

Library and Book History

LIS 604 201

Fall, 2006

Thurs, 6:00-8:30, UofL EL254

Kurt Metzmeier
Acting Director, Law Library
University of Louisville

852-6082

kurt.metzmeier@louisville.edu

Required Texts:

None. You are responsible for all readings on the course page.

Perspective:

The instructor of this course is a lawyer, a historian, an educator, and a librarian. If you mention James Joyce's *Ulysses*, he is apt to digress as to the book's tortured publication history, its role in the legal history of censorship in the U.S., or the beauty of the 1934 Random House edition. Along the way, at least one bad pun will be used and likely one or two obscure references to American popular culture and/or a 1980s British television comedy series. This integrated approach will be reflected in the lectures and readings.

Course Objectives:

Purpose of the course is to orient students to the history of the book and libraries, with an emphasis on the print culture of the United States. By the end of the course students will:

1. Understand the common vocabulary of book history; for example, when confronted with the word "incunabula", they will know it relates to the early history of print, not Madonna's new religion.
2. Have a basic knowledge of the main events and personalities in world and American library history, including Herbert Putnam, Melvil Dewey, and Rupert Giles.
3. Gain an understanding of the role of print culture and libraries in social and political history of the modern world.
4. Learn how book and library history can be integrated into the everyday operations of a library.
5. Use new-found knowledge to better understand the impact of new technologies of print culture; will be able to confidently declare "the imminent death of the library/book" every decade or so throughout their career.

Course Requirements

1. Research Report 40%
2. Brochure/Website 15%
3. Bibliography 10%
4. Presentation 25%
5. Class Participation 10%

Details:

- **Generally.** While library and book history often seems extraneous to the business of a real-world library, it actually plays a large role in the interaction between the library and the community it serves. Libraries, whether public or academic, need to stage public events to raise their profiles and commemorations of their history or of their unique holdings. Recent examples include Louisville Free Public Library's Gutenberg exhibition in 2000 and the University of Louisville Libraries decision to highlight unique holdings as part of its Two Millionth Volume celebration. The following course assignments attempt to simulate the work products generated in planning, promoting and staging these programs.
- **Research Report.** The primary assignment will be a research paper on some aspect of library and book history. **All other assignments will be based on the same topic.**
- **Brochure/Website.** In this assignment, you present your research in a form that mixes text with graphics. The audience is the general public, so the tone should be engaging and educational. Should include 500 words of text and two or three images.
- **Bibliographic Handout.** Should be a list of selected works directly relevant to your topic. Envision it as handout for your presentation.
- **Presentation.** Students will be required to present their research to the class in a fifteen-minute presentation. The presentation must include some graphical material. Students may use PowerPoint.