

# **The Political Economy of Piracy**

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Professor Johan Mathew, SAS - History

TF 9:50-11:30A

Honors College Rm S124

College Avenue Campus

**Will Count towards SAS -History Major**

**Will Count towards SAS -History Minor**

This course uses the history of piracy as a lens to explore some fundamental concepts in economics. We will focus on piracy in the "Golden Age" but look at these ideas comparatively with piracy in the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean throughout world history. The course will explore how piracy functions as economic justice, forms of political economy within pirate communities, and the forms of political economy that promote piracy. With piracy as a springboard, we will go on to examine a number of different forms of illicit economic activity including copyright piracy, counterfeiting, human trafficking and gun running. The course takes crime and violence to be an integral component in the wider economy and you will consider how it impacts the formal economy. These topics will allow us to interrogate key concepts in economic and political thought and to understand the role of institutions in regulating the economy. The course readings are drawn from a broad array of disciplines, but our questions will primarily be drawn from economics and our methods from history.

## *Course Objectives:*

- 1) The course materials will allow you to identify different economic concepts and evaluate how they are applied in historical contexts.
- 2) Gain a more sophisticated understanding of piracy, crime and informal activity and their role in the global economy.
- 3) Gain a deeper knowledge of different varieties of piracy in world history and in contemporary global affairs.

## **Required Texts**

Marcus Rediker, *Villains of All Nations* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2004)

Peter Leeson, *The Invisible Hook* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009)

Moises Naim, *Illicit: How Smugglers, Traffickers and Copycats are Hijacking the Global Economy* (New York: Anchor Books, 2006)

## **Recommended Texts**

R.T. Naylor, *Wages of Crime: Black Markets, Illegal Finance and the Underworld Economy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press)

Adrian Johns, *Piracy: The Intellectual Property Wars from Gutenberg to Gates* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010)