

HIS 200

Gateway Seminar:

PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN

Spring 2019 Tu Th 12:30-1:45 Rush Rhees 456 Office Hours: Wed. 1 pm-3 pm or by appt.



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Overview: This gateway research seminar introduces history majors to historical research, debate, and writing using piracy in the early modern Atlantic world as a common topic for inquiry. Over the semester, students will learn about history as an academic discipline and how to study history at a college level. You will master the skills of 1) defining and developing a research topic, 2) critically evaluating existing historical scholarship, 3) understanding different historians' theoretical and methodological approaches, 4) identifying, evaluating and interpreting relevant primary and secondary sources (including non-documentary evidence), 5) considering perspective and bias present in historical evidence and scholarship, and 6) constructing historical arguments and explanations orally and in written work. By the end of the semester, each student will write a well-crafted 3,000-word (10- to 12-page) research paper that explores some aspect of early modern piracy, following standard conventions for historical writing. The skills you learn in this seminar will provide a firm foundation to build upon in the subsequent courses you take here at the University of Rochester and especially ready you to take HIS 200- and 300-level W seminars.

Organization: This course initiates an open-ended conversation about history, what historians do, and how they do it. It introduces history as a continuing debate between scholarly interpreters, rather than as a set and stable script about what happened in the past. Studying piracy is merely a means to the end of understanding history as a process and a discipline. In most weeks, our discussions will focus on a series of questions for you to consider and debate, using either material from short assignments or assigned readings. While ostensibly focused on aspects of piracy, your written work will also develop and display skills critical to historical understanding and analysis. Our classroom is also your arena for raising questions generally about academia, liberal arts, and the purpose of history in modern society. At heart, this seminar is a collaborative venture in which we will all hopefully come to a better understanding of the past through teaching each other.

Piracy – defined loosely as unsanctioned theft in a maritime context – is probably older than recorded history and occurred in most periods of the past, as well as in our present world. Because of my scholarly focus on maritime history in the early modern Atlantic

world, we will mostly examine piracy in Caribbean and Atlantic waters, c. 1550-1750 – the era and area from which most popular images of piracy come. Although we will historicize piracy within this period, one can study piracy in other centuries and places: the Greek and Roman Mediterranean, Viking Europe, Medieval Ireland and Baltic, 1400-1820 North Africa, 19th c. China and the Caribbean, 1830s Mississippi and Ohio Rivers, 1990s Adriatic and Indonesia, and 2005-present Somalia, to name a few examples. As a term, piracy has also been adopted to refer to violations of print copyright (19th c.) and illegal media distribution of music, films, and software. Historical pirates (generally sadistic thieves and thugs with boats) depart considerably from our popular modern image of pirates derived from literature, films, video games, and Halloween costumes. Tracing and explaining the cultural divergences of real and fictional pirates provides another useful way of understanding how successive generations have projected contemporary values and anxieties upon pirates. Pirates, therefore, offer an ideal subject for both studying history and considering how historical perspectives on a subject are constantly changing.

Assessment: Your grade in this class is based on **class participation** (20 %), a **book review** (10 %), a pirate primary source analysis paper (10%), a substantive critique of a pirate videogame (10%), and written work associated with developing your **research paper** (50%). Your class participation grade includes various short exercises, small writing assignments, and in-class debates over the course of the semester.

Class Participation: You are expected to attend every class, read the assigned material, and come prepared to answer the questions posited below and talk about what you have read. Seminars are by nature designed to be question-driven, so you will be expected to think on your feet. In contributing to discussion, quality is more appreciated than quantity. Be courteous and respectful to your peers. A history seminar is not a spectator sport: if you are silent, I will assume you are unprepared rather than brilliant but shy. Unexcused absences will also cause your class participation grade to suffer.

Written Work: The rest of your grade is based on three short (5-page) papers: a critical review of Marcus Rediker's *Villains of All Nations* (Feb. 28), a primary source analysis paper (March 12), and a critical appraisal of a pirate videogame or film from a selected list (April 4), and a 12-page (double spaced, exclusive of illustrations and bibliography) research paper addressing a topic that you will develop in consultation with me. In week XIV, you will give a 10-minute presentation on your research topic, which will be part of your class grade.

We will develop your final research paper incrementally throughout the semester. Think about potential topics NOW and have one or two tentatively in mind from the start. You have until March 1 before you have to commit fully to any topic. By the end of Week 6 you will hand in a written **prospectus**, identifying your topic choice, a bibliography listing primary and secondary sources, and overview of your research progress thus far. This will be graded and is worth 5% of your research paper grade. During **Week X**, you will turn in an **outline** of your developing paper when we meet to discuss progress, which is also worth 5% of your research paper grade. A full-text, properly referenced draft of your research paper is due on April 18 and is worth 10% of your grade. This should NOT be a "rough draft" and will be graded as if it is your final submission. You will get back two sets of comments and suggestions (one from me, one from a student peer) that should guide you to make further refinements and improvements before submitting the revised,

final version of your research paper on Wednesday, May 8, by noon. This will be worth 30% of your grade. Late submissions will not be accepted.

Required Texts: John Arnold, *History: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford, 2000) Alexander Exquemelin, *Buccaneers of the Americas* (1678) Capt. Johnson [Daniel Defoe?], *A General History of the Pyrates* (2004) Kris Lane, *Pillaging the Empire: Piracy in the Americas, 1500-1750* (New York, 1998) Marcus Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea* (Cambridge, 1986) Marcus Rediker, *Villains of All Nations: Atlantic Pirates in the Golden Age* (Boston, 2004) Robert Louis Stevenson, *Treasure Island* (any edition will do...)

William Storey, *Writing History: A Guide for Students* (5th ed., Oxford, 2015)

Required Viewing: *Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl* (2003) *Captain Phillips* (2013)

Required Playing (sign up to select one): 1701 A.D. Gold Age of Pirates: Caribbean Tales Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag Buccaneer Commander: Conquest of America East India Company Collection Ocean Trader Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End Port Royale 3 Sid Meier's Pirates! Live the Life The Settlers Tortuga: Two Treasures Uncharted Waters OR other pirate- or oceanic trade-related



... OR other pirate- or oceanic trade-related games, with instructor permission

NOTE that there are also many articles and chapters from books for which you are also responsible. You will find most of them on the course Blackboard webpage or can get them via JSTOR (see the Rush Rhees Databases), Google Books, or the old fashioned way: paper copies in the library stacks.

The College's credit hour policy for undergraduate courses is to award 4 credit hours for courses that meet for the equivalent of 3 periods of 50 minutes each week. Students enrolled in HIS 200 are expected to devote at least one hour each week to identifying the main lines of argument in course readings to prepare for discussions and researching in depth their topics for the final seminar paper.

U. of R. Writing, Speaking, and Argument Program: Over the course of the semester while developing your reaction and research papers, you are allowed -- and very much encouraged -- to work with writing tutors and specialists in the College WSAP Center (<u>http://writing.rochester.edu/center.html</u>, Rush Rhees Ground floor). They will help you to improve your prose and organization and can serve as ideal readers/sounding boards as

you develop your research projects. As a fortune cookie I once opened stated, "Good writing is clear thinking made visible." The writing center staff can help you to achieve this ideal - if you work with them.

Rush Rhees Research Librarians: You are also encouraged to consult Alan Unsworth early and often while developing your research paper. Alan is a specialist in U.S., British, and European sources and can help you at all stages of the research project, especially in finding relevant source materials. You can contact him at the Reference Desk or by email/phone: aunsworth@library.rochester.edu/ x59298.

Intellectual Honesty Students and faculty at the University must adhere to high standards of academic honesty in all of the work that we do. You have already read and signed an academic honesty policy statement indicating that you understand the general principles upon which our work is based. The College Board on Academic Honesty website gives further information on our policies and procedures: www.rochester.edu/college/honesty.

You are encouraged to discuss course readings and assignments with your fellow students. All written work, however, must be done independently and not in collaboration with one another. To gain appropriate help for your essays, I encourage you to consult fellows in the College Writing, Speaking, & Argument Program. Your papers will require footnotes/endnotes and a "Works Cited" section, following the Chicago Manual of Style, 17th edition, format. The Chicago Manual is accessible via the River Campus Libraries' Voyager catalogue: http://www.library.rochester.edu/. If you are in doubt about citation methods (which we will go over in class) or are worried about situations that may violate the U of R honor code or constitute plagiarism, I am happy to advise you in advance of submitting your work. For a helpful discussion of plagiarism (including subtle instances), see the American Historical Association's "Defining Plagiarism," https://www.historians.org/teaching-and-learning/teaching-resources-forhistorians/plagiarism-curricular-materials-for-history-instructors/defining-plagiarism. Cheating and plagiarism are serious offenses and will be treated as such. Anyone who engages in such activities will be turned over to the College Board on Academic Honesty for disciplinary action, as outlined at http://www.rochester.edu/College/honesty

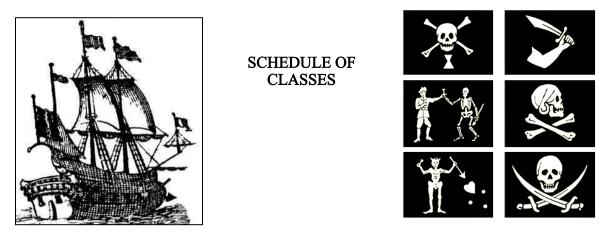
Please include the UR honor pledge at the end of every paper you submit: "I affirm that I have not given or received any unauthorized help on this assignment, and that this work is my own."

Accommodation If you have a disability for which you require an academic accommodation, you are encouraged to contact the Office for Disability Resources and me. We will work together to find a solution. Access coordinators in the Office of Disability Resources can meet with you to discuss the barriers you are experiencing and explain the eligibility process for establishing academic accommodations. The director of disability resources is Amy Wight (amy.wight@rochester.edu). The access coordinators are Pamela Spallacci (pamela.spallacci@rochester.edu) and Elizabeth Carpenter (elizabeth.carpenter@rochester.edu). The access assistant is Anne Staub (anne.staab@rochester.edu). The Office of Disability Resources is located in Taylor Hall, can be reached via telephone at 585-276-5075, and maintains a website at http://www.rochester.edu/college/disability/. A Note on Communication: It is your responsibility to get to class on time and to submit all your work on time or early in paper form. I check my email and phone messages regularly and usually am good about responding to correct and courteously worded missives, but don't expect instant responses and do not assume I got your email. Informal and poorly punctuated/capitalized emails annoy me. If a truly urgent or important situation arises, try to contact me in person, relay a message via the history department, or call me at home (678-4704), rather than trust email alone. Also, do not simply "disappear" if you find yourself overwhelmed or struggling: I can only work with you if I know this is happening, and an early timely intervention can do far more than damage control at semester's end.

Grading Scale For the papers and other assignment graded out of 100 points, I use the following scale:

* A: 93–100	* C: 73–76
* A-: 90–92	* C-: 70–72
* B+: 87–89	* D+: 67–69
* B: 83–86	* D: 63–66
* B-: 80–82	* D-: 60–62
* C+: 77–79	* E: Failure (59 or below)

For more information on the undergraduate grading scheme, please see: Grading Schemes — AS&E, Office of the University Registrar, https://www.rochester.edu/registrar/grading/scheme.html.



Jan. 17 (Th) - Signing On, Setting Out: Mutual (& Virtual) Introductions

Because I take my job as a pirate/Atlantic/maritime/public historian very seriously, I will be somewhere between the volcano-ravaged island of Montserrat and Dutch St. Maarten when our first class meets. Please go over this syllabus during class, introduce yourselves to each other, and fill in and send me by email the "first day" questionnaire (also the last page of this syllabus) to Michael.jarvis@rochester.edu so I can get to know you better before I return state-side.

Week I

Jan. 22 (Tu) What is History? What is the relationship between "the past" and history? How do we interact with and recover "the past"? What remains unrecoverable and is this a problem? Why do historians do what they do? How are histories framed? Researched? Written? What gets left out and why? Who "uses" history? How and why? Is history political?

Read and be prepared to discuss all of John Arnold, History: A Very Short Introduction

Jan. 24 (Th) What do historians do? What sorts of theoretical and methodological perspectives do they adopt as they do their research? How do these and other factors (age, ethnicity, class, race, culture, gender) shape historians' interpretations and choice of subject? Why does every generation write its own history?

Assignment (single page, notes/bullet points are fine): Study the U. of R. history department's website, especially its faculty homepages, philosophy, and course offerings. Pick two faculty members (other than Prof. Jarvis) and report in class on the sorts of history they do, their research interests, and their course offerings. Better yet: look up their office hours and talk with them directly about what their interests are. Choose two courses from the department's course list that you would like to take. Why these?

Week II: Where do historians do it?

Where do historians find the evidence they use to reconstruct the past? How accessible are these sites? What types of sources do they use? What potential problems and biases exist within primary sources? Where and how do historians assemble their information into a scholarly product? How long does it take? Where do historians present their research and how do they evaluate each other's work?

Jan. 29 (Tu) – Primary sources: what are they? Where do we find them? Assignment: go to ONE of the following archival catalogs/databases and search for contemporary printed, manuscript, and visual sources related to pirates and piracy:

Library of Congress: http://catalog.loc.gov/ British Library: http://www.bl.uk/reshelp/findhelprestype/catblhold/all/allcat.html National Archives (UK): http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/SearchUI/

National Maritime Museum: http://www.nmm.ac.uk/explore/collections/ [NB has both library and mss. Archive catalogs]

National Archives and Records Administration: http://www.archives.gov/ Mystic Seaport: http://library.mysticseaport.org/

The London Gazette: http://www.london-gazette.co.uk/

In the Rush Rhees Library Databases:

Early English Books (EEBO)

Eighteenth Century Online (ECCO) *Early American Imprints I* (Evans)

America's Historical Newspapers, 1690-1922

Identify 3 book titles or newspaper articles that seem interesting to you. If possible, skim or read them. Why are they appealing and what can they tell you about the past?

Jan. 31 (Th) – Discussion of Secondary sources, academic vs. "popular" venues for presenting research, public history, museums, and documentaries in reaching non-academic audiences, and peer review of work.

Read: J.L. Anderson, "Piracy and World History: An Economic Perspective on Maritime Predation," *Journal of World History* VI (1995), 175-199 (a secondary scholarly article) and look up/print out TWO Wikipedia (or other online) entries that cover some of the same topics or persons that Anderson mentions in his article. Do the sources agree? Complement each other? Clash? How do you reconcile conflicting "facts"?

Week III: Historical Writing

How do historians find sources and formulate research topics? What is a thesis? How does one build and support an historical argument? What are the conventions of historical writing? Why do footnotes matter? How does one choose one's audience? What is an "ideal reader"? What choices do historians make in adopting narrative strategies? How do we separate the good stuff from the rubbish on the web? Who gets to talk about the past? Has the internet democratized the past or created a virtual City of Babel?

Feb. 5 (Tu) Discussion of William Storey, *Writing History*, all; John Green, "38 Common Grammar and Spelling Errors," http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hRMRCeQBAKI Feb. 7 (Th) Lecture: Getting to Know the Early Modern Pirate: Empires, Colonization and the geopolitical context of Piracy and the Caribbean



Week IV: Mariners and Maritime Culture

Pirates came from a larger body of maritime laborers, who worked on the ships powered imperial and Atlantic commerce. But how did they work? What forms did vessels take? How was labor organized and stratified aboard vessels? Were seafarers distinct enough in their work, language and dress to constitute a distinct maritime culture? How (and how well) were sailors anchored to portside communities? To their particular religions, nations, and races? Were they oppressed? Opportunistic? Given the choice, would you want to live the life of an 18th-century sailor for a month?

Feb. 12 (Tu) Discussion of Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*, Introduction and chs. 1-5. Take note of the theoretical stance Rediker takes into his study of Anglo-American seamen. Does his framing fit or exclude most sailors?

Feb. 14 (Th) Daniel Vickers and Vincent Walsh, "Young Men and the Sea: The Sociology of Seafaring in 18th-Century Salem, Massachusetts," *Journal of Social History* 24, no. 1 (1999): 17-38; Michael Jarvis, "Bermuda's Maritime Economy I", *Eye of All Trade*, 119-134, 141-156.

Week V: Historicizing Caribbean Piracy, 1492-1700

How, when, and why did European states expand across the Atlantic Ocean? Where did different nations colonize, and how did their colonies differ? How important were maritime connections to this process? Where did piracy fit into this general multinational imperial expansion? What were the major ports and regions of the maritime Atlantic in 1600? 1700? What commodities flowed out of and into these seaports? How large was the floating population of sailors at work in the Atlantic in different periods? In what maritime activities were they engaged? How many of them were pirates?

Feb. 19 (Tu) Sea Dogs and Zeerovers: Kris Lane, Pillaging the Empire, 3-95

Feb. 21 (Th) Buccaneers: Lane, Pillaging the Empire, 96-163

Week VI: "Golden Age" Piracy and Historical Interpretation

Between 1699 and 1726, most of the most famous pirates known today were active. As such, this so-called Golden Age has profoundly shaped popular perceptions of historical piracy. How did relationships between various nation-states and pirates vary at this time? Was piracy in this period different from earlier Caribbean episodes?

Feb. 26 (Tu) Golden Age Pirates: Lane, Pillaging the Empire, 164-202

Feb. 28 (Th) BOOK REVIEW and Discussion of Rediker, *Villains of All Nations,* all. Turn in a **5 page (double-spaced) summary** and critical review of this book at the start of class, outlining Rediker's main thesis/characterization of pirates and their culture/ideology. Evaluate the strength of his argument and the supporting evidence he uses. What subjects does he handle especially well or poorly? Are there subjects he neglects?

By the end of this week: Turn in a written prospectus identifying your preliminary choice of a final research paper topic. You should state your thesis/historical question or problem that you will investigate and list some primary and secondary sources you will need to do this. Also schedule an appointment with Research Librarian Alan Unsworth for assistance in finding primary and secondary sources, especially journal articles.

Week VII: Arguing about Pirates: Radical Interpretations

Given the fragmentary and problematic nature of primary sources documenting pirate society and activity, scholars can find pirates doing any number of things that fit a particular "reading" of their ideology and lifestyle. Consider the strengths and shortcomings of Rediker and Burg's views of early modern pirates. How might each be guilty of projecting later concepts and stereotypes backward upon their subjects? What aspects of their interpretations remain compelling?

March 5 (Tu) continued discussion of Rediker, *Villains of All Nations* and B.R. Burg, "Buccaneer Sexuality and the Buccaneer Community," *Sodomy and the Pirate Tradition*, 107-173 (BE WARNED! Burg's material is fairly graphic...)

March 7 (Th) **Race and Piracy:** Discussion of Arne Bialuschewski, "Black People under the Black Flag: Piracy and the Slave Trade on the West Coast of Africa, 1718-1723" *Slavery and Abolition* XXIX (2008), 461-475;Kenneth Kinkor, Black Men under the Black Flag," *Bandits at Sea: A Pirate Reader*, 195-210; Michael Jarvis, "Maritime Masters and Seafaring Slaves in Bermuda, 1680-1783," *William and Mary Quarterly* 59 (2002): 585-622.

Week VIII (March 11 & 13) SPRING BREAK

Week IX: Ground-Truthing Historical Interpretations

Most primary evidence on Buccaneers and Golden Age Pirates are drawn from the collections of Alexander Exquemelin and Charles Johnson. SIGN UP for selections on specific pirates in these two sources and study them closely, noting how they support or contradict the works we've already read thus far AND where they raise new subjects that have not yet been historically analyzed

March 19 (Tu) SECOND PAPER (5 pages double-spaced) DUE, summarizing your primary accounts and how they intersect with other course readings. Be prepared to report on your pirates in a general class discussion.

March 21 (Th) **Victims' Perspectives:** FIND two colonial newspaper accounts of pirate attacks in the *America's Historic Newspapers* database and read the manuscript depositions of Bahamian residents Edward Holmes and Elizabeth Strode (1709). How do these portrayals of pirates mesh with our past readings?

Also Recommended: John Bernard, ed., *Ashton's Memorial: An History of the Strange Adventures and Signal Deliverances of Mr. Philip Ashton...* (Boston, 1725) Cotton Mather, *The Vial Poured Out Upon the Sea: A Remarkable Relation of Certain Pirates brought to a Tragical and Untimely End...* (Boston, 1726)

Week X Making Myths

How did our image of pirates become sanitized over time - once the threat of actual pirate violence was safely in the past? Is the appeal of pirates culturally specific (Anglo-Americans) or general? How have literature, films, videogames and other marketed products remade pirates in the popular imagination? If we accept that every generation rewrites history, has each generation also generated its own twist on pirates of the past?

March 26 (Tu) LITERATURE: Discussion of Stevenson, *Treasure Island*, all, and David Cordingly, *Under the Black Flag*, 5-25,

March 28 (Th) FILM: Discussion of *Pirates of the Caribbean: Curse of the Black Pearl* [view this on your own]; Russell Skowronek, "Anthropological Insights into the Origins and Continuity of Fiction and Fact in the Study of Piracy," in *X Marks the Spot*, 282-298; David Cordingly, *Under the Black Flag*, 170-177.

Hand in an **outline, bibliography and status report** on your progress toward your final research paper. State what your tentative thesis will be, other scholars whose work you are engaging, and the primary evidence you will use to support your interpretation (or refute that of others).

Then, spend the rest of the week/weekend playing your selected pirate videogame OR watching your selected pirate film

Week XI: Playing Detective, Playing Pirate

April 2 (Tu) **Murder and Mutiny on the Schooner** *Ruby*, **1754** - In this class, we will collectively investigate a Bermuda Vice Admiralty Court trial. You will closely study and assume the roles of particular eyewitnesses to the events as we establish the facts of the event, after which we will shift to a historical perspective and discuss how to understand a braided history composed of different perspectives and agents, as well as how this individual case links to or challenges other broader Atlantic and maritime history themes.

April 4 (Th) **Watching Pirates, Playing Pirate** - What knowledge can we gain from films, computer simulations and "virtual" approximations of the past? What other experiences or activities provide insights into the mental or material worlds of pirates? Was playing a pirate useful? Disturbing? How do simulations like this contribute to the glamorization or sanitization of historical pirates? How historically accurate are games and what could make them more so?

THIRD PAPER DUE (5 pages) – a historical critique of a chosen film or videogame, applying the course's previous assigned primary and secondary readings to the film plot or game script/environment. This should be less focused on the game's engagement/playability/technical elements than the historical content and larger cultural implications of the viewer/player adopting virtual roles and the insights (or misimpressions) gained through media immersion. Students choosing to critique games should read and incorporate insights from James Paul Gee, "Learning and Identity: What Does it Mean to be a Half-Elf?" in Gee, *What Video Games Have to Teach Us About Learning and Literacy* (Rev. ed., New York, 2007), 45-70.

Come to class ready to report on your experiences, observations, and analysis.

Week XII: Developing your Research Papers

We will use this week to meet individually to discuss your progress on your research papers and your three previous written papers. Please schedule a 10-15 minute slot during office hours (Wednesday 2-4pm) or during regularly scheduled class time. Come prepared with an outline of your paper, highlighting your thesis, argument, and supporting evidence.

April 9 (Tu) Individual meetings April 11 (Th) Individual meetings

Week XIII: Papers Due and Peer Review Selection

April 16 (Tu) – No Class – work on your papers

April 18 (Th) - **Research Paper Drafts** are due at the beginning of class. Bring TWO copies of your completed paper. I will pair you up with a suitable partner for as peer reviewer. Over the weekend, critically read your peer's paper and prepare substantial written feedback for him/her regarding the strength and persuasiveness of his/her argument, clarity of communication, adequacy of supporting evidence, paper structure, and constructive suggestions for ways to improve and to add perhaps neglected but useful evidence or perspectives. Please be kind in your critique and put as much effort into your peer's paper as you would like applied to your own.

Week XIV: Debating Piracy

April 22 (Tu) In Class: return your paper critique to your peer AND hand in a copy of your critique to me (these will be graded and form part of your class participation grade). Spend the rest of the day thinking about the feedback you've received and your responses to suggestions and criticisms.

April 24 (Th) **Research Presentations**: Students will orally report on their research papers and field questions from classmates (10 minutes maximum!). Be prepared to offer historical examples and evidence to support your presentations. Visuals and Powerpoint presentations are welcome but must still keep to the time limit.

Week XV: Debating Piracy (II) and Assessing Piracy: Then and Now

April 29 (Tu) Research Presentations, continued. IF TIME ALLOWS, we will end the course by discussing modern piracy since the 1990s and how it resembles or differs from historical piracy in the Caribbean.

WATCH: *Captain Philips* (2013) and **READ** William Langewiesche, "Anarchy at Sea," *The Atlantic Monthly* vol. 292 (Sept. 2003), 50-80.

Wednesday, May 8, noon: Revised Final Papers due