University of Waterloo  
Department of English Language and Literature  

English 319: History and Theory of Media I: Writing and Print Cultures  
Fall 2007  

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Office Hours: Tuesdays, 12:00–12:30; Thursdays, 12:00–12:30  

Course Description:  
This is a course about media before the twentieth century and, in particular, on the media of writing and print. We will examine the history of writing (briefly) and of the printed material (in more detail). One of our principal aims will be to become more critical and aware of writing and print as media, to accept that they are not neutral carriers of textual messages, but shape what the texts they embody mean. To this end, we will focus on how the modern printed book acquired its form, and how its various conventions shape the way we read and understand. We will, however, also consider other kinds of printed matter.  

Aims and outcomes:  
The aims of this course are:  
• To encourage students to think about writing and print as distinctive media, the characteristics of which shape the way we experience literary and non-literary texts.  
• To show students the particular ways in which different forms of writing and print affect the way in we read.  
• To acquaint students with the history of writing and print in Europe and America  
• To introduce students to the main features of the disciplines known as the history of the book and the history of print culture.  

By the end of the course students will be able to:  
• Analyse the distinctive features of written and printed objects and place them in an historical context.  
• Understand the historical evolution of written and printed forms  
• Understand how their experience of any text is shaped by its material form  
• Do basic research in the history of the book  

Organization of classes:  
We'll meet twice a week. There are short(ish) readings for each class which you should read before the session. Several of the classes will be lectures, with some room for discussion. In these cases, I'll put the PowerPoint presentation up on the course's UW-ACE site afterwards. Nevertheless, I assume you'll be at every class and test will cover what I say as well as what appear in the PowerPoint.
Rare Book Room sessions: There is no point talking at length about the need to think of books as distinctive material objects if we don’t actually encounter any. We’ll therefore hold several of the classes in the Rare Book Room of the Porter Library, where we will examine a number of interesting books dating from the mid-16th century to the present.

On-line materials: Much of the material it would be ideal to see is extremely rare, but available in a number of excellent on-line exhibitions and collections. You will therefore often be asked to examine materials on-line in order to prepare for classes. Hyperlinks to the relevant websites are given below.

This course has a UW-ACE site which I will use to send messages, communicate marks, and post tasks and on-line summary forms. I’ll also use the site to show you certain visual content. Please look at the site regularly.

Readings
You should purchase a copy of Alberto Manguel, *A History of Reading*, which is available at the UW bookstore. Manguel is an engaging writer, tells lots of anecdotes, and is good at raising some of the issues about books and writing that matter to us. But you’ll need to supplement him with reading that focuses on the brute facts about the history of writing and print, so there is a series of additional readings, which are required and are available on reserve at the library.

Assessment:
Mid-term: 25%
Tasks: 15%
Group project: 25%
Book project: 35%

During the term there will be a few short tasks or exercises you’ll be asked to complete, and these will make up 15% of the final mark. The mid-term exam, which will be given in class, will consist of two essay questions and a series of terms you’ll be asked to define.

Group presentations will take place in November. Each group should prepare a presentation on the topic in question that lasts no more than 40 minutes. The presentations should be informative, but they should also encourage discussion. They will be marked on quality of oral delivery, organisation, interest and sophistication of content and the degree to which they elicit discussion. 75% of the mark given to each student for this presentation will be the group mark; the remaining 25% will be mark given to each member of the group by his or her peers, reflecting their contribution to the group.

Your final project will be a study, 10-15 pages long, of a single book in the Waterloo collection. You will be asked to analyse the book’s formal and material features and to discuss their history and their relevance for the way the book was and is used and understood.

Please also note the following Faculty note on academic offenses:

"Note on avoidance of academic offences:
All students registered in the courses of the Faculty of Arts are expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take
responsibility for their actions. When the commission of an offence is established, disciplinary penalties will be imposed in accord with Policy #71 (Student Academic Discipline). For information on categories of offences and types of penalties, students are directed to consult the summary of Policy #71 which is supplied in the Undergraduate Calendar (section I; on the Web at www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm). If you need help in learning what constitutes an academic offence; how to avoid offences such as plagiarism, cheating, and double submission; how to follow appropriate rules with respect to “group work” and collaboration; or if you need clarification of aspects of the discipline policy, ask your TA and/or your course instructor for guidance. Other resources regarding the discipline policy are your academic advisor and the Undergraduate Associate Dean."

Note: On November 18/02, Senate passed a motion that all course outlines must also contain the following reference to the student’s right to grieve: “Students who believe that they have been wrongfully or unjustly penalized have the right to grieve; refer to Policy #70, Student Grievance. http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm.”

TOPICS SESSION-BY-SESSION

September 12
Tuesday: Introduction/discussion of syllabus

Thursday (September 14): NO CLASS

September 19-21
Tuesday: Writing: its origins and nature
Reading: Manguel, A History of Reading, pp. 3-65, 177-85

Thursday: Writing: the alphabet
Reading: Walter Ong, “Writing restructures consciousness”, in Orality and Literacy

September 26-28
Tuesday: Writing: context, forms and formats
Reading: TBA

Thursday: Manuscript Culture

October 3-5
Tuesday: The invention of print: mechanical questions

Thursday: Rare Book Room, The invention of print II: printed objects
Reading: Manguel, “The Shape of the Book” (pp. 125-47)
October 10-12
Tuesday: The form of the book I: layout, title pages, organization
Reading: Febvre and Martin, "The Book: Its Visual Appearance", pp. 77-90;
S. H. Steinberg, Five Hundred Years of Printing, pp. 75-80

Thursday: Rare Book Room, The form of the book II: Typography and ideology
Reading: S. H. Steinberg, Five Hundred Years of Printing, pp. 3-17, 74-84
On-line: Chapter 2 of "Dawn of Printing: Incunabula"

October 17-19
Tuesday: The form of the book III, Images and Illustrations
Reading: Martin 320-327, 406-11; Manguel “Picture Reading”, pp. 95-107.
On-line: “Biblia pauperum”

Thursday: Rare Book, Room, Reading practices
Reading: Roger Chartier, “The Practical Impact of Writing”, in Chartier (ed.),

October 23-25
Tuesday: Libraries
126-9

Thursday: Mid-term exam

October 30 - November 1
Tuesday: Print and society I: Religion. First group Presentation
Reading: Manguel, pp. 85-93, 225-36; Elisabeth Eisenstein, selections from The
Printing Press as an Agent of Change

Thursday: Print and society II: Nationalism. Second Group Presentation.
Reading: Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities, p. 37-46, 67-82

November 6-8
Tuesday: Print and Society III: Language. Third Group Presentation.
Reading: Febvre and Martin, pp. 319-32; Steinberg, pp. 54-8

Thursday: Print and Society IV: Literature. Fourth Group Presentation
Reading: Manguel, pp. 109-24, 149-73; D. F. McKenzie

November 13-15
Tuesday: Print and Society V: Science. Fifth Group Presentation

Thursday: The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries
Reading: Henri-Jean Martin, The History and Power of Writing, pp. 397- 463
November 20-22
Tuesday: Rare Book Room, Serials, magazines, newspapers,
  Reading: Steinberg, pp. 121-6; Martin, 414-34

Thursday: The Book in Canada

November 27-29
Tuesday: Rare Book Room, Avant-gardes, private presses, and fine printing in the twentieth century
  Reading: Jan Tschichold, “The Principles of the New Typography”, in Heller and Meggs, Texts on Type

Thursday: Discussion and Review

RESOURCES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

On-line collections and exhibitions:

In Aedibius Aldi: The Legacy of Aldus Manutius and His Press (Brigham Young University): http://library.byu.edu/~aldinc/

Biblia pauperum: http://www.amasis.com/biblia/

British Library Turning the Pages Site (an excellent site with digitised versions of 15 rare books, which you can page through and magnify as you wish): http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/ftp/ttpbooks.html

Caxton’s Canterbury Tales: http://www.bl.uk/treasures/caxton/homepage.html

Color Printing in the Nineteenth Century (University of Delaware): http://www.lib.udel.edu/ud/spec/exhibits/color/


Early English Books Online (UWaterloo Library Collection)

The Gutenberg Bible at the Ransom Center:
http://www.hrc.utexas.edu/exhibitions/permanent/gutenberg/

For endless examples of fonts: http://www.myfonts.com

Graphic Design: Typography (University of Florida):
http://web.uflib.ufl.edu/spec/rarebook/art3283c/index.htm

**General histories**


**Aspects of print culture**


**Books about particular printers**

**Caxton:**

Blake, Norman, *Caxton and His World* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1969)


**Estienne:**


**Gutenberg:**


**Jenson:**

Aldus Manutius:

**Typography**
-----, *A Tally of Types* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973)

**On the practice of reading and on readers**
Caavallo, Gugliemo and Roger Chartier, *A History of Reading in the West* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999)
Saenger, Paul, *Space between Words: The Origin of Silent Reading* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1997)
Saenger, Paul, 'Silent Reading: Its Impact on Late Medieval Script and Society', *Viator: Medieval and


Miller, Laura J. The Best-Seller List as Marketing Tool and Historical Fiction *Book History* 3 (2000) 286-304
