Syllabus for the Course

17:610:586 THE HISTORY OF BOOKS, DOCUMENTS, AND RECORDS IN PRINT AND ELECTRONIC ENVIRONMENTS (3)
(also: 16:194:675 TOPICS IN LIBRARY & INFORMATION SCIENCE)

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I. Catalog Description

The course will examine the production and circulation of knowledge in light of changing technologies, institutions and textual forms. An overview and comparison of textual transmission in oral, manuscript, print and electronic communication environments will include regulatory frameworks and the history of “intellectual property” (from attribution, authorship, to participatory ownership of creation). It will examine the current scholarship relevant for understanding books, documents and record manifestations comparatively. The focus on the book trades, web spheres, and socio-technical systems such as digital libraries will prompt questions about the nature of texts (print, non-print, and digital), their reception, associated literacy practices, communities and institutional contexts. The course will present a critique of the technological revolution perspective.

II. Pre- and/or Co-requisite

None

III. Course Objectives

• Understanding how information is created, preserved and communicated in different historical periods
• Comparison and contrasting of textual transmission processes in print and electronic environments and communication shifts
• Understanding the structure of texts and protocols for their reception in a historical framework
• Examination of theoretical issues and selected in-depth study of significant case studies in the current multidisciplinary scholarship of electronic and print culture
• Examination of methods and sources for the study of print and electronic texts and application of these methods for in-depth study of such texts, their production, circulation or use

IV. Organization of the Course

Module I - Technology & Chronology

1. Innovation
2. Transformation: Technologies & Documentary Practices
Module II – Genre, Discourse, Representations, Structured Spaces

1. Structure of the Text (Typography, Punctuation, Paratext, Hypertext)
2. Transformation: From Codex to Electronic Publishing
3. The Order of Texts (Digital Libraries, Web spheres, Blogospheres)

Module III – Contexts of Distribution, Regulatory Frameworks

1. Use, Appropriation
2. Networks, Communities
3. Metacultures, Institutionalization, Standardization
4. Authors, Publishers and the Public
5. Regulation and Legitimacy
6. Circulation of Value (Canon, Bestsellers)

V. Major Assignments

REQUIRED TEXT:


VI. Methods of Assessment

Methods Paper 20% of final grade
Critical Assessment of Readings 20% of final grade
Term Paper 40% of final grade
Class participation and discussion 20% of final grade

VII. Course Readings


Burke, Peter. 2000. A Social History of Knowledge: From Gutenberg to Diderot. (Polity)


Cavallo, Guglielmo, and Roger Chartier, Eds. 1999. *A History of Reading in the West*. (U of Massachusetts P)


Loewenstein, Joseph. 2002. *The Author's Due: Printing and the Prehistory of Copyright*. (U of Chicago P)


Webspace entry points (metaindexes mostly):

HoBo (formerly: The History of the Book @ Oxford) at: http://users.ox.ac.uk/~hobo/hobo/index2.html.


Voice of the Shuttle (VoS) Media Studies Portal (Alan Liu, UC-Santa Barbara) at: