

**HISTORY 2188B**  
**Pirates & Piracy on The World's Seas and in the Public Imagination**  
**Winter 2023**  
**(In-Person, Synchronous)**  
**Wednesdays, 10:30am-12:30pm; Classroom: HSB 240**  
**Cap'n Mike Dove**  
**Office Hours: Mondays 1pm-3pm, or by appointment**  
**Department of History, Lawson Hall 1207**  
**mdove2@uwo.ca**

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Images: Lady Cheng; Vikings; Blackbeard; Captain Jack Sparrow

Please note that this is a draft syllabus. The final version of the syllabus, including a list of all reading assignments, will be available on the OWL-Sakai course website prior to the beginning of classes in January.

**Course delivery with respect to the COVID-19 pandemic:**

The intent is for this course to be delivered in-person, but should the COVID-19 landscape shift, the course will be delivered on-line asynchronously (i.e. posted on OWL for students to view at their convenience). The grading scheme will not change. The course will return to an in-person mode of delivery when the University and local health authorities deem it safe to do so.

**Course Description:**

This course examines the history of pirates and piracy from antiquity through to the present day. Among its major themes are changing definitions of piracy; the reasons individuals, groups, and nations have practiced or supported piracy; and how pirates have been depicted in popular culture.

**Course Syllabus:**

Pirates have been the scourge of the seas since maritime trade and commerce began. From its origins in the classical period to its continued existence in the modern day, piracy has had significant economic, political, social and cultural effects on societies. The Jolly Roger, Long John Silver, the “prostitute pirate” Lady Cheng, Blackbeard and Captain Jack Sparrow have informed popular depictions of piracy and stirred romantic visions of freedom, adventure and buried treasure. This course seeks to separate myth from reality by tracing the history of piracy from antiquity through the medieval and early modern pasts to the present day.

Among the chief questions explored throughout the course will be what constituted piracy in a given era; why people ‘turned pirate’; what a pirate’s life was like; and why pirates continue to generate public fascination. Changes in the definition of piracy, from violent robbery at sea to theft and murder of any kind, were driven by major societal transitions such as the rise of nation-states and their projection of political, military and commercial power through permanent navies. Privateering or state-sanctioned piracy, hostage-taking and kidnapping, as well as bootlegging and terrorism, will be discussed. Were pirates radicals? Early democrats? Heroes? Villains?

The motives for turning pirate and the nature of that reality will be discerned through examining themes of race, class, gender, labour, sex, religion, and the ideals of equality, liberty and fraternity. Pirates and piracy will be examined through an interdisciplinary lens, framing questions and using methodologies from history as well as archaeology, film studies, folklore, law, literature, sociology/ criminology, visual arts, and music.

Upon completion of this course, students should have:

- o an understanding of the origins, causes and major periods of piracy in world history;
- o identified significant events and personalities in the history of global piracy;
- o assessed the impact and enduring relevance of piracy on the economic, political, military, social, and cultural history of world societies;
- o separated myth from reality through examining the depiction of piracy in popular culture (fiction, folklore, literature, film);
- o a better understanding of how to critically assess both primary and secondary sources on the extensive history of global piracy;
- o explored themes relating to the history of piracy through a variety of disciplinary approaches and methods;
- o further developed highly transferable skills of critical thinking;
- o expressed their ideas and arguments clearly and concisely in writing.

**Course Materials:**

There is one textbook for the course, available for purchase in hardcopy through Western Book Store, or as an eBook from several vendors, including Vital Source: <https://www.vitalsource.com/en-ca/products/global-piracy-james-e-wadsworth-v9781350058200>

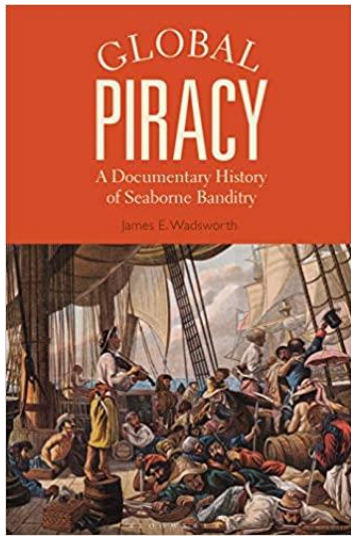


Image: James E. Wadsworth, *Global Piracy: A Documentary History of Seaborne Banditry* (Bloomsbury, 2019)

kobo: [https://www.kobo.com/ca/en/ebook/global-piracy?utm\\_source=indigo&utm\\_medium=web&utm\\_campaign=retailer](https://www.kobo.com/ca/en/ebook/global-piracy?utm_source=indigo&utm_medium=web&utm_campaign=retailer)

or Kindle: [https://www.amazon.ca/Global-Piracy-Documentary-Seaborne-Banditry-ebook/dp/B07MT4NPKK/ref=sr\\_1\\_6?keywords=global+piracy&qid=1590782650&sr=8-6](https://www.amazon.ca/Global-Piracy-Documentary-Seaborne-Banditry-ebook/dp/B07MT4NPKK/ref=sr_1_6?keywords=global+piracy&qid=1590782650&sr=8-6)

Additional readings, consisting of book chapters, articles, illustrations and videos, are accessible through the OWL (Sakai) course website, as noted in the final course syllabus.

### Methods of Evaluation:

Students must complete two exams in order to pass this course.

Midterm Exam	40%	15 February 2023	In-Class
Final Exam	60%	Date & Location:	TBA - April Exam Period

### Exams

Students must write two exams: one two-hour in-class midterm, scheduled during class time on Wednesday, 15 February 2023, and a three-hour final exam, to be scheduled during the April Exam Period by the Registrar's Office. Both exams will be non-cumulative and will feature two sections: one will ask students to identify and describe the significance of a choice of five of eight historical terms; and the other section will ask students to write on a choice of essay-style questions (i.e. one essay for the midterm and two essays for the final). Electronic devices of any kind (e.g. phones), are not permitted to be carried by, or near, the student during exams.

The Midterm Exam will examine students on course materials from Week 1 to Week 5 inclusive. Students should prepare their answers with reference to the relevant course materials only. Information and sources external to the course will not be given credit. The midterm exam is weighted at 40% of the final course grade.

The Final Exam will examine students on all course materials since the midterm exam (ie. from Week 6 to Week 11 inclusive). Students should prepare their answers with reference to the relevant course materials only.

Information and sources external to the course will not be given credit. The final exam is weighted at 60% of the final course grade.

### **Accommodation for Missed Exams:**

Students with an approved absence from an in-class exam will be required to write a make-up exam. Only the academic counselling office of a student's home faculty can approve such a request. Please do not send the course professor your medical or private information. Be aware that the make-up exam will not necessarily be in the same format, be of the same duration, or cover the same material as the original exam.

For in-person classes, make-up exams will be written during one of the Department of History make-up midterm exam slots. There are two make-up slots for each term – students must write in one of those slots. Course professors may not be available to respond to questions during the make-up exam slots. Dates for the make-ups will be listed on the Department of History website under Important Dates. No other make-up opportunities will be provided unless further academic consideration is granted by Academic Counselling. Students who fail to write a make-up exam during a designated time slot will receive a grade of zero on that assessment.

IMPORTANT: In the event the University moves to online learning, make-up exams will take place online via OWL.

### **Tentative Course Schedule and Readings:**

**Please note that several additional readings will be assigned in this course. They will appear on the final version of the course syllabus, which will be posted on the OWL-Sakai course website prior to the beginning of term.**

This course will be taught through in-person lectures and the OWL (powered by Sakai) course website. It contains all course materials except the textbook and is where students will access the final course syllabus, announcements, calendar, additional assigned readings, and their grades.

I hope this will be an enjoyable experience for you. Please let me know as soon as possible if you are encountering issues or have concerns about your performance in the course. We will work towards finding a solution. Thank you for enrolling. Arrrr!

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## **JANUARY**

11 – WEEK 1: Pirates & Piracy: An Introduction

Readings: Wadsworth, Chapter One, pp. 1-12.

TBA

18 – WEEK 2: Sea Robbers of Antiquity

Readings: Wadsworth, Chapter Two, pp. 15-28.

TBA

25 – WEEK 3: Medieval Sea Raiders: Muslim Corsairs & Viking Invaders

Readings: Wadsworth, Chapter Three, pp. 31-42.

TBA

## **FEBRUARY**

01 – WEEK 4: Elizabethan Seadogs

Reading: Wadsworth, Chapter Four, pp. 45-66.

TBA

08 – WEEK 5: Piracy's 'Golden Age', Part I: Buccaneers & the Pirate Round

Readings: Wadsworth, Chapters Six & Seven, pp. 83-96; 99-114.

TBA

15 – MIDTERM EXAM (IN-CLASS)

**22 - NO CLASS: WINTER STUDY BREAK!**

## **MARCH**

01 – WEEK 6: Piracy's 'Golden Age', Part II: 'The Most Notorious Pyrates'

Readings: Wadsworth (textbook), Chapter Ten, pp. 155-173.

TBA

08 – WEEK 7: Female Pirates & Agents of Piracy

Readings: TBA

15 – WEEK 8: Pirates & Privateers of Atlantic Canada

Readings: TBA

22 – WEEK 9: Rovers of the Barbary Coast

Readings: Wadsworth, Chapter Nine, pp. 135-152.

TBA

29 – WEEK 10: Sea Bandits of China and SE Asia

Readings: Wadsworth, Chapters Five, Eight & Eleven, pp. 69-80; 117-132; 177-198.

## **APRIL**

05 – WEEK 11: Modern Piracy & Pirates in Popular Culture

Readings: Wadsworth, Chapters Thirteen, Fourteen, Fifteen & Sixteen, pp. 215-231; 233-246; 249-263; 265-280.

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**Additional Statements:**

Please review the Department of History Course Must-Knows document, <https://www.history.uwo.ca/undergraduate/Docs/Department%20of%20History%20Course%20Must-Knows.pdf>, for additional information regarding:

- Academic Offences
- Accessibility Options
- Medical Issues
- Plagiarism
- Scholastic Offences
- Copyright
- Health and Wellness

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