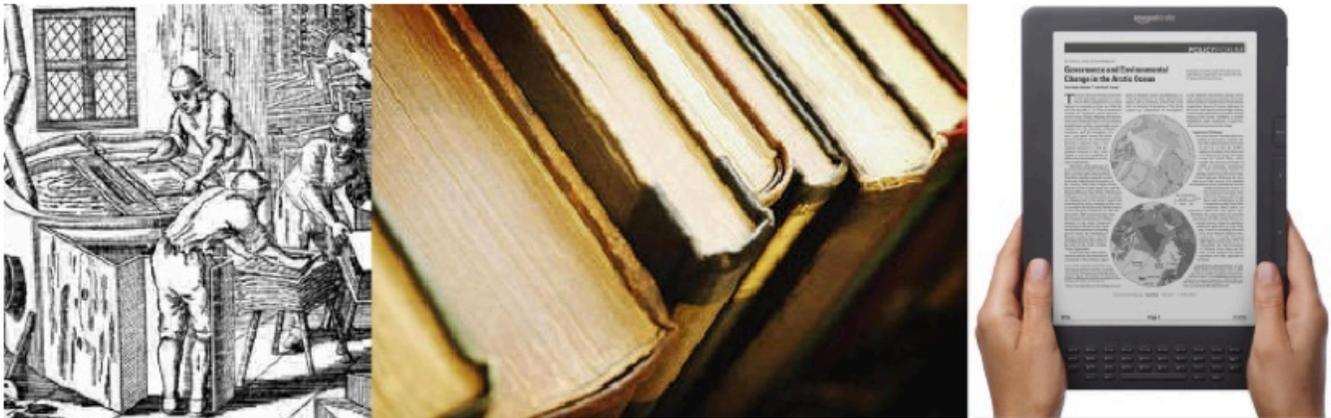


LIS 340: What Is A Book?

Spring 2015
Professor Jonathan Senchyne
senchyne@wisc.edu

Class meets Tuesdays and Thursdays 11:00am-12:15pm
in the Charles Bunge Room, 4207 Helen C. White Hall
Office hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10am-11am, 4255 Helen C. White Hall



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. The course also assumes that “book” is a capacious term, or a placeholding one, an object that becomes the site of questions and debates about a variety of media, expressions, and recording practices. We live in a moment of rapid media evolution, and yet we have seen the book endure and change as a form. Academic fields including book history, digital humanities, media studies, and 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* (and, in a wider sense, *information*) as an active technology that shapes peoples, perceptions, and cultures rather than serving as a passive receptacle of them. This course also meets the requirements for Comm B, which means we will be thinking about our own written and spoken productions by way of this material.

Required Books

- Benjamin Franklin – *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*, (Norton Critical Editions), ISBN: 0393935612
- Nicole Howard – *The Book: The Life Story of a Technology*, (Johns Hopkins University Press), 2009, ISBN: 0801893119
- Alan Jacobs – *The Pleasures of Reading in the Age of Distraction* (Oxford University Press) ISBN: 0199747490

- Keri Smith – *This Is Not A Book*, Perigree, 2009 (ISBN: 978-0-399-53521-5)
- Hannah Webster Foster: *The Coquette and the Boarding School* (Norton Critical Editions) ISBN: 0393931676
- PDFs – If I make a text available via PDF you may choose to print it out or read 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.

Required books are available for sale at the Rainbow Bookstore Cooperative, a short walk from Helen C. White Hall located at 426 W. Gilman Street. Their website is: <http://rainbowbookstore.coop/> There is a wonderful cat who lives in the store. His name is Harvey. Required books are also available for 2-hour loans from the reserve desk in the SLIS Library on the 4th floor of Helen C. White. You can also use UW System libraries, Interlibrary Loan, or the Madison Public Library to acquire copies of the required books.

Required Materials

- 5 days of a weekly newspaper, preferably the *New York Times* or the *Wisconsin State Journal*.
- Cross-stitch sampler kit: http://www.ourgreenhouse.com/ProductDetails.asp?ProductCode=his-minicro&Click=18030&utm_source=googleshopping&utm_medium=shoppingengine&gclid=CIXRnL-U88ICFeXm7AodlGEAVA

The above are for required weeklong hands-on media literacies learning activities. Newspapers can be purchased at the Campus Store for about \$0.60 per day. M-F papers should also be available at coffee shops, grocers, gas stations, bookstores, newspaper vending machines around town. Availability is much better in the morning. The cross-stitch sampler kit is only available from the vendor linked above. We will discuss ordering procedure in class.

Course Goals

Students will

- Develop understanding of essential questions in the fields of book history, media studies, and information studies.
- Become familiar the history of media technology in America/the U.S. from the colonial period to the present with emphasis placed on the long history of technology, not exceptionalist presentism.
- 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:

- * 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.
- * 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 the differently-abled, 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

I am available to discuss appropriate accommodations that may be required for students who are differently abled. 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 assignment and possibly for the course.

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

WEEK ONE

Setting the Scene

Tuesday, January 20th

Course Introduction: Syllabus Overview and Preliminary Discussion “What Is A Book?”

Thursday, January 22nd

Setting the Scene: The Materialities of Reading Today

📖 Naomi S. Baron, “The Case Against E-Readers: Why Reading Paper Books Is Better for Your Mind” *Washington Post*,

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2015/01/12/the-case-against-kindle-why-reading-paper-books-is-better-for-your-mind-and-body/>

📖 “The Future of the Book, From Papyrus to Pixels” *The Economist* (may require a free registration to access content online), <http://www.economist.com/news/essays/21623373-which-something-old-and-powerful-encountered-vault>

WEEK TWO

Books, Print, and People: Reading, Printing, and Politics

ALL WEEK: Please purchase a copy of the *New York Times* (\$0.60/day at the campus bookstore for students) or the *Wisconsin State Journal* 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, Thursday, January 27th

📖 Benedict Anderson, “Introduction” and “Cultural Roots” from *Imagined Communities*, pgs 1-38

In Class: Using digital resources for historical newspaper research

Thursday, Thursday, January 29th

No reading. Lecture on print and public continues. Discussion of newspaper reading practices.

WEEK THREE

The History of a Technology

Tuesday, February 3rd

📖 Nicole Howard: *The Book: The Life Story of a Technology*

Thursday, February 5th

📖 Nicole Howard: *The Book: The Life Story of a Technology*

WEEK FOUR

Petting Zoo

Tuesday, February 10th

Half of Class Goes to Silver Buckle & Half to Rare Books

Thursday, February 12th

Half of Class Goes to Silver Buckle & Half to Rare Books

Friday, February 13th

📝 *Newspaper Reflection Essay*, due in Learn@UW dropbox

WEEK FIVE

Handwriting and Letters, and the Development of the Novel

Tuesday, February 17th

- 📖 Recipe at top of this page from *Cookery and Medicinal Recipes*: <http://t.co/81UtnXLL>
- 📖 Transcribe this recipe! (in class)
- 📖 Read 8-10 letters in the Abigail Kelley Foster digital collections:
<http://gigi.mwa.org/netpub/server.np?quickfind=&site=AKFoster&catalog=catalog&template=results.np&sorton=Filename&ascending=1>
- 📖 Intro to this collection: <http://www.americanantiquarian.org/abby-kelley-foster-papers-finding-aid>

Thursday, February 19th

No class meeting. Work on Wisconsin Historical Society archival letters project.

WEEK SIX

Letters and the Development of the Novel

Thursday, February 24th

- 📖 Hannah Webster Foster, *The Coquette*

Thursday, February 26th

- 📖 Hannah Webster Foster, *The Coquette*

Friday, February 27th

- 📖 Short essay on WHS Letters & Transcription, Due in Learn@UW Dropbox

WEEK SEVEN

Print and Representations of the Self

Tuesday, March 3rd

- 📖 Benjamin Franklin, *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*

Thursday, March 5th

- Academic Libraries and Library Research, with guest lecturer Anjali Bhasin
- 📖 Identify three examples of what you consider to be high quality online writing.

WEEK EIGHT

Printing and Soapmaking: Gender and the Book

Tuesday, March 10th

- 📖 Benjamin Franklin, *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*

Thursday, March 12th

- 📖 Excerpts from Jill Lepore, *The Book of Ages: The Life and Opinions of Jane Franklin*

Friday, March 13th

- 📖 Annotated Bibliography, due in Learn@UW dropbox
- 📖 750 word Internet mag essay on Foster or Franklin, due in Learn@UW dropbox

WEEK NINE

Pens and Needles: Gender and the Book

Both days: bring your cross-stitch sampler kits

Tuesday, March 17th

- 📖 Hunt Howell, "Spirits of Emulation: Readers, Samplers, and the Republican Girl" *American Literature*, 81.3, pgs 497-526.

Thursday, March 19th

- 📖 Anne Bradstreet, "The Prologue," "The Author to Her Book" and prefatory material to *The Tenth Muse Lately Sprung Up in America*

📖 John Winthrop's journal for 13 April 1645,
<https://books.google.com/books?id=O2s3AQAAMAAJ&dq=winthrop's%20journal&pg=PA225#v=onepage&q&f=false>

📖 Bethany Reid, "'Unfit for Light': Anne Bradstreet's Monstrous Birth" *The New England Quarterly*, Vol. 71, No. 4. (Dec., 1998), pp. 517-542.

WEEK TEN

The Humanities and Jobs

Tuesday, March 24th

Guests will visit class in person or via video conference to discuss how study in book history, media studies, and other closely-related humanities fields led to their current or former jobs.

Thursday, March 26th

Graduate School Options: What Is Library School? With Guest Lecturer Tanya Cobb

Friday, March 27th

📖 5-page essay due on Learn@UW dropbox

March 28th to April 5th Spring Break

📖 Keri Smith, *This Is Not A Book*

Have fun with this. The main question here is, what is "interactivity?"

WEEK ELEVEN

Race, Gender, and the Labor of the Book/Digital

Tuesday, April 7th

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

📖 Lydia H. Sigourney, "To A Shred of Linen"

Thursday, April 9th

📖 Mike Daisey, "Mr. Daisey and the Apple Factory"

<https://archive.org/details/thisamericanlife-misterdaisey>

<http://www.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/454/mr-daisey-and-the-apple-factory>

📖 Mike Daisey, Ira Glass, et. al., "Retraction"

<http://www.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/460/retraction>

WEEK TWELVE

The Book as Global Commodity

Tuesday, April 14th

📖 Ted Striphas, "Bringing Bookland Online" from *The Late Age of Print*

Thursday, April 16th

📖 George Packer, "Cheap Words" *New Yorker*, February 17, 2014

<http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2014/02/17/cheap-words>

📖 Mac McClelland, "I Was A Warehouse Wage Slave" *Mother Jones*, March/April 2012

<http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2012/02/mac-mcclelland-free-online-shipping-warehouses-labor>

📖 Adam Liptak, "Supreme Court Rules Against Worker Pay for Screenings in Amazon Warehouse Case" December 9, 2014.

http://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/10/business/supreme-court-rules-against-worker-pay-for-security-screenings.html?_r=0

📖 OPTIONAL: Integrity Staffing Services, Inc. v. Busk (2014)

http://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/14pdf/13-433_5h26.pdf

WEEK THIRTEEN

Privacy, Data, Books, Libraries, and Networks

Tuesday, April 21st

📖 Francine Prose, “They’re Watching You Read” *New York Review of Books*
<http://www.nybooks.com/blogs/nyrblog/2015/jan/13/reading-whos-watching/>

📖 Electronic Frontier Foundation E-Reader Privacy Chart,
<https://www.eff.org/deeplinks/2012/11/e-reader-privacy-chart-2012-update>

📖 American Library Association policies on privacy, confidentiality, and intellectual freedom

- <http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill/interpretations/privacy>
- <http://www.ala.org/Template.cfm?Section=ifissues&Template=/ContentManagement/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=25304>

📖 Sean Gallagher, “Adobe’s E-Book Reader sends your reading logs back to Adobe in plain text” *Ars Technica*, <http://arstechnica.com/security/2014/10/adobes-e-book-reader-sends-your-reading-logs-back-to-adobe-in-plain-text/>

📖 John Cassidy, “The Supreme Court Gets It Right on Cell Phone Privacy” *The New Yorker*
<http://www.newyorker.com/news/john-cassidy/the-supreme-court-gets-it-right-on-cell-phone-privacy>

📖 OPTIONAL: Riley v. California (2014)
http://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/13pdf/13-132_819c.pdf

Thursday, April 23rd

📖 dana boyd and Kate Crawford, “Six Provocations for Big Data” *SSRC*,
http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1926431

📖 Kieran Healey, “Using Metadata to Find Paul Revere”
<http://kieranhealy.org/blog/archives/2013/06/09/using-metadata-to-find-paul-revere/>

📖 Vox.com Explainer on the Snowden Bulk Metadata Collection Leaks
<http://www.vox.com/cards/nsa-and-ed-snowden/what-is-the-national-security-agency>

📖 Leon Weiseltier, “Among the Disrupted,” *New York Times*, 7 January 2015
<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/18/books/review/among-the-disrupted.html>

📖 Kathleen Fitzpatrick, Alexander Galloway, Jim English, “Franco Moretti’s *Distant Reading*: A Symposium” *LA Review of Books*
<http://lareviewofbooks.org/essay/franco-morettis-distant-reading-a-symposium>

WEEK FOURTEEN

Pleasure Reading

Tuesday, April 28th

📖 Alan Jacobs, *The Pleasures of Reading in an Age of Distraction*

Thursday, April 30th

📖 Alan Jacobs, *The Pleasures of Reading in an Age of Distraction*

WEEK FIFTEEN

Tuesday, May 5th



Thursday, May 7th

Course evals and goodbyes.

Friday, May 8th

📖 “History of a Book” essay due, Learn@UW dropbox