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New York University
Freshman Honors Seminar
Syllabus still subject to minor changes
Pirates, Privateers
and Other Maritime Renegades of the Caribbean
(Tuesdays, 9:30-12:00, BOBS LL146)

Pirates, privateers and runaways of the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth century Caribbean fought, stole, lied and killed to make a living and either to collaborate with or oppose bosses and empires. Today, the Jolly Roger --the pirate flag-- is clearly displayed in toys and makes for compelling cinematic moments. In real life, however, flying that flag was a criminal act punishable with the death penalty. How must we think of Francis Drake, the most feared privateer of the 1500s, in the age of Jack Sparrow, the most renowned of the fantasy pirates of our days? This class will approach the history of maritime renegades as an opportunity to develop critical thinking, historical research and writing skills. While outsiders often described pirates and privateers as renegades, godless, murderers and villains, privateer men like Francis Drake, pirate women like Anne Bonny, or runaway slaves like Tom King lived at the very center of important political questions of their age.

In this class we will become familiar with an Atlantic space dominated by the Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, English, and French Empires. However, imperial domination was very often a matter of dispute and open confrontation, and rested heavily on slavery and brutal exploitation. Such a volatile, belligerent and violent world became fertile ground for maritime renegades of various kinds: interlopers, privateers, pirates and maroons. The seagoing initiatives of slaves and former slaves became so prevalent that by the end of the eighteenth century, in the period of the intertwined American, French, Haitian and Spanish American revolutions, seamen of African descent became, on their own right, important protagonists of the Age of Revolutions. This history of maritime renegades will take us from Africa and Europe to the Caribbean and North America, and from the age of Columbus to the age of Washington.

Writing Assignments and Grading:

- 1) A short written assignment, due on the fourth week of class (Feb. 18).
Students will answer to a prompt. (3-4 pages)
- 2) A second short written assignment, due on the ninth week of class (April 1).
Students will answer to a prompt. (4-5 pages)

- 3) A final paper. This paper will be evaluated in two stages: an early draft (at least 4 pages, due on the twelfth week of class, April 22), and the final paper proper (8 to 10 pages, due at the end of our last class meeting, May 6).

Participation and attendance in class, which are mandatory, will be graded and are equivalent to **20%** of your final grade.

Each one of the **short written assignments** is equivalent to **20%** of your final grade.

The **first draft** of the **final paper** is worth **10%** of your final grade.

The **final paper** is worth **30%** of your final grade.

Note on Final Paper:

Students must complete a paper using at least five bibliographical references. In their papers, students will present a central argument or thesis around one of the issues or social actors examined throughout the course. The student's argument or thesis must be supported with bibliographical evidence. For these purposes, students may use the University's library resources. Students will go over a rough draft with the instructor and receive feedback. They will use this feedback to revise their papers, and submit a well-polished final version.

Remember: plagiarism is a violation of the College's Academic Integrity Policy. Please visit <http://cas.nyu.edu/page/academicintegrity> for more details.

Required Books:

Marcus Rediker, *Villains of All Nations. Atlantic Pirates in the Golden Age* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2004).

Philip D. Curtin, *The Rise and Fall of the Plantation Complex. Essays in Atlantic History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

Course outline and weekly readings [students must do each week's readings before coming to class]:

Week I, Jan. 28: Introduction. Crafting history.

-Marc Bloch, *The Historian's Craft* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1962), Chapters 1 & 2, pages 3-78. NYUclasses

-Mary Lynn Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing History* (Boston and New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2007), Chapter. 6, Plagiarism: What Is It and How to Avoid It. Pages 88-96. NYUclasses

Part one
The Atlantic World

Week II, Feb. 4: Encounter of worlds.

- Tobias Green, "Fear and Atlantic History: some observations derived from the Cape Verde Islands and the African Atlantic," *Atlantic Studies* Vol. 3 No. 1 (April 2006): 25-42. NYUclasses
- J. H. Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic World. Britain and Spain in America. 1492-1830* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), chapter 1, Intrusion and Empire, & chapter 2, Occupying American Space, pages 3-56. NYUlibrary

Week III, Feb. 11: The Atlantic perspective: interlocking histories.

- Laurent Dubois, "The French Atlantic," Jack P. Greene & Phillip D. Morgan, eds., *Atlantic History. A Critical Appraisal* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), pages 137-161. NYUclasses
- Primary source for written assignment, due next week: *Castaways. The Narrative of Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca*. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993), Chapters 1-17, pages 1-58. NYUclasses

Week IV, Feb. 18: Atlantic Wealth, Atlantic Poverty.

- **Paper due in class, hard copy.**
- J. H. Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic World. Britain and Spain in America. 1492-1830*. Chapter 4, Exploiting American Resources, pages 88-114. *NYUlibrary

Part two
Empires at war: Interloping seafarers and renegade communities

Week V, Feb. 25: England against Spain: the Corsairs of Queen Elizabeth.

- Philip D. Curtin. *The Rise and Fall of the Plantation Complex. Essays in Atlantic History*. Chapter 5, Bureaucrats and free lances in Spanish America, pages 58-70.
- Kris E. Lane. *Pillaging the Empire. Piracy in the Americas. 1500-1750* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1998), chapter 2, Smugglers, Pirates, and Privateers. The Elizabethans, pages 33-57. NYUclasses.

Week VI, March 4: From Buccaneers to Pirates

- Philip D. Curtin. *The Rise and Fall of the Plantation Complex. Essays in Atlantic History*. Chapter 6, The Sugar Revolution and the Settlement of the Caribbean; Chapter 7, Anarchy and Imperial Control; Chapter 8, Slave Societies on the Periphery, pages 73-110.

-Kris E. Lane. *Pillaging the Empire. Piracy in the Americas. 1500-1750*. Chapter 3, From the Low Countries to the high seas: the Dutch sea-rovers, pages 62-91.

Week VII, March 11: The Golden Age of Piracy

- Philip D. Curtin. *The Rise and Fall of the Plantation Complex. Essays in Atlantic History*. Chapter 9, The Slave trade and the West African economy in the eighteenth century, & chapter 10, Atlantic commerce in the eighteenth century, pages 113-143.

- Marcus Rediker, *Villains of All Nations. Atlantic Pirates in the Golden Age*. Chapters 1-3, pages 1-82.

Spring Break

Week VIII, March 25: Women pirates.

- Marcus Rediker, *Villains of All Nations. Atlantic Pirates in the Golden Age*. Chapters. 4-6, pages 60-126.

Week IX, April 1: Social bandits or outright criminals?

- **Paper due in class.**

- Marcus Rediker, *Villains of All Nations. Atlantic Pirates in the Golden Age*. Chapters 7-8 & Conclusion, pages 127-176.

Part three
A World of Slavery

Week X, April 8: The Slave Trade

- Philip D. Curtin. *The Rise and Fall of the Plantation Complex. Essays in Atlantic History*. Preface to First Edition, Chapter 1, The Mediterranean origins, chapter 2, Sugar planting: From Cyprus to the Atlantic islands, chapter 3, Africa and the slave trade, chapter 4, Capitalism, feudalism and sugar planting in Brazil, pages xi-xiii & 3-57.

- John Thornton. *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400-1800* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), chapter 6, African and Afro-Americans in the Atlantic world: life and labor, pages 152-182. NYUclasses

Week XI, April 15: The Slave Ship.

- Markus Rediker, *The Slave Ship. A Human History* (New York: Penguin, 2008), chapter 1, Life, death and terror in the slave trade, & chapter 8, The sailor's vast machine, pages 14-40, 222-262. NYUclasses

Week XII, April 22: Slave Societies.

- First draft of final paper due in class.

- Laurent Dubois, *Avengers of the New World. The Story of the Haitian Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), Prologue, chapter 1, Specters of Saint-Domingue, & chapter 2, Fermentation, pages 1-59. NYUclasses

Part four

Runways, Corsairs and motley crews in the Age of Revolutions

Week XIII, April 29: Maritime unrest and the American Revolution.

-Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra. Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2000), chapter 6, "The outcasts of the nations of the earth," & chapter 7, A motley crew in the American Revolution, pages 174-247. NYUebruary

Week XIV, May 6: Maritime maroons and the Haitian Revolution.

-Final paper due at the end of class, hard copy

-Julius S. Scott, "«Negroes in Foreign Bottoms»: Sailors, Slaves, and Communication," Laurent Dubois & Julius S. Scott, eds., *Origins of the Black Atlantic* (New York: Routledge, 2010), pages 69-98. NYUclasses

- Laurent Dubois, *Avengers of the New World. The Story of the Haitian Revolution*. Chapter 4, Fire in the cane, pages 91-114. NYUclasses