

PRINT AND BOOK TECHNOLOGIES IN THE WEST

Autumn term: Tuesdays, 14.00-16.00

NB: Session 1 meets 14:30–16:30

Convenors: Dr Christopher Ohge, Dr Elizabeth Savage

Objectives

This module will introduce key resources and methodologies for research in the history and future of technologies for books, focusing on western historical technologies from the middle ages to the digital age. It combines lectures, object-based seminars, and hands-on practical sessions. It focuses on the history of the book in the west, including text and non-textual content such as images, diagrams, and music. Drawing on a number of disciplinary perspectives, it equips students to undertake research into a broad range of issues related to the production and reception of books, printed material, book and print cultures, and digital approaches to book history across a wide range of places and times.

Learning Outcomes

Students will gain knowledge and understating of a range of technologies relevant to the history of the book and printing, focusing on western production from the middle ages through to the digital present. They will be expected to critically examine foundational texts as well as current issues that are shaping the fields. They will understand book and text technologies as a process existing on a long continuum rather than a series of radical alterations. They will develop a broad range of research skills that can be applied to individual areas of interest, including core tools for undertaking research in these areas. They will also learn practical skills to enhance their interpretation of the materiality and physical features of books and printed material and begin undertaking independent research in collections.

Structure

The module will occupy twenty hours (ten sessions) of classes held in the Autumn term.

Assessment

The module will be examined by either a 5,000-word essay, or a practical exercise agreed with the convenors (e.g. a historical reconstruction or digital project) and a 2,500-word essay exploring the technology that was used.

The essays are due after the final class.

For exact dates please see the MA/MRes Programme Handbook.

Weekly schedule of classes

AUTUMN TERM

1. Introduction: Book Technology and Technological Determinism: Christopher Ohge & Elizabeth Savage **(NB: Meet at 2:30–4:30)**
2. The Hand-Press Period, 1450-1830: Elizabeth Savage
3. Manuscript Technologies to 1900: Sara Charles
4. Machine Processes, 1830–1900: Elizabeth Savage
5. Practical: Printing at a Common Press: Richard Lawrence & Elizabeth Savage **(NB: Meet at St Bride Foundation)**

READING WEEK

1. From Machine to Digital Technologies of the Book, 1830-1950: Christopher Ohge
2. Computerised Technologies and the Book, 1950-2021: Christopher Ohge
3. The Role of Markup in Text Technologies: Christopher Ohge
4. Practical: Digital Workshop: Christopher Ohge
5. Planning Your Project and Essay: Christopher Ohge & Elizabeth Savage

Module Timetable

Autumn term timetable

Tueadays, 2–4pm

Week	Date	Session Title	Tutor	Room
1	29th September	Introduction: Book Technology and Technological Determinism	Christopher Ohge & Elizabeth Savage	SH (2:30–4:30)
2	6th October	The Hand-Press Period, 1450-1830	Elizabeth Savage	SH
3	13th October	Manuscript Technologies to 1900	Sara Charles	SHL
4	20th October	Machine Processes, 1830-1900	Elizabeth Savage	SH
5	27th October	Practical: Printing at a Common Press	Richard Lawrence & Elizabeth Savage	St Bride Foundation
	3rd November	Reading Week		
6	10th November	From Machine to Digital Technologies of the Book, 1830-1950	Christopher Ohge	SH
7	17th November	Computerised Technologies and the Book, 1950-2021	Christopher Ohge	SHL—CO to ask for digitisaion visit, or ICS if not
8	24th November	The role of markup in digital text technologies	Christopher Ohge	Virtual
9	1st December	Practical: Digital Workshop	Christopher Ohge	SH
10	8th December	Planning Your Project or Essay	Christopher Ohge & Elizabeth Savage	SH

Weekly Schedule and Preparatory Reading

Required and recommended reading is detailed under each seminar below. Where required reading is not specified, please read at least three texts per class. If an entire book is included in the reading list, choose any one chapter that is relevant to your interests.

AUTUMN TERM

Week 1

Introduction: Book Technology and Technological Determinism: Christopher Ohge & Elizabeth Savage

NB: Meet at 2:30–4:30

Required viewing:

Stephen Fry: The History of the First Printing Press: The Machine that Made Us, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uQ88yC35NjI> (59 minutes)

Required reading:

Any chapter of Sabrina Alcorn Baron, Eric N. Lindquist, Eleanor F. Shevlin, eds., *Agent of Change: Print Culture Studies after Elizabeth L. Eisenstein* (Amherst; Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007)

James Gleick, *The Information: A History, A Theory, A Flood* (Fourth Estate, 2012). Especially Chapters 1, 2, 4, and 7.

Sarah Werner, *Studying Early Printed Books, 1450–1800: A Practical Guide* (Wiley, 2019), Part 1.

Optional Reading:

Laura Mandell, *Breaking the Book* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2015)

Week 2

The Hand-Press Period, 1450–1830: Elizabeth Savage

Phillip Gaskell. *A New Introduction to Bibliography: The Classic Manual of Bibliography* (new edition, 2002): 'Presswork', pp. 118–141 and 'Decoration and Illustration', 154–160.

Roger Gaskell, 'Printing House and Engraving Shop: A Mysterious Collaboration,' *The Book Collector* 53 (2004): 213–252

Watch Terry Belanger, 'The Anatomy of a Book: Format in the Hand-Press Period' (Book Arts Press (Rare Book School): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Efxddk09p0g&feature=youtu.be> (29 minutes)

At least one of:

Antony Griffiths, *The Print Before Photography: An Introduction to European Printmaking 1550 – 1820*, Chapter 10: 'Single Sheets, Pairs, Sets and Oeuvres', 164–180, Chapter 11: 'Book Illustration', 181–194

Lotte Hellenga, 'Printing', pp. 65-108. In *Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, vol. 3: 1400–1557 (Cambridge: CUP, 1999)

Alan May, 'Albrecht Dürer's Drawing of a Printing Press: A Reconsideration', *Journal of the Printing Historical Society* 22 (Spring 2015): 63-79.

James Mosley, 'The Technologies of Printing', pp. 161-199. In *Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, vol. 5: 1695–1830 (Cambridge: CUP, 2010)

Week 3

Manuscript Technologies to 1900: Sara Charles

<https://travelingscriptorium.files.wordpress.com/2021/03/binding-booklet-2016.pdf>

www.teachingmanuscripts.com

Week 4

Machine Processes, 1830–1900: Elizabeth Savage

Philip Gaskell, *A New Introduction to Bibliography: The Classic Manual of Bibliography*: 'Printing Machines', 251–265, 'Printing Practice in the Machine-Press Period', 289–296.

David McKitterick, 'Changes in the Look of the Book', 75–116. In *Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, vol. 6: 1830–1914 (Cambridge: CUP, 2010)

James Moran, *Printing Presses: History and Development from the Fifteenth Century to Modern Times* (Faber, 1973). Any chapter from 10–16, depending on your area of interest.

At least one of:

Michael Twyman, *The British Library Guide to Printing History and Techniques*, London: British Library, 1998.

Michael Twyman, *Printing 1770–1970: An Illustrated History of its Development and Uses in England*, London: Eyre & Spottiswood, 1970; reprinted London: British Library, 1998.

Week 5

Practical: Printing at a Common Press: Richard Lawrence & Elizabeth Savage

There is no set reading. Please dress appropriately, eg sturdy shoes, no loose scarves or sleeves, clothing that wouldn't be ruined if stained by printing ink.

READING WEEK

Week 6

From Machine to Digital Technologies of the Book, 1830-1950: Christopher Ohge

Michael Lesk, Chapter 1 ('Evolution of Libraries') and Chapter 3 ('Images of Pages') of *Understanding Digital Libraries* (2005),
https://openlibrary.org/works/OL17708708W/Understanding_Digital_Libraries.

Melissa Terras, 'Digitization and digital resources in the humanities', in *Digital Humanities in Practice* (Facet, 2012). DOI: 10.29085/9781856049054.004.

Elaine Treharne and Claude Willan, *Text Technologies: A History* (Stanford University Press, 2020), pp. 1–32, 103–33.

Week 7

Computerised Technologies and the Book, 1950-2021: Christopher Ohge

Required Readings:

Dennis Yi Tenen, 'Reading Platforms: A Concise History of the Electronic Book', in *The Unfinished Book*, edited by Alexandra Gillespie and Deidre Lynch (Oxford University Press, 2020). DOI: 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780198830801.013.22.

John B. Thompson, Chapters 12 ('The digital revolution and the publishing world') and 15 ('The hidden revolution') of *Books in the Digital Age* (Polity, 2005)

Optional readings:

Adam Crymble, Chapter 2 ('The Archival Revisionism of Mass Digitisation') of *Technology and the Historian* (University of Illinois Press, 2021).

Andrew Prescott, 'Slow Digitisation and the Battle of the Books', in *Slow Scholarship* (Boydell and Brewer, 2019). <https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/slow-scholarship/slow-digitisation-and-the-battle-of-the-books/5FA19D7FDA4AC78BDF508E38378D2CB2>.

Week 8

The role of markup in digital text technologies

Readings:

David Birnbaum, 'What is XML and why should humanists care?'
<http://dh.obdurodon.org/what-is-xml.xhtml>.

Allen Renear, 'Text Encoding', in *A Companion to Digital Humanities*, ed. ed. Susan Schreibman, Ray Siemens, John Unsworth (Blackwell, 2004).
2004.<http://www.digitalhumanities.org/companion/view?docId=blackwell/9781405103213/9781405103213.xml&chunk.id=ss1-3-5&toc.depth=1&toc.id=ss1-3-5&brand=default>

Week 9

Practical: Digital Workshop: Christopher Ohge

There is no set reading for this workshop, but you should consult this tutorial on Markdown: <https://www.markdownguide.org/getting-started/>. Also bookmark the Markdown cheat sheet (<https://www.markdownguide.org/basic-syntax/>).

Also make sure you have the following downloaded: a text editor (I prefer [Atom](#)), and Pandoc (<https://pandoc.org/installing.html>).

Week 10

Planning Your Project or Essay Christopher Ohge & Elizabeth Savage

There is no set reading, but please come prepared with at least two questions about possible projects or essay topics.