

Long Island University
LIS 616, Summer, 2014

CONTEMPORARY ARTISTS' BOOKS

SYLLABUS

Dr. C. Woo
August 1-3, 23-24, 2014, 11-5 p.m.
Office hrs: after class and by appt.

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Required readings: by Drucker, Lauf, Phillpot, Hubert, et al., distributed in class.

Contemporary Artists' Books

This course will investigate the contemporary world of artists' books and what it means to build a collection in this genre. It will begin by looking at essential questions such as what the term "artists' books" has come to mean, what are its historical precedents and contexts in the art world, why it is a 20th-century phenomenon, and perhaps most importantly, what are the principles and criteria of selection and appraisal.

It will look at the practical side of the field: collecting policies, public mission and outreach, the marketplace, dealers, and business ethics. We will also take a look at the logistics of stewardship over this special category of books: housing, preservation, cataloging, promotion and access.

In order to get a real 'tincture' of these works and to gain a better understanding of their special requirements, we will have several laboratory sessions at the LIU-Brooklyn Campus to examine the material and technical aspects of an artist's book. Examples from its special collection of artists' books will be investigated, and the course will culminate with the making of an original, individual artist's book.

Course Objectives

This course fulfills the primary Palmer School objectives for student learning in library and information science:

1. *Foundations, Principles and Ethics*, fostering an understanding of the trends and theories behind book history as a discipline, refining critical thinking, problem-solving and decision-making skills.
2. *Description, Organization and Operation of Information Systems*, specifically understanding the particular of this special genre of book collecting within the realm of Special Collections.

3. *Information Services*, namely developing the ability to communicate and educate targeted audiences in the Rare Books and Special Collections field and trade, understanding the relation of these entities in a national and international framework.
4. *Administration and Management*, demonstrating methods of outreach for information services in this genre to specific audiences and working collaboratively with collectors, scholars and curators in the field, being capable of managing and preserving a rare books collection.
5. *Professional Development and Leadership*, specifically refining and assessing the value of research and continuing education, being able to apply theory to practice in a working collection and library.

Course Requirements

1. Attendance is required. No absences or lateness are allowed given the shortened format of the course.
2. Readings. Students are expected to have completed the readings for each class and be ready to participate in discussion.
3. A brief written report on an artists' books collection (assigned at the first meeting) disseminated through class-email addresses.
4. An original, handmade artist's book to be executed during the studio sessions.
5. A Term Paper/Project of approximately 10-12 pages. For this, students may choose one of these two options.
 - A. A Research Paper. A research paper of 10-12 pages on an aspect of the field with a separate bibliography. The paper should propose an original thesis or point of view and be supported by research findings. Where illustrations are called for, include visual images.
 - B. Drawing from a local collection such as those at NYPL, MoMA, or BMA, select seven to eight works and write an original, in-depth critical analysis of each. The written paper should be framed as a coherent thesis and essay and should include a bibliography. Include color images of the books.
6. An oral presentation of the term/research paper during the last class session.

Citation Style and Bibliography

All written materials should be typed using 12-point type, double-spaced with 1-inch margins at the sides and 1-1/2-inch margins at the top and bottom. Please double space

between sentences and after colons (this applies to the bibliographies/work cited pages as well). Pages should be numbered. There should be a separate cover page with the title of the paper, the student's name, date and the course number.

All written materials should follow the MLA Citation Style for in-text citations and references as well as for the bibliography/list of works cited. Please avoid quoting passages from texts (especially long ones) without adequate commentary.

All citations and sources consulted and paraphrased but not quoted must be properly documented.

Course Policies

All work should be turned in on time since learning is cumulative through the semester. When problems arise in meeting deadlines, students should consult with the instructor *well before* the assignment is due.

Success in this course will depend in part upon good citizenship, that is, attending class, being on time, participating helpfully in classroom exercises, submitting all work on time, and submitting work that meets scholarly standards. All written work should be clearly and coherently expressed and well-organized. Always proof-read written work several times, for sense, organization, tone, the mechanics of writing, and for leftover words from revisions made on the computer. Presentation matters.

Academic Honesty. Students who submit written or other work not their own or who submit work with sources inadequately acknowledged or documented will be given the grade of zero for the work and may fail the course.

Classroom Protocol

Other than scheduled breaks, leaving during class time should be undertaken only for real emergencies.

All electronic equipment must be turned off and put away during class time. It is preferable that you take notes by hand instead of on an electronic device.

Food and drink are not allowed in class.

Hands must be clean for studio and laboratory sessions.

CALENDAR

Aug 1 – NYU, Bobst

Mon – May 14th

Preliminaries; readings

Critical and Aesthetic Issues in the Field of Artists' Books

Definitions of ABs

Historical Contexts and Precedents

Demonstration: Examples of ABs

Studio session: Origami Books

*Readings for WK 2: Drucker (Chapters 1 and 2 of *The Century of Artists' Books*),
Phillpot, Lauf, Rogers

*Assignment for next week: Written report on an AB Collection, circulated by email to
entire class.

Aug 2 – NYU, Bobst or LIU, Brooklyn

Appraisal and Selection Criteria

Collecting Policies

Laboratory Session – Examples of ABs and Exhibition Catalogs

*Readings for WK 3: Hubert, Ch. 4 & 13, Drucker's "Critical Issues" and "Beyond
Velveeta," Carlen's "Marketing Fundamentals"

*Due: Preliminary Proposal for the Term Paper/Project

Aug 3 – LIU, Brooklyn

LLC 507 – Please bring your LIU ID

Cataloging of ABs

Housing and Preservation

Promotion and Access

Distribution and Marketing

Dealers and Business Ethics

Studio Session – collage exercise

*Readings for WK 4: Runnells, Dowd, Bodman

*Due: Proposal for the Term Paper, including specific topic, thesis, abstract of argument,
review of the literature and statement of research methodology.

Aug 23 – LIU, Brooklyn, LLC 507

Laboratory Session: Books from the LIU Collection of Artists' Books

Making an Artist's Book – Design Session

Aug 24 – LIU, Brooklyn, LLC 507

Studio Session – Making an Artist's Book
Presentation of Term Projects

Directions to the Brooklyn Campus

Subways to the BC: 4, 5, 2, 3 to Nevins Street stop (walk one block on Flatbush Avenue to DeKalb; Q, B, R, W to Flatbush Ave. There are entrances at the corner of Flatbush and DeKalb, and at DeKalb Avenue (green gates). Ask for the Library Learning Center Building (LLC) and take the elevator to the 5th floor, make two left turns and walk down long hall to Room 507.

Please note: if you are driving to campus and need a parking space, please let me know the following: the make, model, and color of your vehicle. You will need a hard-copy memorandum to gain entry to the parking spaces.

Artists' Books Collections and Organizations
for Reports, Due Week 2, Monday

Please prepare a brief written description (one-two pages) of one of the following artists' books collection including the extent, collecting focus, outreach programs and access policies. This description should be emailed to all the students and instructor.

1. Yale University
2. Rhode Island School of Design
3. NYPL Spencer Collection
4. School of the Art Institute of Chicago
5. Museum of Modern Art (MoMA)
6. Brooklyn Museum of Art (BMA)
7. Harvard University
8. Wesleyan University
9. Wellesley College
10. Ruth and Marvin Sackner Archives of Visual and Concrete Poetry
11. Mata and Arthur Jaffe Collection at Florida Atlantic University