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Printing and the Book During the Reformation:  
1450-1650, an NEH Summer Seminar for  
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### The History of the Book from Chaucer to Shakespeare

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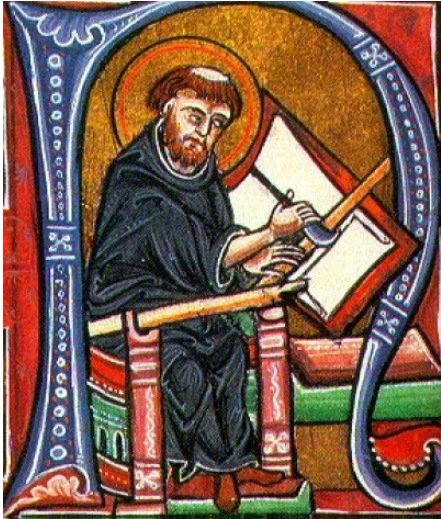
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# The History of the Book

## from *Chaucer* to *Shakespeare*



Books played a central role in the formative years of English culture from the late Middle Ages through the Early Modern period. Scribes, printers, editors, and illuminators all affected the representation of texts in ways that complicate and shaped reception of books beyond merely an author's intentions. The technology of the book also became central to debates emerging in and around the Protestant Reformation. We will be focusing on the role of the book and its transformations, materially and politically. This will be a challenging course in which direct engagement with texts represented in early print and manuscript will hold a central focus, along with two textual lynchpins: the first quarto of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, and Chaucer's *Wife of Bath's Prologue*.

## Table of Contents

Why take this course?	2
Learning in fraught times	2
Textbooks	3
Academic Integrity	3
Accessibility and Accommodation	4
Expectations for this Course	4
Course Communication	4
Grading and Assignments	5
Tokens: what they are, how to use them	6
Late Policy	7
Course Calendar	8

## Why take this course?

Familiarizing ourselves with the history of the book and learning how to analyze its literary and cultural roles will help us learn about historical cultures that influenced—and continue to influence—our own. In addition, this course will help you acquire or further develop skills that you can apply to analyzing and writing about literary and other texts. By the end of this course, you will be able to answer the following questions:

- 1) How does the book shape society, and how is it shaped by society? What does the history of the book have to do with social, religious, and political conflicts?
- 2) What does the analysis of the book as a physical object help me understand about the book as a form of media?
- 3) How do I explore the context of a medieval or early modern English work?
- 4) How can studying the history of the book help me become a better thinker and writer? How can it help me improve my analysis of texts?

## Learning in Fraught Times

There is a lot going on in the world right now. If you are stressed, this is normal: your fight-or-flight reaction is working. In designing this class, I have worked hard to address how we can learn with both pleasure and effectiveness. Some features this class offers include:

- **Increased flexibility** for assignment due dates. While the due dates are in place to help you progress through the class, I've also provided a window after the due date during which you can submit late with no questions asked and no penalties. See the "late policy" below for more info and guidelines.
- **Excuse yourself from assignments:** If you get particularly overwhelmed or sick, you can choose to exempt yourself from two assignments. See the "tokens" section below for details on that (not all assignments are eligible for token use).
- **No midterm or final exam:** Your final grade will be based on your accomplishments throughout the semester; see "Ungrading" in this list below and the section "Grading and Assignments" further below in the syllabus.
- **Options:** Several of the modules provide you with multiple options for what you can read and how you can learn. In this way, I hope you can choose assignments that you will discover to be intellectually engaging.
- **Breaks:** Twice during the semester, I have created what I'm calling a "breather" week: an opportunity for you to catch your breath. There will be no new reading during these

weeks, and the only assignments due will be a self-assessment, building on what you've already learned in preceding weeks. This is to create space for you to process what you've learned in this class, and think about your other classes, too. I believe that your success in all your academic endeavors improves your attentiveness and engagement with this class, and I want to support that.

- **Ungrading:** I will not be assigning points or determining grades for your work. Instead, I invite you to invest yourself not in what points to earn, but in what you want to *learn*. If an assignment does not seem productive to you, reach out to me to discuss an alternative.

## What texts do you have to buy?

Adrian Johns, *The Nature of the Book*. ISBN: 9780226401225

Christopher de Hamel, *A History of Illuminated Manuscripts*. ISBN: 9780714834528

William Shakespeare, *The First Quarto of Hamlet*, ed. Kathleen O. Irace. ISBN: 9780521653909

## Academic Integrity

Florida International University is a community dedicated to generating and imparting knowledge through excellent teaching and research, the rigorous and respectful exchange of ideas and community service. All students should respect the right of others to have an equitable opportunity to learn and honestly to demonstrate the quality of their learning. Therefore, all students are expected to adhere to a standard of academic conduct that demonstrates respect for themselves, their fellow students, and the educational mission of the University.

A course like this is designed to encourage you to develop your own ideas while in conversation with the thinking of other students, writers, and critics. I encourage you to, when you read and research, note the source of whatever contributes to or inspires your own thinking, so that you can share the source with your classmates in discussion and properly credit it in your own writing. An important element of academic integrity is fully and correctly acknowledging when you've relied on the ideas and work of other people. Feel free to consult with me if you have concerns about the correct way to reference others' work.

## Accessibility and Accommodation

If you need accommodations, **you have a right to have these met**, so it's best to reach out to FIU's [Disability Resource Center](#) and notify your professors as soon as possible.

Please visit our [ADA Compliance](#) webpage for information about accessibility involving the tools used in this course.

You can also visit [Canvas Commitment Accessibility](#) webpage for more information.

## Expectations for This Course

**Modality:** This is an online course, which means most (if not all) of the course work will be conducted online. Online courses require a degree of self-motivation, self-discipline, and technology skills which can make these courses demanding. It's my job to help you negotiate this, and I've designed the course in a way that I hope aids you to learn in this class.

**Expectations:** Federal guidelines mandate that university classes require two hours of prep (reading/writing) for every 1 credit hour of instruction. A typical class worth 3 credits can thus entail about 9 hours of work each week. I have designed this class to take approximately those 9 hours; in weeks that fall short, I encourage you to use the spare time to conduct your own research on topics relevant to your own interests.

**Schedule and Recommended Pace:** Although I have made suggestions in the Calendar to help you allocate your days to different readings or assignments, as a participant in an online course, it's primarily your responsibility to determine when to do the readings and complete the required work by the due dates I have set. Turning in work before a due date is great if that works better for your own schedule. I encourage you to log into the class and work on it daily.

## Course Communication

I want to be here for you! I am online a lot, and you can reach out any time via Canvas Messages or email. I'm also happy to schedule a one-on-one Zoom chat. I usually respond to questions within 24 hours, Monday-Friday. Note that I do not commit to checking on the course over the weekends, so if you plan to turn assignments in on Saturday or Sunday, Thursday or Friday may be your last days to reach out in time to hear back from me with any questions you might have about the assignment before Monday.

# Grading

You will earn a final grade by the end of the semester, but this course will focus on qualitative—not quantitative—assessment. While there are assignments for you to accomplish, and completing these will be a requirement for moving forward in the class, I will not be grading them. Instead of determining a numerical or letter grade, I will be asking questions and making comments that engage your work.

(For the purpose of keeping track of assignments, all work will be incorporated in the Canvas gradebook as having 1 point; 0 points mean that I have not yet looked at it, and 1 point means that I have provided you feedback for review.)

You will also be reflecting carefully on your own work and the work of your peers. The intention here is to help you focus on learning in a more organic way, as opposed to working as you think you're expected to. If this process causes more anxiety than it alleviates, reach out to me at any point to confer about your progress in the course to date. If you are worried about your grade, your best strategy should be to do the readings and complete the assignments. Your reflection on your learning and progress should correlate with your final grade. You should consider this course a busy-work-free zone. If an assignment does not feel productive, let me know, and we can find ways to modify, remix, or repurpose the instructions.

You may also want to read Alfie Kohn's, "The Case Against Grades":  
[www.alfiekohn.org/article/case-grades/](http://www.alfiekohn.org/article/case-grades/)

# Assignments

There are four types of assignments in this class that invite you to practice and further develop critical thinking and writing skills key to enhancing your ability to analyze literature. Over the course of these assignments, you will write the equivalent of a 17-20 page paper.

These four types of assignments are:

- **Tickets to Class** (which help you engage with critical readings)
- **Close reading assignments** (which help you analyze literary readings and formulate questions about them)
- **Perusall annotation assignments** (which engage your analytical skills in close conversation with a text and classmates' ideas about it)
- **Discussion posts** (which focus on the exchange of ideas and questions between yourself and your classmates)

- **Final research project** (this will be an essay you will develop before the end of the semester)

You will have to complete these assignments in the order I set out to progress from module to module.

If an assignment does not feel productive, let me know in advance: we can find ways to modify, remix, or repurpose the instructions.

**In addition**, at three points through the semester, I will ask you to assess your progress in the class and evaluate what has contributed to your learning via completing **self-reflections**.

## Tokens

In case you get overwhelmed or sick, you also start the semester with **three tokens**. Tokens can be used to excuse yourself from a total of **three** assignments (one assignment per token). However: they **cannot be used to excuse yourself from a self-assessment or the final project**.

To use a token, create a Word document and, in it, state that you'd like to use a token for this assignment. If you're feeling it, toss in a cat meme or some medieval image you find interesting. Submit that document to the Canvas submission link for that assignment. That's it!

You do not need to explain or justify your use of a token. However, if you're motivated to use one because an assignment seems too difficult or not productive for you, I'd instead encourage you to reach out to me first so that we can identify an alternative approach that enhances your learning.

**Because of the coronavirus, I strongly recommend that you reserve these tokens for emergencies, so that you'll have them available in case you get sick.** See also the Late Policy below.

## Late Policy

**What if I can't turn work in on time?** While I don't encourage late work, the due dates are given to help keep you progressing. You can, nevertheless, turn work in late—no questions asked—until 11:59pm the Sunday following the assignment's original due date. The important thing is to maintain the sequence of assignments. If you experience technological difficulties (computer failures, internet connectivity failures, etc.), it is your responsibility to develop a back-up plan in case of such difficulties.

**OK, but what if I still can't turn in work on time?** You may need to work ahead if the due dates are not conducive to your schedule. From Module 1 on, each new module will become available the last Thursday morning in the preceding module, just after midnight. You can also use a token to excuse yourself from a max of two assignments, excluding self-reflections.

**Otherwise, you must turn in all work for this course to pass the class.**

**Great, but what if I or a family member whom I have to care for catches the coronavirus and I can't turn work in on time?** Let's hope that doesn't happen! But if it does, you have several options, given that this class is designed with a good bit of flexibility.

- 1) You can use your tokens to take a pass on three assignments, excluding self-reflections;
- 2) Although I've recommended due dates for all assignments, I will accept them late—no questions asked—if submitted by 11:59pm the Sunday following the suggested due date;
- 3) Longer extensions can be negotiated with me **in advance** if you have been submitting good work on a steady, regular basis;
- 4) If you've worked steadily and thoroughly over most of the course and then get sick near the end, reach out to me to discuss an **incomplete**;
- 5) Contact your adviser to discuss a **medical withdrawal**. Medical withdrawals will not affect your GPA, but you should talk to your adviser about the process and any possible impact on your financial aid.

**All work must be submitted no later than 11:59pm the Sunday after its due date to be accepted.**

**What if I added the class late?** If you joined the course after the first day of the term, it is your responsibility to reach out to me immediately to let me know if you will need additional time past the first Sunday to catch up any work from the first days of class. Those who join late must take responsibility for catching up. Joining the course late does not give a student carte blanche to turn in every subsequent assignment late. It's your responsibility to get caught up, keep up with due dates, and to move forward with the rest of the course at the pace detailed in the Course Calendar.



# Schedule of Readings and Assignments

## Week 1: Page as Interface

Monday: Introduce yourselves

Tuesday: Perusall syllabus and diagnostic

Wednesday: Critical reading handout and takeaway

Thursday: Interpretive questions handout and quiz

Friday: Page as Interface, Introduction

William Warner, "In the Beginning Was the Book: Page as Interface" animation

Read page & watch linked video, "The Making of a Medieval Book" and video,

"Gutenberg Press" (for overview and intro to processes of making a page)

Submit take-away

## Week 2: Page as Interface, Con't

Monday: Read Joanna Drucker, "Reading Interface"

Tuesday: Submit Ticket to Class #1

Wednesday: Read "Adam Sciveyn"

Thursday: Complete "Adam Sciveyn" annotations on Perusall

## Week 3: the Materials of Books

Monday: Read "Introduction," de Hamel, *A History of Illuminated Manuscripts*

Tuesday: Submit Ticket to Class #2

Wednesday: Read Exeter Book Riddle 26

Thursday: Complete Exeter Book annotations on Perusall

## Week 4: Books, Print, and the Reformation

Monday: Read Adrian Johns, "Introduction" to *The Nature of the Book*

Tuesday: Ticket to Class #2

Wednesday: Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* (excerpts)

Thursday: Complete annotations on Perusall

## Week 5: *Hamlet* and the Bootleggers

Monday: Read Johns, *Nature of the Book* ch. 2, "Literary Life"

Tuesday: Submit Ticket to Class

Wednesday: Shakespeare, *Hamlet* Q1, lines 1-631

Thursday: Submit Close Reading #1 Exercise

## Week 6: *Hamlet*, continued

Monday: Read Johns, *Nature of the Book* ch. 5, "Faust and the Pirates"

Tuesday: Submit Ticket to Class

Wednesday: Read Shakespeare, *Hamlet* Q1, part 2  
Thursday: Submit Close Reading #2 exercise

**Week 7: Hamlet, con't**

Monday: Read Shakespeare, *Hamlet* Q1, part 3  
Tuesday: Submit Close Reading #3 Exercise  
Thursday: Start discussion posts  
Friday: Respond to classmates' posts

**Week 8: Breather Week 1**

Friday: Submit Self-Assessment #1

**Week 9: Literacy and Multiplicity**

Monday: Read Chaucer, Wife of Bath's Prologue, lines 1-450  
Tuesday: Submit Close Reading #4 Exercise  
Wednesday: De Hamel, *A History of Illuminated Manuscripts*, ch. 5, "Books for Aristocrats"  
Thursday: Complete Perusall annotations

**Week 10: Reading Communities**

Monday: Read Chaucer, Wife of Bath's Prologue, lines 451-600  
Tuesday: Submit Close Reading #5  
Wednesday: Read De Hamel, *A History of Illuminated Manuscripts*, ch. 4, "Books for Students"  
Thursday: Submit Ticket to Class

**Week 11: Reading Communities, con't**

Monday: Read Chaucer, Wife of Bath's Prologue, lines 601-end  
Tuesday: Submit Close Reading #5  
Wednesday: Read De Hamel, *A History of Illuminated Manuscripts*, ch. 6, "Books for Everybody"  
Thursday: Submit Ticket to Class

**Week 12: Breather week 2**

Friday: Submit Self-Assessment #2

**Week 13: Print, the Counter-Reformation, and the Underground**

Monday: Read Alexandra Walsham, "Domme Preachers'? Post-Reformation English Catholicism and the Culture of Print"  
Tuesday: Complete Perusall annotations  
Wednesday: Read Mark Rankin, "Richard Topcliffe and the Book Culture of the Elizabethan Catholic Underground"  
Thursday: Submit Ticket to Class

**Week 14: Prepping the Final Project**

Monday: Begin Final Project Step 1

Tuesday: Submit Final Project Step 1

Wednesday: Begin Final Project Step 2

Thursday: Submit Final Project Step 2

**Week 15: Final Projects, Final Discussion**

Tuesday: Submit Final Project

Wednesday: Begin discussion posts

Friday: Reply to classmates

**Week 16: Conclusion**

Tuesday: Submit Self-Assessment #3