

**GLIS 612: History of Books and Printing**  
**McGill University, School of Information Studies**  
**Fall Term, Monday, 11 September – 4 December 2017**  
**2:30-5:30 pm, EDUC 434**

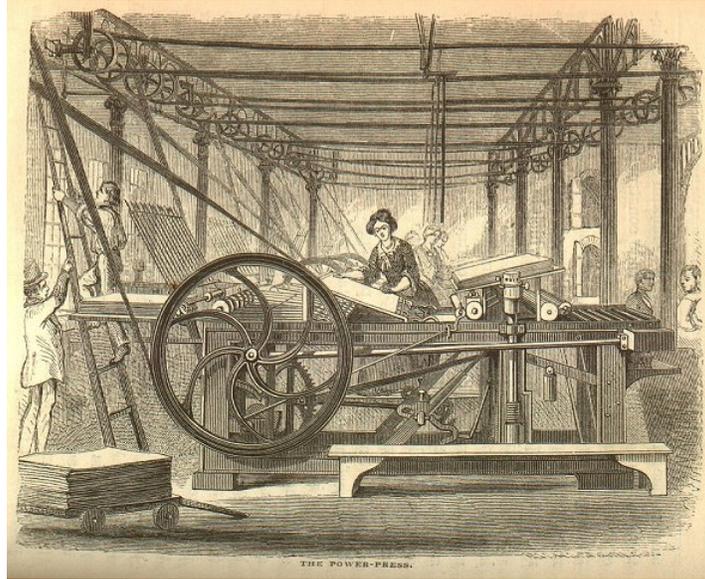


Image from *The Harper Establishment, or How the Story Books are Made*, 1855.

## **INSTRUCTOR**

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

## **OVERVIEW**

This course surveys the history of printing with moveable type and book production 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. Topics covered will include, but are not limited to, manuscript production; printing processes and technologies in the hand and machine press eras; book illustration and design; communities of readers; newspapers; libraries; digital publishing; and the future of the book. We will attempt to learn more about broad themes by looking at specific case studies and the occasional fieldtrip. The course consists of seminars led by the instructor, student presentations, field trip(s), 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 six centuries;
- Gain knowledge of the role of printing in the spread of ideas, language, information, knowledge, and culture across cultures and civilizations.
- Develop a critical grounding in theoretical and historical perspectives that draw on research in Information Studies and other fields of knowledge in order to inform professional practices.

## EXPECTATIONS

This is a graduate course with a significant amount of required reading. We will cover a large swathe of intellectual and technological ground and we will move 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 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 to refrain from using your cell phone and engaging in other distracting activities.

## CONTACTING THE INSTRUCTOR & OFFICE HOURS

E-mail ([geoffrey.little@mcgill.ca](mailto:geoffrey.little@mcgill.ca)) is the best way to reach the instructor. Messages will be answered within twenty-four (24) hours, except on weekends.

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 points that are mutually convenient.

## COURSE EVALUATION

- |                                    |     |
|------------------------------------|-----|
| 1. Group Seminar Presentation      | 30% |
| 2. Typeface Project                | 20% |
| 3. Individual Seminar Presentation | 40% |
| 4. Participation                   | 10% |

## ASSIGNMENTS

### **1. Short Group Seminar (30%)**

Starting in **Week 6** groups of two or three students will present a twenty-minute seminar on a prescribed topic. The seminar is designed to help us explore topics 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 weeks of class. Both/all group members will receive the same grade.

Groups are required to submit by e-mail a descriptive summary of their seminar (6 pages max.) to the instructor **by 12 noon on the day of their presentation**. The summary should **not** be your presentation script. It should include citations to secondary sources you use or quote. Any A/V materials you wish to use in your presentation (e.g., PowerPoint) should also be sent to the instructor by e-mail **by 12 noon on the day of your presentation**.

Each group is to end its seminar with **2 questions** and to lead a short discussion following.

### **2. Typeface Project (20%)**

Each student will select a typeface and write a short paper (max. 8 pages) outlining its history and development, design, characteristics, instances of use, and strengths and weaknesses. You are free to select a typeface from the list that follows, but you may also propose another. Helvetica is not an option.

Baskerville Bell Bembo Bodoni Cartier Caslon Centaur Century Comic Sans Courier Didot Futura Galliard Garamond Gill Georgia Goudy Jenson Palatino Perpetua Tahoma Troy Verdana Wingdings Yale

You should start your research by consulting Robert Bringhurst's excellent book *The Elements of Typographic Style* (Vancouver, 1992, rev. ed., 2015). Bringhurst will give you a comprehensive further reading list. This title is on reserve in HSSL: Z246 B74 2015.

This assignment is due **in class on October 16**.

### **3. Individual Seminar (40%)**

Starting in **Week 9** and going to the end of term, each student will construct and deliver an individual seminar around a single item from Rare Books and Special Collections in the McGill Library. Questions to consider when approaching the item include: Is it a book? A manuscript? Is it on paper? On vellum? Does it have an author? If yes, who was she/he? Does it have a stated printer or publisher? What do we

know about him/her? What do you know about the circumstances regarding the writing, publication, or distribution of the work? Is there knowledge of any previous owners (i.e., provenance)? What impact did the work have, if any, on its readers? Is it illustrated? Is there anything interesting about the typography and design? Is there evidence of wear or use?

Your seminar should craft a narrative rather than give a series of facts or observations and should connect the item you have selected with the larger issues we cover in class or that you yourself are able to identify in your research.

Your seminar will consist of a twenty-minute in-class presentation (**20%**) and a short essay (max. 8 pages, not including bibliography, **due in class the Monday following your presentation**) (**20%**). Your essay can mirror your presentation, but it should expand on the ideas you expressed and explore some of the questions you raised. Your essay should also incorporate appropriate secondary sources that have helped your work or informed your investigations. Please make sure in your essay to give appropriate bibliographic details for your item, including its call number.

#### **4. Participation (10%)**

Your participation mark will be determined by the quality of your contributions to the course. This means being present for classes, reading all of the week's primary assigned materials, doing further reading (based on references from the assigned readings, suggestions from the instructor, or your own initiative), allowing yourself enough time to think about the readings, and coming to class with things to say. Participation depends just as much on listening, so you should listen carefully to everyone's contributions, consider the effects of your own comments, and respect all members of the class.<sup>1</sup>

#### **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 serif 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 notes along with a bibliography of all sources. Be consistent and accurate in your citations. Consult the 16<sup>th</sup> edition of the *Chicago Manual of Style*, available online through McGill: <http://mcgill.worldcat.org/oclc/200998332>. An assignment that does not follow the *Chicago Manual of Style* will automatically receive a full grade penalization, i.e., a paper

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<sup>1</sup> Based on Professor Alan Galey's syllabus for INF 2159H: Historical and Analytical Bibliography, University of Toronto.

that merits an A- will score a B+. **Per the School of Graduate Studies, any grade below a B- is a failing grade.**

## **LATE SUBMISSION OF ASSIGNMENTS**

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

## **TEXTBOOK**

This course has no textbook, but Philip Gaskell's *A New Introduction to Bibliography* (New Castle, DE and Winchester, UK: Oak Knoll Press and St. Paul's Bibliographies, 1995) will be consulted in detail. Gaskell is available as a PDF through the McGill Library: <http://mcgill.worldcat.org/oclc/32821740>. Two copies of Gaskell are available in the HSSL reserve room.

## **COURSE READINGS**

Other than Gaskell, course readings will be available online through the McGill library or myCourses. The following key is used to identify where to find and access materials.

@ **Available online through the McGill Library**

# **Available online via myCourses**

## **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

McGill University values academic integrity. 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 that affect students can be found in the McGill Charter of Students' Rights: <https://home.mcgill.ca/deanofstudents/rights/>.

## **STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

Please speak with the instructor about your particular situation. All such discussions are confidential. Support for students is also available through the Office for Students with Disabilities: <https://www.mcgill.ca/osd/office-students-disabilities>.

**CLASS SCHEDULE****WEEK 1: September 11: Introduction / Book History as a Field of Study****WEEK 2: September 18: The Emergence of Print & the Early Hand Press Period**

Christopher de Hamel, "The European Medieval Book Trade," in *The Oxford Companion to the Book* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010). @

Andrew Pettegree, "The Invention of Printing," in *The Book in the Renaissance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 21-42. @

**WEEK 3: September 25: Printing Technologies to 1850**

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

**WEEK 4: October 2: Authors and Authorship****All read:**

Michel Foucault, "What is an Author?" in *Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology*, ed. James D. Faubion, trans. Robert Hurley et al., vol 2, *Essential Works of Foucault, 1954-1984* (New York: New Press, 1998), [http://www.english.upenn.edu/~cavitch/pdf-library/Foucault\\_Author.pdf](http://www.english.upenn.edu/~cavitch/pdf-library/Foucault_Author.pdf).

**Read 1 of:**

Martin Greenup, "The Glittering Frontier: Emily Dickinson and Publication," *Cambridge Quarterly* 33, no. 4 (2004): 345-62. @

Meredith McGill, "Circulating Media: Charles Dickens, Reprinting, and Dislocation of American Culture," in *The Broadview Reader in Book History*, eds. Michelle Levy and Tom Mole (Toronto: Broadview Press, 2014), 439-56. #

Linda H. Peterson, "Parallel Currents: *The Life of Charlotte Bronte* as Mid-Victorian Myth of Women's Authorship," in *Becoming a Woman of Letters: Myths of Authorship and Facts of the Victorian Market* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 131-50. #

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 9: STUDY WEEK – NO CLASS**

**WEEK 6: October 16: Printing Technologies After 1850****\*\*Start of Group Seminars\*\*****\*\*Typeface assignment due in class\*\***

Gaskell, *A New Introduction to Bibliography*, read “The Machine Press Period: Introduction:” 189-213; “Printing Machines:” 251-65; and “Production Routines:” 292-96.

**WEEK 7: October 23: The Illustrated Book**

Richard Benson, *The Printed Picture* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2008), 6-73. # NB: Much of this text consists of illustrations so you may skim. Pay attention to woodcuts, engravings, etchings, and lithographs.

**WEEK 8: October 30: Field trip to Musée de l'imprimerie du Québec****\*\*999 ave Émile-Journault, Crémazie Metro | \$6.00 admission (exact change, please)\*\*****WEEK 9: November 6: Print in the New World: New Spain, New England, New France****\*\*Start of Individual Seminar Presentations\*\*****Read 2 of:**

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

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

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

Germaine Warkentin, “In Search of ‘The Word of the Other’: Aboriginal Sign Systems and the History of the Book in Canada,” *Book History* 2 (1999): 1-27. @

**WEEK 10: November 13: Print in the New World: Nineteenth-Century Canada****All read:**

George L. Parker, “The Evolution of Publishing in Canada,” in *History of the Book in Canada*, vol. 2, *1840-1918*, eds. Yvan Lamonde, Patricia Lockhart Fleming, and Fiona Black, 17-32, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004. # Read also:

**Read 1 of the following short texts in *HBiC* v. 2:**

Cornelius Jaenen, “Aboriginal Communities,” 33-40; #

Merrill Distad, “Print and the Settlement of the West,” 62-71; #

Elizabeth Driver, “Cookbooks,” 408-411. #

**WEEK 11: November 20: Newspapers and Public Libraries**

Richard L. Kaplan, "Press, Paper, and the Public Sphere: The Rise of the Cheap Mass Press in the USA, 1870-1910," *Media History* 21, no. 1 (2015): 42-54 @

Wayne A. Wiegand, "The American Public Library: Construction of a Community Reading Institution," in *History of the Book in American*, vol. 4, *Print in Motion: The Expansion of Publishing and Reading in the United States, 1880-1940*, 431-451. #

**WEEK 12: November 27: Artists' Books / Livres d'Artistes**

Sylvie Alix, "A History of the Artist's Book in Quebec," in *History of Art Libraries in Canada: Essays in the History of Art Librarianship in Canada – Histoire des bibliothèques d'art au Canada: essais sur l'histoire de la bibliothéconomie d'art au Canada* (ARLIS/Canada, 2012), 46-61, <http://www.arliscanada.ca/hal/arlis-hal.pdf>.

Nancy Tousley, "Artists' Books" in *Learn to Read Art: Artists' Books* (Hamilton: Art Gallery of Hamilton, 1990), 3-17. #

**WEEK 13: December 4: Book Production in the Twentieth Century & the E-Book****\*\*Closing Ceremonies at Thomson House\*\***

Walter Benjamin, "Unpacking My Library," 1931, available at:  
[http://art.yale.edu/file\\_columns/0000/2138/benjamin.pdf](http://art.yale.edu/file_columns/0000/2138/benjamin.pdf).

Eileen Gardiner and Ronald G. Musto, "The Electronic Book." In *The Oxford Companion to the Book* (Oxford University Press, 2010). #

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