

HSTR 420: CAPITAL PUNISHMENT IN ENGLAND (Spring 2020)

Subject to change

Instructor: Simon Devereaux

Email: <devereau@uvic.ca>

Phone: (250) 721-7390



Course description:

This seminar examines the nature, purposes and extent of capital punishment in England from the Middle Ages to the present day. Topics include:

- the practice of hanging, drawing and quartering for traitors
- the idea of the gallows as a semi-sacred space
- growing critiques of execution that were gaining prominence after the mid-18th century
- the imposition of post-mortem dissection upon murderers between 1752 and 1834
- attempts to make capital punishment more effective and acceptable during the Revolutionary Era (1775-1815)
- the struggle to reduce capital punishment to the crime of murder alone (1815-1837)
- growing doubts about the morality and efficacy of public execution during the early Victorian era, ending in its abolition in (1837-1868)
- the final unravelling of capital punishment in postwar England (1945-1969)

Proposed assignments:

One short (ten-minute) verbal presentation	10%
One short (1,200-word) Seminar Paper	30%
One longer (1,600-word) Book Review	40%
Regular Seminar Attendance & Participation	20%

Proposed reading list:

Required readings posted on Course Spaces