

**History of Books and Print Culture**  
**Professor Jonathan Senchyne**  
**Fall 2015 - LIS 650**  
**Tuesdays, 1:30-4pm – Bunge Room**

**Course Description:**

History of Books and Print Culture is a graduate course introducing students to the methods, questions, and practices of two interrelated fields of academic inquiry: "print culture" and "the history of the book." From their roots in textual scholarship, librarianship, and bibliography, book history and print culture studies have developed into rich and diverse scholarly discourses across nearly all periods, national literatures/histories, and humanities disciplines. This course provides an introduction to foundational texts and questions, specialized immersion in scholarship focusing on the history of the book in early and nineteenth-century America, and graduate-level practice using book historical research methods on American literary and historical texts. Graduate students preparing for dissertations in the humanities, pursuing the UW-Madison Ph.D. minor in print culture studies, working on the MA in Library and Information studies with emphases in archives, special or academic libraries, museums, or digital humanities should find many points of interest in the course.



"The Antiquarian," Courtesy of the American Antiquarian Society

**Essential Questions**

- How have scholars and librarians approached the book itself as an object of study, and what sort of information and interpretation does the material book support?
- To what extent does the technology of printing – and associated trades and practices – create a culture?
- What are the various institutions that support the study of books: academic criticism and history, archives and special collections, museums, book art studios, etc?
- What methods of research from the physical archive to the digital collection, and what intellectual traditions, produce book history and print culture scholarship?
- What claims, interpretations, and ongoing inquiries have book history and print culture studies sustained in pre-1900 American literary, historical, and art historical studies?
- What is the long history of these disciplines from bibliography and textual editing through digital humanities?
- What are some strategies for doing original archival book historical research and producing written scholarly prose about it?

**Contact**

Office: 4255 Helen C. White  
email: [senchyne@wisc.edu](mailto:senchyne@wisc.edu)  
twitter: @jsench

Office Hours: Tues 12:30-1:30, by appointment  
Will respond within 24 hours, M-F, 9am-5pm at the very least.  
A mix of personal & professional posts, may post links to relevant stories/cfps

## Book List and Course Materials

We will be reading several books in their entirety so you will need a copy of those listed below. In the interest of facilitating class discussion, please, when possible, order the editions listed below. Books are available on two-hour reserve in the SLIS library. Articles and excerpts will be provided in PDF or through the University libraries. When we read an article or excerpt in PDF, it does not matter to me whether you read on paper or an electronic device, except that I insist that you have a demonstrable system for annotating and marking important passages.

- William Wells Brown, *Clotel; or the President's Daughter*, Bedford Cultural Edition, ISBN: 0312621078
- Joseph Dane, *What Is A Book? The Study of Early Printed Books*
- Benjamin Franklin, *Benjamin Franklin's Autobiography*, Norton Critical Edition, ISBN: 9780393935615
- Lisa Gitelman, *Paper Knowledge: Toward a Media History of Documents*
- Barbara Hochman, *Uncle Tom's Cabin and the Reading Revolution*
- Jill Lepore, *Book of Ages: The Life and Opinions of Jane Franklin*
- Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Norton Critical Edition, ISBN: 9780393933994

## Assignments

There are three components to the final grade in this course: class preparation and participation, archive presentations, and the seminar paper. Of the final grade, preparation and participation make up 20%, the archive presentations another 20% and the seminar paper 60%. More specific information about assignments will be forthcoming, but the following gives a general idea about expected work:

Preparation and participation: This course relies on the contributions of its members for its success. Attendance and readiness to participate in discussions (which requires having done the reading) are critically important. You will also be asked to make a short presentation once during the semester. Presentations are meant to jumpstart discussions by identifying key points in a reading that we should focus on. This does not mean merely summarizing the reading, but rather opening avenues for critical discussion during the class session. Why is this interesting for us? What of it makes sense and what seems confusing and might be addressed in our discussion? What are some relevant connections to other readings we have done? These should be about five to ten minutes long. During our final meeting, you will also have 10-15 minutes to present on your seminar paper research.

Archival presentations. From time to time during the semester we will meet at either the Wisconsin Historical Society or the Special Collections department of the Memorial Library. When we meet at these locations, you should select one item (book, pamphlet, manuscript, broadside, letter, whatever) related to the topic of the week of our meeting, view it, put it on hold for our meeting, and be prepared to talk about the item for 5 minutes during our meeting.

Seminar Paper: Proposal Due: **November 17** (1 page), Seminar Paper Due **end of exam period** (20-25 pages). The seminar paper should be on a topic of your choosing that is demonstrably relevant to the topic of the course. You may choose to write on a text that was on the syllabus or you may choose not to. You may build on the work you did for your short paper if you choose to. The paper should, in the end, demonstrate your critical engagement with the methods, questions, and practices of the fields of book history and print culture, preferably on some aspect of the history of the book in America before 1900. For an introduction to the seminar paper as a genre, see Gregory Colon Semenza, "The Seminar Paper" Graduate Study in the

Humanities for the 21st Century (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005) 82-101. In order to help develop the project in consultation with me, you will submit a 1-page proposal outlining the essay's proposed thesis, essential questions, and primary and secondary texts that you will focus on. Please use Chicago or MLA for citations.

## Calendar of Readings

Readings should be completed before class on the day for which they are listed. You are expected to do all of the required reading for this course. You are not, however, expected to fully master everything that you are reading at first. I expect that you will make a good faith effort at understanding by doing the reading; looking up words, terms, allusions, and references you may not know; and coming to class meetings with things to say about what you understood and questions about what you haven't yet grasped. In this way, you will become increasingly familiar and confident in the field, and capable of making your own contributions to the practice and scholarship of book history and print culture.

### Week 1, September 8: Key Terms: Bibliography, Book History, and Print Culture

- G. Thomas Tanselle, "A Bibliographer's Creed," Harvard.
- Robert Darnton, "What is the History of Books?" *Daedalus* (Summer 1982): 65-83.
- Robert Darnton, "What is the History of Book, Revisited" *Modern Intellectual History* (2007).
- Carl Spadoni, "How to Make a Soufflé; or, What Historians of the Book Need to Know about Bibliography" *History of Intellectual Culture* 7.1 (2007) 1-9.

### Week 2, September 15: Print Culture and Public Sphere

- Jurgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois*, 1-51.
- Elizabeth Eisenstein, "Defining the Initial Shift: Some Features of Print Culture" (abridged version) *Book History Reader* eds. David Finkelstein and Alistair McCleery (New York: Routledge, 2002) 151-173
- Benedict Anderson, "Introduction" and "Cultural Roots" *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* New Edition (New York: Verso, 2006) 1-38.
- Optional: Meredith McGill, "Introduction: The Matter of the Text" *American Literature and the Culture of Reprinting, 1834-1853* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003) 1-44.
- Sandra Gustafson, "American Literature and the Public Sphere" *American Literary History* 20.3 (2012) 465-478.
- Optional: Michael Warner, *The Letters of the Republic: Publication and the Public Sphere in*

*Eighteenth-Century America*, ix-72.

### Week 3, September 22: Making Books, c. 1440 – c. 1880

- Dane, *What Is A Book?*
- MEET IN SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, MEMORIAL LIBRARY

### Week 4, September 29: Benjamin Franklin, A Life in and of Print

- Benjamin Franklin, *Autobiography*
- Michael Warner, *The Letters of the Republic: Publication and the Public Sphere in Eighteenth-Century America*, 73-96.
- James Green and Peter Stallybrass, "Making and Remaking Benjamin Franklin, The 'Autobiography' Benjamin Franklin, Writer and Printer, 145-172.

### Week 5, October 6: Jane Franklin Mecom, A Life out of Print, Gender and the Book Part I

- Jill Lepore, *Book of Ages: The Life and Opinions of Jane Franklin*

### Week 6, October 13: Gender and the Book Part II

- MEET IN SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, MEMORIAL LIBRARY
- Anne Bradstreet, *Tenth Muse Lately Sprung Up In America*, paratextual material and "Prologue" (read pages represented on Images 1-10 in Early English Books Online)
- Hannah Webster Foster, *The Coquette or, The History of Eliza Wharton*
- Elizabeth Maddock Dillon, *The Gender of Freedom: Fictions of Liberalism and the Literary Public Sphere*, 1-48.
- Cathy N. Davidson, *Revolution and the Word: The Rise of the Novel in America*, 110-150

### Week 7, October 20: History of the History of the Book in America

- Isaiah Thomas, *The History of Printing in America*, Thomas' personal narrative (skim), "English America," "Massachusetts," and "Pennsylvania."  
<https://books.google.com/books?id=oH0yAAAAIAAJ&dq=isaiah%20thomas%20history%20of%20printing&pg=PR1#v=onepage&q&f=false>
- Philip Gura, *The American Antiquarian Society, 1812-2012: A Bicentennial History*, excerpts TBA.

### Week 8, October 27: Print and Colonialism

- MEET IN THE WISCONSIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY
- David Hall, "The Europeans' Encounters with Native Americans" *A History of the Book in America Volume 1: The Colonial Book in the Atlantic World*. (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2007) 13-25.
- Matt Cohen, "Introduction" *The Networked Wilderness: Communicating in Early New England* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010) 1-28
- Hugh Amory, "The Trout and the Milk: An Ethnobiographical Essay," *Bibliography and the Book Trades*, Ed. David D. Hall, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007) 11-33.
- Bethany Schneider, "Not for Citation: Jane Johnston Schoolcraft's Synchronic Strategies" *ESQ: Journal of the American Renaissance* 54:1-4 (2008).
- Increase Allen Lapham, *The Antiquities of Wisconsin* (1855) <http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/Antiquities/>

#### Week 9, November 3: Uncle Tom's Cabin, Media Event 1

- Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*
- *Uncle Tom's Cabin and American Culture*, <http://utc.iath.virginia.edu/>
- *Uncle Tom's Cabin in the National Era*, <http://nationalera.wordpress.com/>

#### Week 10, November 10: Uncle Tom's Cabin, Media Event 2

- Barbara Hochman, *Uncle Tom's Cabin and the Reading Revolution*
- MEET IN SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, MEMORIAL LIBRARY

#### Week 11, November 17: Early African American Print Culture 1

- William Wells Brown, *Clotel; or, The President's Daughter* (1853)
- *Clotel* by William Wells Brown: An Electronic Scholarly Edition, University of Virginia Press Rotunda Edition.
- Joanna Brooks, "The Unfortunates: What the Life Spans of Early Black Books Tell Us About Book History" *Early African American Print Culture* eds Lara Langer Cohen and Jordan A. Stein (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012) 40-52.
- Leon Jackson, "The Talking Book and the Talking Book Historian: African American Cultures of Print" *Book History* 13 (2010)
- *Colored Conventions Project* transcription DH project portal: <http://coloredconventions.org/transcribe-minutes>

## Week 12, November 24: Early African American Print Culture 2

- MEET AT WISCONSIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY
- Frances Smith Foster, "A Narrative of the Interesting Origins and (Somewhat) Surprising Developments of African-American Print Culture" *American Literary History* (Winter 2005) 17 (4): 714-740
- Eric Gardner, *Unexpected Places: Relocating Nineteenth-Century African American Literature*, 3-21.
- Select one African American or abolitionist periodical at WHS, locate something within to research and present on.

C19 Newspapers Available in paper format at the Wisconsin Historical Society

The North Star: URL: <http://search.library.wisc.edu/catalog/WU8241978>

Frederick Douglass' Paper: URL: <http://search.library.wisc.edu/catalog/WU8115534>

Anglo-African Magazine: URL: <http://search.library.wisc.edu/catalog/ocm01481156>

Freedom's Journal: URL: <http://search.library.wisc.edu/catalog/ocm01570144>

The Liberator: URL: <http://search.library.wisc.edu/catalog/ocm01590713>

Oberlin Evangelist: URL: <http://search.library.wisc.edu/catalog/ocm01760980>

National Anti-Slavery Standard: URL: <http://search.library.wisc.edu/catalog/ocm05020246>

Anti-Slavery Bugle: <http://search.library.wisc.edu/catalog/ocm01321288>

New National Era URL: <http://search.library.wisc.edu/catalog/ocm09879585>

North American Review: <http://search.library.wisc.edu/catalog/ocm04604572>

The Revolution: URL: <http://search.library.wisc.edu/catalog/ocm01644047>

## Week 13, December 1: The Visual Book – Guest Lecture by Lauren Gottlieb-Miller

- *The Century of Artists Books*, Johanna Drucker. New York: Granary Books, 2004. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. pp. 1-120; 287-307; 357-364
- *Structure of the Visual Book*, Keith A Smith. Rochester, NY: keith smith BOOKS, 2003. Expanded 4<sup>th</sup> Edition. pp. 15-27; 49-117 (mostly illustrations)
- White, Tony. From Democratic Multiple to Artist Publishing: The (R)evolutionary Artist's Book. *Art Documentation*. Vol. 31, no. 1 (Spring 2012), pp 45-56.
- Peruse the Artists' Book Collection @UW online here:

<http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/ArtistsBks>

- Visit Kohler Art Library's current Artist Book exhibit (title TBD)

Week 14, December 8: The Everyday, Print Culture and Document Culture

- Lisa Gitelman, *Paper Knowledge: Toward a Media History of Documents*

Week 15, December 15: From BH to DH

- Matthew Kirschenbaum, *Mechanisms: New Media and the Forensic Imagination*, pages 1-110.

Seminar Paper Due before end of university exam period.

## Grading Policy

A: 94 - 100 Outstanding achievement. Student performance demonstrates full command of course materials and evinces a high degree of originality and/or creativity that far surpasses course expectations.

AB: 88 – 93 Very good achievement. Student performance demonstrates thorough knowledge of course materials and exceeds course expectations by completing all course requirements in a superior manner.

B: 82 - 87

Good work. Student performance meets designated course expectations, demonstrates understanding of the course materials, and performs at an acceptable level.

BC: 77 - 81 Marginal work. Student performance demonstrates incomplete understanding of course materials.

C: 72-76 Unsatisfactory work and inadequate understanding of course materials. Course work at this level triggers probationary status unless balanced by an A earned in another course during the same semester.

## Academic Integrity

Please see <http://students.wisc.edu/doso/acadintegrity.html> and <http://students.wisc.edu/doso/students.html> for the University's policies on academic integrity and misconduct, including plagiarism.

## Accommodations

It is my intention to fully include persons with disabilities in this course. Please let me know immediately if you need any special accommodations to enable you to fully participate. I will try to maintain confidentiality of the information you share with me to the fullest extent possible, given that we may need to speak with your site supervisor. To request academic accommodations, you must register as soon as possible with McBurney Disability Resource Center (1305 Linden Drive; 263-2741; [www.mcburney.wisc.edu](http://www.mcburney.wisc.edu).)

## Late Assignments

Assignments are due on the dates listed in the Schedule. In fairness to your classmates, assignments will be marked down if turned in late. Only catastrophic emergencies will be considered justifiable exceptions to this policy. Late work will incur a penalty of one percentage point a day, unless you contact me on or before the due date, to negotiate an alternative reduction.

## Absence Policy

Class attendance is mandatory. Attendance is defined as being present for the entire class meeting. Anything substantially less than that, e.g., leaving at break, will be considered an absence. If illness or an emergency prevents you from attending class, please notify me, and any team members for group projects, by email or telephone before class begins. You should also make arrangements with another student to get her or his notes. An absence will be excused only if the absent student notifies me in advance of the class, or if the absent student can clearly demonstrate that such notification was not possible. If a student does not notify me of an absence prior to the start of class, students should assume that the absence will be considered unexcused.