The History and Future of the Book
Proposed for ENG 382
(passed ENG curriculum committee Fall 2010)

Instructor:
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Books


Purpose of the Class

This class will enable us to:

- Explore the cultural and literate phenomenon we call the book
- Discern how the book in its development from ancient times to the present has influenced, and been influenced by, human intellect and literacy
- Understand the impact of printing on the course of human literacy
- Trace how the rise of important books—as content and as artifacts—has influenced the way we read, write, and think, and
- Debate, as ink-on-tree-product gives way to pixels on a screen, what the “book” will become in the next 50 years, and what impact those changes will have on thinking and reading
About the Instructor

You can email me anytime. I check my email many times per day (I generally do not check my email after 8 or 9 pm, however. See “Response Time” below).

Response Time: I will usually respond to phone or email messages within 24 hours. Email is my preferred method of responding to both emails and phone calls. If you specifically want me to call you back on the phone, please note that when you leave your message, and please note as well when you will be able to take the call (to avoid our playing phone tag).

Office hours: I am in my office during office hours. Outside of office hours, it’s best to make an appointment for a specific time.

About me: I’m a native Texan, and have taught at CU for 20 years. My research area is technology and its effects on human communication. While I’ve taught lots of different courses in 29 total years of college teaching, I generally teach mostly classes in writing (composition, technical writing) and technology and literacy (like this class).

My parents worked at Texas Tech for 30+ years, and therefore I almost literally grew up on a college campus. It’s no surprise that I ended up working on one myself. In college at Tech, I wanted to be a high school band director, and then a lawyer; I essentially backed into English and discovered that it was the place for me; I have always loved playing with language in various ways (mostly talking, but writing, too). I’ve been teaching for about 27 years all told, but I had a variety of different jobs before then: bookseller, telephone company installer, library clerk, bakery janitor, liquor store clerk, cook—I’ve done a lot of interesting and not-too-interesting things. Within English studies, my interests are modern (technology, literacy, technological literacy, multimedia composition, the history and future of the book) and a little older (Shakespeare, Renaissance drama, the history of the book). My activities outside of work are varied: golf, Mexican food, cats, books (duh), traveling with my wife, and computers. I am a very serious Texas Tech Red Raiders and Dallas Cowboys fan, and have learned to love the Huskers on occasion.
Policies

1. **Demeanor:** I love teaching. As such, I try my very utmost to be fair and courteous to you all. Likewise, I will expect you to be fair and courteous to each other, both in in-class meetings and online. We are a community of writers, and we will learn from each other best if we all do our best work in an atmosphere of enthusiasm, courtesy, and respect for each other and each other’s writing.

2. **Canceling class:** In case of bad weather or unforeseen event, call the University’s weather hotline at 280-5800 to see if the University is closed. If it is closed, we will not have class. If it is not, we probably will have class. If the University is not closed, but I cannot make it to class, I will notify you via email and via this website. Notwithstanding the above, if you feel that the weather situation would render your travel to campus unsafe, then don’t come in.

3. **Late work:** You get 1 paper or draft to turn in up to 24 hours late. After you’ve used that allowance, all future late papers or drafts will have their grade reduced by half a letter grade.

   You may turn in 1 weekly comment up to 1 week late. After that, late weekly comments will not receive a grade at all. (“Late” means 1 second or more after the due time, which is every Sunday at 1159 pm.)

5. **Attendance:** You may miss 2 physical class meetings without penalty. Each missed class meeting after this will lower your final course grade by 5 percentage points (for example, a final grade of 92 would become an 87). Six (6) absences will earn automatic failure for the course.

There are no exceptions (other than item 2 above, and below)* to these policies; their intent is to make the field fair for everyone. I appreciate notification of doctors’ appointments and illness; however, such notification or doctor’s notes will not “excuse” an absence or a late paper.

*If you are on a University-approved team that requires you to be absent from class, I will need the note from your coach advising me of this fact before you go.

6. If you have any questions about the class, your performance your writing, etc., please come and see me. I have “real” office hours in my office in CRHL 134E, and I will be available via email or IM. The only wrong question is the one you never ask.

7. **Academic honesty** is a very big deal. Here it is, in plain language: Every single word you write must be your own (help from the Writing Center is OK, and encouraged). Having someone else write your paper, or part of it, is wrong. Getting
a paper from somewhere else and turning it in as your own is wrong. Pasting information from the Internet into your paper, without quoting it and indicating where it came from, is wrong. Using copyrighted graphics from the Internet without first acquiring permission to use them is wrong. Putting something from another source, no matter where, into your own words and putting it in your paper without telling where it came from is wrong. **If a paper or project does any of these things, it will receive a grade of zero, and the Dean’s office will be notified.** Read [http://www2.creighton.edu/fileadmin/user/CCAS/docs/acadhonesty.html](http://www2.creighton.edu/fileadmin/user/CCAS/docs/acadhonesty.html) for the College’s academic honesty policy.

9. I’ve been teaching for 27 years. In that time, I have become very much aware that many students believe they must get a certain grade (usually an A) in order to achieve some external goal: to get into medical school/law school/graduate school, etc; to get/keep a scholarship; to remain at Creighton/transfer elsewhere—the list goes on. I will, here and now, tell you that I sympathize with you and understand these pressures, goals, and attitudes. I had the same things going on when I was in college.

That having been said, I must tell you now that my goal in this course is to assist you in becoming better and more aware thinkers and writers about the topic of this course. That’s my job. Your job is to think, reflect, and write, and to learn from doing that writing. I therefore cannot and will not give extra credit or curve any grade for this course.

10. Technology. You must have a valid Creighton email account which you should check every day. I will send all email announcements and syllabus changes to that email address. As far as other technology, as much of the information for this course will be online, and as this syllabus is online, you will need to have daily access to the World-wide Web. Two of the projects for this class will involve digital media; they will be doable and completable with equipment found on CU public computers or in the English Computer Lab in CRHL 126.
Grading Policy for Papers

These comments refer to the evaluation of the end product of a lengthy process—the final revised version of a paper, not the first or even the second draft. Global and local revision are vital components any student’s writing process.

An A (outstanding) paper is unique, original, engaging, and full. It will have virtually no grammatical, usage, punctuation, or spelling errors. It has an unique “voice” that reflects an individual writer behind it, and will speak with authority and clarity. It is rich in detail, showing a clear understanding of differences in levels of specificity; it provides justification or support for all general assertions. Its treatment of the topic avoids a feeling of “anonymity.” It addresses the assignment directly without avoiding specific requirements.

The B (above average) paper falls short of an A paper usually in two areas: style and development. It has some errors in grammar, usage, punctuation, or spelling, but usually very few; or it has some awkward phrases—but in neither case enough to impede the reading of the paper. Its development is consistently strong, with detail and support present in most, but perhaps not every, instance. Its sense of audience is clear. The B paper addresses the assignment directly and satisfies almost all of its requirements. The B grade is not given to a paper that is not clearly and demonstrably above average.

The C (average) paper addresses the assignment directly and relatively clearly, but without significant depth or clarity. Stylistic errors may be noticeably present, but not in such quantity as to impede the reading in a significant way. A C paper generally provides some support for assertions, but not enough to give the impression of complete thoroughness. The tone and voice of a C paper are fairly clear but often lack a sense of individuality of author or sense of authority. A C paper often has an “anonymous” quality to it, restating standard opinion or assertions without going into significant depth. A C paper is in control of its subject in a reasonable but not yet comprehensive manner.

It is important to note that a C grade on a paper does not mean that the writing, or the student’s performance, is in any way poor or substandard. A C means that the work is basically solid and acceptable.

A grade of C+ may be given to a paper whose elements place it in the upper range of C papers, but which is still not of B quality.

The D (below average) paper addresses the assignment only in a brief way, avoiding some of the requirements of the assignment. Many general statements without proof, support, or justification often characterize it. Its usage, grammar,
punctuation, or spelling are such that reading the paper is somewhat difficult; it has more than a few such errors per page. It is kept from being an F paper by the fact that it does address the assignment in some way and that it has some structure and does make coherent points.

An F paper has many grammatical, stylistic, punctuation, usage, or diction errors (enough to make reading the paper difficult); it makes few if any coherent assertions about the point; it has little structure; or it has any combination of these problems. A paper which may be acceptable in style and development, but which does not address the assignment at all, may also be given a grade of F.

(based on Miami University Composition program)
Required assignments

1. Come to class on time, every day, prepared, and ready to talk about what you’ve read. Participate.
2. Write 2 projects.
   a. The Bibliographic Autobiography will ask you to construct your own life story through the books or other texts you read, have read, or been otherwise influenced by. Length: 10 pages. References and annotated bibliography required. Draft and final versions required.
   b. The Impact Project will ask you to isolate a particular, very focused, aspect of a) book history or b) book technology and create a webpage to post on the class website that engages both the historical context of the topic and the cultural and literate impact of the phenomenon studied.
3. Contribute to a weekly dialogue (10 posts) on the class blog; 1 comment of no fewer than 300 words per week.
4. Take the final exam.

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<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bibliographic Autobiography</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Impact Project</td>
<td>150</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weekly Dialogue</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final exam</td>
<td>50</td>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>400</td>
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Your final grade will be the total percentage of points earned out of points possible.
What you have to read and when you have to read it


- Week 2 Books before Gutenberg (beginning). Field trip to Reinert Library Rare Books Room to see pre-book “books”

- Week 3 Books before Gutenberg (continued) (Read Petrosky first half)

- Week 4 What hath Gutenberg wrought? Eisenstein (read ch 1,2,3,)

- Week 5 Book-associated technologies (Eisenstein (read ch 4.5.6.7) (Petrosky 2nd half)

- Week 6 Tyndale, Wycliffe, and the English Bible: artifact and content (Bobrick first half) (Paper 1 draft due)

- Week 7 The English Bible as political border fence (Bobrick 2nd half)

- Week 8 The spread of the book (handouts) (Paper 1 due)

- Week 9 Books and their successors outside of the West (Barrett first half)

- Week 10 Books and their successors outside of the West (Barrett 2nd half)

- Week 11 Future of the Book (begin); Umberto Eco: Bruno Giussani (handouts)

- Week 12 Future of the Book (end)

- Week 13 Workshops on impact projects

- Week 14 impact project presentations

- Finals week: Final examination