ENGL 6330: Piracy in Early American Literature
Spring 2018, Three Credit Hours

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Course Description:

This course examines the literature of piracy in early America. We will read works by and about pirates, ranging from first-person adventure tales to novels featuring pirates as heroes and villains. Our analysis of these works will be driven by the following questions:
Why was the figure of the pirate such an important and enduring figure in early American literature and culture? What did the pirate represent--politically, economically, culturally--to early American writers? How does the literature of piracy help us understand the historical development of nationalism, imperialism, and capitalism?

Teaching Philosophy:

This course is designed to foster active learning. I believe that the most transformative educational experiences occur when students articulate for themselves and reflect regularly on the significance of course material through dialogue. I enter this course as your partner in this process of discovery and dialogue. I will serve the class as a guide familiar with the terrain of early America. I expect that you will learn from me, and I expect to learn from you. This course depends for its success on teacher and student alike reading carefully, thinking deeply, and engaging substantively with the texts and with each other.

Objectives:

ENGL 6330 has a set of course-specific objectives. Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:
- Identify major trends in the literary representation of pirates and piracy in early American literature
- Compare and contrast the representation of pirates and piracy at critical junctures in early American history
- Situate the literature of piracy within broader historical and cultural contexts of significance to early American studies

These objectives correspond to the following IDEA objectives:
- Learning to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view (Essential)
- Gaining a broader understanding and appreciation of intellectual/cultural activity (Important)
- Developing skill in expressing oneself orally or in writing (Important)

Textbooks:

Defoe, *General History of the Pyrates*
Exquemelin, *Buccaneers of America*
Fenimore Cooper, *The Pilot and Red Rover*
Melville, *Billy Budd and Other Tales*
Rediker, *Villains of All Nations*
Tyler, *The Algerine Captive*

Course Structure:

This course explores the literatures of piracy in early America via a general introduction and four thematic units:
1. The Lore and Lure of Piracy
2. The Caribbean Buccaneers
3. The Golden Age
4. Barbary Piracy
5. Fictional Afterlives

Each unit centers on foundational primary and secondary texts. The thematic units are designed to familiarize you with major periods and movements in the history of piracy in the Americas and to enable you to discern important similarities and differences in each of these subsections of the course.

Assignments:

Précis:
You will compile short précis of primary and secondary works at regular intervals during the course. These précis will demonstrate your close reading and analytical abilities. They will also demonstrate your facility with academic writing. Individual entries should be 250 words. Précis will be shared with the class via the Journals tool to foster intellectual community and collaborative learning.

Discussion Boards:
Discussion boards will offer you an opportunity to share your insights and questions about course materials and to benefit from the insights and questions of others. I will post prompts and queries regularly throughout the course, and students are encouraged to do so as well.

Synchronous Meetings:
At key intervals, we will hold whole-class synchronous meetings to discuss broad patterns in our primary and secondary texts. Synchronous meetings will offer an additional opportunity to create intellectual community and will offer as well an opportunity to hone advanced communication skills necessary for success in the profession.

Students who are unable to participate in synchronous meetings due to significant extenuating circumstances will be offered alternative accommodations.

Short Essay:
You will write one short essay of 1250 words that demonstrates your graduate-level close reading and research skills. You will select one primary text or two related primary texts and offer an analysis of their significance for the literary history of piracy that incorporates current research from reputable sources. I will expect that you offer a thesis that is informed by and that responds critically to the arguments put forth by contemporary scholars of piracy.

Annotated Bibliography of Criticism:
You will compile an annotated bibliography of criticism on piracy in early American literature that includes ten sources. Your ten sources must include a mix of academic monographs and articles from reputable presses and journals. Your bibliography should focus on a specific era or theme within the course (Barbary piracy, or 19th-century fictional depictions of pirates, for example). Your bibliography will include an introduction of 500 words explaining its thematic focus and distilling its overall findings. Following the introduction, you will include individual annotations, in alphabetical order, with an average length of 250 words.

Final Project:
Final projects will be tailored to individual students' interests and career aspirations. I will set up individual conferences to discuss potential final projects with each student. Once we agree on an appropriate project, I will assist in the formulation of a work plan to help ensure its successful completion.

Grading Plan & Scale:

Grading Plan:
This course will evaluate your progress toward our main objectives through a series of discussions and formal writing assignments. The grading plan is as follows:

Précis: 15%
Discussion Boards: 15%
Synchronous Discussions: 15%
Short Essay: 15%
Annotated Bibliography of Criticism: 15%
Final Project: 25%

Grading Scale:
A: 90-100
B: 80-89
C: 70-79
D: 60-69
F: 0-59

Policies

Class Policies:

Submission of Work & Late Work:
All major assignments must be submitted via the appropriate application following the appropriate protocols by the stipulated due date. Work may not be submitted by any other means. Late work will not be accepted, except in the following cases: university-sponsored events, documented religious observances, and documented disabilities that require specific modifications to major assignments. Students in these categories must provide me with appropriate documentation at the beginning of the term if accommodations are to be made.

Exceptions will also be made for students who experience a major life event. Such students should approach me as soon as possible to devise an alternate work plan. Exceptions of this sort will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

Email Protocols:
I do not correspond via email about academic performance, attendance, or matters communicated clearly via the syllabus and course announcements. For inquiries of general interest to the class, please use the Virtual Office. For queries of a personal or private nature, please schedule a meeting via the following link calendly.com/dr-jmpayton.

University Policies:

Academic Honesty: https://www.shsu.edu/dotAsset/728eec25-f780-4dcf-932c-03d68cade002.pdf

Students with Disabilities: https://www.shsu.edu/dotAsset/187f9029-a4c6-4fb4-aea9-2d501f2a60f3.pdf

Student Absences on Religious Holy Days: https://www.shsu.edu/dotAsset/0953c7d0-7c04-4b29-a3fc-3bf0738e87d8.pdf

Academic Grievance Procedures for Students: https://www.shsu.edu/dotAsset/bb0d849d-6af2-4128-a9fa-f8c989138491.pdf

Visitors in the Classroom: Only registered students may attend class. Exceptions may be granted on a case-by-case basis. These must be cleared with me in advance. Visitors must not distract or disrupt the class.

Instructor Evaluations:
Students will be asked to complete a course/instructor evaluation form toward the end of the semester.

Schedule:

Notes:

* All readings are from course textbooks unless otherwise noted. Readings from other sources will be labeled "supplementary" and will be available in PDF in the Resources section of our course space.

* Suggested daily schedules and assignment due dates are posted within Blackboard.

Introduction: The Lore and Lure of Piracy
Dates: 1.17-1.28

The Buccaneer Era
Dates: 1.29-2.11

The Golden Age
Dates: 2.19-3.4

Barbary
Dates: 3.26-4.8

Fictional Afterlives
Dates: 4.9-4.29