Palmer School of Library and Information Science  
Long Island University  
LIS 658: History of the Book  
Instructor: J. Fernando Peña

Course Syllabus  
(Fall 2014)

Time and Place:  
Bobst Library, NYU, Avery Fisher Center, 2nd Floor (70 Washington Square South, New York, N.Y. 10012), Wednesdays, Sept. 3 through Dec. 17, 2014, 6:30-8:20 p.m., with a couple of holidays when class does not meet as scheduled in the syllabus. Note that decisions about closings made for C.W. Post do not affect Palmer classes at NYU. In general, if the subways are running, this class will meet even if weather is poor.

Contact Information:  
Bobst Library, NYU, Suite 707, 70 Washington Square South, New York, N.Y. 10012; tel. 212-998-2681, fax 212-995-4072, email fernando.pena@liu.edu. Email communication is always preferable to telephone.

Office Hours:  
Mondays 2-4 p.m. and Wednesdays 2-6 p.m. and by appointment, in the Palmer suite in Bobst Library (7th floor). Also available at other times, and by appointment.

Purpose, Scope and Method:  
This course is designed primarily for students who intend to work in special collections libraries or in the antiquarian book trade. Through lectures, visits to special collections repositories, presentations by experts, and individual and group exercises, students will become familiar with recognized landmarks of the western book and with major theoretical approaches to interpreting “the book” in its broadest sense. Students will also become acquainted with the intellectual tools of the book historian’s trade, including technical vocabulary, bibliography in its various manifestations, and key information sources and reference works. By the conclusion of the course, students will be able to communicate in professional terms about book history with their peers, with typical users of special collections libraries, and with the general public. Prerequisite: LIS 510 or LIS 511.

While there is a theoretical book history component to the course, emphasis will place upon studying the book as object, i.e., the physical book itself. Less emphasis will be given to current theories of authorship, reading, and other aspects of book history that have become so popular in cultural and literary studies in recent years.

Students are encouraged to take advantage of the rich offerings pertaining to book culture in the New York City area. In addition to written assignments that require visits to rare book collections and events, students should expect to make additional visits on their own and to share information about these events and their experiences with the entire class.
Palmer School Learning Objectives:
This course, which focuses on the history of the book and libraries, addresses the following Palmer School Program Goals and corresponding Student Learning Objectives (SLOs):

- Goal 1. Apply the principles, ethics and philosophy of the profession while serving their patrons, institutions and communities; and corresponding SLOs
  - 1a. Explain and apply the foundations and principles of the library and information science professions; and
  - 1c. Compare and contrast different types of collections and information center.

Written Assignments and Final Grade:
Students will be assigned written exercises that test their grasp of the readings and issues discussed in class. Each assignment will require students to deal with particular aspects of the history of the book and the book as object. To complete these assignments effectively, students will need to utilize the appropriate technical vocabulary as discussed in readings and class and to properly cite relevant primary and secondary sources. Logic and technical aspects of writing will also be evaluated. For full credit, all written assignments must be submitted in a timely manner and in a professionally appropriate form. Students’ understanding of the readings, technical vocabulary, and material discussed in class will also be evaluated in a short midterm and final exam.

The four primary written assignments have equal weight, and the midterm and final exams will also be weighted equally, as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Two written assignments (“Biography of a Book” parts I &amp; II)</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final “Biography of a Book” paper</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-class and take-home midterm exam</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take-home final exam</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class participation, including completion of ungraded assignments</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Assignments and exams are as follows:

- To determine students’ initial familiarity with the material, a diagnostic quiz will be given during the first class. Ungraded, but required.
- To encourage students to visit special collections-related exhibitions and events and to interact with professionals in the field, students will turn in one short reports (2-3 pages) narrating their experience viewing a rare books exhibition or attending a lecture, presentation, etc. related to rare books/special collections; due October 1. Ungraded, but required.
- To determine students’ ability to discuss the publication history of a book and to cite relevant bibliographical references, the first part (of three) assignments relating to the “biography of a book” will be due on October 8. 15% of grade.
- To test students’ familiarity with technical vocabulary and grasp of the readings, a short midterm exam will be given in-class midterm on October 15; a short essay take-home portion of the mid-term will be due on October 22. 10% of grade.
- To determine students’ ability to apply techniques in descriptive bibliography to a specific copy of a book, the second part (of three) assignments relating to the “biography of a book” will be due on November 12. 15% of grade.
• To determine students’ ability to relate a text to its social and intellectual context, the third and final part of the “biography of a book” assignment will be due on December 10. 30% of grade.

• To measure the result of student learning throughout the semester, a take-home final exam will be distributed on December 10 and due on Wednesday, December 17. 10% of grade.

**Participation:** Because so much of the work for the class will take place during meeting times and because collaboration is the usual mode of work in libraries, attendance and participation are important. There will be extensive use of group work on sample problems during class. Students who miss more than three sessions cannot expect to receive full credit for this course. Those who plan to miss any session should let the instructor know well ahead of time in order to schedule a make-up session or to complete extra work. The instructor may also occasionally ask students to turn in exercises completed during class, and these may count toward the participation portion of the final grade. Additionally, students will be expected to make a minimum of two visits to rare book and special collections-related exhibitions or events (e.g., libraries, antiquarian booksellers, exhibitions, lectures, etc.) on their own time and to report back during class, on Blackboard, or in written assignments.

**Grading Rubric:** Written assignments in this class will be graded according to the following guidelines:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>GPA</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>Outstanding achievement. Student performance demonstrates full command of the course materials and shows a high level of originality and/or creativity that far surpasses course expectations; grammatical errors, misspellings, and typos are minimal or non-existent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>Very good work. Student performance demonstrates thorough knowledge of the course materials and exceeds course expectations by completing all requirements in a superior manner; grammatical errors, misspellings, and typos are minimal (average one-two per page) or non-existent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>Good work. Student performance demonstrates above-average comprehension of the course materials and exceeds course expectations on all tasks as defined in the course syllabus; grammatical errors, misspellings, and typos are present (average two-three per page).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>Adequate work. Student performance meets designated course expectations, demonstrates understanding of the course materials, and is at an acceptable level; grammatical errors, misspellings, and typos are present (average four-five per page).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>Marginal work. Student performance demonstrates incomplete understanding of course materials; grammatical errors, misspellings, and typos are frequent (average six-ten per page).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Unsatisfactory work. Student performance demonstrates incomplete and inadequate understanding of course materials; grammatical errors, misspellings, and typos are very frequent (average 11-14 per page) and adversely affect the structure and flow of the narrative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>Unacceptable work. Student performance demonstrates incomplete and inadequate understanding of course materials; grammatical errors, misspellings, and typos are ubiquitous (average 15 or more per page) and adversely affect the structure and flow of the narrative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>Failing. Student failed to turn in an assignment or plagiarized.</td>
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</table>

**Planning Your Time:**
The State of New York specifies that a three-credit, for-credit course should require a minimum of about 150 hours. Students should prepare to spend much more than 150 hours to get full benefit from the course, and they should divide their time weekly so that they are not overwhelmed by the fast paced
schedule and due dates of graded exercises. For planning purposes, students may find the estimations of time commitment below helpful. Keep in mind that this is an indication of average time necessary to complete the required work in a satisfactory manner.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Hours</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Three written Assignments (3 x 10 hours each)</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final “Biography of a Book” paper</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Readings (14 weeks x 6 hours/week)</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal visits to libraries, booksellers, etc.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(minimum 1 visits x 2 hours)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class meetings (15 sessions x 2 hours each)</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>161</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

(average 11 hours/week)

**Required Texts and Readings:**


- **Chappell, Warren, and Robert Bringhurst.** *A Short History of the Printed Word.* 2nd rev. ed. Vancouver: Hartley and Marks, 2000; but any edition of this book, originally published in 1970, is acceptable. [Optional but highly recommended; read either this or Steinberg]


**NOTE:** Other required readings, including articles and book excerpts, will be made available on Blackboard.

**Other Texts Recommended for Completing Course Assignments (either on two-hour reserve or permanent reference at Bobst):**


Selected Web Resources and Blogs:

Book Arts Web http://www.philobiblon.com/

Cambridge University. Incunabula Project Blog http://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/deptserv/rarebooks/incblog/ [Active blog specializing in incunables; worth following regularly if the topic interests you]

Digital Scriptorium http://www.scriptorium.columbia.edu/ [Database of medieval and renaissance manuscripts in the United States, with detailed bibliographic descriptions and many images]


University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). UCLA Library Special Collections Blog http://blogs.library.ucla.edu/special

University of Saint Andrews (Scotland) Special Collections. Echoes from the Vault [blog] http://standrewsrarebooks.wordpress.com/ [Excellent and active blog about rare books, with links to many similar blogs in the UK and the United States]

Yale University. Beinecke Library [blog] http://beineckeblog.library.yale.edu/

Plagiarism:

Plagiarism is an extremely serious offence in academic circles, and transgressions can involve serious penalties. A student must not adopt or reproduce ideas, words, or statements of another person without appropriate acknowledgment. A student must give credit to the originality of others and acknowledge an indebtedness whenever he or she does any of the following: quotes another person’s actual words, either oral or written; paraphrases another person’s words, either oral or written; uses another person’s idea, opinion, or theory; or borrows facts, statistics, or other illustrative material, unless the information is common knowledge. As a rule of thumb, when in doubt, cite the source! More on plagiarism can be found at http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/02/. LIU’s policies on plagiarism can be found at http://www2.liu.edu/cwis/cwp/library/exhibits/plagstudent.htm.

Citation Formats & Style Manual:

Use Modern Language Association (MLA) format consistently for all assignments unless you have a strong preference for another popular citation format (e.g., APA, Turabian, Chicago Manual of Style, etc.). Examples of MLA and other formatting styles can be found at http://www2.liu.edu/cwis/cwp/Library/workshop/citation.htm as well as at http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/.

If you have questions about grammar or want to ensure that your style is clear, effective, and readable, see William Strunk, Jr.’s The Elements of Style, online through http://www.bartleby.com/141/. This succinct work is available cheaply in used copies at many used book stores or online.

Students with Disabilities or Special Needs:

Please do not hesitate to contact the instructor via email or in person early in the semester to discuss any modifications that may be necessary to accommodate special needs.
CLASS SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS

Class I. September 3
Introduction

- Overview of course
- Book history and bibliography
- Theoretical models

Diagnostic Quiz

Read:

Class II. September 10
The Book in the Ancient World

- Writing and the book in Mesopotamia and the Ancient Near East
- The book in the classical world
- Papyrus and other writing materials

Read:
Carter, “Bibliography” and “Rarity”
Howard, p. 1-25

Watch:
YouTube video: “How to make papyrus paper” / by lostanythinguk [7:23 min.]

Browse/Skim:
Class III. September 17  The Book in Late Antiquity and Early Medieval World

- The rise of the codex in late antiquity
- Books and manuscripts in the early Church and early medieval Europe
- Parchment making

DUE: Book selection for “Biography of a Book” assignments (email to instructor okay)

Read:
Carter, “Manuscript,” “Parchment,” and “Vellum”
Chappell, p. 3-42
http://www.ccel.org/ccel/benedict/rule2/files/rule2.html
Origen (182-254 CE). Letter to Gregory. Translated by Frederick Crombie (1885).  
http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0415.htm

Watch:
YouTube video: “How parchment is made - Domesday - BBC Two” / by BBC [4:04 min.]
Class IV. September 24 The Book in the Late Medieval World

- Manuscript book culture before printing
- Readers and reading
- Papermaking and its impact

Read:


Watch:

YouTube video: “How to on handmade paper” / Paperstudio [4:09 min.]

Browse/Skim:

Cornell University, Division of Rare Books & Special Collections, From Manuscript to Print: The Evolution of the Medieval Book [website]. http://rmc.library.cornell.edu/medievalbook/
Class V. October 1 The Birth of Printing

- The invention of printing and Gutenberg’s achievement
- The book in the 15th Century
- The spread of printing

Class Visit to NYU’s Fales Library & Special Collections, with Charlotte Priddle, Librarian for Printed Books (Bobst Library, 3rd Floor)

DUE: First Written Assignment (report on rare book-related event or exhibition)

Read:
Chappell, p. 43-92
Howard, p. 27-53
Steinberg, chapters 1 and 2 (optional)

Watch:
The Machine That Made Us (BBC documentary, 2008, with Stephen Fry; 60 min.) [Many options for viewing this video are available on YouTube and elsewhere, most dividing full documentary into five or six short segments]
Class VI. October 8  The Mechanics of Printing

- The printing press and its parts
- The printing firm and its members
- Typography and design

DUE: “Biography of a Book,” part I

Read:

Carter, “Copy,” “Forme,” “Fount or Font,” “Layout,” “Point System,” “Type Measurement,” and “Typography”

Steinberg, chapter 3 (optional)


Watch:


Video: The Making of a Renaissance Book (Rare Book School) [Shot in 1969 on location at the Plantin-Moretus Museum in Antwerp; produced by Dana Atchley and originally distributed by the American Friends of the Plantin-Moretus Museum; will be shown in class]

Browse/Skim:


http://ett.arts.uwo.ca/printersdevil/index.html
Class VII. October 15  The Book in the 16th Century

- Printing continues to spread
- Changing roles of printers and publishers
- Book structures and bookbinding

Midterm Exam (part in-class, part take-home distributed today)

Read:

Chappell, p. 93-122
Howard, p. 55-86
Steinberg, chapters 4-9 (optional)


Watch:
Video: Gary Frost, How to Operate a Book (Rare Book School, 1986) [May be shown in class, or view independently in Bobst Avery Center]

Browse/Skim:
British Library Database of Bookbindings [website].
http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/bookbindings/

Bookbindings on Incunables in American Library Collections: A Selection [website].
http://www.bibsocamer.org/BibSite/Husby/Selection.html
Class VIII. October 22  Descriptive Bibliography and Book History

- Imposition and format
- Collation and the collation formula
- Other relevant technical terminology

**DUE: Take-Home Midterm Exam**

**Read:**


**Watch:**

Video: Terry Belanger, *The Anatomy of a Book I: Format in the Hand-Press Period* (Rare Book School, 1991) [will be shown in class, and if necessary view independently if necessary in Bobst Avery Center]
Class IX. October 29  The Book in the 17th and 18th Centuries

- Authorship and copyright
- New sales and distribution methods
- Book illustration processes
- The book in the Americas

Read:

Chappell, p. 123-190
Howard, p. 87-111
Steinberg, section II (“The Era of Consolidation, 1550-1800), chapters 1-8 (optional)
U.K. Copyright Act of 1709 (“Statute of Anne”).
http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Copyright_Act_1709

Watch:
YouTube videos: Following three short films from arts Mia (Minneapolis Institute of Arts):

Browse/Skim:
Class X. November 5  The Book in the 19th Century

- New technologies and their impact
- New book illustration techniques
- Rise of bibliomania and book collecting

Class Visit to NYU’s Fales Library & Special Collections, with Charlotte Priddle, Librarian for Printed Books (Bobst Library, 3rd Floor)

Read:


Chappell, p. 191-226
Howard, p. 114-137
Steinberg, section III (“The Nineteenth Century”), chapters 1-5 (optional)

Watch:


Browse/Skim:

http://www.victorianweb.org/art/illustration/tech1.html
Class XI. November 12  Late 19th Century Trends

- Theodore Low De Vinne (1828-1914) and his legacy
- William Morris and the private press movement

DUE: “Biography of a Book,” part II

Read:

Chappell, p. 227-254
Steinberg, section IV (“1900-1955”), chapters 1-3 (optional)

Browse/Skim:

The Art of American Book Covers [website by Richard Minsky].
http://americanbookcovers.blogspot.com/

http://bindings.lib.ua.edu/
Class XII. November 19       The Book in the 20th Century

- Paperbacks, book clubs, and popularization
- Computers and their impact on printing and publishing

Readings:

Chappell, p. 255-274

Howard, p. 139-158

Steinberg, section IV (“1900-1955”), chapters 4-7 (optional)


***REMINDER: NO CLASS ON NOVEMBER 26 (THANKSGIVING RECESS)***
Class XIII. December 2  The Book Today

- Artists’ books
- Recent changes in bookselling and book publishing
- E-books, born-digital books, and new forms and media

**Guest Speaker: Constance Woo, Media Arts Librarian, LIU-Brooklyn, on Artists’ Books**

*Take-Home Final Distributed (due Wednesday, Dec. 17)*

*Short Student Presentations on “Biography of a Book” Papers (1 of 2)*

**Read:**

Chappell, p. 275-300 (chapter XI on “The Digital Revolution and the Close of the Twentieth Century”; selection available on Blackboard for those using earlier editions)

Howard, p. 139-158 [reread if necessary]

Steinberg, section V (“The Postwar World”), chapters 1-8 (optional)


**Watch:**

YouTube video: “Combat Paper: veterans battle war demons with paper-making” / PBS Newshour [7:34 min.]
Class XIV. December 10  The Book Tomorrow

- “Everything old is new again?”

Short Student Presentations on “Biography of a Book” Papers (2 of 2)

DUE TODAY: Final “Biography of a Book” paper (with rewrites of parts I and II)

DUE ON WEDNESDAY, DEC. 17: Take-Home Final

Read:
