

LIS 340: What Is (Or Was) A Book?

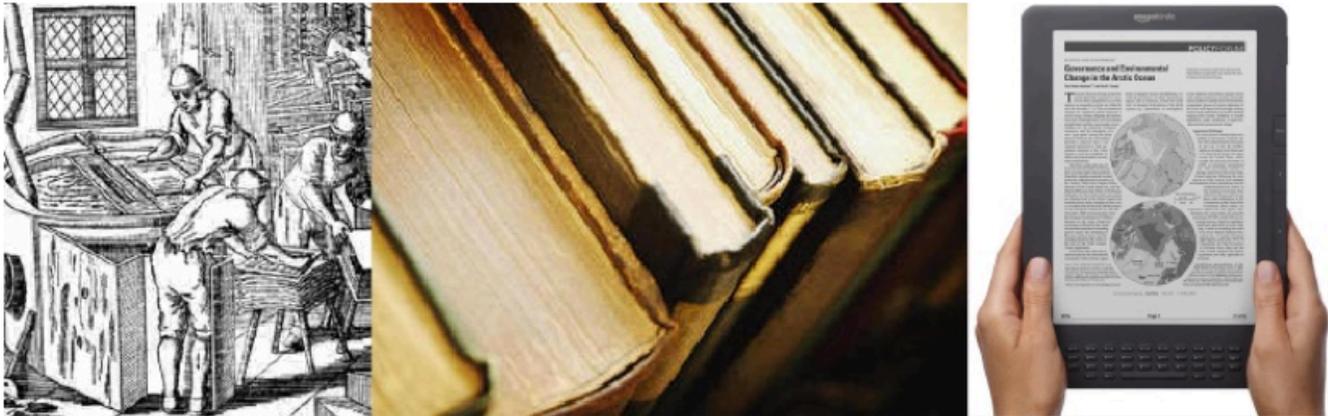
Spring 2013

Prof. Jonathan Senchyne

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4255 Helen C. White Hal

Class meets Tuesdays and Thursdays
in Media Studio A, Room 2252A College Library, 2:30-3:45 pm
office hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1-2 pm



Course Description

This course is framed by a question about what books are, what books have been, and what books might be: past, present, and future. We live in a moment of rapid media evolution, and yet we have seen the book endure as a form. Academic fields including book history, digital humanities, media studies, and even human computer interaction (to name only a few) all have something at stake in the form of the book – not to mention industry-oriented interests in e-readers, book retail, publishing – and likewise this course will approach the book from a number of perspectives. Our primary goal is to understand the book as an active technology that shapes peoples, perceptions, and cultures rather than as a passive receptacle of them. From this point of view we will explore everything from the folding of Shakespeare’s folios to the energy consumption of e-readers, from dedicated Harry Potter fans standing in line outside Barnes and Noble in the twenty-first century to Benjamin Franklin in the eighteenth. This course also meets the requirements for Comm B, which means we will also be thinking about our own written and spoken productions by way of this material.

Required Texts

- Ted Striphas – *The Late Age of Print: Everyday Book Culture from Consumerism to Control* Columbia University Press, 2009 (ISBN: 978-0-231-14815-3)
<http://www.thelateageofprint.org/download/>
- Keri Smith – *This Is Not A Book*, Perigree, 2009 (ISBN: 978-0-399-53521-5)
- Andrew Piper – *Book Was There: Reading In Electronic Times*, University of Chicago Press,

2012 (ISBN: 978-0-226-66978-6)

- PDFs – If I make a text available via PDF I encourage you to print it out over reading it on an electronic device. But, if you choose to read it on an electronic device, I want to see that you have a system for active notetaking while reading. This is true if you are reading it on paper, too, by the way.

Course Goals

Students will

- Develop understanding of essential questions of book history, media, and information studies.
- Develop critical reading skills, including analysis of form, content, and historical context
- Make productive use of library resources in the humanities, including research of primary and secondary sources and their proper citation in writing assignments
- Practice preparatory writing strategies, including drafting, proofreading, revising, and peer review
- Practice skilled use of thesis, argument, evidence, organization, style, mechanics, and awareness of audience in both written work and class discussion
- Practice skilled oral performance in both informal and formal presentations

Course Requirements

Attendance, participation and preparation – 20% of course grade, total, based on the following:

- **Class participation and preparedness (10%)** – Your prepared presence in class each day is required. Prepared students will have done the required reading and will bring a copy of the reading to class. Please be on time; being ten or more minutes late to class will be considered an absence. This seminar meets only twice per week and will include lecture, media-viewing, writing activities, and discussion, which cannot be re-created if you are absent. Answering one's cell phone, text-messaging, or Internet browsing during class will constitute an absence. If you must miss class due to an emergency, it is your responsibility to find out from another student what was covered that day. Your participation in class discussions is also required. Absences, lateness, unpreparedness, and silence will adversely affect your class participation grade. *More than three unexcused absences may result in a failing grade for the course.*
- **In-class presentations (10%)** – Students will be asked to present their research and to open our class discussion at least twice during the semester. (Further details on presentation requirements will be given in class.) Unscheduled reading quizzes may also be given, the grades of which will factor into your attendance and participation grade.
- **Individual meetings with me, your instructor** – There will be at least one *required* meeting with me, to be scheduled later in the semester. I am also available during weekly office hours and by scheduled appointment. If you schedule an appointment with me, don't stand me up! Failing to attend a scheduled meeting with me will be treated like an absence from class.

Written work – 80% of course grade, total, based on the following:

- **Writing/creative assignments, to be completed both in and outside of class (40%)** – These include blog posts, proposals, essay drafts, and research assignments. Informal writing assignments will receive brief comments, but not letter grades. Look for further instructions
- **Essay assignments (40%)** –
 - * All written assignments completed outside of class must be submitted in Times New Roman 12 point font, double-spaced, with 1 inch margins. All formatting and style elements and in-text citations must conform to MLA guidelines. Formal essay assignments must also include an appropriate Works Cited page. Please staple assignments longer than one page.

- * Any writing for this course may be shared with other class members, for instructional purposes.

Grading

Informal writing assignments will be graded on a Pass/Fail basis. Either an assignment is sufficient and receives full credit (an A), or it is insufficient or incomplete and receives no credit (a zero, not just an F).

Formal writing assignments will be graded according to the following scale:

A=94% AB= 88% B=82% BC= 77% C=72% D=68% F=50% or lower

Please see the “Grading Guidelines” handout for more information on formal writing assessment.

At the end of the semester, a single letter grade will be assigned for participation and preparation, and these will be averaged with grades for formal and informal writing.

The Writing Center

Writing well is hard work. A major goal of this course is to learn to write, clear, coherent, and compelling writing about literature. The Writing Center is a valuable campus resource and can be utilized by both inexperienced and advanced student writers who want help organizing ideas for an essay or further constructive criticism on a draft. To schedule an appointment, you may go to the Writing Center in person (6171 Helen C. White Hall) or call 608-263-1992. Check their website (<http://www.writing.wisc.edu/>) for information about locations and hours of satellite locations.

Class Conduct

Seminars thrive on the contributions of their members. In order to maintain an atmosphere of open, constructive discussion, seminar members must be respectful of each other’s person, work, and ideas.

University Policies

The instructor respects and upholds University policies and regulations pertaining to the observation of religious holidays; assistance available to physically handicapped, visually and/or hearing impaired students; plagiarism; sexual harassment; and discrimination based on race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or gender identification. All students are advised to become familiar with the respective University regulations and are encouraged to bring any questions or concerns to the attention of the instructor.

Students with Special Needs

In compliance with the University policy and equal access laws, I am available to discuss appropriate accommodations that may be required for students with disabilities. Requests for accommodations should be made at the beginning of the semester, except in unusual circumstances, so that arrangements can be made. Students are encouraged to register with the McBurney Disability Resource Center (1305 Linden Drive; 608-263-2741; <http://www.mcburney.wisc.edu>) to request academic accommodations.

Academic Integrity

Work you submit for this course must have been written for this course and not another and must originate with you in form and content with all contributory sources fully and specifically acknowledged. Make yourself familiar with the University’s Academic Integrity Policy at <http://students.wisc.edu/doso/acadintegrity.html>. Please see <http://students.wisc.edu/doso/students.html> for more information on academic misconduct, including how to avoid plagiarism. In this course, the normal penalty for a violation of the academic integrity policy is an “F” for the term.

CALENDAR of Readings and Writing Assignments

📖 = Reading assignment, to be completed by the date for which it is listed.

📝 = Writing assignment, to be completed by the date for which it is listed

Course Introduction

WEEK ONE

Tuesday, January 22nd -- Class Introduction – Brainstorming: What Is A Book?

Thursday, January 24th – The Contemporary Printscape

📖 Robert Darnton, *The Case for Books*, vii-58

What Is A Book?

WEEK TWO

Tuesday, January 29th –

📖 Joseph Dane, *What Is A Book?: The Study of Early Printed Books*, 1-100.

Thursday, January 31st –

📖 Joseph Dane, *What Is A Book?: The Study of Early Printed Books*, 101-156.

Materialities of Reading

WEEK THREE

ALL WEEK: Please purchase a copy of the *New York Times* (\$0.60/day at the campus bookstore for students) each day this week, Monday-Friday and spend one hour engaging with it each day. You can read it, do the crossword, fold it up, look at the pictures, whatever. Just do it for an hour each day. Keep a journal in which you reflect on the experience.

Tuesday, February 5th

📖 Folger Shakespeare Library LUNA image archive project.

Thursday, February 7th

📖 William Powers, “Hamlet’s Blackberry: Why Paper Is Eternal.”

www.hks.harvard.edu/presspol/publications/papers/discussion_papers/d39_powers.pdf

📖 Michael Agger, “Lazy Eyes, How We Read Online,” <http://www.slate.com/id/2193552/>

Interactivity Part 1

WEEK FOUR

Tuesday, February 12th – Cutting and Pasting

📖 The Jefferson Bible: <http://americanhistory.si.edu/jeffersonbible/>

📖 Digital Dickinson - <https://acdc.amherst.edu/browse/collection/collection:ed>

📖 Emily Dickinson poems, TBA.

📝 Newspaper reading reflection essay.

Thursday, February 14th – Paleography

📖 Hancock, John, 1671-1752. *Commonplace book* : manuscript, 1687. MS Am 121. Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass. <http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:FHCL.HOUGH:3372490>

📖 <http://ocp.hul.harvard.edu/reading/commonplace.html>

📖 Recipe at top of this page from *Cookery and Medicinal Recipes*: <http://t.co/81UtnXLL>

📄 Transcribe this recipe!

📄 Essay #1 Proposals plus Prospective Thesis Paragraph Due

The Late Age of Print

WEEK FIVE

Tuesday, February 19th

📖 Ted Striphas, *The Late Age of Print: Everyday Book Culture from Consumerism to Control*, 47 - 110

Thursday, February 21st

📖 Ted Striphas, *The Late Age of Print*, 141-174

“Commerce with books”

WEEK SIX

Tuesday, February 26th

📖 Jean-Luc Nancy, *On the Commerce of Thinking: Of Books and Bookstores*

📄 Academic Book Review of *The Late Age of Print* **and** Amazon.com [style] Book Review of *The Late Age of Print*

Thursday, February 28th

No formal class meeting this date because I have to travel to a conference. Instead, please visit one (or more) of the independent bookstores [Room of One’s Own/Avol’s, Rainbow, Paul’s] near campus for at least an hour, making observations. Report observations, instructions to follow.

📄 Bookstore Field Report Short Essay

📄 Essay 1: First Iteration Due

Media and Self-Representation

WEEK SEVEN

Tuesday, March 5th - *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*

📖 Franklin, Parts 1 and II

Thursday, March 7th

📖 Franklin, Parts III and IV

📖 Green and Stallybrass, *Benjamin Franklin, Writer and Printer*, Chapter 1, “The Writer as Printer”

WEEK EIGHT

Tuesday, March 12th

📖 Ziff, *Writing in the New Nation*, Chapter 5, “Writing for Print”

📄 Franklin Collective Annotated Bibliography Due

Thursday, March 14th – Franklin’s Media Staying Power
📖 Benjamin Franklin Episode of the *The Office*
📄 Essay #1 Second Iteration Due

Undoing Dickinson, Redoing Dickinson

WEEK NINE

Tuesday, March 19th

📖 Virginia Jackson, “Dickinson Undone” *Dickinson’s Misery*, 16-68

Thursday, March 21st

📖 Alexandra Socarides, “Introduction” and “Dickinson’s Sheets” *Dickinson Unbound*, 3-48

SPRING BREAK – March 25th-29th

Interactivity Part 2: Document your use of *This Is Not A Book* over Spring Break.

Thinking and Playing with Print/Book/Digital Culture

WEEK TEN

Tuesday, April 2nd

📄 Digital Dickinson Project Presentations Day 1

Thursday, April 4th

📄 Digital Dickinson Project Presentations Day 2

Talking Papers

WEEK ELEVEN

Tuesday, April 9th

📖 Herman Melville, “The Paradise of Bachelors and the Tartarus of Maids”

Thursday, April 11th

📖 Herman Melville, “The Paradise of Bachelors and the Tartarus of Maids”

📖 “Inside Amazon’s Warehouse” http://articles.mcall.com/2011-09-18/news/mc-allentown-amazon-complaints-20110917_1_warehouse-workers-heat-stress-brutal-heat

WEEK TWELVE

Tuesday, April 16th

📖 “The Adventures of a Quire of Paper”

📖 *The Office*, “Scranton Commercial,”

http://www.nbc.com/The_Office/video/scranton-commercial/171571

📄 Essay 2 Proposal and Prospective Thesis Paragraph

Thursday, April 18th

📖 “The Adventures of a Quire of Paper”

📄 “How Green Is My iPad?”

<http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2010/04/04/opinion/04opchart.html>

WEEK THIRTEEN

Tuesday, April 23rd

📖 Andrew Piper, *Book Was There: Reading in Electronic Times*, vii - 82

Thursday, April 25th

📖 Andrew Piper, *Book Was There: Reading in Electronic Times*, 83 - end

Unclass – Students' Choice

WEEK FOURTEEN

Tuesday, April 30th

📖 Students' Choice

Thursday, May 2nd

📖 Students' Choice

Feeling Books

WEEK FIFTEEN

Tuesday, May 7th

📖 Selected Walt Whitman poems, TBA

Thursday, May 9th

Evaluations and Goodbyes!

📄 Essay #2 Draft DUE

Monday, May 13th – Final Exam Date

📄 Essay #2 DUE