

## The Printed Page: Victorian to Virtual

English 398 - 3 credit hours

Jane A. Carlin, Senior Librarian, Design, Art, Architecture, and Planning

Barbara Wenner, Associate Professor of English

University of Cincinnati Honors Program

Philip Way, Director

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**Course Description:** "The Printed Page: Victorian to Virtual" explores the interactions between text and image focusing on significant British literary works, text, illustration, and production. The course also examines book design and binding up to the present, observing the ways in which the Internet has made many texts—and their repositories—virtually available. As part of the course, students observe how designs are used today and why authors and designers might choose a particular format and design to express the creator's purpose. This class is limited to fifteen students. Instructors avoid the lecture (sage-on-the-stage) mode of presentation for the most part. Students participate actively in the class by presenting research on book design and bringing to class the problems which writers, illustrators, and book designers experience when producing a book. Instructors may provide mini-lectures, but students are expected to work on collaborative activities and share insights with classmates through group discussion and presentation. Several guest speakers and visits are scheduled.

Learning Objectives:

- To explore book design and production in the 19th and 20th centuries, with special emphasis on artistic and literary traditions of Great Britain.
- To acquire skills in use of archives and examination of original documents.
- To acquire awareness of major cultural institutions in Great Britain.
- To increase knowledge and ability to present information in creative ways.
- To learn essential research skills and utilization of technology.
- To introduce the basic elements of book design and construction.
- To gain knowledge of important Victorian fictional texts and to evaluate literature in a cultural context.

Texts:

This is a selected list of texts from which the instructors chose selections for students to study. These texts are supplemented by a variety of scholarly articles and review of relevant web sites, such as the British Library, the Victoria and Albert Museum, and the William Morris Society.

Altick, Richard.

*Victorian People and Ideas: A Companion for the Modern Reader of Victorian Literature.* New York: Norton, 1973.

Armstrong, Carol M. *Scenes in a Library: Reading the Photograph in the Book, 1843-1875.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998.

Bartram, Alan. *Making Books: Design in British Publishing since 1945.*

London: British Library; New Castle, DE: Oak Knoll Press, 1999.

Bettley, James, ed. *The Art of the Book: From Medieval Manuscript to Graphic Novel.*

London: V&A Publications, 2001.

Brake, Laurel. *Print in Transition, 1850-1910: Studies in Media and Book History*. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave, 2001.

Christ, Carol and John Jordan, eds. *Literature and the Victorian Imagination*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995.

Curtis, Gerard. *Visual Words: Art and the Material Book in Victorian England*. Aldershot, Hants, U.K.; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2002.

Darton, F. J. Harvey. *Children's Books in England: Five Centuries of Social Life*. London: British Library; New Castle: Oak Knoll Press, 1999.

Davis, Philip. *The Oxford English Literary History, Vol. 8: Victorians 1830-1880*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.

Maxwell, Richard, ed. *The Victorian Illustrated Book*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2002.

Meggs, Philip B. *A History of Graphic Design*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1998.

Palmer, Rodney, and Thomas Frangenberg, eds. *The Rise of the Image: Essays on the History of the Illustrated Art Book*. Aldershot, Hants, U.K.; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2003.

## Syllabus

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Date	Topic
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Week 1	An introduction to the course, formation of student learning groups and introductory group exercise, introduction to the history of the book and Victorian literature, Discussion of literary and visual arts research.
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Week 2	An evening at the Archives: Utilizing the "history of book" teaching collection of the University's Archives and Rare Books Department; you will be introduced to a brief history of book design, and a hands on viewing and discussion of various types of books and documents (including Illumination and the Decorated Page). Student groups will meet to select research topics.
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Week 3	An evening at the Cincinnati Public Library. We will be meeting with Sylvia Metzinger, Rare Book Librarian, who will focus on the William Morris collection as well British illustrators of the 19th century.
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Week 4	Introduction to the literature and the art of Christina and Gabriel Rossetti and Thackeray, Dickens and their illustrators. Discussion of color printing and design, which prompted the production of, illustrated book in the latter part of the 19th century. Works such as Owen Jones's <i>The Grammar of Ornament</i> and the many publications of William Morris and Kelmscott Press will be discussed as well as Aubrey Beardsley's <i>Yellow Book</i> and his illustrations of the literature of Wilde and Pope.
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Week 5 Visit to local press: Patsfall Press and continued discussion on printing history and formats, particularly Leonard and Virginia Woolf's Horgarth Press, noting the emphasis on the physical form of the book, its cover, and book jacket, as well as the binding and typesetting.

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Week 6 Group Presentations: guest critics will be invited  
Individual project descriptions are due.

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Week 7 DAAP professors Jane Alden Stevens and Kimberly Burleigh visit and discuss their own contemporary book art. Orientation to study trip and introduction to Britian.

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Week 8 Take home examinations – must be completed and submitted by March 2nd

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The March 18 (Friday) leave Cincinnati  
Tour March 19 (Saturday) arrive in London, V&A exhibit – International Arts & Crafts , welcome dinner and orientation to London  
March 20 (Sunday) tour of London, Tate Museums  
March 21 (Monday) National Art Library – V&A, St. Bride's Printing Library  
March 22 (Tuesday) Kelmscott House. Evening at the theater  
March 23 (Wednesday) visit to Oxford and Woodstock  
March 24 (Thursday) British Library and farewell dinner  
March 25 (Friday) travel back to Cincinnati

The class will meet April 17th (Sunday) to present their books at DAAP Library. These books will be on exhibit for a three-week period.

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### Grading Policies:

Students are evaluated by successful completion of the following:

**A group project utilizing problem-based learning, which involves an analysis of printed materials for presentation in class (40%):** This project provides students with the opportunity to fully explore a subject related to course content. As a group, students identify a topic that they thoroughly examine throughout the quarter from a list of research topics that has been compiled and available on the Assignments section of our class Blackboard site. They may use these topics or develop one of their own. Each topic needs instructors' approval.

As a group, students investigate the topic, and the end result is a 20-minute presentation to the class. As they research a topic, it is important to keep in mind that they must approach the topic from many different perspectives. The goal is to provide information not only on, for example, the author and content of a book but the cultural context in which the book was produced, the readership of the book, the impact of the content on society, and other social, cultural, artistic and economic factors.

**An individual project resulting in the construction of a book (40%):** General Description: For the final project, students are expected to create a "book" that will draw inspiration from the many examples we have seen in class as

well as reflect aspects of the trip to England. They must select an "inspiration" publication/topic for the basis of the book, for example, the publications of William Morris, the unique illustrations of Aubrey Beardsley, or the development of typography and fonts. Students are required to submit a written reflection about the book that includes the following information:

- How they utilized the concepts and themes discussed in class.
- How they integrated their experiences in England into creating the book.
- How they used specific images, text, and materials to convey their ideas.
- How they presented their project as thoughtful, well-organized, well-documented, pleasing for an audience.

**A take-home examination where students apply their newfound knowledge of textual interpretation and visual concepts to a new book. (20%)**

Contact person: Barbara Wenner, [WENNERB@ucmail.uc.edu](mailto:WENNERB@ucmail.uc.edu)