



# SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

## 4<sup>th</sup> NWU-JGU Collaborative Seminar in HISTORY



### Witchcraft in Germany and Europe 15th–17th century



#### Abstract

At the request of students at the NWU, the lecture aims to give an overview of the witch persecutions in Europe – from the emergence of the first idea of a new, heretical sect of witches around 1430 to the mass persecutions between 1580 and 1650. Between 50,000 and 60,000 people were executed as witches in Europe in the early modern period.

The lecture will address how the idea of “witches” evolved and why not every woman using magic was supposed to be a witch. Most accused witches were women, but also men were persecuted. Calvinists were in some regions strongly against witchcraft trials, but on the other hand the prosecution was very strong in Calvinistic northern Norway and in Scotland. So, the causes and reasons for witch hunts are not mainly religious nor a question of sex. The reasons behind the witchcraft trials in general and the reasons for local outbreak will be addressed. That will lead us to popular but wrong myth about witch hunts nowadays.

#### Bionote

**Dr Regina Schäfer** studied History, Literature, Sociology and Journalism at the Universities of Mainz (Germany) and Dijon (France). She is Research Associate at the Department of Late Medieval History and Comparative Regional Studies at the Johannes Gutenberg Universität Mainz. Her main research interests are focussed on changes in the 14th to 16th century in rural, urban and noble contexts, taking gender issues into account. She was part of a team editing and translating the court records of the village Ingelheim (Ingelheimer Haderbücher). From 2020 to 2023 she was research fellow in the project “Language of Governmental Practice in Late Medieval Towns. Aberdeen and Augsburg in Comparison” lead by Jackson Armstrong and Jörg Rogge.

**Wednesday 20 Nov 2024**

17:00-18:00 South African time

16:00-17:00 German time

Join the Zoom meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/92569398315?pwd=PZXnrbuUkT6yy1CW1e1AqnOtFZ3s6O.1>

Passcode: 200958