

## HIST 490A 201

### **Paper, Ink, and Pixels: A Global History of the Book**

Instructor: (Dr.) Sarah Basham  
(she/her)

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#### **About this course**

This course asks students to consider the history of one of the most ubiquitous objects in a university experience. What counts as a book? How long have they been around? What role do books play in human experience? We will hold old books, write in and about books, smell and listen to books, measure books, describe books and their authors and readers. Books are knowledge and stories given material form ([Leslie Howsam](#)).<sup>1</sup> We will ask how different people have produced and consumed these material objects in different places and times, and what relationship books, libraries and archives have to our own production of historical knowledge.

We start with a tour through early manuscript cultures, then experience the invention of print technologies all over the globe and the changes this wrought in intellectual and popular cultures. We will consider how to formally describe surviving books from all periods and the materials that were used to produce them. We'll ask what makes a genre, and how to write a social history of a book—then read about the people who wrote, produced, and read them. We finish with a discussion of the spaces and institutions that house and continue to house physical books and their digital successors.

#### **Objectives**

Students will learn to ask questions about the historical relationships between people, material objects, and abstract ideas contained therein. Students will also learn necessary formal skills for writing about rare books as primary sources.

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<sup>1</sup> Leslie Howsam, "Thinking through the History of the Book," *Memoires du livre/Studies in Book Culture* 7.2(2016), DOI: 10.7202/1036851ar <https://scholar.uwindsor.ca/historypub/16/>

## Readings

Readings will be available via the Library Online Course Reserve system on Canvas. See the schedule below for due dates. Readings should be prepared before the class on the date listed.

*\*\*The readings and the syllabus will change according to the interests of students and needs of the class. I will make every effort to give ample notice regarding any changes to the syllabus.\*\**

## Grading Components and Late Submission Policy

Attendance and Participation	15%
Weekly Thought Bubble <150 words each, due Tuesdays 12 pm	15%
Final Essay Topic and Research Question	10%
Final Essay Preliminary Bibliography	20%
Final Essay Proposal	20%
Final Essay	20%

**For every day an assignment is late, 10% will be deducted from the final mark. Assignments more than 3 days late will not be accepted without a formal academic concession.**

## Deliverable Assignments (Detail)

### **Weekly Thought Bubble: due Tuesdays 12 pm (noon)**

Thought Bubbles can take any form you want (Cartoon? Writing? Video? Audio clip?), but must (1) be brief (150 words or less); (2) be submit-able via the class Canvas discussion board; and (3) show that you have thought critically about the reading.

**Responses should be submitted via Canvas by noon Tuesdays for perusal by peers.**

**Final Essay Topic and Research Question: due Friday, 2/14, midnight, via Canvas.**

Your research question should revolve around an item held in UBC Rare Books and Special Collections. It should identify an item of interest and draw on the kinds of literature we read in the first month of the course. The assignment should include a preliminary thesis statement that answers the question. Specific requirements will be discussed in class.

### **Final Essay Preliminary Bibliography: due Friday 3/6, midnight, via email.**

This bibliography should include a list of primary sources and secondary sources you plan to consult for your project. Specific requirements will be discussed in class.

### **Final Essay Proposal: due Friday 3/27, midnight, via Canvas.**

The focus of the proposal should be an outline of your final paper, including a revised research question, a revised hypothesis, an outline of planned paragraphs, and an updated list of the primary and secondary sources you plan to use.

*These assignments will be returned with suggestions from the instructor.*

### **Final Essay: due Wednesday, 4/29, noon, in hard copy.**

Your final essay for the course should be a research paper between 4,000 to 5,000 words, excluding footnotes. The paper should be based on the primary source you chose for your descriptive bibliography. The paper should draw on the themes for the course and connect the material book and its text. Specific requirements will be discussed in class.

## **Attendance and Classroom Policies**

Attendance to all classes is mandatory. Everyone gets one, as my advisor used to call it, excused, “There’s Nothing Technically Wrong With Me But My Brain Is Melting And I Just Really Need Some Sleep” absence (cf. Carla Nappi, 2013). No notification necessary. Two or more absences will impact your participation grade. Second absences due to illness/personal reasons will be excused upon notification of the instructor. To excuse further absences, an academic concession is required. See here: <https://students.ubc.ca/enrolment/academic-learning-resources/academic-concessions>. When absent, please continue to submit your weekly thought bubbles.

When in class, you are expected to participate respectfully in class discussions. Seminar-style learning requires a high degree of contribution from all parties, and succeeds best when executed in a spirit of generosity. Let’s make it happen. Feel free to take notes on a laptop, but please do not text your friends, go online shopping, watch sporting games, message people on WeChat, or otherwise derail your classmates’ learning experiences.\*

\*You laugh, but I have seen all of these things in the classroom. It’s annoying. Don’t do it.

## Academic Integrity

Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Any assignments found to have been plagiarized will receive an automatic failing grade. Familiarize yourself with UBC's definitions of academic integrity and ways to avoid (even accidental) plagiarism: <https://learningcommons.ubc.ca/academic-integrity/>. The Arts One program provides a definition of plagiarism:

<https://artsone.arts.ubc.ca/about-arts-one/ubc-policies/ubc-plagiarism-policy/>

Let's keep our class and community healthy and thriving with our own ideas! Come talk to me *anytime* you have questions on this front.

## Academic and Life Resources for Students

From the University:

UBC provides resources to support student learning and to maintain healthy lifestyles but recognizes that sometimes crises arise and so there are additional resources to access including those for survivors of sexual violence. UBC values respect for the person and ideas of all members of the academic community. Harassment and discrimination are not tolerated nor is suppression of academic freedom. UBC provides appropriate accommodation for students with disabilities and for religious, spiritual and cultural observances. UBC values academic honesty and students are expected to acknowledge the ideas generated by others and to uphold the highest academic standards in all of their actions. Details of the policies and how to access support are available here: <https://senate.ubc.ca/policies-resources-support-student-success>

From Me:

I am happy to be a resource for you, but I am only qualified to be an academic resource. I recognize there are many things that might impact your studies. In case find yourself needing assistance this term, the resources below may help. Please pay special attention to the first three links, where you can find Arts Academic Advising, and information on academic accommodations for students with ongoing medical conditions or disabilities via the Centre for Accessibility.

<b>Arts Academic Advising</b>	<a href="https://learningcommons.ubc.ca/tutoring-studying/academic-advising/">https://learningcommons.ubc.ca/tutoring-studying/academic-advising/</a>
<b>Academic Accommodations</b>	<a href="https://students.ubc.ca/enrolment/academic-learning-resources/academic-accommodations-disabilities">https://students.ubc.ca/enrolment/academic-learning-resources/academic-accommodations-disabilities</a>
<b>Centre for Accessibility</b>	<a href="https://students.ubc.ca/about-student-services/centre-for-accessibility">https://students.ubc.ca/about-student-services/centre-for-accessibility</a>

**AMS Tutoring**<https://www.ams.ubc.ca/student-services/tutoring/>**Centre for Writing and  
Scholarly Communication  
(Learning Commons)  
Counselling Services (pro  
counselors)**<https://learningcommons.ubc.ca/tutoring-studying/tutoring/><https://students.ubc.ca/health/counselling-services>**Wellness Centre (trained  
students)**<https://students.ubc.ca/health/wellness-centre>**AMS Sexual Assault Support  
Centre (AMS SASC)**<https://amssasc.ca/>**Sexual Violence Prevention and  
Response Office (SVPRO)**<https://svpro.ubc.ca/>**Schedule**

Wk	Day	Topics	Readings
1	1/8	<i>Course introduction</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kingsley, Stephanie. "Book History: A Perspectives Quick Study." <i>Perspectives</i>, 17 October 2016. <a href="https://www.historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/october-2016/book-history-a-perspectives-quick-study">https://www.historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/october-2016/book-history-a-perspectives-quick-study</a></li> <li>• Darnton, Robert. "What is the History of Books?" <i>Daedalus</i> 111.3 (Summer, 1982): 65–83.</li> </ul> <p>Optional: Darnton, Robert. "'What is the History of Books?' Revisited." <i>Modern Intellectual History</i> 4.3 (2007): 495–508.</p>
2	1/15	<i>Manuscript Cultures</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Michael Friedrich and Cosima Schwarke. "Introduction—Manuscripts as Evolving Entities." pp. 1–26. In <i>One-Volume Libraries: Composite and Multiple-Text Manuscripts</i>. Michael Friedrich and Cosima Schwarke, eds. Studies in Manuscript Culture, Volume 9. Berlin/Boston: Walter de Gruyter GmbH, 2016. <a href="https://www.degruyter.com/view/books/9783110496956/9783110496956-001/9783110496956-001.xml">https://www.degruyter.com/view/books/9783110496956/9783110496956-001/9783110496956-001.xml</a></li> <li>• Jörg B. Quenzer. "Introduction." pp. 1–6. In <i>Manuscript Cultures: Mapping the Field</i>. Edited by Jörg B. Quenzer, Dmitry Bondarev, and</li> </ul>

			<p>Jan-Ulrich Sobisch. <i>Studies in Manuscript Cultures, Volume 1</i>. Berlin, Munich, and Boston: Walter de Gruyter GmbH, 2014.</p> <p><i>Optional: Agnieszka Helman-Ważny. "Tibetan manuscripts: Between History and Science." pp. 276–298. In <i>Manuscript Cultures: Mapping the Field</i>.</i></p>
3	1/22	Print Cultures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Elizabeth L. Eisenstein, <i>The Printing Revolution in Early Modern Europe</i>, p.xiii–xxii, and 1-45. Via UBC: <a href="https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139197038">https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139197038</a></li> <li>Adrian Johns, <i>The Nature of the Book</i>, "Introduction," pp. 1–57: <a href="https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb.01007">https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb.01007</a></li> </ul>
4	1/29	Print Cultures continued...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brokaw and Chow, <i>Printing and Book Culture in Late Imperial China</i>, Part I, Introduction: Chapter 1 (pp. 3–54); Part II, Commercial Publishing: Chapter 3 (pp. 107-151) and Chapter 5 (pp. 184–234). <a href="https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb.33047">https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb.33047</a></li> </ul> <p><i>ASSIGNMENT: Prior to class, sort through the RBSC collections online, and identify objects or groups of objects you are particularly interested in.</i></p>
5	2/5	Descriptive Bibliography  RBSC Visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Donald F. McKenzie, "The Book as an Expressive Form." <i>Bibliography and Sociology of Texts</i>. Cambridge University Press, 1999. DOI: <a href="https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511483226.004">https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511483226.004</a></li> </ul> <p><i>Optional: Thomas G. Tanselle, "A Description of Descriptive Bibliography." <i>Studies In Bibliography</i> 45(1992):1–30. <a href="https://www.jstor.org/stable/40371955">https://www.jstor.org/stable/40371955</a></i></p>
6	2/12	Ink and Paper  Proposed RBSC work week.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adrian Johns. "Ink." In <i>Materials and Expertise in Early Modern Europe: Between Market and Laboratory</i>, edited by E. Spary and U. Klein, 101–24. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010. DOI:10.7208/chicago/9780226439709.003.0005</li> <li>Gitelman, Lisa. <i>Paper Knowledge: Toward a Media History of Documents</i>. Durham: Duke University Press, 2014. <a href="#">Introduction and Chapter 1, pp.1–52.</a></li> </ul>

Research Question/Topic due Friday, 2/14, midnight, via email.			
7	2/19		Reading break. No class.
8	2/26	Genre Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ann Blair. <i>Too Much to Know: Managing Scholarly Information Before the Modern Age</i>. New Haven: Yale University Press, c2010. <a href="#">Chapter 3, pp. 117–172.</a></li> <li>Robert E. Hegel. "Niche Marketing for Late Imperial Fiction," In <i>Printing and Book Culture in Late Imperial China</i>, edited by Cynthia J. Brokaw and Kai-wing Chow. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005. <a href="#">Chapter 6, pp. 235–266.</a> <a href="https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb.33047">https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb.33047</a></li> </ul>
9	3/4	Social history of the book	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>McDermott, Joseph. <i>A Social History of the Chinese Book: Books and Literati Culture in Late Imperial China</i>. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2006. [<a href="https://muse.jhu.edu/book/5497">https://muse.jhu.edu/book/5497</a>]</li> </ul>
Bibliography due 3/6, Friday, midnight, via email.			
10	3/11	Authors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Simone Müller. "The Compiler as the Narrator: Awareness of Authorship, Authorial Presence and Author Figurations in Japanese Imperial Anthologies, with a Special Focus on the <i>Kokin wakashū</i>," In Schwermann, Christian and Raji C. Steinbeck, ed. <i>That Wonderful Composite Called Author: Authorship in East Asian Literatures from the Beginnings to the Seventeenth Century</i>. Leiden: Brill, 2014. <a href="#">Chapter 3. 98-141.</a> <a href="https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/ubc/detail.action?docID=1901809">https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/ubc/detail.action?docID=1901809.</a></li> <li>David Hall. <i>Ways of Writing: Practice and Politics of Text-Making in Seventeenth-Century New England</i>. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008. <a href="#">Chapter 3, "Social Authorship and the Making of Printed Texts."</a> <i>Project MUSE</i> <a href="https://muse.jhu.edu/book/14063">muse.jhu.edu/book/14063.</a></li> </ul>
11	3/18	Readers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fish, Stanley E. "Interpreting the 'Variorum.'" <i>Critical Inquiry</i>, vol. 2, no. 3, 1976, pp. 465–485. <i>JSTOR</i>, <a href="http://www.jstor.org/stable/1342862">www.jstor.org/stable/1342862</a> .</li> <li>Jane P. Tompkins, "The Reader in History: The Changing Shape of Literary Response," In <i>Reader-Response Criticism: From Formalism to Post-</i></li> </ul>

			<i>Structuralism</i> , edited by Jane P. Tompkins. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980. <a href="#">Pp. 201–32.</a>
<b>*Final Essay Proposals due 3/27*</b>			
12	3/25	<i>Libraries</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Borges, Jorge Luis. "The Library of Babel." In <i>Labyrinths: Selected Stories and Other Writings</i>. Edited by Donald A. Yates and James E. Irby. New York: New Directions Pub. Corps., 2007. Pp. 51–58. OR, same publisher, 1964.</li> <li>• Manoff, Marlene. 2004 "Theories of the Archive from Across the Disciplines". <i>Libraries and the Academy</i> 4.1 (2004): 9–25. <a href="https://muse.jhu.edu/article/51302">https://muse.jhu.edu/article/51302</a></li> </ul>
<b>*Final Essay Proposals due 3/27*</b>			
13	4/1	<i>Digital Era</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whitney Anne Trettien. "A Deep History of Electronic Textuality: The Case of <i>English Reprints Jhon Milton Areopagitica</i>." <i>Digital humanities quarterly</i> 7.1(2013). <a href="http://www.digitalhumanities.org/dhq/vol/7/1/000150/000150.html">http://www.digitalhumanities.org/dhq/vol/7/1/000150/000150.html</a></li> </ul>
<b>*Final Essay Proposals due 3/27*</b>			
14	4/8	<i>Recap and review</i>	Prepare to talk about your final paper with the class.
<b>*Final Essay Proposals due 3/27*</b>			
4/29	<b>Final Papers due in hard copy, 12 PM (noon).</b>		