This class will use Stacy Schiff’s 2015 book, *The Witches: Salem, 1692*, as its text. For each session, we will discuss the reading and explore one or two topics beyond the text. Please try to complete all reading assignments before the class. Suggested discussion topics will be sent by email before each session. Feel free to suggest your own discussion ideas.

In addition to the events described in Schiff’s book, the class will examine the broader social context of events in Salem. We will explore the concept of witch hunt as parable, metaphor and literary inspiration. Finally, we’ll discuss how the events in Salem happened and speculate why they occurred.

**Session 1**

Chapter I: The Diseases of Astonishment

Chapter II: That Old Deluder

Extension Topic: Puritanism, History and Beliefs.

Extension Topic: The English Civil War

**Session 2**

Chapter III: The Working of Wonders

Chapter IV: One of You Is a Devil

Extension Topic: Warfare and Constant Attack, King Philip’s and King William’s Wars

**Session 3**

Chapter V: The Wizard

Extension Topic: Magic and Witchcraft, a Historical and Anthropological Overview

**Session 4**

Chapter VI: A Suburb of Hell

Extension Topic: Government and Economy of Puritan Massachusetts
Session 5
Chapter VII: Now They Say There Is Above Seven Hundred in All
Chapter VIII: In These Hellish Meetings
Extension Topic: The Many Theories About Salem and How They’ve Changed

Session 6
Chapter IX: Our Case Is Extraordinary
Extension Topic: Salem Witch Trials in Literature

Session 7
Chapter X: Published to Prevent False Reports
Extension Topic: The Salem Witch Trials as Parable and Metaphor

Session 8
Chapter XI: That Dark and Mysterious Season
Chapter XII: A Long Trail of Miserable Consequences
Extension Topic: The Lessons of History