Anthropology of Pirates and Piracy
ANTH 114
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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
Since Packback, ANTH 114’s discussion platform has an associated fee, I have made every effort to keep costs down. There is only one book assigned, C. R. Pennell’s *Bandits at Sea: A Pirate’s Reader* (New York: New York University Press, 2001) available for purchase at the Duck Store. Other book chapters and articles will be posted on Canvas.

Canvas
ANTH 114 is an online course, which means that you will have to familiarize yourself with Canvas, UO’s online system. Your GE 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.

**Packback**

A major component of your final grade will be participation. In order to facilitate productive and lively discussion, we will be using the Packback Questions platform. Packback Questions is an online curiosity community where you are encouraged to be as curious as possible. You will ask deep questions about how what we’re studying relates to life and the real world. **Participation constitutes 20 points out of a total possible 100.** Exemplary participation may count towards extra credit.

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

Before you start posting, be sure to read the [Community Guidelines](https://Packback.co/questions) found in the tutorial on Packback. If your post doesn’t follow the Packback Community Guidelines, there is a chance it will be removed and you won’t receive points for that post. For example, closed ended aka “yes/no” questions will not receive credit, or posts which include slurs.

**To start posting on Packback Questions:**

1. Navigate to [https://Packback.co/questions](https://Packback.co/questions) and click “Register as a new student”. Note: If you already have an account on Packback you can login with your credentials.

2. Make sure to register with your SCHOOL email address and real first name and last name.

3. Enter our class community’s access code into the “Join a new Community” module on your dashboard.
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Our Community access code: 7EF9477F-9920-A257-6EFC-4AD213A9C61C

4. Follow the instructions on your screen to finish your registration.

For a brief introduction to Packback Questions and why we are using it in class, watch this video: vimeo.com/packback/Welcome-to-Packback-Questions

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 or Packback. 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.

Grade Breakdown

Participation: 20 points, see above under “Packback.”

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

Final Essay: 35 points, covers material from the remaining five weeks of the term.

Week 3 & Week 7 Quizzes: 10 points, 5 each.

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. Late submissions will have a full letter grade deducted for every day they are late.

Students with Documentable Disabilities
Please inform your GE 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 GE 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
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work in a test situation; 3. using the course textbook or other material not authorized for
4 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”
- Pennell: “Introduction” in Bandits at Sea
- Dawdy and Bonni: “Towards a General Theory of Piracy”
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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”
• Bracewell 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”
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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.