



## HIS 200

### Gateway Research Seminar:

### PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN



Fall 2021  
MW 11:50-1:05  
Bausch & Lomb 270  
Office Hours: Tuesdays 1-3 pm or by appt.

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**Overview:** This gateway research seminar is designed to introduce history majors to historical research, debate, and writing using piracy in the early modern Atlantic world as our common topic for inquiry. Over the semester, you 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 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, you will produce a well-crafted 3,000-word (10- to 12-page) research paper that explores some aspect of early modern piracy that follows standard conventions for historical writing. The skills you learn in this seminar will provide you with a firm foundation to build upon in subsequent courses you take here at the University of Rochester and especially prepare you to take upper level HIS 20x and 30x W seminars.

**What this course is NOT:** easy. If "gateway" in the title lured you into thinking this is a very basic course introducing history and you could coast through it with little effort, I apologize. In the interest of truth in advertising, the course is a gateway to *historical research methods and writing*, in which you will be reading archaic 18<sup>th</sup>-century English prose in print and handwritten manuscript and delving into the complex world of early modern seafaring in the age of sail, with complex terminology, strange customs, and an extensive new geography of seaports, islands, and colonies to master. If you're up for an intellectual challenge, are willing to commit to reading difficult sources and argue passionately over them and are ready to do original research on obscure subjects that will likely be difficult to analyze, welcome aboard! If not, perhaps consider jumping ship now and signing onto one of the other excellent history classes we're offering this semester.

**Organization:** This course is, in essence, an open-ended conversation about history, what historians do, and how they do it. I view history as a continuing debate between scholarly interpreters, rather than as a fixed, 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, 19<sup>th</sup> 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 (19<sup>th</sup> 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 divergence between fictional and actual pirates provides another useful way to understand how successive generations have projected contemporary values and anxieties upon pirates. If, as it is said, every generation writes its own history, it is also true that every generation refashions its image of the pirate. Studying pirates, therefore, provides us with an ideal subject for both studying how history is first made as well as how historical perspectives on subjects are in constant flux.

**Assessment:** Your grade in this class is based on **class participation** (20%), six short reaction papers to weekly readings (15%), a pirate primary source analysis paper (10%), a substantive critique of a pirate videogame (5%), 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 before-hand, 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. If it becomes apparent that you have not done the readings or otherwise prepared for class, you will be marked as absent for that day. Unexcused absences will also cause your class participation grade to suffer.

**Written Work:** The rest of your grade is based on six short reaction papers to particular weeks' readings (1-3 pages), a review of Marcus Rediker, *Villains of All Nations* (Oct. 4), a primary source analysis paper (Oct. 18), a critical appraisal of a pirate videogame or film from a selected list (Nov. 3), and a 12-page (double spaced, exclusive of illustrations and bibliography) research paper on a topic that you will develop in consultation with me. In week 14 or 15, 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 October 8 before you have to commit fully to any topic. By the end of Week 6 (Oct. 8) you will hand in a written **prospectus**, identifying your topic choice, a bibliography listing primary and secondary sources, and an overview of your research progress thus far. This will be graded and is worth 5% of your research paper grade. On Oct. 27 (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 Nov. 17 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, Dec. 15, by noon. This will be worth 30% of your grade. Late submissions will not be accepted and your earlier draft grade will be counted instead.

Required Texts:

John Arnold, *History: A Very Short Introduction* (2000)

David Cordingly, *Under the Black Flag* (1995)

Alexander Exquemelin, *Buccaneers of the Americas* (1684) – FREE ORIGINAL COPY available to download from EEBO or lots of used copies of the 2000 Dover edition.

Capt. Charles Johnson, *A General History of the Pyrates* (Manuel Schonhorn 2004 Dover edition – lots used)

Marcus Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea* (1986)

Marcus Rediker, *Villains of All Nations: Atlantic Pirates in the Golden Age* (2004) **BUY THIS USED IF POSSIBLE.**

William Storey, *Writing History: A Guide for Students* (4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> editions USED are fine! Don't buy the overpriced new/6<sup>th</sup> edition since very little changed)

Required Viewing:

*Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl* (2003)

Required Playing (sign up to select one):

*1701 A.D. Gold*  
*Age of Pirates: Caribbean Tales*  
*Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag*  
*East India Company Collection*  
*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 ocean trade-related game 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 UR Student/Blackboard webpage or can get them via JSTOR (see the Rush Rhees Databases), Google Books, or the OG 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 two periods of an hour and twenty 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 in researching their topics for the final seminar paper.

**UR Writing, Speaking, and Argument Program:** Over the course of the semester while developing your short reaction and research papers, you are allowed -- and very much encouraged -- to work with writing tutors and specialists in the College WSAP Center (<http://writing.rochester.edu/center.html>, 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 Rush Rhees research librarian Lara Nicosia ([Inicosia@library.rochester.edu](mailto:Inicosia@library.rochester.edu); 585-275-9298) early and often while developing your research paper. Lara is a specialist in U.S., British, and European history sources and can help you at all stages of the research project, especially in finding relevant source materials. You can book an appointment with her [HERE](#)...

**Intellectual Honesty** Students and faculty at the University must adhere to high standards of academic honesty in all 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](http://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-for-historians/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](mailto:amy.wight@rochester.edu)). The access coordinators are Pamela Spallacci ([pamela.spallacci@rochester.edu](mailto:pamela.spallacci@rochester.edu)) and Elizabeth Carpenter ([elizabeth.carpenter@rochester.edu](mailto:elizabeth.carpenter@rochester.edu)). The access assistant is Anne Staub ([anne.staab@rochester.edu](mailto: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 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 (585-678-4704), 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>.



## SCHEDULE OF CLASSES



**August 25 (W) - Signing On, Setting Out, Charting Our Course**

**P**rior to the start of classes, I will email you a short questionnaire about your interest and experiences with history and life in general. Please send me your answers before the first day of class and be prepared to talk about them as we meet for the first time.

### Week I – Big Questions

**August 30 (M) 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*

**Sept. 1 (W) 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 UR History Department website, especially its faculty homepages, philosophy, and course offerings. Pick two faculty members (other than me) and report in class on the sorts of history they do, their background and research interests, and their course offerings. Better yet: look up their office hours and meet with them directly to learn about their interests. Choose two courses from the department’s full course list that you would like to take. Why these?

**Sept. 6 (M) – Labor Day, No Class**

## Week II: The Stuff of History

**W**here 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?

**Sept. 8 (W) – Primary Sources:** what are they? Where do we find them?

**Assignment:** PART I - 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 your reaction paper for this week, list THREE titles you discovered that are primary sources (written at the time of the events) and THREE secondary sources (scholarly or popular interpretations of pirates or piracy as a subject) that seem interesting and reputable.

**PART II- In the Rush Rhees Library Databases, consult ONE of these digital primary source collections:**

*Early English Books* (EEBO)

*Eighteenth Century Online* (ECCO)

*Early American Imprints I* (Evans)

*America's Historical Newspapers, 1690-1922*

In the second part of your reaction paper, list three book titles or newspaper articles that seem interesting. Download and skim or read them, and report on how understandable they are. Why are they appealing and what can they tell you about the past?

## Week III: Historical Writing

**Sept. 13 (M) – Secondary sources:** academic vs. “popular” works and venues for presenting research, the role of public history, museums, and documentaries in reaching non-academic audiences, and peer review of work.

**Read:** David Cordingly, introduction, *Under the Black Flag*, pp. xiii-xxi; J.L. Anderson, “Piracy and World History: An Economic Perspective on Maritime Predation,” *Journal of World History* VI (1995), 175-199; Arne Bialuschewski, “Between Newfoundland and the Malacca Strait: A Survey of the Golden Age of Piracy, 1695-1725,” *The Mariner's*

Mirror 90 (2004):167-186 (secondary scholarly articles) and consider how the authors frame their analysis and interpretation of piracy.

NOW, look up TWO Wikipedia (or other online) entries that cover the same topics or persons that Cordingly, Anderson and/or Bialuschewski mention in their articles. In class, please be prepared to talk about your findings. Do the sources agree? Complement each other? Clash? How do you reconcile conflicting “facts”?

### Sept. 15 (W) – From Reading History to Writing History

**H**ow 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?

**Read:** William Storey, *Writing History*, all; John Green, “38 Common Grammar and Spelling Errors,” <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hRMRCeQBAKI>

**Assignment** (Reaction paper): use Storey and your own experiences to answer today’s leading questions above (short sentences/bullet points are ok)



## Week IV – Entering the Pirates’ World

**Sept. 20 (M)** Lecture: Empires, Colonization and the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>-Century Caribbean

**Sept. 22 (W)** Historicizing Caribbean Piracy, 1492-1700

**H**ow, 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?

**Read** Cordingly, *Under the Black Flag*, pp. 26-55 & Alexander Exquemelin, *The Buccaneers of America* (1684 original via EEBO or Dover edition 2000, lots of used copies out there)

**Assignment:** Exquemelin’s work is our first substantial exposure to “early phase” Caribbean piracy – the Buccaneer era. Focus on TWO figures or topics in his book and discuss either how much you already knew about them or what new things you learned through Exquemelin’s descriptions. End by answering: who was Exquemelin and why did he write this book?

## Week V: Mariners and Maritime Culture

**P**irates came from a larger body of maritime laborers who worked on the ships that 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 18<sup>th</sup>-century sailor for a month?

**Sept. 27 (M)** Discussion of Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*, Introduction and chs. 1-5. Take note of the theoretical stance Rediker adopts in his study of Anglo-American seamen. Is his characterization persuasive?

**Sept. 29 (W)** Daniel Vickers and Vincent Walsh, “Young Men and the Sea: The Sociology of Seafaring in 18<sup>th</sup>-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.

**Assignment:** in your reaction paper, identify how Rediker, Vickers, and Jarvis (me!) view maritime work and culture differently, and how they perhaps frame their subjects using different geographies, periods, and sources. Was there one maritime culture or many? Which characteristics seem applicable to the largest number of sailors?

## Week VI: “Golden Age” Piracy and Historical Interpretation

Most of the most famous pirates known today were active between 1699 and 1726. 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?

**Oct. 4 (M) Read:** Rediker, *Villains of All Nations*, all; Rediker, *Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*, ch. 6.

**Assignment:** write a **5-page (double-spaced) summary** and critical review of this book, 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?

**G**iven 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?

**Oct. 6 (W) Read:** Cordingly, *Under the Black Flag*, 79-170; B.R. Burg, “Buccaneer Sexuality and the Buccaneer Community,” *Sodomy and the Pirate Tradition*, 107-173 (BE WARNED! Burg’s material is fairly graphic...)

**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 Lara Nicosia for assistance in finding primary and secondary sources, especially journal articles.**

## Week VII: Arguing about Pirates: Radical Interpretations

**Oct. 11 (M) – Fall Break, No Class**

**Oct. 13 (W) 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.

**Assignment:** summarize each author's views on the relationships between enslaved Africans/African-Americans as sailors and cargoes, white maritime workers, and pirates. Do these authors directly clash or cover somewhat different terrain? Whose arguments/interpretations seem most persuasive?

### Week VIII: Ground-Truthing Historical Interpretations

Most primary evidence on Buccaneers and Golden Age Pirates is drawn from the works of Alexander Exquemelin and Charles Johnson. This week, we will read in common a few entries from Johnsons' *General History of the Pirates* and you will each SIGN UP to write on and report about a few specific pirates.

**Oct. 18 (M) Rogues Gallery. Read:** Johnson, *General History*, 71-94 (Blackbeard), 318-336 (Low), 383-418 (Mission) AND your selected individual pirates. Be prepared in class to report on their careers.

**Assignment:** Summarize the careers of your particular pirate(s), particularly how they came to piracy, how they operated, the length and success (or lack thereof) of their careers, and how those careers ultimately ended. End by reflecting on how your specific pirate(s) either support or contradict the scholars we've read thus far and highlight areas where their stories perhaps raise new subjects

### Oct. 20 (W) Victims' Perspectives and The Big Reveal

**Read:** the manuscript depositions of Bahamian residents Edward Holmes and Elizabeth Strode (1709) online and FIND two colonial American newspaper accounts of pirate attacks in the *America's Historic Newspapers* database. 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)

William Snelgrave, *A New Account of Some Parts of Guinea and the Slave Trade...And a Relation of the Author being Taken by Pirates and the Many Dangers He Underwent* (1734)

**\*\* Secret Assignment Challenge Issued, due on Monday**

### Week IX 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?

### **Oct. 25 (M) Revisiting the Rogues Gallery Assignment due & discussion**

**Also Read:** David Cordingly, *Under the Black Flag*, 3-25, 158-244.

**Oct. 27 (W) Watch:** *Pirates of the Caribbean: Curse of the Black Pearl* [view this on your own or in an evening class viewing session TBA]; **Read:** 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;

Come to class prepared to discuss how *POC:BP* works as a film and reinforces or reinterprets popular images of pirates and piracy, with particular attention to race, class, ethnicity, stereotypes about sailors, and historical places we’ve come to know about from past readings (never mind/excuse the whole “undead” part of the story – it was, after all, based on a theme-park ride...)

### **Research Paper Development:**

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).

**SIGN UP** for watching a pirate film or playing a selected pirate videogame to prepare for your turn as a cultural critic in discussions next week Videogame Players also **Read** James Paul Gee, “Learning and Identity,” in *What Videogames Have to Teach us about Learning and Literacy*, 45-69) and apply his discussion of identity to yourself as you played.

## **Week X: Performing The Pirate**

**Nov. 1 (M) No Class – play your games/watch your films!**

**Nov. 3 (W) 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?

**Assignment (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.

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

### **Week XI: Developing your Research Papers**

We will use this week to meet individually to discuss your progress on your research papers and your past written papers. Please schedule a 10-15 minute slot during office hours (Tuesday 1-3 pm) or during regularly scheduled class time. Come prepared with an outline of your paper, highlighting your thesis, argument, and supporting evidence.

**Nov. 8 (M)** Individual meetings

**Nov. 10 (W)** Individual meetings

### **Week XII: Papers Due and Peer Review Selection**

**Nov. 15 (M) – No Class – work on your papers**

**Nov. 17 (W) 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 XIII: Research Paper Draft Exchange**

**Nov. 22 (M) 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.

**Nov. 24 (W) No Class, Thanksgiving Break**

### **Week XIV: Presentations**

**Nov. 29 (M) Research Presentations I:** 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.

**Dec. 1 (W) Research Presentations II**

**Week XV: Debating/Assessing Piracy: Then and Now**

Piracy is still a problem in many parts of the world, arguably for many of the reasons it flourished in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. How did the British Empire and other European powers end piracy in the 1720s? Where and why does piracy flourish in recent years and today? With all our technology, how can pirates still continue to operate? What relationships might exist between environmental degradation, capitalist exploitation, terrorism and piracy in today's world?

**Dec. 6 (M) Read** William Langewiesche, "Anarchy at Sea," *The Atlantic Monthly* vol. 292 (Sept. 2003), 50-80; **Watch:** *A Hijacking* (2012) on your own or at a common class screening. ALSO look up on your own recent news stories about global pirate attacks since 2010 and come to class prepared to discuss the perception gulf between historic and modern pirates.

**Dec. 8 (W) Final Class: Research Presentations III (If needed) and Parting Ways: Do you now see pirates in a different light? History as a subject and a scholarly activity? If not, I deserve a keel-haul. If yes, you deserve a party.**

**FINAL REVISED PAPERS DUE at NOON on Dec. 15 (W)**