This class explores practices of witch-hunting in Early Modern Europe. About 60,000 people, 85% of them women, perished in the European witch-hunt, mostly in the century between 1560 and 1660. We explore the particular set of circumstances that encouraged these “burning times” in the era of the Baroque. We explore precursors during the Middle Ages: heretics and Jews were accused of some to the same crimes—child murder and desecration of the Eucharist—that would later feature in the witch-hunts. By the mid-sixteenth century, however, prosecutors lost interest in heretics and Jews and focused their attention on old women as perpetrators of witchcraft. What were the gender stereotypes that led to this particular construction of the witch? The stereotypical witch varied geographically and changed over time. In some parts of Europe men were prosecuted as werewolves, as you see above. Children played a problematic and changing role in the witch-hunts. Witchcraft often served as an explanation for high infant mortality, and children featured prominently among the accusers of witches. But after 1680, children took on a new role: as perpetrators of witchcraft. We will explore the paradox that on the eve of the Enlightenment in the eighteenth century, the so-called “Age of the Child” that recognized childhood as a special stage of life that needed to be protected and nurtured, children were accused of—and executed—for witchcraft more than ever before. Finally, we ask when, how, and why the witch-hunts ended. People didn’t stop believing in witchcraft—why did they stop burning witches? (Or did they?)