

**ARTHIST 522A: Topics in Print History**

**Winter Term, Thursdays 1:15 - 3:15**

**Cantor Arts Center, Tanenbaum Room, or Green Library, as specified**

**Instructor: Graham Larkin**

**Office: Cummings Art Building, Room 116**

**E-mail: BGL@stanford.edu**

**Description**

This seminar examines material, conceptual and social facets of print communication, from the early modern period to the present. Led by an art historian, the class will attend to printed texts as well as images. Indeed, one of the main aims is to bring a rich body of writing about the printed word to bear on visual material. We will move from the provocations of media visionaries Marshall McLuhan and Walter Ong (*Week 2*) to a detailed consideration of the emergence of different printing techniques (*Weeks 3-5*). Subsequent classes will treat the peculiar status of the multiple image (*Weeks 6-7*); how the look of the printed word affects meaning (*Week 8*); the history of image compilation (*Week 9*); and the troubled task of regulating printed matter (*Week 10*).

**Participants**

Open to graduate and qualified undergraduate students in all disciplines.

**Venues**

All classes will be taught in the presence of original prints and books from a variety of periods and places, in either the Cantor Arts Center or Green Library Special Collections. The first two classes (January 8 and 15) will be held in the Tanenbaum Seminar Room, Cantor Center for Visual Arts, 328 Lomita Drive and Museum Way (off Palm Drive). Enter behind the Gates of Hell, at the left of the museum. Seriously.

**Expectations**

All reading is mandatory. Seminar participants are expected to discuss the readings on the syllabus, and to analyze printed texts and images in Stanford Collections. Grades will be assigned on the basis of class participation (40%), short writing assignments based on the weekly readings (30%), and a final writing assignment centering on selected objects(30%).

**Class Schedule and Readings**

**1. Introduction**      *(Jan 8, Cantor Center)*

*(Description of class by instructor, and initial chat.)*

## **2. Technology Transforms Consciousness** (*Jan 15, Cantor Center*)

Richard S. Field "Sentences on Printed Art," in *Print Collector's Newsletter* vol. 25, no. 5 (Nov-Dec 1994), p. 171.

Marshall McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy; The Making of Typographic Man* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1962), pp. 124-174. [\[skim\]](#)

Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (2nd ed. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), pp. 3-21, 157-178, 203-216.

Walter Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (London & New York: Methuen, 1982), pp. 31-108.

## **3. Techniques of Hand Production** (*Jan 22, Achenbach Foundation, San Francisco*)

Antony Griffiths, *Prints and Printmaking: An Introduction to the History and Techniques* (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996), pp. 1-99.

Michael Twyman, *The British Library Guide to Printing: History and Techniques* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), pp. 8-45.

## **4. The Rise of the Printed Word and Image** (*Jan 29, Green Library Spec. Coll.*)

David Landau and Peter Parshall, "Framing the Renaissance Print" and "How Prints Became Works of Art: The First Generation," in *The Renaissance Print: 1470-1550* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1994), pp. 1-63.

Graham Larkin and Lisa Pon, "Printing Matters: The Materiality of Print in Early Modern Europe," *Word & Image*, vol. 17, nos. 1-2 (2001), pp. 1-6.

Philip B. Meggs, "Printing Comes to Europe," "The German Illustrated Book," and "Renaissance Graphic Design," in *A History of Graphic Design*, pp. 58-107.

## **5. Some Later Techniques** (*Feb 5, Green Library, Spec. Coll.*)

Antony Griffiths, *Prints and Printmaking: an Introduction to the History and Techniques* (Berkeley: Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996), pp. 100-127.

Michael Twyman, *The British Library Guide to Printing: History and Techniques* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), pp. 46-82.

## 6. Reclaiming the Pre-Photographic Copy (*Feb 12, Cantor Center*)

Francis Haskell, *The Painful Birth of the Art Book*. London & New York: Thames and Hudson, 1987.

William M. Ivins, *Prints and Visual Communication* (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard UP, 1953), pp. 21-70.

Patricia Mainardi, "Copies, Variations, Replicas: Nineteenth-Century Studio Practice," in *Visual Resources*, vol. 15, pp. 123-147.

## 7. Mechanization and its Discontents (date to be determined due to CAA conference; *Cantor Center?*)

Stephen Bann, *Parallel Lines: Printmakers, Painters and Photographers in Nineteenth-Century France* (New Haven: Yale UP, 2001), [selections].

Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility: Third Version" in *Selected Writings*, vol. 4 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 2003), pp. 251-283.

Joshua Binion Cahn, (ed.), *What is an Original Print? Principles Recommended by the Print Council of America*. New York: Print Council of America, 1961.

Philip K. Dick, "Pay for the Printer" (1956), in *The Father-Thing* (Collected Stories, vol. 3; Los Angeles: Underwood/Miller, 1987), pp. 239-252.

Siegfried Giedion, "The Assembly Line in the Twentieth Century," in *Mechanization Takes Command: A Contribution to Anonymous History* (New York, Oxford Univ. Press, 1948), pp. 115-127.

## 8. Assemblage (*Feb 26, Cantor Center*)

Bruno Latour, "Drawing Things Together," in Michael Lynch and Steve Woolgar (eds.) *Representation in Scientific Practice* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press), pp. 19-68.

Peter Parshall, "Art and the Theater of Knowledge: The Origins of Print Collecting in Northern Europe," in *Harvard University Art Museums*, vol. 2, no. 3 (1994), pp. 7-36.

Roger de Piles, "On the Usefulness and use of Prints," in *The Art of Painting, with the Lives and Characters of above 300 of the Most Eminent Painters... Translated from the French...* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed., London: T. Payne, 1754), pp. 49-60.

Marcia Pointon, "Illustrious Heads," in *Hanging the Head: Portraiture and Social Formation in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1993), pp. 53-78.

Aby Warburg, Selections from the 'Bilderatlas Mnemosyne,' in Dorothee Bauerle, *Gespensstergeschichten für ganz Erwachsene: ein kommentar zu Aby Warburgs Bilderatlas Mnemosyne* (Münster: Lit, 1988), p. 157ff.

### **9. Regulation** (*March 4, Cantor Center*)

Joseph Leo Koerner, "The Law of Authorship," in *The Moment of Self-Portraiture in German Renaissance Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), pp. 203-223.

Lisa Pon, "Prints and Privileges: Regulating the Image in 16th-Century Italy," *Harvard University Art Museum Bulletin* 6:2 (Fall 1998), pp. 40-60.

Mark Rose, "The Question of Literary Property," "The Regime of Regulation" and "Making Copyright" in *Authors and Owners: The Invention of Copyright* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1993), pp. 1-48.

### **10. Material Words** (*March 11, Green Library, Spec. Coll.*)

Random Cloud, "Fiat flux," in *Crisis in Editing: Texts of the English Renaissance*, ed. Randall McLeod (New York: AMS, 1994), pp. 61-172.

D. C. Greetham, "Reading the Text: Typography," in *Textual Scholarship: An Introduction* (New York: Garland, 1994), pp. 225-270.

D.F. McKenzie, "Typography and Meaning: The Case of William Congreve," in *Printers of the Mind*, pp. 198-236.

## Assignments

### First Short Assignment, due Jan 26

Choose three diverse printed artifacts that you can use as the basis for future assignments. These must be selected in consultation with the instructor and the curators in the respective collections. Two will be prints in the Cantor Center, in two different media dating from two different centuries. The third will be a book or other printed artifact, combining both text and image, in the Green Special Collections. The curators are:

Betsy G. Fryberger  
Curator, Prints and Drawings  
Cantor Arts Center  
betsygf@stanford.edu  
Work Phone: (650) 725-0463

John E. Mustain  
Rare Book Librarian  
Green Library, Dept. of Special Collections  
jmustain@stanford.edu  
Work Phone: (650) 725-6964

### Cataloging Assignment, due Feb 9

Write up the basic “tombstone data” for your two prints, as it would appear in a catalogue.

Unless noted, the format for these entries is based on the entries in Marjorie B. Cohn (ed.), *A Noble Collection: The Spencer Collection of Old Master Prints* (Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University Art Museums, 1992), which will be on reserve in the Art Library.

Please include the following information, in successive lines:

- **Medium**, including paper color and texture [Note: Cohn 1992 does not describe the paper; if possible, do this using the standardized vocabulary in the *Print Council of America paper sample book* (Lunning and Perkinson 1996).]
- **Condition** (remark on the quality of impression; note also areas which look faded, discolored, foxed, rubbed, restored, lost or otherwise different than they seem to have looked originally. Be sure to remark if you think that any imperfections, such as scratches or spots, are attributable to the plate, the inking or the subsequent life of the sheet.
- **Size of sheet** in centimeters, height by width
- **Size** of plate mark (if applicable), in same format
- **Watermark** (if applicable), with reference to matches or resemblances to marks reproduced in Briquet, *Les filigranes* (Art Library Reserve, Z237.B75 1985 F).

- Description of any **inscriptions** in or on top of the print, noting the nature and location of every inscription (*using the shorthand descriptors "u. l." for upper left, "l. c." for lower center, etc.*), and transcribing it. Use italics for the inscription, and separate location descriptions with a semicolon.

**- References to any standard catalogues raisonné**

**- Credit line, including location**

*BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE:* For an exemplary introduction to many of the issues surrounding old prints, see Jan Piet Filedt Kok, "On the Authorship, Printing Quality and Production of the Prints of Lucas van Leyden," in *Lucas van Leyden*, compiled by Jan Piet Filedt Kok et al. This is part of the series "The New Hollstein Dutch & Flemish etchings, engravings and woodcuts, 1450-1700," in the Art Library reference (*not reserve*) section at NE670 .L7 A4 1996. For detailed descriptions of conservation issues, see Carlo James et al., *Old Master Prints and Drawings* (1997), in the Art Library Reserve for our class.

**Short Assignments (10% each, for a total of 30%)**

For three out of the remaining five weeks (you choose which three), write a short (650-1000 word) reflection on your three objects in light of the week's readings. Feel free to bring in references to other objects in Stanford collections, including prints on exhibition such as the ones in the Cantor portrait show. You can also bring in other readings when you need to, but please try not to bring in any more supplementary material than absolutely necessary; this is intended as an exercise in close reading and close looking. If you do bring in other readings or objects, please add the full references in the form of a supplementary bibliography or object list. Each assignment should be e-mailed to me as a Word document by the Sunday after the class with the readings in questions.

**Final Assignment (30%)**

For the final assignment you have the choice of a paper or an object exam. Please let me know your choice by Monday, February 23.

**Option A (Paper)**

The paper, which should ideally grow out of the class reading and your previous assignments, should be a formal research paper dealing with the particularities of print media. The topic should be decided in consultation with me.

**Option B (Object Exam)**

For the object exam (should you choose to go that route) you will be locked in a room with ten printed objects, a magnifying glass, and a copy of Gascoigne's *How to Identify Prints*. The individual prints will likely be matted, and inscriptions or other clues might be covered. After an hour of investigation time, you will spend an hour and a half presenting eight of these objects to the Print Interrogation

Committee, who will ask you about such matters as medium, condition and authenticity. The Committee will consist of me and whatever Chosen Experts I can rope into service (John, Betsy, &c). Students who go this route are strongly advised to do practice exams with each other.