

Minnesota State University Moorhead, Fall 2006
Art 497/Art 590 The Book: History, Aesthetics, Criticism
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Office hours: available by apt. or Tu/Th: 2-3:30; Fri 2-4 p.m.

*"Tout, au monde, existe pour aboutir à un livre."
"Everything in the world exists in order to end up in a book"—Stéphane Mallarmé*

Course Description and Objectives:

This special topics seminar is a 4-credit art history course open to upper level studio and art history students at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Students of literature, mass communications, library science and other appropriate fields are also welcome to enroll in the seminar.

A portion of this seminar will focus on the 20th and 21st-century interpretations of the artist's book: defining it as a genre, exploring its history and its diverse forms. Additional readings will include canonical essays from the discipline of book history and print culture to gain a broader understanding of the book as a major cultural and symbolic medium in ancient and modern civilization. The adaptation of the book form and function in contemporary digital technologies will also be analyzed.

The course will be structured as a seminar. As such, students will be expected to actively participate in class discussion as well as present research papers on topics that reflect their interests. There will be no exams but there will be extensive reading and journaling assignments throughout the semester and a number of group led discussion projects (detailed below). Moreover, the class will be undertaking several field trips in the region and in the twin cities to visit specialized collections and meet experts in the field of books. These trips are listed in the syllabus as "zigzags of a bibliophile," please note that students should not miss more than two of these visits as they constitute a vital part of the course (including one over-night trip to Minneapolis Nov. 2nd/3rd).

Students with disabilities who believe they may need an accommodation in this class are encouraged to contact Greg Toutges, Coordinator of Disability Services 477-5859 (voice) or 1-800-627-3529 (MRS/TTY)CMU 114 as soon as possible to ensure that accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion.

Course Requirements/Grading Guidelines:

1. Critical Reading Journals (35% of grade). Each student should procure a specially designated notebook to maintain a journal for all the seminar readings. If you keep an electronic journal, you will need to submit it in hard copy appropriately bound. These journals must be brought to class every time we meet in order to facilitate discussion of the assigned readings. We will be sharing and even exchanging these journals during the class period. As journals are a very individual form of expression and learning, each student journal will be unique. Nevertheless, I will require three basic features. 1) General notes for review and reference taken while reading assignment 2) A brief synthesis of the reading that includes any questions or problems concerning the reading as well as significant vocabulary or concepts introduced. 3) Notes from class discussion of the reading to complement what you wrote prior to discussion. Finally, each journal entry needs to be labeled clearly (author, title, page #). Journals will be collected twice during the semester but I will also be checking them informally during class meetings and field questions from students about form and content.

2. Class Discussion and Preparation (10% of grade). As a seminar course, the rigor and content of our discussions will be determined by the quality of participation among students. Clearly, the journals will play a role in preparing for class but it is the students' task to share the contents of their journals including questions/problems encountered with a particular reading. I also define preparation as providing constructive interaction and feedback for one's peers (in other words, comments or questions should not simply be directed at the instructor but the entire class).

3. Independent Research Papers and Presentations (35% of grade). Each student will be embarking on an independent research project on a topic that reflects their interests and that contributes to the overall themes of the course (for suggestions see list). Students will share the fruits of their research in a 20–30 minute oral presentation. Based on the student's research project, an eight to ten page paper will be turned in one week after the presentation and be posted on the website for peers in the course. An annotated bibliography with a minimum of four sources is also required. A detailed handout will be distributed providing guidelines for writing the paper. **Please note that topics need to be chosen by September 25th.**

4. Group Discussion Projects (20%). We will form five distinct discussion groups. Periodically each group will be responsible for leading discussion of an assigned reading. When your group is designated to lead discussion, each member of the group needs to tackle the reading ahead of time and then meet with other members of the group (electronically or face to face) to discuss the reading and decide how to lead class discussion. Group dynamics can be tremendously rewarding but they can also be frustrating, therefore to avoid the classic pitfalls of group work, members will rotate responsibilities (detailed below). Moreover, I expect a brief written report detailing the contribution of each member.

When a group is responsible for leading discussion, each member will be assigned a role (or roles, depending on how many are in a group) and these roles should rotate when the group takes their second turn. Ideally, there should be an assigned spokesman for the group during class discussion. Other tasks for group members include: taking notes during discussion of the group meeting, looking up supplementary information or vocabulary, assembling/creating handouts or supplementary material as needed for class discussion, writing of final report detailing the contribution of each member.

Required Texts:

1. Jerome Rothenberg and Steven Clay, eds. A Book of the Book. Some Works & Projections About The Book and Writing. New York: Granary Books, 2000.
2. David Finkelstein and Alistair McCleery, eds. The Book History Reader. New York: Routledge, 2002.
3. Johanna Drucker. The Century of Artists' Books. New York: Granary Books, 1995 or 2004 edn.

Highly recommended:

1. Betty Bright. No Longer Innocent. Book Art in America, 1960–1980. New York: Granary Books, 2005.
2. Renée Riese Hubert and Judd D. Hubert. The Cutting Edge of Reading: Artists' Books. New York: Granary Books, 1999.
3. Alberto Manguel. A History of Reading. New York: Penguin Books, 1996.

Syllabus

Aug 28th Introduction and distribution of first assignment, due for next class on Aug. 30th. Review syllabus and course requirements carefully and bring questions/concerns to class. **Be sure to procure the Rothenberg/Clay book as soon as possible.**

Aug 30th Book Basics: Discussion of first assignment:

- What is a book?
- What characterizes some of the **experiences** of interacting with a book?
- What are some of the **cultural or historical associations/expressions** of the book?

Distribution of Glossaries.

Discussion of Critical Reading Journals and other questions about seminar procedures.

Library Book Report assignment distributed; due in class on Sept. 13th.

Sept 4th Labor Day. No Class. Read/Make/Experience A Book!

Sept 6th Book Basics: reading/journal assignment: Thomas Vogler, "When a Book is Not a Book," in Rothenberg & Clay, 448-466.

Sept 11th Zigzags of a Bibliophile: The Anatomy of a Book.

Please note: we will be meeting at the MSUM Library and meet with Pam Werre; please arrive a few minutes early at the main circulation desk.

Sept 13th Book Basics: Library assignment due.

Formation of Discussion Groups

Sept 18th Book Basics: reading/journal assignment: Keith Smith, "The Book as Physical Object," in Rothenberg & Clay, 54-70.

Guidelines for Research Papers and Presentations distributed.

Discussion of Research Topics (see list at the end of syllabus).

Sept 20th History/Culture of the Book: reading/journal assignment: Robert Darnton "What is the History of Books," Finkelstein & McCleary, 9-26.

Group #1 Discussion Leader

Sept. 25th Zigzags of a Bibliophile. Class visit from Betty Bright

Review Betty Bright's Book (on reserve): *No Longer Innocent*; prepare questions for the author. Note that she will be giving a public lecture at 6 p.m.

Note: Topic Declarations are due.

Sept 27th History/Culture of the Book: reading/journal assignment: Walter Ong, "Orality and Literacy: Writing Restructures Consciousness," Finkelstein & McCleary, 105–17.

Group #2 Discussion Leader

Oct. 2nd Zigzags of a Bibliophile: The Book Collection of Ron Ramsay

Oct. 4th History/Culture of the Book: reading/journal assignment: Elizabeth Eisenstein, "Defining the Initial Shift. Some Features of Print Culture," Finkelstein & McCleary, 151–73.

Group #3 Discussion Leader

Oct 9th Artists' Books/The Book as Art: reading/journal assignment: Johanna Drucker, "The Artist's Book as Idea and Form," in The Century of Artists' Books also reprinted in Rothenberg and Clay; and Lucy Lippard, "Double Spread," from Put About: A Critical Anthology on Independent Publishing. London: Book Works, 2004.

Group #4 Discussion Leader

Oct. 11th Artists' Books/The Book as Art: reading/journal assignment: Drucker, "Conceptualizing the Book: Precedents, Poetics, and Philosophy," William Blake from "The Marriage of Heaven and Hell," and David Erdman, Introduction to The Illuminated Blake, Rothenberg & Clay, 104–111.

Group #5 Discussion Leader

Oct. 16th Fall Break. No class. Books, Books, Books!

Oct. 18th Zigzags of a Bibliophile: To be announced

Journals Due

Oct. 23rd Artists' Books/The Book as Art: reading/journal assignment: Drucker, "Artists' Books and the Twentieth-Century Avant-Garde," in The Century of Artists' Books; F. T. Marinetti "Imagination without Strings—Words in Freedom," (1913) in Rothenberg & Clay, 178–185.

Discussion Leader Group #1

Oct. 25th Zigzags of a Bibliophile: Visit from Professor Jennifer Roberson on the role of Books and Calligraphy in Islamic Culture.

Oct. 30th Artists' Books/The Book as Art: reading/journal assignment: Review pertinent portions in above Drucker reading; Marjorie Perloff, "The Futurist Moment," "Blaise Cendrars and Sonia Delaunay "La Prose du Transsibérien" (examine facsimile fold out and the translation of poem), André Breton Foreward to The Hundred Headless Woman and also the Max Ernst text of The Hundred Headless Woman as well as Marcel Duchamp's Boîte en Valise, all in Rothenberg and Clay.

Discussion Leader Group #2

Distribution of the Benjamin and Borges Reading (for Nov. 20th class discussion)

Nov. 1st Artists' Books/The Book as Art: reading/journal assignment: All the following selections from Rothenberg and Clay: Tom Phillips from The Heart of a Humument and Notes on a Humument (375 and 423-430); Richard Hamilton on Dieter Roth (395-398) and Dieter Roth Introduction to Books and Graphics (389-394); Alison Knowles On the Book of Bean (399-402); Jess O! (403-422); Allan Kaprow Words: An Environment (445-447); Alec Finlay Aftword to Little Sparta (467-469) and Ian Hamilton Finlay/Robin Gillanders from Little Sparta (470-472). The Drucker book will also provide important background on these canonical texts.

Discussion Leader Group #3

Nov 2nd / Nov 3rd Zigzags of a Bibliophile: Overnight Fieldtrip to St. John's University and to the Twin Cities. Details and itinerary to be announced in class.

Nov 6th Books and Readers: The Stone Reader. Details to be announced.

Nov 8th Zigzags of a Bibliophile: Visit to New Rivers Press.

Nov 13th Books and Readers: Roger Chartier, "Labourers and Voyagers: from the Text to the Reader," Finkelstein & McCleery, 47-58.

Discussion Leader Group #4

Distribution of Marshall McLuhan readings for Nov. 27th class; also the "The Future of the Book" reading for Nov. 29th.

Nov 15th Dept. of Art and Design Portfolio Reviews. No Class.

Nov 20th Books and Readers: Walter Benjamin, "Unpacking My Library," from *Illuminations*; Jorge Luis Borges, "The Library of Babel," in *Ficciones*. ***All Groups Prepare for Discussion.

Nov 22nd Thanksgiving Break.

Nov 27th The Future(s) of the Book: Looking at Marshall McLuhan: readings to be distributed in class.

Nov 29th The Future(s) of the Book: Electronic Media

Finkelstein & McCleery "The Future of the Book" (from 2005 anthology)

Discussion Leader Group #5

Dec 4th The Future(s) of the Book: Details to be announced.

Dec 6th Zigzags of a Bibliophile: Visit from Brittney Goodman

Dec 11th The Future(s) of the Book (cont'd)

Catch up day and student presentations.

Dec 13th MSUM Study Day. No Class.

Dec 15th Final Exam. Round Table Discussion. 3–5 p.m.

Suggested Research Topics (only the tip of the iceberg!) Note: Many of these suggestions are very broad: to make the topic more manageable, students will need to find a particular focus

- The Ancient World and the Early Forms of the Book: the scroll, the codex, etc.
- Books in Non-Western Cultures (choose a specific region/era for your focus)
- Medieval illuminated manuscripts
- Books and spiritual knowledge: The I Ching, the Kabbalah, The *Sefer Yetsirah* (The Book of Formation), The Torah, The Koran (also known as "*The Book*": al-Kitab), The Vedas, The Upanishads, The Bible, The New Testament Gospels, The Gnostic Scriptures, etc.
- *Incunabula* and the transition from manuscript to print
- Emblem Books
- Encyclopedias and Encyclopedism
- Famous Libraries: The Great Library of Alexandria (the original ancient library and/or its most recent reincarnation), The New York Public Library, The Library of Congress, The Boston Public Library, The new Minneapolis Public Library, The Book-Shaped Bibliothèque Nationale (Paris), The British Library (London), and others.
- Famous Private Libraries: The Athenaeum (Boston), The Newberry (Chicago), Pierpoint Morgan Library (New York), The Bodleian (Oxford), etc. etc.
- *Abecedarium* and/or other books of pedagogy
- Celebrated book illustrators: P.J. Redouté, Thomas Bewick, William Blake, Tony Johannot, J.J. Grandville, Walter Crane, Aubrey Beardsley, Félicien Rops, and many many more
- Books and Gender: Form, Content, Readership
- Books and Censorship
- Books and the passions they inspire

- Books and Theft, Contraband, and other Misdemeanors!
- Books of Evil
- Photographic Interpretations of the Book
- Books as Sculpture: Sculpture as Books
- Architectural metaphors and the book
- Books/Libraries and the Literary Imagination: Borges, Blake, Eco, Mallarmé, Benjamin, etc.
- Books and the Cinematic Imagination
- Children's Books
- The Avant-Garde Book
- The Book as an Agent of Social Change
- Alternative/specialized artists' books: Franklin Furnace, Printed Matter, Art Metropole etc.
- The impact of the "printing revolution" on Humanism and the Enlightenment
- The "electronic revolution" and the future of the book
- Visual Expression in E-Lit (electronic literature)
- Digital Poetics/Imagery and the Book
- Cybertextuality and the Book
- Illustrated books: the dynamics of word-image relationships, history and genres of illustration
- Books and the cultural/experiential dimensions of reading, looking, and touching
- Eroticism/Sensuality of the Book
- The Book as World
- The Anti-book
- Altered Books
- Collage Novels
- Painter's Books
- One-of-a-kind books
- Books as: art objects, vessels, games, fetishes, magic, weapons, or death
- Book collecting and book collectors
- Institutions of the book: publishers, printing firms, booksellers, and libraries
- Parts of the Book: bookbinding, paper, title page, illustrations, typography, ex-libri
- Famous Book Publishers/Printing Houses: Plantin, the Kelmescott Press, Arion Press, Circle Press, Didot etc.
- Books and Reading/Readers
- Authors and Books

Selected Bibliography (many titles are on reserve at MSUM Library; others are on order or available through ILL)

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- Dodge, Martin, and Rob Kitchin. Mapping Cyberspace. London & New York: Routledge, 2003.
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Useful websites:

<http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/book%5Fhistory/>

<http://www.philobiblon.com/links.htm>