

Folger Undergraduate Research Seminar
Books and Early Modern Culture
Fridays, 12:30-3:00 (Spring 2014)
Folger Shakespeare Library, Deck A Seminar Room

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office hours: Mondays and Thursdays—you can make an advance appointment or have someone at the circulation desk call my office extension; you can also email questions to me and I will respond within 24 hours (over the weekend it might take 48 hours).

Course description

The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the history of books by focusing on books and early modern culture. By learning about how books were made and how books were used, students will gain a clearer appreciation of how early modern culture was shaped by and was a shaping force in the development of print culture. The archival skills students learn in conducting this research will serve them in future research projects, and their understanding of the sociology of books will refine their understanding of the early modern period and the roles that books played in later periods.

Course thematics

The study of books and book history can be divided into three approaches; we will draw on all three during the semester. We will begin with an exploration of **books as physical objects**: how they were made and what we can learn from their physical presence. By studying the physical labor that went into making books—how they were printed, how they were assembled, how they were bound—we will learn to recognize the material traces that can lead us to a new understanding of how a particular book was used, what its impact might have been, and how it shapes the text it contains. We will move on to examine **the role that books played in early modern culture** and the processes by which they were made available, focusing on the relationships between printers (or “stationers”), book sellers, authors, and readers. We will look at the economic forces driving the book trade, consider what authorship meant during the early modern period, and explore the uses that readers made of books. The final section of our course will consider **books as vehicles for text**. In some ways the opposite approach of focusing exclusively on the book as a material object, this approach will consider how books transmit (and shape) texts by studying some of the theories behind modern editing and studying instances of modern editions of early texts.

Course policies

- Late papers will not be accepted. Should you anticipate a problem in meeting a deadline, you need to talk to me in advance of the deadline itself so that we can discuss an extension.
- You must come to each and every class prepared for that day’s discussion. Missing even one session will stand in the way of your developing the knowledge about early modern books necessary for succeeding in this course.
- You must always respect Library policies and staff. Failure to adhere to Library regulations could mean losing your Reader’s Card.

- I communicate with you through email; please check your account regularly in order to receive updates about class activities and my responses to your work.

Grades

There will be four short written assignments and one long paper during this course, making up 90% of your final grade for this course. Brief descriptions of the assignments and their percentage of the final grade are provided on the last page of this syllabus; longer guidelines for each assignment will be posted online and discussed closer to deadlines. Late papers will not be accepted; should you anticipate a problem in meeting a deadline, you need to talk to me in advance of the deadline itself.

The remaining 10% of your final grade will be based on your class participation and the occasional brief research exercise assigned during class. You must come to each and every class prepared for that day's discussion. Because we meet only once a week, missing even one session will hinder your preparedness for the assignments and will stand in the way of your developing the knowledge about early modern books necessary for succeeding in this course. Should you be seriously ill, contagious with something unpleasant, or observing a religious holiday, please let me know (in advance, in the case of holidays) so that we can touch base about what you missed.

Readings

Readings marked on the syllabus with an asterisk (*) are the primary readings for that day; other readings listed should be read as your time and interest allows. All readings are available on our course website (<http://sarahwerner.net/FolgerBooks/>). While the site as a whole is open to the public, you will need a password to access the page with links to the readings; please contact me if you have misplaced the password.

You will notice that the readings specified on the syllabus below consist nearly entirely of modern books about early modern books and book history. We will be working with early modern books in class and outside of class, and you will be provided with a bibliography of the books we have consulted in class. Students are always welcome to bring into the classroom particular books that they are interested in and would like to discuss; should you wish to bring rare material into the seminar room, you must notify Dr Werner by Monday of that week's class meeting. Students should also avail themselves of the resources in the Folger, both of our collections of rare materials, but also of our range of experts in the field. The Library's curators and staff will help you find your way through our collection.

January 31: Orientation

February 7: Preface: What is book history?

- * Robert Darnton, "What is the History of Books?" in *The Kiss of Lamourette: Reflections in Cultural History* (New York & London: Norton, 1990), 107-35. [Originally published in *Daedalus* 111:3 (1982): 65-83.]
- * D.F. McKenzie, "The Book as an Expressive Form" in *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999), 9-30. [Originally given as a Panizzi lecture at the British Library in 1985.]
- * Roger Chartier, "Labourers and Voyagers: From the Text to the Reader," *Diacritics* 22:2 (Summer 1992): 49-61.

Eltjo Buringh and Jan Luiten van Zanden, "Charting the 'Rise of the West': Manuscripts and Printed Books in Europe, A Long-Term Perspective from the Sixth through Eighteenth Centuries," *The Journal of Economic History* 69 (2009): 409-45.

Robert Darnton, "What Is the History of Books? Revisited," *Modern Intellectual History* 4.3 (2007): 495-508.

February 14: Volume I: Books as objects: In-class exercise: looking at books

February 21: Volume I: Books as objects: casting off, format, printing

* Sarah Werner's work-in-progress introduction to bibliography (text forthcoming)

There are some useful videos illustrating aspects of printing, punchcutting, typesetting, and understanding format; these can be watched at the Folger, but are not required viewing:

The Making of a Renaissance Book. Dir. Dana Atchely, prod. American Friends of the Plantin-Moretus Museum (Antwerp). 16 mm film, 22 min., 1969. Re-released by Book Arts Press, VHS, 2000.

From Punch to Printing Type: The Art and Craft of Hand Punchcutting and Typesetting, dir. Peter Herdrich, prod. Book Arts Press, 1985. VHS, 45 min.

The Anatomy of a Book, I: Format in the Hand-Press Period, dir. Peter Herdrich, written by Terry Belanger, prod. Viking Productions, distrib. Book Arts Press, 1991. VHS, 30 min.

How to Operate a Book, dir. Peter Herdrich, written by Terry Belanger and Gary Frost, prod. Book Arts Press, 1986. VHS 30 min.

February 28: Volume I: Books as objects: illustrations, bindings

Exercise due: Making a quarto

* Roger Gaskell, "Printing House and Engraving Shop," *The Book Collector* 53 (2004): 213-51.

* David Pearson et al, *Preservation Advisory Centre: Bookbindings* (London: British Library, 2010).

* Mirjam M. Foot, "Bookbinding and the History of Books" in *A Potencie of Life*, ed. Nicolas Barker (London: British Library, 1993), 113-26.

James A. Knapp, "The Bastard Art: Woodcut Illustration in Sixteenth-Century England" in *Printing and Parenting in Early Modern England*, ed. Douglas A. Brooks (Aldershot, Hampshire: Ashgate, 2005), 151-72.

Blair Hedges, "A Method for Dating Early Books and Prints Using Image Analysis," *Proceedings of the Royal Society* 462 (2006): 3555-73.

Sunday, March 2, 11:00 pm: notify me by email of your book selection for your semester's project

March 7: Volume II: Books and culture: Stationers' Company

* Peter W. M. Blayney, excerpt of "The Publication of Playbooks" in *A New History of Early English Drama*, eds John D. Cox and David Scott Kastan (New York: Columbia UP, 1997), 389-415.

* Zachary Lesser, "Speculation in the book trade" in *Renaissance Drama and the Politics of Publication: Readings in the English Book Trade* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004), 26-51.

* Cyndia Susan Clegg, "The Stationers' Company of London" in *The British Literary Book Trade, 1475-1700*, eds James K. Bracken and Joel Silver, *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, Vol. 170 (Detroit: Gale Research, 1996), 275-291.

Peter Stallybrass, "Little Jobs': Broadides and the Printing Revolution" in *Agent of Change: Print Culture Studies after Elizabeth L. Eisenstein*, eds Sabrina Alcorn Baron, Eric N. Lindquist, and Eleanor F. Shevlin (Amherst: U Massachusetts P, 2007), 315-341.

Helen Smith, “‘A free Stationers wife of this companye’: Women and the Stationers” in *Grossly Material Things: Women and Book Production in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2012), 87-134.

March 14: Volume II: Books and early modern culture: stationers and authors

- * Michel Foucault, “What is an Author?” in *Textual Strategies: Perspectives in Post-Structuralist Criticism*, ed. Josué V. Harari (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1979), 141-60.
 - * Marcy L. North, “Ignoto and the Book Industry” in *The Anonymous Renaissance: Cultures of Discretion in Tudor-Stuart England* (Chicago and London: U Chicago P, 2003), 56-88.
 - * David Scott Kastan, “Humphrey Moseley and the Invention of English Literature” in *Agent of Change: Print Culture Studies after Elizabeth L. Eisenstein*, eds Sabrina Alcorn Baron, Eric N. Lindquist, and Eleanor F. Shevlin (Amherst: U Massachusetts P, 2007), 105-124.
- Adrian Johns, “The Invention of Piracy” in *Piracy: The Intellectual Property Wars from Gutenberg to Gates* (Chicago: U Chicago P, 2010), 17-40.

Sunday, March 16, 7:00 pm: Assignment due: Your book’s stationers

{**March 21: NO CLASS: Spring break**}

Tuesday, March 25, 7:00 pm: Assignment due: Your book’s authors

March 28: Volume II: Books and early modern culture: early readers and users

- * William H. Sherman, “Toward a History of the Manicule” in *Used Books: Marking Readers in Renaissance England* (Philadelphia: U Pennsylvania P, 2008), 25-52.
 - * John Jowett, “For Many of Your Companies: Middleton’s Early Readers” in *Thomas Middleton and Early Modern Textual Culture: A Companion to The Collected Works*, eds Gary Taylor and John Lavagino (Oxford: Clarendon P, 2007), 286-327.
- Franklin B. Williams, Jr. “Commendatory Verses: The Rise of the Art of Puffing,” *Studies in Bibliography* 19 (1966): 1-14.
- Ann Blair, “Reading Strategies for Coping with Information Overload ca. 1550-1700,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 64 (2003): 11-28.
- Keith Thomas, “The Meaning of Literacy in Early Modern England” in *The Written Word: Literacy in Transition*, ed. Gerd Baumann (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1986), 98-131.

April 4: Volume II: Books and culture: modern readers and users

- * Jeffrey Todd Knight, “Fast Bind, Fast Find: The History of the Book and the Modern Collection,” *Criticism* 51 (2009): 79-104.
 - * William H. Sherman, “Dirty Books? Attitudes Toward Readers’ Marks” in *Used Books: Marking Readers in Renaissance England* (Philadelphia: U Pennsylvania P, 2008), 151-178.
- Louis B. Wright, “The Harmsworth Collection and the Folger Library,” *The Book Collector* (1957): 123-28.
- Stephen H. Grant, “A Most Interesting and Attractive Problem: Creating Washington’s Folger Shakespeare Library,” *Washington History* 24: 1 (January 1, 2012): 2–21.

Sunday, April 6, 7:00 pm: Assignment due: Your book’s early users

April 11: [to be announced]

Sunday, April 13, 7:00 pm: Assignment due: Your book's provenance OR Your book's afterlife

April 18: Case Study: Bibles

- * Paul Saenger, "The Impact of the Early Printed Page on the Reading of the Bible" in *The Bible as Book: The First Printed Editions*, eds Kimberly Van Kampen and Paul Saenger (New Castle, DE and London: Oak Knoll P and British Library, 1999), 31-45.
- * Evelyn B. Tribble, "Authority, Control, Community: The English Printed Bible Page from Tyndale to the Authorized Version" in *Margins and Marginality: The Printed Page in Early Modern England* (Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 1993), 11-56.
- Peter Stallybrass, "Books and Scrolls: Navigating the Bible" in *Books and Readers in Early Modern England: Material Studies*, eds Jennifer Andersen and Elizabeth Sauer (Philadelphia: U Pennsylvania P, 2002), 42-79.
- Lori Anne Ferrell, "The Politics of Translation: The Bible in English, c. 1500-1700" in *The Bible and the People* (New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 2008), 56-94.

April 25: Volume III: Books as vehicles for texts: editing a text

- * Erick Keleman, "Textual Criticism and Kinds of Editions" in *Textual Editing and Criticism: An Introduction* (New York: Norton, 2009), 73-120.

May 2: Volume III: Books as vehicles for texts: annotating a text

Exercise due: Editing your text

- * Robert D. Hume, "The Aims and Uses of 'Textual Studies'" *PBSA* 99:2 (2005): 197-230.
- * Gerard Genette, "Introduction" in *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997), 1-15. [Originally published as *Seuils* (Paris, 1987).]

May 9: Volume III: Books as vehicles for texts: digital texts and tools

- Sarah Werner, "where material book culture meets digital humanities," *Journal of Digital Humanities* 1:3 (Summer 2012). <http://journalofdigitalhumanities.org/1-3/where-material-book-culture-meets-digital-humanities-by-sarah-werner/>
- Alan Galey, "The Enkindling Reciter: E-Books in the Bibliographical Imagination," *Book History* 15 (2012): 210-247.
- Mathew Kirschenbaum, "'Every Contact Leaves a Trace': Storage, Encryption, and Computer Forensics" in *Mechanisms: New Media and the Forensic Imagination* (MIT Press, 2008), 25-72.

Friday, May 16, 7:00 pm: Assignment due: Your book's biography

Assignment Descriptions: (longer guidelines can be found on the course website)

For all the assignments below, you will want to use an early modern book of your choice (assuming that it is in the Folger collection, that it is something you can read, and that it is in good enough condition to work closely with). You will use the same book for all assignments, since your research into your book's makers and users will be incorporated into writing the book's biography.

Late papers will not be accepted; should you anticipate a problem in meeting a deadline, you need to talk to me in advance of the deadline itself.

- 1) Your book's stationer(s) (10% of final grade):

Who was responsible for putting the book in print (that is, who printed it and who published it)? How are they identified—on the book's title page? in a colophon? in information supplied by a cataloger? What other types of texts did he or she print/publish/sell?

2) Your book's author(s) (10% of final grade):

How does your book identify and construct its author(s)? Is there a name on the title page? Is it pseudonymous? Anonymous? Is the author identified in other ways, such as through prefatory materials, or the use of the first person in the text?

3) Your book's early readers and users (10% of final grade):

Where are the signs of a reader in your book? What are those signs? Are they signs of a specific, individual reader, or are they signs of a projected audience? If both, what is the relationship between that specific reader and the imagined audience? What is the relationship between the author and the reader(s)? Is there evidence of the book having been actually read?

4a) Your book's provenance (10% of final grade):

Were there later collectors who owned this book? What do you know about those owners? What institutions, if any, held this book? What are the physical signs that indicate the book's provenance?

OR

4b) Your book's afterlife (10% of final grade):

What happened to your book's text after it was printed? Are there later printings of the same text? Later editions of the text? Translations? Does it exist in a modern print or digital edition?

5) Your book's biography (minimum 4000 words; 50% of final grade):

Write the biography of your book. Start from the book's creation (who wrote it, who put up the money for its publication, who printed it) and move on through the history of the book (where it was sold, which owners (if any) can be identified, what uses were made of the book, what changes were made to the book's physical structure) on up to the present day (how did it come into the Folger's collection, how is it cataloged). Depending on the popularity of your book, you could address familial relationships (reprints, subsequent early modern editions, subsequent editions), travel history (translations), etc.

There will also be a number of shorter exercises due during the course of the semester. These are designed as hands-on exercises to illustrate specific archival research skills and will be able to be completed in a few hours' work. All are required, and will count in the 10% participation portion of the final grade.

Note to other teachers:

You are more than welcome to use this syllabus as inspiration for your own, including the readings I've selected to the papers and exercises I assign. I would love to hear from you if you do and, to the extent it's possible, being credited. In the spirit of acknowledging influences, I have learned a great deal from the syllabi used by Lyn Tribble and Heidi Brayman Hackel for when they taught the MA Seminar at the Folger Institute; the assignments on your book's authors and your book's readers were drawn from similar assignments from the latter.