LIS 586 History of the Book
Course Outline
Fall 2017

Instructor:

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Calendar Description:
The historical, aesthetic, and economic bases of the artefacts known as “books” and their role in the recording, preservation, and dissemination of ideas.

Objectives:
Articulate and appreciate the role and context of books in civilization.
Develop a historical sense of the evolution of the tools, materials, and techniques of book production.
Understand and advocate for the role of rare books in research libraries: namely, their interpretation, use, and exhibition, as well as environmental and other preservation issues.

Measurable Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs):
Students will investigate, analyze, and articulate a significant topic in the history of the book through a book review, class presentation, and term paper.
Students will develop an understanding of the range of disciplines that make up the subject (e.g., bibliography, publishing, typography, etc.).
The course will make use of the University’s special collections holdings, providing students with frequent opportunities to handle rare books and special materials, carry out research interests using these holdings, and investigate questions about the book as material, social, and cultural object.

Content:
This course follows a chronological path from the advent of the codex to the emergence of printing and the mass production of books. Papermaking, typography, bookbinding, and modern private-press publishing will also be explored. Issues of housing and conservation will be discussed, as well as the duality of the book as both physical artefact and intellectual repository.
Methods:
Instruction encompasses lectures, videos, field trips, discussion, hands-on-exercises, and class presentations.

Course Relationships:
Prerequisite: LIS 501

Required Texts:
We will use chapters in Solveig C. Robinson’s The Book in Society (2014) to reinforce important developments in book culture that are covered in class and to explain other aspects of print culture that may not be discussed in class due to time constraints.

While there are no required readings as such, students are well advised to consult and familiarize themselves with the nomenclature covered by John Carter’s indispensable ABC for Book Collectors, and the general overviews of printing and bibliography in Philip Gaskell’s A New Introduction to Bibliography. While Gaskell’s book should be the novice’s first recourse, it has not entirely superseded two older books: Ronald B. McKerrow’s An Introduction to Bibliography for Literary Students and Roy Stokes’ Esdaile’s Manual of Bibliography, which cover much the same ground.

In many respects, the best general history is still S.H. Steinberg’s Five Hundred Years of Printing, which, like Carter’s ABC, has been continuously in print for nearly six decades. For sheer entertainment value, however, Nicholas Basbanes’ A Gentle Madness: Bibliophiles, Bibliomanes, and the Eternal Passion for Books cannot be too highly recommended.

Assignments and Weighting:
Book review: 25%
Class presentation: 25%
Term paper: 40%
Participation: 10%

School of Library and Information Studies Grading Statement:
Grades reflect professional judgements of student achievement made by instructors. These judgements are based on a combination of absolute achievement and relative performance in class. The instructor should mark in terms of raw scores, rank the assignments in order of merit, and with due attention to the verbal descriptions of the various grades, assign an appropriate final letter grade.

Grades are calculated in accordance with the SLIS Grading Procedure

Academic Integrity:
The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize
themselves with the provisions of the Code of Student Behaviour and avoid any behaviour which could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University.

Students should also be mindful of the SLIS Copyright Policy

**Inclusive Language and Equity:**
The Faculty of Education is committed to providing an environment of respect for all people within the university community and to educating faculty, staff, and students in developing teaching and learning contexts that are welcoming to all. The Faculty recommends that students and staff use inclusive language to create a classroom atmosphere in which students’ experiences and views are treated with equal respect and value in relation to their gender, racial background, sexual orientation and ethnic background. Students who require accommodations in this course due to a disability affecting mobility, vision, hearing, learning, or mental or physical health are advised to discuss their needs with Specialized Support and Disability Services.

**Recording of Lectures:**
Recording of lectures is permitted only with the prior written consent of the professor or if recording is part of an approved accommodation plan.

Policy about course outlines can be found in Section 23.4(2) of the University Calendar.