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**SI 633: *A Cultural and Material History of the Book From Pre-Gutenberg to Post-Google***  
(a.k.a. “A History of Books and Printing”) Winter 2009

**General description:**

This course addresses a number of fundamental questions in European cultural history centered on the book as both material as well as cultural and social object. Touching on a variety of different physical formats, the course will explore questions of authorship, production, manufacture, distribution, and reading of books, as well as their restriction and periodic prohibition. Meetings will make frequent use of the University’s large special collections holdings, and students are encouraged to carry out extended individual projects using these holdings. The final unit of the course will be devoted to the fundamental changes in print culture being fostered by the internet and hypertext, with examination in particular of the University of Michigan’s evolving role in the novel enterprise of electronic book circulation.

The **goals of this course** are at once practical and theoretical: among others, to give you the knowledge and experience to work comfortably with Special Collections material, to situate the work of innovative bookmakers in the larger cultural scheme of the reception and dissemination of their products, to provide a forum for assessing and debating the sweeping changes in the nature of print culture that appear to be underway.

**Course materials:**

- Textbooks for purchase at Shaman Drum bookstore (also on closed reserve, Shapiro Library):  
Christopher De Hamel, *Scribes and Illuminators*, 1992  
Michael Twyman, *The British Library Guide to Printing*, 1998
- Supplemental online materials will be posted to the CTools site.
- In addition, please purchase by the third class session a 3.5 or 5.0 mm felt-tipped black calligraphy pen, “Y & C” brand, at Michigan Book and Supply; 2007 price = \$1.49

**Principal Coursework:**

- Option A:** class participation (¼ of final grade), one book review (¼ of final grade), final project (25+ pp.) (½ of final grade)
- Option B:** class participation (¼ of final grade), two book reviews (each one-fifth of final grade), shorter final project (12+ pp.) (35% of final grade)

*Class participation includes one in-class “present the day’s reading” exercise of five minutes and six response papers submitted on dates of your choosing. See assignment sheets for details.*

**Rules and Regulations:** More than one absence becomes problematic unless you consult with me; non-course-related internet access during class is, for reasons you can imagine, not allowed. The conventional academic regulations concerning attribution of sources and intellectual honesty are in full vigor in this course.

**\* Note: in the event of (minor) discrepancies in scheduling between paper and electronic sources, consider CTools listings take precedence over what is listed below.**

► Please select the reading you would like to present from among those that are underlined.

**Week 1:** 9 Jan **Course overview: Goals, methods, materials.** What is a book?

**Week 2:** 16 Jan **Materials I:** The prehistory of the book; papyri; codex vs. roll; writing materials

- G. Bologna, pp. 11-17 of introduction to her *Illuminated Manuscripts* (CTools)
- Martial's Epigrams (brief excerpts) (CTools)
- Either Roberts and Skeat, *The Birth of the Codex*, chaps. 2, 5, 9, 10 (CTools)  
or Peter Stallybrass, "Books and Scrolls: Navigating the Bible" (CTools)
- Christopher de Hamel, *Scribes and Illuminators*,  
Introduction (4-7)  
Ch. 1, "Paper- and Parchment-Makers" (8-26)  
Ch. 2, "Ink-Makers and Scribes" (27-44)
- Early Writing Materials Websites (if you have time): see CTools

*Response paper recommended for Roberts & Skeat, Stallybrass, or de Hamel.*

**Week 3 Jan 23 Materials II: Scripts and Manuscripts; the Architecture of Writing**

- Either Christopher de Hamel, *Scribes and Illuminators*  
Ch. 3, "Illuminators, Binders, and Booksellers" (45-69)  
or Febvre and Martin, *Coming of the Book*, ch.1(paper) (pp. 29-44) (CTools)
- Giulia Bologna, "From Scroll to Illuminated Codex," ideally pp. 18-39, at least pp. 23-30 (CTools)
- Gary Hustwit, *Helvetica* (2 volunteers may present)  
2007 documentary film; DVD available at Askwith Media Library, Video D 46483-D, or Art&Architecture library, basement, Video DZ 246 H 454 2007. Please watch in library, beginning at odd-numbered hours (1:00, 3:00, 5:00, etc.).

**Week 4 30 Jan Orality, Literacy, Media Studies \*Class meets in rm. 806 Hatcher Library**

- Ong, "Orality and Literacy: Writing Restructures Consciousness"(CTools)
- Postman, "Media as Epistemology" (CTools)
- McLuhan, *Gutenberg Galaxy*, excerpts (CTools)
- Plato, *Phaedrus*, short extract (CTools)
- Special Collections Visit I: prepare manuscripts exercise no. 1 for class meeting**

**Week 5: 6 Feb Moments of Paradigm Shift and The Architecture of Writing, II**

- Johannes Trithemius, *In Praise of Scribes*, c. 1490, short extract (CTools)
- Lowry, "Men of Business and Men of Letters" (CTools) (first half / second half)
- Gaskell, "Printing type," *A New Introduction to Bibliography*, 9-39 (CTools)

**Week 6: 13 Feb The advent of the printed book, I**

- CoB Preface (pp. 9-13)
- CoB ch. 2 (pp. 45-76) ("Technical Problems and Their Solution")
- Twyman, *BL Guide to Printing*, ch. 1 & first portion of ch. 2 (pp. 8-35)

**Book review #1 due (all students)**

**Week 7: 20 Feb The advent of the printed book, II \*Class meets in rm 806 Hatcher Library**

- CoB, ch. 3 & ch. 4 (Visual Appearance; Book as Commodity) (pp. 77-127)
- Special collections visit 2: prepare documents exercise no. 2 for class meeting**

**Week 8: Break (27 Feb.)**

**Week 9: 6 March The advent of the printed book, III**

- CoB ch. 5 & ch. 6 (Labor issues and booksellers; Geography of the book trade)
- Twyman, *BL Guide to Printing*, ch. 2 to end (pp. 35-45)

**Week 10: 13 March The advent of the printed book, IV \*Class meets in rm 806 Hatcher Library  
Science and Religion Jostled**

- Elizabeth Eisenstein, “Western Christendom Disrupted,” 148-86 (CTools)
- Elizabeth Eisenstein, “The Book of Nature Transformed,” 187-254 (CTools)

**Special Collections Visit 3**

**For class presentations only** (not a general assignment):

- Christiane Andersson, “Polemical Prints During the Reformation” (CTools)

**Week 11: 20 March Censorship and the Book as Locus of Freedom of Expression**

- *CoB*, ch. 7 section 6 (“Censorship and Banned Books”)
  - Milton’s *Areopagitica* (first half / second half) (CTools)
  - Rockwell’s *Freedom of Speech* (CTools)
- For a class presentation only** (not a general assignment):
- David Tribe, “As Old as History,” chap. 2 of *Questions of Censorship* (CTools)

**Option B students: Book Review #2 due**

*Response paper recommended for Milton reading.*

**Week 12: 27 March The Book as a Locus for Practices of Reading**

- Multiple short readings will be posted to CTools

*Response paper required (min. 400 words).*

**Week 13: 3 April Printing in the Industrial Age \*Class meets in rm 806 Hatcher Library**

- Twyman, *BL Guide to Printing*, ch3 and ch. 4, pp. 45-82
- Possible additional reading TBA

**Special Collections visit no. 4**

**Due: 2-3 pp. synopsis and bibliography on final project research (Options A and B)**

**Week 14: 10 April Future of the Book I: The Electronic Frontier**

- Paul Duguid, “Material Matters: The Past and Futurology of the Book” (pp. 63-102) (CTools)
- Carla Hesse, “Books in Time” (pp. 21-36) (CTools)
- If time: e-Readers such as Kindle

*Response paper recommended for Duguid or Hesse reading.*

**Week 15: 17 April Future of the Book II: Liberational Textuality**

Google scanning project and copyright; Espresso Book Machine

- Two or three shorter articles TBA—will be posted to CTools

**25 April: Term paper due (Option A and Option B students)**