Overview

From Robert Louis Stevenson’s Treasure Island to Disney’s Pirates of the Caribbean, pirates have had an enduring place in the Western world for quite some time. Naturally, the truth of figures like Henry Morgan and Anne Bonny is far more complex than the swashbuckling pirates of fiction. Nevertheless, many of us still identify with them. Moreover, we are just as likely to imagine them as Robin Hood-esque heroes as sadistic villains. Unsurprisingly, the truth lies somewhere in the middle.

This course will engage with three major topics. First, we will explore the role pirates have played in popular culture and why. What do these figures represent in different places and times? How are they imagined or portrayed? Second, we will learn about the impact pirates have had on the development of the modern world prior to the USA becoming a naval power. Please note that for the purposes of this course, “modern” means the “Modern Era,” a period spanning from European contact with the Americas to the 21st century: ie, roughly 1500 to today. What sorts of people became pirates? Why? Moreover, what sort of government, if any, was exercised on pirate ships? Finally, we will delve into contemporary piracy, both maritime and online. What are some similarities and differences between piracy during its Golden Age and today’s pirates? Moreover, can we consider the internet – as of this writing – the “new high seas?”

Readings

In an effort to keep costs down, there are no textbooks assigned for this course. All readings will be posted online under "Files." You are expected to keep up with the readings.

Canvas
ANTH 114 is an online course, which means that you will have to familiarize yourself with Canvas, UO’s online system. Your GEs and I will be posting announcements, assignments, instructions, lectures, this syllabus, feedback, grades – only visible to you – on Canvas. You have automatically been entered as a user for ANTH 114’s Canvas site, and can access it from the UO homepage. It is important that you acquaint yourself with Canvas early and do not wait until the last minute to complete online assignments. Please note that barring a documented, campus-wide blackout I will not accept “technical difficulties” as an excuse.

Participation

In order to receive your points per week, you must post 1 question and 2 answers relevant to our class subject matter per week under "Discussions." You may also be asked to respond to prompts given by your instructor and GEs. There will be a Sunday 11:59 PM deadline for submissions in your community each week. Links to an external site.

Contacting Me

I am available via email at jgt@uoregon.edu. You are much more likely to get a prompt response from me if you email me rather than contact me through Canvas. I will make every effort to respond within 48 hours. If I do not, feel free to email me again.

When emailing an instructor or GE, it is wise to put the course number in the subject line, along with the gist of why you’re emailing them. It’s also good form to begin emails to instructors/professors or GEs with a greeting and their name. For example, rather than “hey” or “sup,” try opening your email to me with “Hi Jonathan.” “Hi Jon” is also acceptable in a pinch (for me, obviously; please address GEs by their actual names). This is not me just being lofty; for those of you embarking upon an academic or professional career, it’s worth noting that oftentimes first impressions are created by email exchanges. An intro-level undergraduate course is a good place to practice this.

Grade Breakdown

Participation: 20 points, see above.
Midterm Essay: 35 points, covers material from the first five weeks of the term.

Final Exam: 35 points, comprehensive. It will include a choice of two essay questions.

Week 3 & Week 7 Quizzes: 10 points, 5 each. Can be taken in one sitting any time during those weeks.

The Midterm prompt will be posted on Canvas at the beginning of Week 5. The Final Exam prompt will be posted at the beginning of Finals Week. In each case, you will have until Friday at 11:59PM to complete each essay.

Standards

While I encourage debate and even disagreement in my classes, I expect that you treat everyone with respect. Discussion posts should be free from personal insults and invective. I will also not tolerate hate speech or casual sexism, racism, homophobia, etc.

Late Work and Incompletes

You will have a full week to complete assignments in this course. Therefore, I will not grant extensions unless (a) you inform the GE and myself that you are ill – a doctor’s note is required – or (b) a documentable emergency has come up. Again, “technical difficulties” is not an excuse unless there is a campus-wide blackout.

Students with Documentable Disabilities

Please inform your GEs and I as soon as possible if you have a documentable disability. It is important you do so as early in the term as possible. We will accommodate you.

Life Happens

Your GEs and I expect quality work from you, but we’re also aware that life happens, sometimes at the worst possible time. The grades and feedback we give you are not judgments about your personally, but recommendations on improvement both in this class and beyond. If the term really starts getting to you, the University Counseling Center is a valuable resource.
Academic Honesty

Students at the UO are expected to act with academic honesty. It is the official policy of the University of Oregon that all acts of alleged academic dishonesty by students be reported to the Director of Student Conduct and Community Standards in the Office of Student Life. The two most prevalent forms of academic dishonesty are cheating and plagiarism.

Cheating: The UO defines cheating as: “an act of deception by which a student misrepresents or misleadingly demonstrates that he or she has mastered information on an academic exercise that he or she has not mastered, including the giving or receiving of unauthorized help in an academic exercise. Examples include, but are not limited to: 1. copying from another student’s test paper, computer program, project, product, or performance; 2. collaborating without authority or allowing another student to copy one’s work in a test situation; 3. using the course textbook or other material not authorized for use during a test; 4. using unauthorized materials during a test; for example, notes, formula lists, cues on a computer, photographs, symbolic representations, and notes written on clothing; 5. resubmitting substantially the same work that was produced for another assignment without the knowledge and permission of the instructor; 6. taking a test for someone else or permitting someone else to take a test for you.”

Plagiarism: The UO states that, “Plagiarism is the inclusion of someone else’s product, words, ideas, or data as one’s own work. When a student submits work for credit that includes the product, words, ideas, or data of others, the source must be acknowledged by the use of complete, accurate, and specific references, such as footnotes. Expectations may vary slightly among disciplines. By placing one’s name on work submitted for credit, the student certifies the originality of all work not otherwise identified by appropriate acknowledgements. On written assignments, if verbatim statements are included, the statements must be enclosed by quotation marks or set off from regular text as indented extracts. A student will avoid being charged with plagiarism if there is an acknowledgement of indebtedness. Indebtedness must be acknowledged whenever: 1. one quotes another person’s actual words or replicates all or part of another’s product; 2. one uses another person’s ideas, opinions, work, data, or theories, even if they are completely paraphrased in one’s own words; 3. one borrows facts, statistics, or other illustrative materials—unless the information is common knowledge.”

Academic Outcomes
This class aims to produce an understanding of both the geopolitical and historical origins of piracy in a variety of regions and time periods. The class will develop critical thinking skills, and encourage the student to apply historical and anthropological knowledge to current issues in global piracy, both at sea and with intellectual property. Students will be asked to demonstrate their knowledge in a series of exams and also in discussions groups, both online and in class.

Reading List

**Week One: Course Introduction, Pirates in Pop Culture**

- Cordingly: “Sloops, Schooners, and Pirate Films” and “Afterward: The Romance of Piracy”
- Dawdy and Bonni: “Towards a General Theory of Piracy”

**Week Two: The M. O. of Piracy**

- Leeson: “The Invisible Hook”
- Bromley in Pennell: “Outlaws at Sea, 1660-1720”
- Hobsbawm: “What is Social Banditry?” and “Who becomes a Bandit?”

**Week Three: Pirates and the State**

- Perotin-Dumon in Pennell: “The Pirate and the Emperor”
- Rediker: Chapters 1-3 of “Villains of all Nations”
- Gaynor: “Piracy in the Offing”

**Week Four: Gender and Sexuality among Pirates**

- Rediker: “The Women Pirates” (Ch. 6 of “Villains”)
- Murray in Pennell: “Cheng I Sao in Fact and Fiction” (“The Practice of Homosexuality among the Pirates of late 18th and early 19th Century China” highly recommended)
- Appleby in Pennell: “Women and Piracy in Ireland”
- Braceywell in Pennell: “Women among the Uskoks of Senj”
- Cordingly: “Women Pirates and Pirate’s Women” (recommended)

**Week Five: Piracy, Smuggling, and Enslavement**

- Karras: “It’s not Pirates!”
- Head: “Slave Smuggling by Foreign Privateers”
- Kinkor in Pennell: “Black Men under the Black Flag”

**Week Six: Pirate Life**

- Cordingly: Chs 5-8 of “Under the Black Flag”
**Week Seven: Pirates in Historical Perspective**

- Anderson in Pennell: “Piracy and World History”
- Starkey in Pennell: “Pirates and Markets”
- Kert in Starkey: “Cruising in Colonial Waters”
- Starkey in Pennell: “The Origins and Regulation of 18th Century British Privateering” (recommended)

**Week Eight: Return to De-Stabilization: Contemporary Piracy**

- Tharoor: “How Somalia’s Fishermen became Pirates” (Time Magazine)
- Anderson: “It’s a Pirate’s Life for Some”
- Galvin: “Caribbean Piracies/Social Mobilities”

**Week Nine: The Hacker Ethic and the New Piracy**

- Jordan: “Hacking and Power”

**Week Ten: Hacktivism: Hacking and State Authority**

- Grossman: “The Code War” (Time Magazine)
- Olson: “The Raid” and “The Revolutionary”

Readings marked “recommended” are not required, but you are highly encouraged to read them as they provide additional context for the concepts under study.