

## History of Text Technologies ENG3803-06

Instructor: Stephen McElroy  
Time: TR 11:00 AM - 12:15 PM  
Location: WMS 204

Office: WMS 222B  
Hours: Tuesday 10-11 AM  
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*You can't have art without resistance in the material.* –William Morris

*We shape our tools, and then our tools shape us.* –Marshall McLuhan

**Please note:** this course fulfills the HoTT requirement for the Department of English 'Editing Writing and Media' Major.

Proceeding both chronologically and thematically, this course introduces the history of the various technologies that have been used to record and transmit cultural memory and experience across time and space. As this is largely a history course, our focus will be on past modes of textual creation. In coming to understand how earlier societies shaped, and were shaped by, various tools of communication, we will develop a greater understanding of our own culture's relationship with text technologies. As you develop into writing professionals, this course will give you a better foundation on which to evaluate the tools you use to communicate, to assess the relationship between form and content, to understand concerns of context and context collapse, to recognize how given tools negotiate permanence, ephemerality, materiality, functionality, and intentionality—in short, to become familiar with the way material form shapes rhetoric.

Cave painting, tattoo, graffiti, scroll, handmade books, machine-made books, the photograph, radio, film, television, digital media: each of these technologies emerged from specific cultural conditions and persist or have been outmoded due to developments in technology *and* to changes in a culture or society's needs and interests. We will investigate how these technologies emerge from certain cultural conditions and how they shape culture in turn. We will use a number of case studies from each major technology, accompanied by foundational theoretical writings and, on occasion, major literary examples.

In addition to our historical survey, we'll undertake hands-on exercises and interactive work to better understand how material function of text technologies relates to the content they convey.

By the end of the course, students who complete the reading and assignments; take good notes and study them; and are attentive in class will be able to:

- understand the historical and critical contexts that inform the development and use of today's text technologies;
- identify and describe the fundamental processes of textual production over the last three millennia;

- identify the major theoretical features of textual production from the inscribing of stone to the writing of blogs;
- provide an overview of the culturally-specific impact of text technologies (demonstrated through the final paper);
- articulate the distinctive and shared trends in the emergence of text technologies.

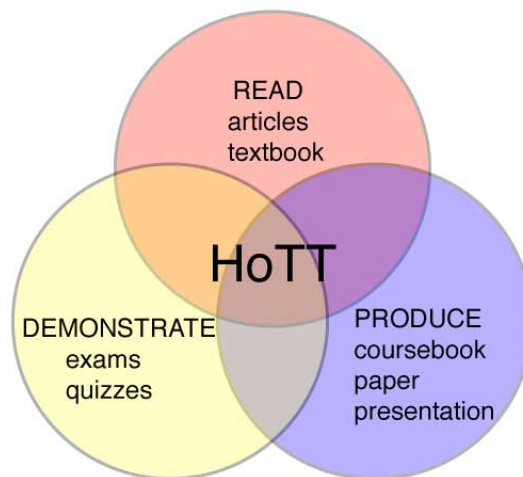
**Course Texts:**

- *A Companion to the History of the Book* ed. Simon Eliot and Jonathan Rose (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007).
- HOTT Coursebook. Available electronically on Blackboard (Bb).
- Other material for this course will be provided on Bb. PowerPoints will be available on Bb. Basic bibliographies and notes are in the Coursebook and on Bb, but you are responsible for compiling fuller bibliographies for your own course work.

*A note on course material:* This course will cover material certain students might find offensive (violence, prejudice, sexuality, religious subjects, immorality). If you would prefer not to encounter this material, please consider not enrolling in this course.

**Grade Distribution (see details below):**

Mid-term Exam: 25%  
 Final Exam: 25%  
 Coursebook/Portfolio/PPP: 20%  
 Final Paper/Presentation: 20%  
 Quizzes: 10%



Quizzes

We will have six electronic quizzes (open-book and open-note) on the readings. Your lowest quiz grade will be dropped at the end of the semester. The quizzes will be short (~10 questions) and will assess your comprehension of a given week’s readings—their themes, arguments, and relevance to our course. You should read each assigned piece and take notes on the author’s main thesis (argument), the conclusion arrived at, and the evidence (specific textual examples) used to get there. **Then, take the quiz on Bb before**

**class begins.** I reserve the right to conduct additional in-class quizzes if student engagement appears to be waning due to not reading.

### Coursebook /Portfolio

You will complete eight assigned entries from the Coursebook (on Bb) – some individually, some in groups: stay tuned for instructions about each Coursebook assignment. You will also create two of your own entries that would make appropriate additions to the book for future students. These entries must be turned in on the date they are due to receive credit. You will gather your coursebook entries and any other required materials, along with a short reflective essay, and turn them in as a portfolio near the end of the semester. The portfolio will be submitted as a PDF.

### Exams

Exams may include short answer, matching vocabulary, true/false, and essay questions. They will draw on material from readings, lectures (& PPTs), class discussions, and the Coursebook. Therefore, it is imperative that you take good notes. Study guides will NOT be provided, but I will offer sample questions prior to the first exam. Please begin keeping a list of important terms (e.g. any term with which you are unfamiliar).

### Final Paper/Presentation

You will compose a 1250-1500 word essay in which you argumentatively compare/contrast/analyze/synthesize two text technologies through the tripartite theoretical lens of materiality, functionality, and intentionality. You will present your argument in a modified, three-minute PechaKucha presentation (we will discuss this in class).

### Presence, Preparation, Participation (PPP)

The most basic aspect of this portion of your grade is just being in class (see “Presence Policy” below). More important, however, is what you do once you’ve sat down:

- Arrive with your readings, some blank paper and writing instrument.
- Do not be late. Chronic lateness may lower your final grade.
- Remain in class for the duration (clear any early departures with me).
- Please, no texting in class
- Be prepared with questions about the material. These may be comprehension questions (i.e. “I don’t understand...”) or they might be broader inquiries meant to spark class discussion.
- Be prepared for me to call on you to comment on the readings or add to discussion.
- Listen carefully to what your classmates and I have to say and take good notes.
- Respond to class comments or initiate a new discussion.
- Contribute to discussion without monopolizing the conversation.
- Don’t just rely on your opinion. Support your comments with evidence from our course readings.
- Aim for at least one thoughtful contribution per class.

**Grading Scale:** A = 93-100%, A- = 90-92%, B+ = 87-89%, B = 83-86%, B- = 80-82%, C+ = 77-79%, C = 73-76%, C- = 70-72%, D+ = 67-69%, D = 63-66%, F = 0-62%

**Presence Policy:**

I will take attendance at each class meeting. Chronic failure to attend class will affect your PPP grade. Because our exam will draw on information from in-class lectures, poor attendance will also have a negative impact on your exam grade. More than two absences (excused or unexcused) may result in your grade being lowered by 1/3 (B+ becomes a B, etc.). More than four absences may result in failing the course.

Accommodations will be made for students with valid and documented absences, per FSU policy (illness, death in the family, military duty, jury duty, religious holidays, official university activities). I will also work with students who experience issues with dependent care. Please see me as soon as possible if you foresee any of these issues so that we can plan on how best to keep you up-to-date with the course. Regardless of whether an absence is excused or unexcused, students are responsible for getting class notes for the days they miss and for keeping up with assignments.

**Course Readings:** If you encounter a problem accessing course readings you must contact me prior to class so that I can address the issue before we meet to discuss the material. Failure to do so could affect your grade.

**Submitting Assignments:** All assignments are due by class time on the day specified.

**Late Work:** Late work may be penalized one letter grade per day. If you have a situation which warrants an extension you must meet with me in advance to arrange a new deadline. Work more than a week late will not be accepted.

**Course Communications:** Our classroom is a professional space where we come together to learn and to have thoughtful discussions about course material. Please be sure your contributions are carefully considered and respectfully delivered.

**My office hours are listed above, on the door of my office, and on Blackboard. I am often available outside of those times and would be happy to meet with you at any point in the semester. Email me or speak to me in class to schedule a meeting.**

Check your FSU email account as well as Blackboard frequently for updates on our course. Please be sure to sign your email so I know who it is from. Email is also a form of class participation, so please treat your messages to me and to your classmates with the same level of care you would a comment made during class.

**Free Tutoring from FSU:**

The assignments and grading for this course assume that students have a solid grasp of academic writing and argument. If you feel you need to brush up on your writing skills or just need some support, please take advantage of FSU's extensive tutoring programs. For tutoring and writing help in any course at Florida State University, visit the Academic Center for Excellence (ACE) Tutoring Services' comprehensive list of tutoring options - see <http://ace.fsu.edu/tutoring> or contact [tutor@fsu.edu](mailto:tutor@fsu.edu) for more information. High-quality

tutoring is available by appointment and on a walk-in basis. These services are offered by tutors trained to encourage the highest level of individual academic success while upholding personal academic integrity.

The English Department's Reading and Writing Center has locations in Williams, the Johnston Learning Studio, and the library. Students may make appointments or walk-in for assistance. To schedule an appointment, please call the RWC at 644-6495 before 6pm. Appointments may also be made at the Strozier RWC desk during their scheduled hours.

**Academic Honor Policy:**

The Florida State University Academic Honor Policy outlines the University's expectations for the integrity of students' academic work, the procedures for resolving alleged violations of those expectations, and the rights and responsibilities of students and faculty members throughout the process. Students are responsible for reading the Academic Honor Policy and for living up to their pledge to "... be honest and truthful and ... [to] strive for personal and institutional integrity at Florida State University." (Florida State University Academic Honor Policy, found at <http://dof.fsu.edu/honorpolicy.htm>.)

Failing to use proper MLA citation for ALL sources may be considered plagiarism.

**Americans With Disabilities Act:**

Students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should:

- (1) register with and provide documentation to the Student Disability Resource Center; and
  - (2) bring a letter to the instructor indicating the need for accommodation and what type.
- This should be done during the first week of class. This syllabus and other class materials are available in alternative format upon request. For more information about services available to FSU students with disabilities, contact the:

Student Disability Resource Center  
874 Traditions Way  
108 Student Services Building  
Florida State University  
Tallahassee, FL 32306-4167  
(850) 644-9566 (voice)  
(850) 644-8504 (TDD)  
sdrc@admin.fsu.edu  
<http://www.disabilitycenter.fsu.edu/>

**Syllabus Change Policy:** Except for changes that substantially affect implementation of the evaluation (grading) statement, this syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advance notice.

d	DATE	READINGS/ASSIGNMENT	Q	DUE
T	1/8	Syllabus/Intro		
R	1/10	Read: Nicholas Carr – Is Google Making Us Stupid? (Bb)		

		Watch: The Machine is (Changing) Us: YouTube and the Politics of Authenticity: <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=09gR6VPVrpw">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=09gR6VPVrpw</a>		
What and Where is Text?				
T	1/15	Read: Walter Ong – “Writing is a Technology that Restructures Thought” (Bb) <b>AND</b> <i>Companion</i> , Introduction		
R	1/17	Read: Porter, “Recovering Delivery for Digital Rhetoric”	Q	
T	1/22	Read: Roger Chartier’s “Languages, Books, and Reading” (Bb)  Assignment for class: From the contemporary world around you, list ten different forms of text and bring this list to class with you.		Ten forms of text
Writing on Earth				
R	1/24	Read: <i>Companion</i> , Chapter 5		
T	1/29	The Chauvet Caves: Assignment for Class: i) Analyze the form and function of the Chauvet Cave Paintings. (coursebook) ii) Watch the trailer for Cave of Forgotten Dreams (the whole film can also be streamed on Netflix!): <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kULwsoCEd3g">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kULwsoCEd3g</a> iii) Read the following on the caves of Nerja: <a href="http://www.newscientist.com/article/dn21458-first-neanderthal-cave-paintings-discovered-in-spain.html">http://www.newscientist.com/article/dn21458-first-neanderthal-cave-paintings-discovered-in-spain.html</a>		
R	1/31	Read: A. Petrucci’s <i>Public Lettering: Script, Power, and Culture</i> (1993), pp. 1-15, 117-29 (Bb)	Q	
Writing in Public				
T	2/5	Read Juliet Fleming, “Early Modern Graffiti” (Bb) <b>AND</b> <a href="http://campaignstops.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/08/30/the-attack-ad-pompeii-style/?hp">http://campaignstops.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/08/30/the-attack-ad-pompeii-style/?hp</a>	Q	
R	2/7	Read: Tracey E. Bowen, ‘Graffiti Art: A Contemporary Study of Toronto Artists’, <i>Studies in Art Education</i> 41 (1999), 22-39 (Bb)  Assignment for Class: i) Analyze ‘Graffiti’ in Coursebook. ii) Post 3 examples of graffiti that you find on campus/in town.		3 examples of graffiti
T	2/12	Read “Official Graffiti of the Everyday” (Bb)  Assignment for Class (complete in coursebook):		CB ‘Signs’

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Analyze the form and function of the Japanese Tsunami Sign.</li> <li>ii) Investigate the signs around you. Answer the questions on 'Signs' in your Coursebook.</li> </ul>		
R	2/14	NO CLASS		
T	2/19	VISIT SPECIAL COLLECTIONS		
R	2/21	EXAM #1		
Writing on Plants and Membranes				
T	2/26	Read: <i>Companion</i> , Chapter 6		
R	2/28	Read: <i>Companion</i> , Chapter 13  Assignment for class: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i.) Coursebook questions on 'Scroll' and 'Codex'</li> <li>ii.) Watch: <a href="http://vimeo.com/47656204#">http://vimeo.com/47656204#</a></li> </ul>		CB 'Scroll' and 'Codex'
T	3/5	Read: Chang, "Skin, Tattoos, and Susceptibility" (Bb)  Assignments for class: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i.) Analyze 'Tattoos' in coursebook</li> </ul>		
ASSIGN FINAL PAPER				
R	3/7	Read: <i>Companion</i> , Chapter 14 Assignment for class: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i.) Coursebook questions on 'Manuscript Culture'</li> </ul>	Q	CB 'Manuscript Culture'
T	3/12	SPRING		
R	3/14	BREAK		
Manuscripts and Mechanics				
T	3/19	Read: Gaskell (Bb) <b>AND</b> <i>Companion</i> , chapter 15  Assignment for class: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i.) Coursebook questions on 'Gutenberg'</li> </ul>		CB 'Gutenberg'
R	3/21	Read: Kuskin (Bb) VISIT SPECIAL COLLECTIONS		
Hand Press and Mechanized Print				
T	3/26	Read: <i>Companion</i> , chapter 17  Assignment for class: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i.) Coursebook questions on 'Shakespeare'</li> </ul>		CB 'Shakespeare'
R	3/28	Read: <i>Companion</i> chapters 19 <b>and</b> 20  Assignment for class: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i.) Coursebook questions on 'Newspapers' and 'Magazines'</li> </ul>	Q	CB 'Newspapers' and 'Magazines'
T	4/2	Read: Benjamin, "Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" (Bb)		
R	4/4	Invented Coursebook Entries due		ICB #s 1 and 2
T	4/9	Read: Adorno, 'Popular Music' (Bb)	Q	

R	4/11	Coursebook Portfolios Due		*CB Portfolios*
T	4/16	Read: Manguel, "The Library as a Mind" (Bb) and "A History of Reading" (Bb) Assignment for class: Analyze coursebook 'Reading and readers'		
<b>R</b>	<b>4/18</b>	<b>EXAM #2</b>		
T	4/23	Presentations		
R	4/25	Presentations		
T	4/30	Final Papers Due		Final Paper