Before the Modern: European Culture, Thought, and Politics (1500 to 1750)

The western world before the modern age was a place where kings were thought to have mystical powers, where faith in an omnipresent God coexisted with a belief in magic and witches, where slavery was seen as perfectly natural, where Jews and lepers were viewed as untouchable, and where spectacles of execution drew thousands of spectators eager to watch human beings be put to death. Through a variety of cultural, philosophical, and political texts, we will explore how the people of pre-modern Europe made sense of their world, and how this world slowly began to disappear at the dawn of the modern age.