

ENGL 604: Post-Digital Textual Materiality

Dr. Shawna Ross

W 12:45-3:45 pm , LAAH 504

Distribution Requirements

- One course in theory
- One course organized around concepts, issues, or themes

Course Description

From the proliferation of print-on-demand books and the emergence of a market for online study aids to the painstaking creation of grant-funded digital scholarly editions and the production of audiobooks, the digitization of cultural heritage has caused scholars to rethink the nature of the physical book. How has the materiality of the codex shaped literary canonicity—and does canonicity change when digital texts emerge? What do we know now about the cognitive and aesthetic affordances of paper now that screens have apparently taken over? How has the socioeconomic status of print culture changed in the face of cheap, free, or pirated information? Should archives be located in remote libraries or the cloud? How should born-digital literary texts be preserved? And how should all of these issues shape the future of our individual fields and methodologies? To explore these questions, this course surveys new theories of the book that are informed by New Media Studies and the digital humanities but stubbornly return to the media specificity of print.

Readings will be drawn from media studies, digital humanities, literary criticism, and book history:

- Amy Earhart and Andrew Jewell, *The American Literature Scholar in the Digital Age*
 - Access [library ebook](#) or purchase copy ([ISBN 047207119X](#))
- Lori Emerson, *Reading Writing Interfaces: From the Digital to the Bookbound*
 - Access [library ebook](#) or purchase copy ([ISBN 0816691258](#))
- Lisa Gitelman, *Paper Knowledge: Toward a Media History of Documents*
 - Access [library ebook](#) or purchase copy ([ISBN 0822356570](#))
- Adam Hammond, *Literature in the Digital Age*
 - Purchase copy ([ISBN 1107615070](#))
- N. Katherine Hayles and Jessica Pressman, *Comparative Textual Media: Transforming the Humanities in the Postprint Era*
 - Access [library ebook](#) or purchase copy ([ISBN 0816680043](#))
- Matthew Kirschenbaum, *Track Changes: A Literary History of Word Processing*
 - Access [library ebook](#) or purchase copy ([ISBN 0674417070](#))
- Matthew Kirschenbaum, *Bitstreams: The Future of Digital Literary Heritage*

- Access [library ebook](#) or purchase copy ([ISBN 0812224957](#))
- Jerome McGann's *Radiant Textuality: Literary Studies after the World Wide Web*
 - Purchase copy ([ISBN 0312293526](#))

Students will be charged with applying these theories to their own literary-historical subfields and their preferred methodologies through the creation of 1) weekly reading responses; 2) a state-of-the-field report on these topics in their field or preferred method of study; 3) a short conference paper that pinpoints and analyzes 1 interesting case study worthy of research, all in the context of a self-organized “panel” with other students in your field, intended to theorize some intervention in textual media studies in your field; and 4) a grant proposal for executing a more complete analysis of your case study or a digital project based on your case study.

Credits 3. 3 Lecture Hours. Topics in the studies of digital humanities; introduction to making/ interpreting digital materials, the surrogates of books, paintings, etc. , that form our cultural heritage, as well as digitally-born literature, art and culture; reflection on digital cultures/ digital archives; theory and practice of creating and researching digital resources. May be taken three times for credit. Prerequisite: Graduate classification.