

HIST 483/583, Winter 2016

New World Pirates

Professor Robert Haskett

T-Th, 10:00-11:20

185 Lillis, CRN 26473/26474

***To the mast nail our flag! It is dark as the grave,
Or the death which it bears while it sweeps o'er the wave;
Let our deck clear for action, our guns be prepared;
Be the boarding-axe sharpened, the scimitar bared!***

The Pirates Own Book (1844), 432.

Buried treasure, X marks the spot, bottles of rum, peg legs, the Jolly Roger, a parrot squawking "Pieces of Eight, Pieces of Eight!"; these are all stereotyped images of pirates. In HIST 483/583 we'll study the romance of piracy that continues to captivate us, draws us to movies, video games, and amusement park rides. Yet in light of the obvious brutality of twenty-first-century Indian Ocean piracy, we need to add a dose of reality to the story of the "great age of piracy" as it played out in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Americas. So we'll study the whys and wherefores of the pirates we know well from fiction and adventure stories, but we'll spend even more time learning about the origins of piracy, the realities of their lives around the edges of Spanish America, their surprising ethnic and gender diversity, and their very real impact on the global economy. It may turn out that the pirates following Henry Morgan out of Jamaica in the seventeenth century were a lot more like today's Somali corsairs than Captain Jack Sparrow or Blackbeard's Ghost.

The expected learning outcomes for "New World Pirates" are as straightforward as a broadside from Blackbeard's *Queen Anne's Revenge*:

- Students will learn how and why piracy and swashbuckling pirate heroes, anti-heroes, and heroines have had a definite allure over the years, particularly in popular culture, despite the grim realities of actual buccaneering in world history;
- Students will grapple with materials written by pirates, by the victims of pirates, and by professional scholars to gain an understanding of those grim realities;
- Students will come to understand how and why piracy grew out of the social, economic, and political realities of the times under study (an understanding that is applicable to developing better insights into piracy as it exists today);
- Students will learn how pirate plundering in Spanish America reacted to, and influenced that empire's colonies in the Caribbean and on the mainlands of North and South America;
- Students will learn how "New World" piracy fits into a greater world historical context of piracy.

HIST 483 will fulfill History before 1800 and either Latin American or World field credits for the History major, and History before 1800 and Non-US/Europe credits for the History minor.

Required Reading: Books and the Pirate Fiction Reader

Four of the following books are available for purchase at the Duck Store. There are also copies held on reserve for our course in the Knight Library. The Reader and a selection of transcribed primary documents are available online through our Canvas website (the latter will be posted in the "Modules" section of our Canvas site as the course progresses).

Cordingly, David. *Under the Black Flag: The Romance and Reality of Life Among the Pirates*. 1996.

Esquemeling, John. *The Buccaneers of America: In the Original English Translation of 1684*. 2007.

Johnson, Charles. *A General History of the Robberies & Murders of the Most Notorious Pirates*. 2010.

Lane, Kris E. *Pillaging the Empire: Piracy in the Americas, 1500-1750 (Second Edition)*. 2016. [The first edition of 1998 is still available and is the edition owned by the Knight Library; page numbers for assignments in this earlier edition are found in parentheses in the Course Calendar, below).

"The Romance of Piracy in Literature: A Reader for HIST 483/583" (found in the "Pages" section of this Canvas site).

I also have placed copies of a number of additional books on reserve in the Knight library for our course; you'll find them keyed into the syllabus as "Recommended Reading." I've also noticed that the Smith Family Bookstore on 13th has a fair number of used books about piracy for sale, and that the Eugene Public Library has some unique works on this subject on its shelves, too (a selected bibliography of these EPL book and resources can be found in the "Pages" section of this Canvas site, as can a bibliography of key works in the UO Knight Library).

Papers

Undergraduates will write three papers for this course. The first one is a take-home midterm in which you will be asked to review the "background" part of the course. You'll be asked to share your understanding of the myths, romance, and realities of piracy as it emerged around the world from ancient times up to roughly the time of the Spanish occupation of the Caribbean, Mexico, and much of South America. This take-home exam paper is due in class on **Thursday, January 28** and is worth **25%** of your course grade. Pointers for how to prepare for this exam can be found in the "Assignments" feature of this Canvas site.

The second paper, due on **Thursday, February 18**, is also a kind of take-home exam. You'll be asked to grapple with one or more related questions related to the history of piracy in the New World, particularly as it preyed on Spanish America in the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries. In-class materials and resources, as well as assigned readings, will be the principal sources for this paper. More details will be found at the appropriate time in the "Assignments" section of the Canvas site. This paper is worth **30%** of your course grade.

The third paper, and the last written assignment for the term, will be due during finals week on **Tuesday, March 15**. This paper replaces a final exam. This time your focus will be on the social history of New World piracy. Aside from required course materials and information from relevant lectures presented during "Part III" of the course (see below), you will be asked to do a certain amount of outside research for this paper. You'll also be given a somewhat freer reign to develop a topic of particular interest to you. I'll be open to a certain amount of creativity in your approaches and the form this paper will take. We'll discuss all of this in class, and you find more detailed instructions at the appropriate time in the "Assignments" section of the Blackboard site. For undergraduates, the third paper is worth **35%** of your course grade. It's not too early to begin thinking about what you might be interested in exploring for this paper; take a look in the "Course Calendar" at

the topics will be covering in Part III, as well as the subjects covered in your assigned reading for this portion of the class. And don't hesitate to discuss your ideas with me.

Graduate students will write all of these papers, but there is an additional written assignment for them. You are to choose one of the books from the "Recommended" section of the course bibliography and write a scholarly book review of it. This paper is due on a "sliding scale," but **should be received by the end of week 8 at the latest**. More details will be found in the "Assignments" section of the Canvas site. I also expect graduate students to be regular visitors to my office hours so that we can discuss readings and other issues in more depth, and with more regularity. Assignment grade percentages for graduate students can be found below.

Attendance and Participation

Since we're covering a lot of ground in terms of time, space, and topics, it is essential that you attend class regularly, and that you are willing to participate as an engaged citizen of the course. I hope that we'll have time for at least short discussions in most class meetings. For this reason, your attendance and participation is worth **10%** of the course grade.

Grading Summary

For undergraduates: Attendance & Participation = **10%**; Midterm = **25%**; First Paper = **30%**; Final Paper = **35%**

For graduate students: Attendance & Participation = **10%**; First Paper = **20%**; Second Paper = **20%**; Book Review = 15%; Final Paper = **35%**

Grading is based on a 100-point scale (note this is a little different from the generic scale used by Canvas): 100-93 = A, 92-90 = A-, 89-87 = B+, 86-83 = B, 82-80 = B-, 79-77 = C+, 76-73 = C, 72-70 = C-, 69-67 = D+, 66-63 = D, 62-60 = D-, 59 or less = F

Warning: Written work received after the end of the class meeting in which it

is due, and up to 5:00 p.m. the same day, will be assessed a fine of 3 points. After this, an additional fine of 5 points a day (including weekends) will be assessed. No written comments will be made by the professor on late work. Protect yourself from computer crashes by making backup copies of all your work, by saving your work regularly, etc. Students missing required work at the end of the quarter will be given a grade of "F" unless prior arrangements have been made for an incomplete. So, mates, avoid being keel hauled like this by getting your work in on time!

Some Articles for Classroom Behavior

1. Please turn off your cell phones and put them away in your backpacks, bags, etc., during class meetings.
2. Laptops may only be used by permission. Those who use laptops must sit in the first two rows of the classroom. It is assumed that you will use your laptops for note taking, only. Otherwise, we will rarely if ever have occasion to go online for anything related to the course during class meetings. Students found to be surfing the web, doing email, or similar things on their computers unrelated to the course while HIST 483/583 is in session will be asked to walk the plank, er, to leave the classroom for the rest of that day's meeting, and will be barred from bringing laptops into the classroom for the balance of the quarter.
3. Let me know if you need to leave class early for any reason. Otherwise, please do not leave and the classroom during our sessions, as this is disruptive.

Course Calendar

Week 1

Part I: The Romance and Roots of Piracy

January

T 5 An Introduction to the Course -- Reading: Cordingly, *Under the Black Flag*, "Introduction;" Johnson, *A General History*, D. Cordingly's "Introduction;" Lane, *Pillaging the Empire*, "A Chronology of Early Modern Piracy, xviii-xx (xi-xii);" "Introduction," 1-5 (3-9)

Th 7 The Romance of Piracy in Popular Culture --

Reading: Cordingly, *Under the Black Flag*. "Wooden Legs and Parrots;" Johnson, *A General History*, Johnson's "Introduction;" Pirate Reader, 1-34

Week 2

T 12 The Romance of Piracy, cont. -- Reading: Johnson, *A General History*, "The Life of Captain Teach;" Pirate Reader, 35-51

Th 14 Critiquing Pirates in Film and Literature, Screening Clips, and a Discussion -- Reading:

Cordingly, *Under the Black Flag*, "Sloops, Schooners, and Pirate Films;" Pirate Reader, 52-68; A Pirate Filmography; Digital Resources (all three in the "Pages" section of our Canvas site)

Week 3

T 19 The Emergence of "Real" Pirates from Ancient Times --

Reading: Complete assigned reading from the first two weeks -- the in-class presentation is your "reading" for this day, so take careful notes, as you'll be responsible for this material in the first paper

Th 21 The Emergence of "Real" Pirates from Ancient Times, cont. --

Reading: Begin Lane, *Pillaging the Empire*, 7-88 (11-95)

Week 4

T 26 Discussion and Review: The Myths and Early Realities of

Piracy Around the World -- Reading: Have all reading assigned through the 21st completed by this date

Part II: New World Piracy: A Critical Narrative History

Th 28 The Age of Sir Francis Drake -- Reading: Cordingly, *Under the Black Flag*, "Plundering the Treasure Ports;" Lane, *Pillaging the Empire*, cont. & complete pp. 7-88 (11-95)

First Paper Due in Class: The Romance Versus the Realities of Piracy

Week 5

February

T 2 The Buccaneers of Tortuga Island -- Reading: Esquemeling, *The Buccaneers of America*, 53-57, 62-119 (or Part 1, Chapters VI and VII, beginning the latter with the adventures of Pierre Francois, and Part 2, Chapters I-III); Lane, *Pillaging the Empire*, 89-121 (96-102)

Th 4 The "Great Age" of Piracy -- Reading: Cordingly, *Under the Black Flag*, "Sir Henry Morgan;" "Pirate Islands and other Haunts;" Esquemeling, *The Buccaneers of America*, 120-181 (or Part 2, Chapters IV-VII); Lane, *Pillaging the Empire*, 122-151 (102-130)

Week 6

T 9 The "Great Age" of Piracy, cont. -- Reading: Cordingly, *Under the Black Flag*, "Into Action Under the Black Flag;" Esquemeling, *The Buccaneers of America*, 183-272 (or Part 3, Chapters I-X); Lane, *Pillaging the Empire*, 152-175 (131-163)

Th 11 Piracy Under Attack in the Eighteenth Century --

Reading: Cordingly, *Under the Black Flag*, "Hunting Down the Pirates;" "Trials, Executions, and Hanging in Chains;" Johnson, *General History*, "The Life of Captain Martel;" "The Life of Captain Vane;" "The Life of Captain Antis;" "An Abstract of Law;" Lane, *Pillaging the Empire*, 176-196 (164-192)

Week 7

T 16 Piracy and Its Effects on the Spanish Empire, with a Discussion -- Reading: Johnson, *General History*, "The Life of Captain

Davis;" "The Life of Captain Roberts" -- Optional Reading, for real enthusiasts: Esquemeling, *The Buccaneers of America*, Part 4, "The Dangerous Voyage and Bold Attempts of Captain Bartholomew Sharp, and Others"

Part III: A Social History of Piracy

Th 18 Pirate Life -- Reading: Cordingly, *Under the Black Flag*, "Storms, Shipwrecks, and Life at Sea;" Johnson, *General History*, "The Life of Major Bonnet;" "The Life of Captain Worley;" "The Life of Captain Lowther;" "The Life of Captain Low;" Lane, *Pillaging the Empire*, 197-208 (193-197)

Second Paper Due in Class – Piracy in the New World

Week 8

T 23 Pirate Life, cont., with a Discussion --

Reading: Cordingly, *Under the Black Flag*, "Torture, Violence, and Marooning;" Esquemeling, *The Buccaneers of America*, 1-52, 58-62 (or Part 1, Chapters I-V; VII, the latter up to the exploits of Pierre Francois); Johnson, *General History*, "The Life of Captain Evans;" "The Life of Captain Phillips;" "The Life of Captain Spriggs;" "The Life of Captain Gow"

Th 25 Invisible Buccaneers: Race, Gender, and Piracy --

Reading: Johnson, *General History*, "The Life of Captain Rackham;" "The Life of Mary Read;" "The Life of Anne Bonny;" Pirate Reader, 69-92

Week 9

March

T 1 Invisible Buccaneers: Race, Gender, and Piracy, cont. --

Reading: Cordingly, *Under the Black Flag*, "Women Pirates and Pirates' Women;" Pirate Reader, 92-108

Th 3 Piracy and the Colonial World, with a Discussion --

Reading: Cordingly, *Under the Black Flag*, "Captain Kidd and Buried Treasure;" Johnson, *General History*, "The Life of Captain Avery;" "The Life of Captain England;" "The Life of Captain Kidd;" "An Account of the Piracies and Murders Committed by Philip Roche, etc."

Week 10

Part IV: Wrapping Up -- A Lively Dead Week

T 8 Performing Piracy: A Forgotten Play based on *Treasure Island*

Th 10 Final Discussion and Review -- Reading: Cordingly, *Under the Black Flag*, "Afterword: The Romance of Piracy;" Lane, *Pillaging the Empire*, 209-230 (198-204); and complete all assigned reading by this class meeting

Finals Week

T 15 Final Papers due by 5:00 – A Social History of Piracy -- turn your papers in at 355 Mckenzie Hall