

DEPARTMENT OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

COURSE OUTLINE – Fall 2026

HI2050 (EC): Pirates and Piracy – 3 (3-0-0) 45 Hours for 15 Weeks

Northwestern Polytechnic acknowledges that our campuses are located on Treaty 8 territory, the ancestral and present-day home to many diverse First Nations, Metis, and Inuit people. We are grateful to work, live and learn on the traditional territory of Duncan's First Nation, Horse Lake First Nation and Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation, who are the original caretakers of this land.

We acknowledge the history of this land and we are thankful for the opportunity to walk together in friendship, where we will encourage and promote positive change for present and future generations.

INSTRUCTOR:	Dr. Daryl White	PHONE:	780-539-2083
OFFICE:	B301A (Inside B301)	E-MAIL:	dawhite@nwpolytech.ca
OFFICE HOURS:	1:00–2:30, Monday and Wednesday or by appointment		

CALENDAR DESCRIPTION: This course examines pirates and piracy in their political, economic, technological, and social context from antiquity to present. Particular attention will be paid to the role of the emerging state in defining, sanctioning, and punishing piracy; the role of race, gender, and class in the social world of the pirate; and the social memory and popular image of the pirate.

PREREQUISITE(S): None

COREQUISITE(S): None

REQUIRED MATERIALS: Links to readings and other materials will be made available on myClass.

DELIVERY MODE(S): Asynchronous

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

By the end of this course, students will be able to

- Describe and discuss details and patterns of events in global pirate history,
- Discuss the historical construction of piracy and its relevance to today,
- Share historical opinions and insights with peers in a group setting,
- Critically assess source materials and construct historical interpretations,
- And communicate research findings and interpretations.

TRANSFERABILITY:

Please consult the Alberta Transfer Guide for more information. You may check the transferability of this course at the Alberta Transfer Guide main page <http://www.transferralberta.alberta.ca>.

**** For courses with alpha (letter) grading, a grade of D or D+ may not be acceptable for transfer to other post-secondary institutions. Students are cautioned that it is their responsibility to contact the receiving institutions to ensure transferability.**

EVALUATIONS:

Grade Component	Value	Notes
Learning Activities • Quizzes – 1.5 % each • Content Reviews – 7% each • Discussion Forum Posts – 2% each	35%	Students can complete a range of activities to earn this portion of the grade. This section recognizes student work for completing a variety of learning activities.
Research Journal • Students may submit this assignment in one of several formats but must use a different format from their interpretation comparison. ○ 1,000-word written essay in academic style ○ 700-word infographic ○ 700-word poster ○ 7-8 minute video	20%	Historical curiosity leads us on searches for information. In the age of electronic information, we have extensive resources available to us. This assignment asks you to follow a thread through the history of piracy. You might start with a well known figure like Captain Kidd, then look into his trial, and wonder if his punishment

Other formats may be suggested but audio-only (e.g. podcast) formats will not work for this assignment.		was typical and whether historians consider it a fair trial. You'll document your research journey in a diary or journal format. Be sure to explain - What your initial question was? - Where you stopped as you looked, how you found the source, what you found in it, and where that led you next - Give your assessment of the sources you looked at, why did you trust the information? - What did you learn over the course of your journey? Your journey should include at least 5 stops at different sources – such as 5 different articles, posts, webpages, books, YouTube videos. Projects must be documented in APA or Chicago Notes-Bibliography style – see further requirements below. This submitted work will be evaluated by Turnitin software within myClass.
Historical Source Assessment Students may submit this assignment in one of several formats but must use a different	25%	The history of piracy often faces a challenge with the reliability of its sources. Are they merely tales repeated for generations or is there fact in them?

format from their source assessment. ○ 1,500-word written essay in academic style ○ 1000-word infographic ○ 1000-word poster and abstract ○ 11-13 minute video ○ 13-15 minute podcast		This source assessment asks students to choose a person, event, or group from the history of piracy and to explore the primary sources that are the basis for research on the chosen topic. How confident should we be in what we think we know? What strengths and limitations are there? Include at least 3 primary sources in your assessment. Projects must be documented in APA or Chicago Notes-Bibliography style – see further requirements below. This submitted work will be evaluated by Turnitin software within myClass.
Course Synthesis and Reflection	20%	This will be due by the end of exam period, 6pm on December 19.

GRADING CRITERIA:

Please note that most institutions will not accept your course for transfer credit **IF** your grade is **less than C-**.

Alpha Grade	4-point Equivalent	Percentage Guidelines		Alpha Grade	4-point Equivalent	Percentage Guidelines
A+	4.0	95-100		C+	2.3	67-69
A	4.0	85-94		C	2.0	63-66
A-	3.7	80-84		C-	1.7	60-62
B+	3.3	77-79		D+	1.3	55-59

B	3.0	73-76		D	1.0	50-54
B-	2.7	70-72		F	0.0	00-49

COURSE SCHEDULE/TENTATIVE TIMELINE:

This timetable is tentative. It will likely change to reflect student responses and questions. A reading schedule for the open-source textbook will be posted on myClass.

Date	Topic	Reading	Topic Questions	Assignments
September 2 to 13	Welcome and Overview	Little, "Of Black Flags and Bloody Banners," in <i>Pirate Hunting</i> , pp. 1-16.	What are your images and ideas of pirates? What does the timeline of pirate history look like?	
September 14 to 27	Ancient Piracy	Little, "Heroes of the Fantastic," "In the Age of Ancient Empires," and "Of Laurel Leaves and Pirate Princes" in <i>Pirate Hunting</i> , pp. 17-70.	How do we distinguish piracy from warfare? How did societies legitimize or fight piracy?	
September 28 to October 11	Medieval Piracy	Little, "The Scourge from the North," "A Sea Roving Free-for-All," and "Of Faith, Galleys, and Greed" in <i>Pirate Hunting</i> , pp. 71-132.	Were the Vikings pirates? How does piracy in the medieval era show the limits of the medieval state? How did this era lay the foundations for later piracy? How the Barbary Corsairs compare to other pirates?	Content Review #1 Due October 16
October 12 to 25	Early Modern Piracy up to the Golden Age	Little, "Spanish Galleons and Portuguese Carracks" and "Of Blind Eyes and Opportunity" in <i>Pirate Hunting</i> , pp. 133-168.	Why did European expansion create opportunities for piracy? How should we draw the line between the "golden age" and the earlier buccaneer era?	
October 26 to	The Golden Age of Piracy	Little, "The Real Pirates of the Caribbean" in <i>Pirate Hunting</i> , pp. 133-168.	Why was this the Golden Age of Piracy?	Content Review #2 Due November 6

November 8			How should we approach the periodization of the Golden Age – beginning and end? Why did the Golden Age end?	
November 9 to 29	Asian Piracy	Little, "Pirates, Rebels, and Warriors" in <i>Pirate Hunting</i> , pp. 235–250.		
November 30 to Dec. 9	Digital and Modern Piracy	Little, "Ships, SEALs, and Satellites" in <i>Pirate Hunting</i> , pp. 269–286.	Why was there no Canadian revolution? What was the bargain of Confederation? Why did some reject it? Who was left out?	Content Review #3 Due December 4
December 19				Course Synthesis due

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

General

- Take as much as you can from this course. Your instructor and classmates will provide you with opportunities to reflect on what you know and believe and to learn new things, but learning does not have to and should not take place just during class time. Pursue questions, chase ideas down online rabbit holes and see where they take you. These facts and ideas can only enrich your understanding and your coursework.
- Remember that this is just a course on a particular subject. Your performance in the course is not a measure of anything more than your ability to learn the history of piracy and complete the assessments. Submitting work late or not doing as well as you would like on an assessment is not a measure of you as a person. You are a learner and that means making mistakes. As long as you are trying your best to get as much as you can from the course (and this may depend on your personal circumstances), you have nothing to apologize for.

Time Management and Coursework

- Students are expected to commit the required time to complete this course. Please plan accordingly. Some flexibility will be provided around due dates, but you need to consult with your instructor.
- Regular connection to the myClass page is important to success in HI2050. Online courses can challenge your planning and time management. Try to schedule time for this course as you would for courses you would take in person.
- Respectful participation in course discussions contributes to your understanding and participation in myClass forums contributes to your myClass activities grade.
- All assignments must follow the requirements laid out on myClass and discussed in class. Topics must be approved by the instructor unless specified otherwise on myClass.
- All assignments must be original work for this course. Work previously submitted for other courses will not be accepted in this course. Students found to have submitted previous work will receive a 0% for the assignment.
- All written assignments must be word-processed. It is particularly important to save a copy of any written work handed in for credit or grading.
- All assignments must be submitted electronically via myClass. This procedure will be demonstrated in class.
- The source assessment and interpretation comparison are to be submitted electronically within 48 hours of the deadline to provide some flexibility. Work submitted after this grace period will be assessed at a diminishing value of 5% for every 24 hour period or part thereof to a minimum value of 70% of the grade. If you find yourself struggling, reach out to your instructor.

- Students will be assessed on their research, synthesis and writing in the course assignments. The presentation of information in terms of organization and writing will be assessed in grading along with the research and analysis. Referencing in Chicago Notes–Bibliography or APA style is a requirement for course assignments
- Machine learning systems, commonly referred to as "AI," are useful tools, but must be used appropriately and with caution. Students are developing knowledge and skills and should not outsource these to machines. In this course, you are encouraged to consider how these systems can help you find information and refine the presentation of your thoughts, but you will also be required to demonstrate that you have verified this information and are responsible for what you present.
- All written work submitted for this course, unless otherwise noted, requires academic referencing in the most recent Chicago Notes–Bibliography or APA Style. This includes both in-text referencing and a source list (bibliography or references).
- In-text referencing additionally requires specific page references for all paginated sources (sources with page numbers or in documents with identifiable page numbers, such as pdfs). APA does not normally require this unless it is a direct quotation, but this course requires it for all references.
- Students are further required to submit representative images, photographs or scans of printed work and screenshots of the sources referenced. This should include a minimum of the title page and one other page referenced in the student's work. These images can be shared as a cloud folder link or uploaded directly to the myClass submission box.
- Works not meeting these requirements will be returned to the student ungraded. Students will be permitted to revise the work subject to a 10% penalty for the first revision and a 25% penalty for the second revision. Revised

work which still fails to meet the requirements after a second revision will receive a 0% grade.

- For cases in which submitted work exhibits concerning patterns or raises questions for the instructor about its creation and the student's intellectual effort involved, students may be required to submit to an oral examination regarding the work at the discretion of the instructor. Failure to participate in the oral examination will result in an assigned grade of 0 for the assessment. If, following the oral examination, the instructor still has concerns about the work, the academic misconduct provisions of the Student Rights and Responsibilities policy (linked below) may be applied. Students whose work has raised concerns will not be permitted to complete the take-home final exam.

STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT:

Academic Misconduct will not be tolerated. For a more precise definition of academic misconduct and its consequences, refer to the Student Rights and Responsibilities policy available <https://www.nwpolytech.ca/about/polytechnic-leadership/policies-directory>.

****Note:** all Academic and Administrative policies are available on the same page.