

GLIS 612: History of Books and Printing
McGill University, School of Information Studies
Fall 2015
Wednesday, September 9 – Wednesday, December 2
2:30-5:30 pm, EDUC 613

Geoffrey Little
geoffrey.little@mcgill.ca
Office hours by appointment

OVERVIEW

This course surveys the history of books and printing from the mid-fifteenth century to the present. It will consider the book as physical object and its role as an historical agent, as well as aspects of book production, distribution, and reception. The focus of the course is Early Modern Europe, Modern Europe, and North America. Topics covered will include, but are not limited to: printing processes in the hand and machine press eras; book illustration and design; typography; communities of readers; newspapers; libraries; digital publishing; and the future of the book. We will engage with materials at the McGill and Concordia libraries that will help illuminate in person what we will be exploring in class. The course consists of lectures, guest lectures, student presentations, field trips, readings, and graded assignments.

The standards and requirements set forth in this syllabus may be modified at any time by the instructor. Notice of such changes will be announced in class and/or through e-mail. Reasonable notice will be given in the case of changes to the readings.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Understand the history of the book as a physical object and the development of printing with moveable type;
- Develop an historical sense of the evolution of the tools, materials, and techniques of book production and printing technology over the past five centuries;
- Understand the role of printing in the spread of ideas, language, information, knowledge, and culture across many cultures and civilizations.
- Develop a critical grounding in theoretical and historical perspectives that draw on research in Information Studies and other fields of knowledge and that will inform professional practices.

SOME EXPECTATIONS

This is a graduate course with a significant amount of required reading. We will cover a large swathe of intellectual and technical ground and we will move fairly rapidly across and through more than five hundred years of human history. It is essential that you be as prepared as possible for every class by doing the assigned readings.

Book History prides itself on its interdisciplinarity and we will be looking at articles, book chapters, and studies produced by historians, literary scholars, librarians, classicists, and philosophers. You need not be familiar with or have a background in these disciplines, but you should be open-minded to the various methods that each brings to the study of books, printing, texts, and reading.

Please be respectful of your peers and the instructor, meaning that during class you are asked to refrain from texting, browsing Instagram, updating your Facebook status, etc., or to engage in other distracting activities.

FIELD TRIPS & GUEST LECTURERS

We will occasionally venture out to look at examples of the materials and topics we are covering. We will also have visits from guest lecturers who are doing research in the areas that we will discuss that week, or who have specific subject expertise.

CONTACTING THE INSTRUCTOR & OFFICE HOURS

E-mail (geoffrey.little@mcgill.ca) is the best way to reach the instructor. Please include “GLIS 612” in the subject line of your message, e.g., “GLIS 612: Question about Readings.” The instructor does not have set office hours, but is happy to make individual appointments to see students before or after class, or at other times that are mutually convenient.

COURSE EVALUATION

1.	Short Seminar	25%
2.	Typeface Presentation	15%
3.	Descriptive Essay Proposal	10%
4.	Descriptive Essay	45%
5.	Attendance	5%

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Short Seminar (25%)

Starting in Week 4 and continuing until Week 12 (with exceptions), groups of 2 to 3 students will present a 15 minute seminar on a prescribed topic. All group members will receive the same grade. The seminar is designed to help us explore subjects that we will be unable to cover otherwise due to time pressures. This is also a way to teach and learn from your peers. A topic sign-up sheet will be circulated during the first and second week of class.

Groups will be required to submit an executive summary of their presentations (max 3 pages) to the instructor by e-mail by 12 noon of the **day of their presentation**. Each group should end its seminar with **two questions** for their colleagues in order to stimulate a short discussion.

3. Typeface Presentation (15%)

Starting in Week 4 and continuing until Week 12 (with exceptions), groups of 2 to 3 students will present an overview of a typeface including its history, its designer, and its strengths and weaknesses, providing examples of the font in printed or digital format. Your oral/visual presentation should be 12-15 minutes. All group members will receive the same grade.

You can choose a typeface from the list below but groups are free to identify another one. Note that **Helvetica** is not an option as there is more information available on this typeface than almost any other. Each group must select a different typeface. A sign-up list will be available in the first and second classes. The instructor reserves the right to modify the composition of groups in case of time pressures as the term goes on.

Arial Baskerville Bell Bembo Bodoni Calibri Cartier Caslon Centaur Century Comic Sans
Courier Didot Futura Galliard Garamond Gill Sans Golden Type Georgia Goudy Jenson Joanna
Palatino Perpetua Rotunda Tahoma Times New Roman Troy Underground Verdana Wingdings

You should start your investigations with Robert Bringhurst's *The Elements of Typographic Style* (Rev. ed., Vancouver: Hartley & Marks, 2012; on reserve in HSSL). Bringhurst gives his readers a comprehensive further reading list.

4. Descriptive Essay (45%): Proposal due October 28 (10%); Paper due December 2

You are asked to write a **descriptive essay** of 12 to 14 pages describing a special collection that you have created of six items discussing aspects of materiality, production, distribution, reception, and survival. For example, your special collection could be made up of six: atlases printed in the 1600s; books with Victorian cloth bindings; books belonging or formerly belonging to a particular individual or institution; editions of *Pride and Prejudice*; works produced by a small press; 19th century Arctic travel narratives; books printed in Yiddish; gay/lesbian pulp novels; books by a particular author or published by a particular press, and so on. Your introduction can include personal reflections on your choice of collection, but your essay should convey why the materials are important. What does the collection represent taken together? Why are these items important/interesting/controversial/special? Your essay should incorporate readings from class or other secondary sources you have identified on your own.

The **project proposal** should be no more than 3 pages, not including any bibliography. It should tell me what special collection you want to create, study, and describe and why. The proposal is not your final paper, but I want to get a sense of what you are thinking and what you will investigate. The proposal should discuss your topic, some items you might want to include in the collection, and references to a handful of readings that will frame your investigations. The proposal is also an opportunity for me to give you some advice or to point you to some references you might find engaging or a specific collection that you might wish to consult.

The form of the essay is up to you, but thinking about these materials as if you were creating a rare book exhibition might be a helpful way to organize your thoughts. To that end, you may wish to consult exhibition catalogues for inspiration. An advanced subject heading search in the McGill (classic) catalogue for “Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library--Exhibitions” or “Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library--Exhibitions” will direct you to well-produced catalogues from the rare book libraries at the University of Toronto and Yale.

To put together your collection, you should visit and use special collections at McGill, Concordia, UdeM, UQAM, BAnQ, the McCord Museum, the Jewish Public Library, or elsewhere. Remember that most special collections have restricted hours of access (i.e., they close early during the week and are not open on weekends). You may not use electronic books or online materials as part of this assignment without clearance from the instructor. One of the goals of this project is that you engage with the physicality of the materials you are studying, including the paper on which they are printed, their bindings, illustrations, their formats, marks of previous ownership, etc.

Please make sure you include call numbers and location information for all items described in your final paper.

SUBMITTING ASSIGNMENTS

In accordance with McGill University's Charter of Students' Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.

Please use a standard, 12-point typeface and double-space all submitted work. Include a title, your name, and student number on the first page. A separate title page is not required. Please include page numbers on subsequent pages.

Cite your sources using the *Chicago Manual of Style* notes and bibliography system. This means bibliographic information given in **footnotes** along with a **bibliography** of all sources at the end. Use the 16th edition of the *Chicago Manual of Style*, available online through McGill. **Marks will be deducted for incomplete or inaccurate citations.**

Assignments may be submitted in person in paper or via e-mail: geoffrey.little@mcgill.ca. Please do not submit anything through myCourses. If submitting electronically, please send Word documents, not PDFs.

LATE SUBMISSION OF ASSIGNMENTS

Late work will not be accepted except in instances of serious illness or personal distress. Medical forms and other documentation may be required. A late assignment will be penalized 5% per day to a maximum of five days at which point it will automatically receive a failing grade.

TEXTBOOK

This course has one suggested textbook, available for purchase at the McGill bookstore. A copy is also on reserve in the Humanities & Social Science Library. This book is both a great work of scholarship and exceptionally useful.

Philip Gaskell, *A New Introduction to Bibliography*. New Castle, DE and Winchester: Oak Knoll Press and St. Paul's Bibliographies, 1995.

COURSE READINGS

All other course readings will be available online through the McGill library or through myCourses. The following key is used in the Class Schedule section to identify where to find and access materials.

@ = Available online through the McGill library
= Available on myCourses

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (for more information see <http://www.mcgill.ca/integrity>).

Additional policies governing academic issues which affect students can be found in the McGill Charter of Students' Rights: <https://home.mcgill.ca/deanofstudents/rights/>.

CLASS SCHEDULE

WEEK 1: September 9: Book History as an Academic Discipline / Introduction

WEEK 2: September 16: The Emergence of Print & the Early Hand Press Period

Christopher de Hamel, "The Gutenberg Bible" in *The Book: A History of The Bible* (London: Phaidon, 2001), 190-215. #

Elizabeth L. Eisenstein, "Some Features of Print Culture" in *The Printing Revolution in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2005), 41-90. #

William V. Harris, "Levels of Greek and Roman Literacy" and "The Functions of Literacy in the Graeco-Roman World" in *Ancient Literacy* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1989), 3-42. @

Andrew Pettegree, "The Invention of Printing," and "Renaissance Encounters: The Crisis of Print" in *The Book in the Renaissance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 21-62. @

WEEK 3: September 23: The Hand Press Period: Paper, Type, Printing, Binding

*****Field trip to Rare Books and Special Collections, McGill University Library*****

Philip Gaskell, *A New Introduction to Bibliography* (New Castle, DE and Winchester: Oak Knoll Press and St. Paul's Bibliographies, 1995), read: "The Hand-Printed Book": 5-8; "Printing Type": 9-39; "Composition": 41-56; "Paper": 57-77; "Presswork": 118-141; and "Binding": 146-53.

WEEK 4: September 30: Encountering Print to 1860

*****Start of typeface presentations and short seminars*****

Jürgen Habermas, Sara Lennox, and Frank Lennox, "The Public Sphere: An Encyclopedia Article (1964)," *New German Critique* 3 (1974): 49-55. @

Leslie Howsam, *Cheap Bibles: Nineteenth-Century Publishing and the British and Foreign Bible Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991). Reader Chapter 3, "The BFBS and English Printers, 1804-1864," 74-120. #

Joad Raymond, *The Invention of the Newspaper: English Newsbooks, 1641-1649* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996). Read Introduction and Chapter 2, pp. 1-19 and 80-127. @
 William St. Clair, "Literary Production in the Romantic Period," in *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 158-76. #

WEEK 5: October 7: The Illustrated Book

*****Field trip to Rare Books and Special Collections, McGill University Library *****

Richard Benson, *The Printed Picture* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2008), 6-73. #

WEEK 6: October 14: STUDY WEEK – NO CLASS

WEEK 7: October 21: Printing, Publishing, and Reading in the Machine Press Period, Part I

Gaskell, *A New Introduction to Bibliography*, 189-265 and 274-96.

Anthony Rota, *Apart from the Text* (Pinner: Private Libraries Association; New Castle, DE: Oak Knoll Press, 1998), 37-48. #

Michael Twyman, *Printing 1770-1970: An Illustrated History of Its Development and Uses in England* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1970), 48-66. #

WEEK 8: October 28: Printing, Publishing, and Reading in the Machine Press Period, Part II

*****Field trip to Musée de l'imprimerie du Québec, 423 rue St-Nicolas [Old Montreal]*****

*****<http://www.museeimpression.org/>, \$6.00 entry fee (exact change)*****

*****Descriptive Essay Proposal Due*****

WEEK 9: November 4: Print in the New World: Part I (New Spain, New England, New France)

Hortensia Calvo, "The Politics of Print: The Historiography of the Book in Early Spanish America," *Book History* 6 (2003): 277-305. @

Hugh Amory, "Reinventing the Colonial Book" in *A History of the Book in America Volume 1: The Colonial Book in the Atlantic World*, gen. ed. David D. Hall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 26-54. #

François Melançon, "Print and Manuscript in French Canada under the Ancien Regime" in Leslie Howsam and James Raven eds., *Books Between Europe and the Americas* (London: Palgrave 2011): 83-103. @

WEEK 10: November 11: Print in the New World: Part II (Canada)*****Guest lecture by Professor Eli MacLaren, Department of English, McGill University*****

Yvan Lamonde, Patricia Lockhart Flemming, and Fiona A. Black, eds. *History of the Book in Canada*. Volume 2. 1840-1918 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005):
 Read “The Evolution of Publishing in Canada,” 17–32; “Literary Authorship,” 119–34; and
 “Publishing Abroad,” 139–46. #

WEEK 11: November 18: Encountering Print in Daily Life After 1860

Sandra Gabriele and Paul S. Moore, “The Globe on Saturday, the World on Sunday: Toronto Weekend Editions and the Influence of the American Sunday Paper, 1886-1895,”
Canadian Journal of Communication 34 (2009): 337-358. @

Guinevere L. Griest, “A Victorian Leviathan: Mudie’s Select Library,” *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 20, no. 2 (1965): 103-26. @

Wayne E. Wiegand, “The American Public Library: Construction of a Community Reading Institution” in *A History of the Book in America*. Volume 4. *Print in Motion*, eds. Carl F. Kaestle and Janice A. Radway (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 431-451. #

WEEK 12: November 25: Artists’ Books*****Field trip to Concordia and guest lecture by Melinda Reinhart, Visual Arts Librarian*****

Megan Benton. “The Book as Art,” in *A Companion to the History of the Book* (Malden, MA : Blackwell, 2007), 493-507. @

Johanna Drucker, “The Codex and its Variations,” in *The Century of Artists’ Books* (New York: Granary Books, 2004), 121-59. #

Clive Philpott, “Books by Artists and Books as Art,” in Cornelia Lauf and Clive Philpott, eds., *Artist/Author: Contemporary Artists’ Books* (New York: American federation of Arts, 1998), 31-66. #

WEEK 13: December 2: The E-Book and the Future of the Book*****Descriptive Essays Due**********Closing Ceremonies at Thomson House*****

Walter Benjamin, “Unpacking My Library,” 1931.
http://art.yale.edu/file_columns/0000/2138/benjamin.pdf

John W. Maxwell, “E-book Logic: We Can Do Better,” *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of Canada* 51 (2013): 29-47. <http://jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/bsc/article/view/20761/16996>

Andrew Piper, *Book Was There: Reading in Electronic Times* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012): Read Chapter 7 and Epilogue. @
