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.

[Please note that this syllabus and the course itself is still under construction. I expect that the general structure of the course will remain the same, but I’m still tinkering with several things right now, including the development of the course website.]

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 399 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 399 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.

Books

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 is available online through our course website.


“The Romance of Piracy in Literature: A Reader for HIST 399” (available through the course website).

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 on our course website).

**Exam and Papers**

Precise Details TBA

**Grading Summary**

Midterm =; First Paper = ; Final Paper =

Grading is based on a 100-point scale: 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 399 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**

**March**
- T  31  An Introduction to the Course

**April**
- Th  2  The Romance of Piracy in Popular Culture
- T    7  The Romance of Piracy, cont.
- Th  9  Critiquing Pirates in Film and Literature
- T  14  The Emergence of “Real” Pirates from Ancient Times
- Th  16  Pirates in East Asia: A Guest Lecture by Erik Glowark
- T  21  In-Class Essay Test: The Romance Versus the Realities of Piracy
- Th  23  A Short History of New World Pirates: The Age of Sir Francis Drake
- T  28  The Buccaneers of Tortuga Island
- Th  30  The “Great Age” of Piracy

**May**
- T  5  The “Great Age” of Piracy, cont.
- Th  7  Piracy Under Attack in the Eighteenth Century
- T  12  Piracy and Its Effects on the Spanish Empire
- Th  14  New World Piracy and the Global Economy

*Paper Due in Class*
T 19  Pirate Life

Th 21  Pirate Life, cont., with a Discussion

T 26  Invisible Buccaneers Race, Gender, and Piracy

Th 28  Invisible Buccaneers Race, Gender, and Piracy, cont., with a Discussion

June
T  2  Performing Piracy: A Forgotten Play based on *Treasure Island*

Th  4  Final Discussion and Review

Finals Week
Th 11  Final Papers due by 5:00; turn them in at 355 McKenzie Hall