The Book (JS) 2016-17

Course director 2016-17: Mark Sweetnam (mark.sweetnam@tcd.ie)

This 10-ECTS team-taught course will introduce JS students to the origins and evolutions of the material, conceptual and virtual objects we know as ‘books’. Course lectures will move chronologically to account for relevant technological and cultural developments, including the rise of literacy and the invention of a popular press. Each lecture is supported by readings from the set text:

Set text: D. Finkelstein and A. McCleery (eds), The Book History Reader, 2nd ed. (Routledge, 2006).

Assessment: This course is assessed by a 2-hour unseen exam in the end-of-year examination session. A sample exam paper is included below. (One-Term Visiting and returning Erasmus students taking The Book A or B should consult the Director of Visiting Students for assessment regulations. Please note that one-term TSM and VS students must submit a 3-4000 word essay (5 ECTS); one-term SH students must submit a 5-6000 word essay (10 ECTS).

Blackboard: The course lectures will be supported by material on Blackboard.

Learning outcomes:
Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

- Demonstrate an awareness of the history of reading and writing, and the evolving nature of publishing;
- Evaluate the cultural significance of the evolution of the book as material object;
- Reflect on the cultural contexts in which books and their supporting industries have evolved;
- Discuss with appropriate resources and references the history of manuscript, printing and publishing cultures contexts and technology;
- Consider the economic, social and cultural implications of digital and electronic forms of textual production and dissemination.

The Book: Michaelmas Term 2015

1. Introducing the history of the book (Mark Sweetnam)

This lecture will introduce students to central concepts in the course. We will consider the significance of book history theory by outlining key moments in the history of the book, and anticipate principal themes in the course.

- Bowers, Fredson, ‘Bibliography, pure bibliography, and literary studies’ in The Book History Reader
- Darnton, Robert, ‘What is the history of books?’ in The Book History Reader
2. Rock and Roll to Codex (Helen Conrad O’Brien)

The modern book represents to a large extent the influence of Christianity and its subtly different approach to literacy. Whatever the reasons, Christians embraced what might have been a passing novelty, the codex, and made it their own. Other readers and texts followed more slowly. The Christian attitude towards the book also assisted the rise of a ‘grammar of legibility’ that worked to ensure the audience of the book was not at the mercy of the shortcomings of the reader. In effect they eventually imported ‘teacher’s aides’ into every book. This attitude would also have repercussions for the status of scribes. Change at first was fairly slow, but under the influence of Irish scholarship, development was rapid and profound. The change from roll to codex has traditionally been characterized as a kind of literary ‘mass-extinction’, but part of this extinction must be referred to the long-standing Roman preference for compendia and digests and to changing educational practice in the third century.


3. Medieval Manuscripts 1: Looking at medieval manuscripts (Alice Jorgensen)

This lecture will discuss what we might look for when examining a medieval manuscript, with particular attention to features of the manuscript page, especially layout, punctuation and script. We will look at examples from the early to late middle ages, drawing attention to notable features and suggesting why they might be interesting for the history of this book, books more broadly, or the text in question.

- Roberts, Jane, *Guide to Scripts used in English Writings up to 1500* (2005)


This lecture will focus on the relationship between manuscripts and texts and between reader, scribe and author with reference to a particularly provoking case: the fourteenthr-
century Middle English poem *Piers Plowman* by William Langland. It is generally accepted that Langland wrote three versions of his poem, *Piers Plowman*, known as A, B, and C, but the manuscripts, of which there are more than 50, in fact exhibit a larger number of variant versions (including combinations of the A and C text, more and less extensive forms of the A-text and forms with a continuation not by Langland); there are also innumerable minor textual differences. The extreme complexity of this situation is a product of the way texts were copied and disseminated in the manuscript age. Scribes used such exemplars they could get their hands on, sometimes comparing different copies, perhaps amending where they could make no sense of what was in front of them; the copying process introduced accidental errors that might be transmitted from copy to copy or corrected in a way that departed from the original. How are we to determine what in each manuscript is scribal and what goes back to the author? Should the priority be reconstructing an authorial text, or should we rather focus on the information of the individual manuscript and what it might tell us about the *Piers Plowman* known to particular readers? Trinity College is fortunate enough to own an important MS (TCD 212) of the C-version of *Piers* which includes a note concerning the authorship of the poem; reproduced pages from this MS can be viewed through WebCT and students are encouraged to look at them in advance of the lecture.


5. BANK HOLIDAY – reading assignment on Blackboard

6. The birth of the author (Brendan O’Connell)
Focusing on the textual history of the works of Geoffrey Chaucer, this lecture will consider the roles played by author, scribes, and readers in constructing the figure of the author. Chaucer’s texts demonstrate a striking anxiety about problems of textual transmission and literary authority, an anxiety borne out by recent discoveries about the scribes who copied his texts. The early modern publication of Chaucer’s collected Works represents an important watershed not only in book history but in modern understandings of what it means to be an author. In this lecture, we will consider some key manuscripts and early printed editions of Chaucer, and address the remarkable ways in which editorial decisions recast the author to suit the changing times: creating a Chaucer who was, by turns, a proto-Protestant, savagely critical of the Catholic church, a virulent misogynist, and a stately and venerated royal poet.

7. STUDY WEEK

8. The press and the fire: The coming of print and the commodification of knowledge

In April 1619, John Donne sent his friend Sir Robert Ker a manuscript copy of *Biathanatos*, his thoroughly odd casuistical exercise on the topic of suicide, which Donne acknowledged to be ‘a misinterpretable subject.’ The volume came with strict instructions for Ker: ‘Reserve it for me if I live, and if I die I only forbid it the press and the fire; publish it not, but yet burn it not, and between those do what you will with it.’ Donne’s instructions are a useful reminder that the displacement of manuscript was neither quick or straightforward and that the coming of print had profound implications for the ways in which knowledge was communicated and consumed. This lecture will consider the series of technical innovations that made print possible, and will examine the ways in which these new technologies reshaped the way that knowledge itself was understood.

- Love, Harold, ‘Early modern print culture: Assessing the models’, in *The Book History Reader*
- Muller, Jan-Dirk, ‘The body of the book’, in *The Book History Reader*

9. The Bible and onwards (Mark Sweetnam)

This lecture will describe the origins and early evolution of the English Bible in print, from Tyndale’s New Testament (1525) to King James’ Authorised Version of the Bible (1611). The lecture will provide an historical overview of the processes of translation, editing and printing that shaped the eventual forms of the English Bible. Particular attention will be paid to the political, economic and cultural contexts which would eventually provide one translation with the epithet, “Authorised”.

- Altick, Richard, ‘The English Common Reader’ in *The Book History Reader*
- Eisenstein, Elizabeth, ‘Defining the initial shift: Some features of print culture’ in *The Book History Reader*
- Flint, Kate, ‘Reading practices’ in *The Book History Reader*

10. Johnson’s *Dictionary of the English Language* (Aileen Douglas)

Among the most ambitious of eighteenth-century enlightenment publications, Samuel Johnson’s *Dictionary* is one of the great manifestations of the aspiration that a book might be a repository of learning. This lecture will explore the *Dictionary* in relation to the making of a national literary tradition and the relationships between the oral and the written.
• Johnson, Samuel, ‘Preface’ to the Dictionary of the English Language
• Lynch, Deirdre, ‘ “Beating the Track of the Alphabet”: Samuel Johnson, Tourism and the ABCs of Modern Authority’, English Literary History 57:2 (1990), pp. 357-404
• McArthur, Tom, Worlds of References (Cambridge: CUP, 1988)
• Ong, Walter, ‘Orality and Literacy: Writing restructures Consciousness’, in The Book History Reader

11. Encyclopedias and the enlightenment organization of knowledge (Aileen Douglas)

Ephraim Chambers’ Cyclopaedia: A universal dictionary of the Arts and Sciences was one of the early encyclopedias to be published in Britain. This lecture will focus on how 18th century encyclopedias organized knowledge, paying particular attention to issues of geography, technology, and relationships between the arts and sciences.


• Yeo, Richard, Encyclopaedic Visions: Scientific Dictionaries and Enlightenment Culture (2001)

12. Toy Books and Popups (Jane Carroll)

With an emphasis on texts for children and young readers, this lecture will explore the history and development of movable books and toy books. We will examine how movables, pop-ups and other kinds of toy books allow readers to play with texts and how these interactive elements support or disrupt traditional ideas of narrative.

Sabuda, Robert (2005) “Making the Paper Listen and Obey” The Lion and the Unicorn, Volume 29, Number 1, pp.9-11
Lectures: Hilary Term 2016

1. Censure and Censorship (Jason McElligott)

Dr McElligott is the Keeper, Marsh’s Library, Dublin: jason.mcelligott@marshlibrary.ie.

This lecture will outline a number of general principles which are useful in the study of censorship in a variety of early modern and modern western societies. Ranging from the sixteenth century to modern times, it will suggest that the study of censorship is a powerful tool for analysing power and powerlessness, and that best censorship is that which leaves no trace in the historical records. We will consider what traditional literary and historical sources can tell us about censorship, and, perhaps more importantly, what they cannot tell us. We will suggest that the examination of serial publications such as magazines, newspapers and literary journals is particularly useful in tracing patterns of censorship across time and space.

- Pettegree, Andrew, *The Book in the Renaissance* (New Haven, CT, 2010)
- Raymond, Joad (ed.), *Cheap Print in Britain and Ireland to 1660* (Oxford 2011)

2. Authorship and Copyright (Jason McElligott)

This lecture will outline the development of the cult of the author and the rise of concept of ‘copyright’. It will suggest that 21st century debates about the usefulness or desirability of strict rules of copyright were also current in the pre-modern period. We will also examine the conflict between different concepts of who should benefit from ‘copyright’, the author or publisher/bookseller? As Southey wrote in 1819: ‘The question is simply this: upon what principle, with what justice, or under what pretext of public good, are men of letters deprived of a perpetual property in the produce of their labours, when all other persons enjoy it as their indefeasible right – a right beyond the power of any earthly authority to take away?’ Wordsworth was equally impassioned on the matter: ‘What reason can be assigned that an Author who dies young should have the prospect before him of his children being left to languish in Poverty and Dependence, while Booksellers [who published the book] are revelling in luxury…?’ We will finish with recent developments in copyright law, and the rise of fears about the ‘Googleization’ of copyright and ownership in the 21st century.

- Ch 4s and Ch 5 of D Finkelstein and A McCleery (eds), *An Introduction to Book History* (London and New York, 2005).
- Loewenstein, Joseph, *The Author’s Due: Printing and the Prehistory of Copyright* (Chicago, Il, 2002).
- McElligott, Jason, *Royalism, Print and Censorship in Revolutionary England* (Woodbridge, 2007), chapter 4 has extensive background on the collaborative nature of early-modern authorship.
- Rose, Mark, *Authors and Owners: The Invention of Copyright* (Cambridge, MA, 1993).
- A very good international resource for copyright in Europe between 1450 and 1900 is http://www.copyrighthistory.org/

3. Publishing in the Long Nineteenth Century: the transformation of the literary marketplace (Jane Mahony)

This lecture identifies and assesses the impact of the significant interlocking structural, legal, technological, and economic changes which influenced the British publishing trade between 1790 and 1914. It traces the development of publishing from the cautious years of this period, dominated by war and financial instability, through the changing legal and economic contexts of the mid-century, to the dynamic and rapid expansion of publishing in the changing conditions of the last decades of the century. The lecture will survey key developments such as technological innovations in printing and typesetting; the impact of national and international law on copyright; the arrival of literary agents and the founding of the Society of Authors, the Society of Booksellers and the Society of Publishers; and market growth as a consequence of increased literacy and imperial expansion.

- Sutherland, John: *Victorian Novelists and Publishers* (1976), chs 1--3

4. Serialisation (Jarlath Killeen)

This lecture will examine the Victorian method of serializing fiction, outlining its origins, its impact, and the kinds of reading communities it produced. It will especially
focus on the cultural work is performed by a serialized fiction aimed at a large middle-class readership. The Victorian experience of both writing and reading in instalments will be examined in a consideration of Dickens' *The Pickwick Papers*, as well as James Malcolm Rymer’s *Varney the Vampire* and George W. M. Reynolds’ *The Mysteries of London*. The lecture will also draw on the extension of serialization into new media in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, including radio, television, and the internet, exploring how they have adopted and adapted serial formats. Issues to be addressed will include the authorial practices, copyright issues, economic concerns, and social/cultural responses related to serial media.

- Brewer, John, ‘Authors, Publishers, and the Making of Literary Culture’ in *The Book History Reader*
- Foucault, Michel, ‘What is an Author?’ in *The Book History Reader*
- Sutherland, John, ‘The Victorian Novelists: Who Were They?’ in *The Book History Reader*

5. Late-Victorian Periodical Culture (Clare Clarke)

What happens to a literary text when it is published in a periodical or newspaper that includes a range of other kinds of writing – advertising, reportage, interviews, or opinion pieces? What is the difference between a novel serialized in a periodical and the same novel published in volume form? This lecture will focus on the huge growth of mass-market periodicals in the 1880s and 1890s, examining the ways in which these new publications were carriers of opinion, information, propaganda, and ideology for a newly-literate middle-class readership. It will relate this to the vital role that these magazines and periodicals played in the development and success of late-Victorian popular genres, including the detective story, the ghost story, and the adventure story. Alongside this, it will examine how these publications and the stories within responded to, or informed debates and anxieties about, issues like gender, empire, race, crime, and class. Finally, it will introduce students to databases such as British Periodicals, which are offering new opportunities for research in this burgeoning field of Victorian periodical studies.

- Brake, Laurel, Aled Jones and Lionel Madden, eds. *Investigating Victorian Journalism* (1990)
6. Self-publishing: Whitman and Dickinson (Stephen Matterson)

Two of the greatest American poets of the nineteenth century, Walt Whitman and Emily Dickinson, were innovative not just in the ways that they extended the possibilities of poetic language and form, but also in terms of their experiments with book publication and design. Both poets, indeed, problematised the very idea of book publication: Whitman was the sole author, designer, and publisher of the first edition of *Leaves of Grass* (1855) – a book which, in itself, went against the grain of conventional nineteenth-century publishing practice in a number of respects – while Dickinson, who never actually published a ‘book’ in her lifetime, nonetheless engaged in a lifelong process of self-publication in a series of hand-stitched booklets or ‘fascicles’ that continue to fascinate scholars of book history and theory as much as those interested in her poetry and poetics. In this lecture, then, some of the contexts for the composition and production – as well as the later publication – of these two authors’ works will be discussed. Consideration will be given to the idea of self-publishing in the history of poetry, the importance of book production and design and their relation to the creation of poetic meaning and form, and the ethics of reading texts that may (in Dickinson’s case, at least) never have been intended for widespread public dissemination.

- Brewer, John, ‘Authors, Publishers and the Making of Literary Culture’ in *The Book History Reader*
- McCann, Jerome, ‘The Socialization of Texts’ in *The Book History Reader*
- Rose, Mark, ‘Literary Property Determined’ in *The Book History Reader*
- [http://www.emilydickinson.org/](http://www.emilydickinson.org/)
- [http://www.whitmanarchive.org/](http://www.whitmanarchive.org/)

Week 7: Reading Week


This lecture examines the development of the family firm of Macmillan & Co. from its foundation in 1843 as a Cambridge bookseller to its position as one of the greatest British publishing houses, focusing on the years 1850-1920. We will see how the principles and philosophy of the founding brothers – interest in education, deep religious belief, and good author relations – laid the foundation for the firm’s growth and success over several generations. We will look in particular at four key aspects of Macmillan & Co.’s vision and publishing strategy: the growth of the firm’s highly successful fiction list; how the firm facilitated the careers of women journalists and authors in the mid-19th Century; the development of transnational business networks in the United States and British Empire; and the encouragement of Irish authors such as W. B. Yeats, Sean O’Casey, Alice Stopford Green and Frank O’Connor from the second decade of the 20th Century.
9. The modern publishing market: the impact of the Net Book Agreement
(Jane Mahony)

This lecture examines the origins and impact of the Net Book Agreement (NBA) of 1899, a key milestone in book history which established re-sale price maintenance in the book trade. The NBA was intended as a remedy for ‘underselling’, the practice of booksellers competing with each other by often non-profitable discounting, as well as the undercutting of booksellers by general stores of the most popular titles. Its introduction brought certainty to the principle players in the industry and, in a significant unintended consequence, accelerated and consolidated the establishment of the royalty system for paying authors which greatly improved their terms, particularly those of mid-list authors, thereby allowing increasing numbers to earn a living from writing. The lecture will assess the impact of the Net Book Agreement on the twentieth-century literary marketplace and examine the factors leading to its demise in the 1990s and the consequences for publishers, booksellers, authors, and readers in the past two decades.


10. Editing and Editions (Sam Slote)

‘The concept of the “definitive text” corresponds only to religion or exhaustion’ (Jorge Luis Borges): The imperfection of the media of textuality has long been recognised. According to a tradition within a Kabbalistic sect, evil first entered into the world through an error in one of the scrolls that contained the sacred text of the Torah. And, of perhaps some less significance, there is no consensus as to what the definitive text of Shakespeare’s *King Lear* might be. The field of textual scholarship is concerned with analysing the variability of texts across their bibliographic instantiations, usually, but not always, with a view to ‘correcting’ these variations (i.e. editing the text). If literary criticism deals with interpreting texts, then textual studies is of vital importance since it reveals how texts are not stable but rather are
subject to multiplicity and variability. This lecture will survey the field of textual studies and editing and examine its implications for the study of literature.

- Bowers, Fredson, ‘Bibliography, Pure Bibliography, and Literary Studies’, in *The Book History Reader*
- Fish, Stanley, ‘Interpreting the Variorum’, in *The Book History Reader*
- McGann, Jerome, ‘The Socialization of Texts’, in *The Book History Reader*
- Slote, Sam, ‘Ulysses’ in the Plural: The Variable Editions of Joyce’s Novel (2004) [this will be made available as a pdf file]

11. Bank Holiday (reading assignment on Blackboard)

12. Remediating Books: Texts, Hypertext and New Reading Environments
   (Mark Sweetnam)

The great cultural enterprise over the past two decades of transferring our print heritage in print to digital formats has caused us to reassess what we mean when we use the term ‘book’. Is the book the physical container? The pages on which the text is printed? Is meaning created by the physical instantiation of the text? The bibliographic codes inherent in such features as print size and type, pagination, the headers, the graphics, the book cover? Is it the placing of one ‘content object’ (paragraphs, titles, stanzas, etc) one after the other? Or is it the text’s semantics, regardless of its physical manifestation? This lecture will explore these ideas, looking at the emergence and development of ‘hypertext’ since the Second World War, and thinking about some of the implications that the emergence of new technologies – and the types of reading that they enable – have had and are having for our study of ‘the book’.

- Gervais, Bertrand. ‘Is There a Text on This Screen: Reading in an Age of Hypertextuality’. Ed. Ray Siemens and Susan Schreibman. (Online)
The Book: Sample exam questions

1. Discuss the factors which led to the codex form superseding the roll form. Take into account social as well as physical factors.

2. What can we learn from studying the script of a manuscript page?

3. There are as many Piers Plowmans as there are manuscripts of Piers Plowman: discuss.

4. Why, in your opinion, might the print revolution have failed?

5. Did the notion of the ‘sacred’ impact the development of the English Bible as a material object?

6. With reference to appropriate examples, discuss the significance of the encyclopedia or the dictionary as ways of organizing knowledge.

7. In terms of book or publishing history what do you consider to be the distinctive features associated with the form of the novel? You may illustrate your answer with examples drawn from the early stages of novel publication, or range more widely.

8. “Information wants to be free” and “The labourer is worthy of her hire” are two incompatible principles invoked in discussions of copyright. The reader will have to decide which is more important. Discuss in relation to the works of one writer.

9. ‘Censorship sometimes reflects change in society as well as attempting to hold it back’. Consider the application of this statement in relation to either the sixteenth century in England or Ireland in the 1920s, paying attention to chronology and publication dates.

10. How significantly did serialization impact the evolution of the novel?

11. Consider some of the ways in which Walt Whitman OR Emily Dickinson challenged nineteenth-century views about the relationship between authorship and publication.

12. In what ways did the development of the Penguin paperback change perceptions of reading in Britain during the 1940s and 1950s?

13. Discuss some of the ways that digital and computer technologies have revised our understanding of ‘the book’.

14. The collapse of the Net Book Agreement in 1995 led to significant changes in the publishing and bookselling sectors in Ireland and Britain. Do you think that
its abandonment has had a mainly beneficial or a deleterious effect on publishers, booksellers and writers?