**

- Kris Lane, *Pillaging the Empire*, pp. 57-88; Tonio Andrade, "The Company's Chinese Pirates: How the Dutch East India Company Tried to Lead a Coalition of Pirates to War against China, 1621-1662."
- Peter Perdue, *China Marches West*, pp. 84-109; Dariusz Kołodziejczyk, "Tibet in the Crimea? Polish embassy to the Kalmyks of 1653 and a project of an anti-Muslim alliance."

### **Pt. III: Encountering Crisis**

#### **Week 8: The Greater War**

- Stuart Clark, *Thinking with Demons*, pp. 43-93.

#### **Week 9: The World Turned Upside Down**

- Christopher Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down*, pp. 13-18, 85-106, 162-170, 182-210.
- Maravall, *Culture of the Baroque*, pp. 149-207.

#### **Week 10: Crisis in the Mind**

- Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things*, pp. 3-18, 51-84.
- Blaise Pascal, *Pensées*, "Section III: On the Necessity of the Wager"; Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chapters 13-14 and 17-18.

#### **Week 11: Expressing crisis**

**Due:** Please submit your project proposals before the first class of week 11.

- Image gallery: please review the image gallery, then select a favorite picture and be ready to present thoughts about it in class.
- Chun-shu Chang and Shelley Hsueh-lun Chang, *Crisis and Transformation in Seventeenth-Century China: Society, Culture, and Modernity in Li Yü's World*, pp. 193-224; Li Yu, *Twelve Towers*, pp. 107-136.

### **Pt. IV: The End of Crisis**

#### **Week 12: Instilling Order**

- Helfferich, *The Thirty Years War: A Documentary History*, pp. 233-273; Derek Croxton, "The Peace of Westphalia of 1648 and the Origins of Sovereignty."
- Charles Maier, *Once Within Borders*, pp. 50-81; Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital, and European States*, pp. 67-95.

#### **Week 13: The Triumph of the State**

- Gillian Weiss, *Captives and Corsairs*, pp. 72-91; Brian Davies, *Warfare, State, and Society on the Black Sea Steppe*, pp. 78-97, 201-207; Young-tsu Wong, *China's Conquest of Taiwan in the Seventeenth Century*, pp. 177-197
- Presentations: please be ready to present the findings of your research project in class.

**Due:** Please submit your research project at the end of week 13.

## Assignments and Grading

Students' final grades will be calculated from their scores in class participation and two written assignments as outlined below.

- In-class participation: 55%
- Final project proposal: 10%
- Final research project: 35%

Please note that this course is heavily weighted towards participation grading! While I will be lenient with absences and generous with assignment extensions, I strictly expect every student to come to class having closely read every assigned reading.

### **In-class participation:**

All students are required to attend each class having read all assigned readings and formulated at least one question or analytical comment regarding each reading. Students are also expected to engage with the instructor and each others' questions. Beyond a baseline of participation in every class, grading will be qualitative rather than quantitative and generally generous.

### **Research project proposal:**

Before the first class of week 11, please select one of the topics discussed in class and formulate a research question related to the topic that would require additional secondary and/or primary source reading in order to answer. Present your topic, your question, and your plan for research in a short (2-3 page) project proposal. You are highly encouraged to include a small bibliography of articles, books, or available primary sources which might help you answer your research question. Make good use of online databases and the JHU library system; we will discuss options for research in class before week 11.

### **Research project paper:**

Before the last class of the semester, you should submit a paper analyzing your research topic and citing both secondary and primary source evidence. Papers can have a minimum length of 8 pages, but students should give the paper as much textual depth as is merited by their available evidence. If a student is willing and believes that they are capable of writing a significantly longer paper, they should email or meet with me to describe their research process for a potential extension.