Unit Description
The Black Death killed around 40% of the population of England in 1348-9, and the return of plague at intervals over the following decades prevented a recovery from this demographic calamity. What were the immediate and longer term consequences of this sudden catastrophe for the survivors? This unit attempts to answer this question with reference to different elements of English society – peasants, town-dwellers, clergy, landed nobility, and the crown itself. All had to adapt to massive economic change and the social consequences that flowed therefrom. As the appearance of heresy in the shape of the Lollards, of popular unrest in the form of the Peasants’ Revolt, and of political fracture in the form of the deposition of Richard II demonstrated, such adaptation in late fourteenth-century England was traumatic. And always there was war with France and Scotland: rarely has England experienced a more turbulent, formative half-century in its long history.

Contact Hours and Mode of Teaching:
10 x 2-hour seminars

Methods of Assessment:
1 x 2 hour exam (100%)

Essential Reading
R. R. Davies, Lords and Lordship in the British Isles in the Late Middle Ages, ed. B. Smith (Oxford, 2009)
R. Horrox, The Black Death (Manchester, 1994)

Further Information
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