HSTR 318: The Bloody Code: Crime & Society in England, 1660-1800, Spring 2020

Subject to change

Instructor: Andrea McKenzie

Email: mckenzie@uvic.ca

William Hogarth - Industry and Idleness, Plate 10; The Industrious 'Prentice Alderman of London, the Idle on brought before him & Impreach'd by his Accomplice

Course description:

A history of crime, society and the administration of criminal justice in early modern England, particularly from 1660-1800. This was the era of the so-called "Bloody Code", in which almost two hundred property offences were theoretically liable to the death penalty and the public hanging and other forms of violent public punishment were a regular feature of urban life. Topics and themes include the political and social backdrop to the capital code; contemporary views of criminality, poverty and sin; gender, class and judicial discretion. We shall chart the emergence of many elements of modern criminal administration and trial – policing, prosecution, lawyers and imprisonment– with a particular attention to the interrelationship between the law and its social context.

Proposed assignments:

20%: 2 X midterms = 10% each

30%: 5-6 double-spaced page (1200-1500 words) primary document analysis, based on a choice of several documents transcribed and edited by the instructor

50%: an open-book final examination on two essay topics provided in advance.

Proposed reading list:

Select documents and scholarly articles, all posted on Coursespaces.