

Trent University

## **HISTORY 4951**

### **EARLY MODERN PIRACY**

**2008-2009**

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#### **INTRODUCTION**

This course examines two hundred years of maritime depredations from the first raid of a Spanish treasure fleet in 1523 to the suppression of piracy in 1726 with an emphasis on the last ten years of pirate activity. Using primary sources as well as accounts of modern historians, the course will explore the world of early modern piracy and the lives of some notable marauders such as Henry Avery, William Kidd, and Bartholomew Roberts. Social, economic, political, and cultural aspects of piracy will be addressed. In addition, this course will look closely at the conditions which fostered piracy and those which led to its suppression. It is intended to give students a critical understanding of past developments and an insight into the representations of one of the most popular historical themes in the media.

## ORGANIZATION

Time and location: Wednesday, 19:00-20:50 DNA B106

### Course format

The course focuses on students' research projects in the history of early modern piracy.

In the first section of the seminar recent historiography of early modern piracy will be examined. The students are expected to read certain texts in Pennell's *Pirates Reader* and discuss the contents in class. Furthermore, students must write a book review. After that they will focus on their individual research projects. Students are encouraged to discuss their work with the instructor during office hours.

## EVALUATION

First term:

Seminar participation 20%

Book review 20%

Second term:

Research paper draft 15%

Seminar presentation 15%

Research paper final version 30%

### Deadlines

October 29: Book review

January 14: Research paper draft

March 30: Research paper final version

late penalty 5% per day

## SEMINAR SCHEDULE

September 10: Introduction and definitions

September 17: Historical overview I

Reading: C.R. Pennell, "Introduction," in *Bandits at Sea*, pp. 3-24; Anne Pérotin-Dumon, "The Pirate and the Emperor," in *Bandits at Sea*, pp. 25-54; Robert C. Ritchie, *Captain Kidd and the War against the Pirates* (Cambridge, Mass., 1986), pp. 1-26

September 24: Historical overview II

Reading: J.S. Bromley, "Outlaws at Sea, 1660-1720," in *Bandits at Sea*, pp. 169-194; B.R. Burg, "The Buccaneers Community," in *Bandits at Sea*, pp. 211-43; Nuala Zahedieh, "'A Frugal, Prudential, and Hopeful Trade': Privateering in Jamaica, 1655-89," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 18 (1990), pp. 145-68

October 1: Historical overview III

Reading: Marcus Rediker, "The Seaman as Pirate," in *Bandits at Sea*, pp. 139-68; Kenneth J. Kinkor, "Black Men under the Black Flag," in *Bandits at Sea*, pp. 195-210

October 8: Historical overview IV

Reading: Lauren Benton, "Legal Spaces of Empire: Piracy and the Origins of Ocean Regionalism," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 47 (2005), pp. 700-24; Peter T. Leeson, "An-arrgh-chy: The Law and Economics of Pirate Organization," *Journal of Political Economy* 115 (2007), pp. 1049-94

October 15: TBA

November 12: Discussion of secondary literature

November 19: Discussion of secondary literature

November 26: Working with primary sources

December 3: TBA

March 11: Research paper presentations

March 18: Research paper presentations

March 25: Research paper presentations

## REQUIREMENTS

The students should have read Peter Earle's *Pirate Wars* (London, 2003), pp. 89-208 at the beginning of the course. In addition, they are expected to read certain texts in C.R. Pennell's *Bandits at Sea: A Pirates Reader* (New York, 2001) in the first weeks of the semester.

### Seminar Participation

All students must come to ten seminars including the ones in which their own work will be discussed. There will be a penalty of 10 % off the participation mark for each unexcused absence.

All students should come prepared and contribute actively and constructively to discussions.

### Book review

By September 17 each student will have to choose a recent book on early modern piracy for a review. The review should be about 1000 words long. Half of the text must consist of a summary. The use of passive voice is not allowed. The book reviews are due on Wednesday, October 29.

### Research project

After the students have submitted their book reviews, they choose a research project, which is usually based on primary sources provided by the instructor or accessible online. The manuscript should be about 5000 words long. A draft of the research paper is due at the beginning of the second term. Shortly thereafter the corrected and annotated manuscript will be returned to the students. Note that comments will primarily deal with major problems and structural issues. After that the students have the opportunity to revise and improve their manuscripts. In March each student is expected to give a brief presentation of his or her research project.

Assignments must be handed in by the required date. There will be a late penalty of 5% per day.

### Academic dishonesty and plagiarism

Academic dishonesty, which includes plagiarism and cheating, is an extremely serious academic offence and carries penalties varying from failure in an assignment to suspension from the university. Definitions, penalties, and procedures for dealing with plagiarism and cheating are set out in Trent University's Academic Dishonesty Policy which is printed in the University Calendar and on the university web site at <[http://www.trentu.ca/deansoffice/policies\\_dishonesty.php](http://www.trentu.ca/deansoffice/policies_dishonesty.php)>

Upon request, students must be ready to present their research notes and explain their work to the instructor.

#### Access to Instruction

It is Trent University's intent to create an inclusive learning environment. If a student has a disability and/or health consideration and feels that he/she may need accommodations to succeed in this course, the student should contact the Disability Services Office (BL Suite 109, Tel.: 748-1281, [disabilityservices@trentu.ca](mailto:disabilityservices@trentu.ca)) as soon as possible.