Mock Trial Exercise

Divide the class into groups of 4-5 students each. Groups should present an assigned witchcraft case to the class (acting as both prosecution and defense), and arguing for / against conviction. Assign each group to one of the following witchcraft cases at Salem:

Transcripts for John Proctor (executed)

Transcripts for Tituba (jailed, later freed)

Transcripts for Bridget Bishop (executed)

Transcripts for Susanna Martin (executed)

Transcripts for Deliverance Hobbs (confessed)

Additional transcripts available at University of Virginia's Salem Project

Student Instructions:

Step 1. Research / Prepare

Each group will present their assigned case to the class, relating it to the law at the time. In your discussion, you will lay out the appropriate context for the case, summarize the accusations and link the wrongdoing to the appropriate laws, and present an appropriate defense. You are responsible for presenting / arguing the case for and against conviction of the accused. What I will be looking for is a clear summary of the evidence against these women, a discussion of how that evidence relates to the corresponding law, and arguments both for and against conviction--i.e. either the evidence meets the standard of witchcraft presented by the law or it doesn't. If you're not sure about this part, that's ok. Use the other course materials (readings, lectures, etc.) to clarify the definition of witchcraft that the law gives--i.e. if the law says "charme or inchantment" then use your judgement (and other material presented in class) to explain what that would have meant to someone in the early modern world. Then argue that the testimony / evidence presented in the documents either meets that definition or not. Present both sides to the class and then let them decide. You may want to read ahead a little bit to help you better prepare for the presentation, since the following week's readings may be helpful for

context. Groups are strongly encouraged to make an appointment to meet with me outside of class to discuss their planning / preparation for the trial discussions.

Step 2. Present & Submit

Each group should spend at least 15 but no more than 30 minutes presenting their assigned case before we break for discussion. You may use notes during the presentation (no need to memorize your "lines", but you should adequately practice / rehearse your parts so the presentation runs smoothly). Groups may format the presentation however you'd like-- you might want to put together a summary of the evidence, or argue it like a case in court, or present a skit, etc. Be creative-- that part is up to you.

On the day before your presentation, the group will submit a copy of any script, notes, powerpoint, or other materials you use to get you through the presentation, so I can have it for reference when figuring out the grade. In addition to submitting your presentation materials, the group will also need to turn in a one-page summary of each group member's contributions to the project, due on the day of the presentation (failure to do so will result in an automatic 5pt deduction from the project grade). Please refer to the attached grading rubric for additional criteria to consider when preparing your presentations.

Step 3. Reflect

Finally, each group member should prepare a brief evaluation (i.e. no more than one page) of the group activity. What went well? What could have been improved? Did everyone do their fair share? Explain. This brief evaluation is due one week after the trial presentation.

If, for any reason, you are having difficulties with your group members, I trust that you will attempt to try to work things out for yourselves before coming to me to intervene. However, I am also sensitive to the fact that some group members may not contribute equally to the final product. I invite any student who has concerns about such matters to reach out to me personally to discuss further.

Formatting Requirements for Writing Assignments

Your essays should be typed with all the margins set to one-inch. Double space the body of the paper only (not the headings and title). Please use Times New-Roman 12-point font size. Include your name, class, and section number in the heading, justified to the left margin. You will be graded on both the style and content of your papers; thus, please be sure to proofread for correct grammar and spelling. Cite every source in Chicago or MLA Style.

Grading Rubric for Trial Activities (25pts total)

Presentation of the Case documents (15pts)

· Clear and thorough summary of the different components of the documents assigned (accusations, testimony of witnesses, examinations of the accused, etc.)

· Presentation demonstrates an active and critical engagement with the sources

· Case evidence is related to the corresponding law in a clear and thoughtful manner

· Arguments For and Against Conviction are clearly presented

· Presentation demonstrates an adequate understanding of the evidence and issues at hand

Relation to Course Material (5pts)

· Presentation demonstrates adequate understanding of the course themes covered thus far

· Presentation relates the case evidence to relevant contexts as presented in course readings, lectures, and discussion

· Relation to course material is completed in a clear and thoughtful manner

Organization / Aesthetics (5pts)

· Presentation displays creativity in communicating the case(s)

· Presentation is engaging / interesting overall

· Group members are well-prepared for the presentation, written materials submitted

· Presentation is organized logically, and flows easily between segments / components

· Group members display an appropriately academic demeanor