ENGL 5173, Advanced Studies in Medieval Literature and Culture: History of the Book

Teacher: J.B. Smith

Texts Required:

Description: Where do bookly standards come from? The Middle Ages? Lascivious Renaissance printers? The book industry? What is a book? This course invites students to learn and think critically about writing technologies, from cuneiform tablets to the Kindle. This course won’t be like other English courses, as it will have a strong hands-on element. We will be spending half of our time in the Special Collections Library, examining and studying objects from our own archive, including cuneiform, papyrus fragments, medieval manuscripts, early printed books, and all manner of later books. We will learn how writing technology affects literature and literary interpretation. Our digital age, as we will see, is only just the most recent change in reading habits and the materiality of the written word.

Essays, exams, and other major requirements for graduate students at the 5000 level: attendance; vigorous participation; one presentation; final project (longer than undergraduates).

MA advisory code: A, 2, 5

M.A. Advisory Coding
The advisory codes indicate what course distribution requirement will be satisfied by the designated listing. If more than one code is listed in the description for a particular class, a student may satisfy only one of those distribution requirements with that class, unless the code is T, for Theory.

For M.A. Students with the Generalist Concentration
Generalist A: satisfies Medieval Literature and Culture requirement.
Generalist B: satisfies Renaissance Literature and Culture requirement.
Generalist C: satisfies Restoration and 18th-century Literature and Culture requirement.
Generalist D: satisfies 19th-century British Literature and Culture requirement.
Generalist E: satisfies British Literature and Culture After 1900 requirement.
Generalist F: satisfies American Literature and Culture Before 1900 requirement.
Generalist G: satisfies American Literature and Culture After 1900 requirement.
Generalist H: satisfies World Literature and Culture Written in English requirement.
For M.A. Students with the Specialist Concentration
  Specialist 1: satisfies Comparative Literature requirement.
  Specialist 2: satisfies Cultural Studies requirement.
  Specialist 3: satisfies Ethnic and Regional Literatures requirement.
  Specialist 4: satisfies Gender and Sexuality requirement.
  Specialist 5: satisfies Medieval Literature requirement.
  Specialist 6: satisfies Modern American Literature requirement.
  Specialist 7: satisfies Rhetoric, Composition, and Literacy requirement.

For All M.A. Students
  (T): satisfies Theory requirement.
    (A course can satisfy the theory requirement while also satisfying one of the other requirements in the lists above.)