

Introduction to Writing, Editing, and Publishing

ENGL 234
Spring 2017
MWF 900-950
Merrifield 312

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Course Description:

What is a book? The short answer is that a book is many things. The long answer will be the focus of this course. Over the semester, students will consider the book in at least four different ways: A) the book as physical object; B) the book as information technology; C) the book as consumer product; and D) the book as work of collective genius.

Students will explore practical and theoretical approaches to the history and future of the publishing industry. Projects will include hands-on bookbinding, digital book design and typesetting using professional quality publishing software, copyediting a manuscript from the Digital Press @ The University of North Dakota, and a data driven analysis of independent literary and scholarly publishing practices. Recent articles in *The New Republic*, *The Atlantic*, and *NPR* all boast that the contemporary publishing industry is “thriving.” Students in this class will get to see why. What’s more, they will learn the necessary skills to take part in the process.

Texts:

Required Books (available in campus bookstore and online)

Houston, Keith. *The Book: A Cover-to-Cover Exploration of the Most Powerful Object of Our Time* (2016)

Miller, Wayne et al. (eds). *Literary Publishing in the Twenty-First Century* (2016).

Marked in the syllabus as (LP21)

Saller, Carol Fisher. *The Subversive Copy-Editor* (2016). Available under my 334 class at the bookstore. Marked as *SCE* in the syllabus.

Many selections available on the course's Blackboard site. Marked in the syllabus as BB.

Course Objectives

- Familiarize students with the history of the book and technologies of print.
- Develop students' understanding of the contemporary publishing industry, big and small.
- Promote student literacy with Adobe InDesign, the industry-standard book design and typesetting software.
- Encourage students to tinker with do-it-yourself and do-it-together strategies for creating, editing, and distributing print by working on a real project with the Digital Press @ the University of North Dakota.
- Foster proficiency in using a collaborative work environment in order to meet the evolving needs of graduate education and the workplace.
- Invite students to investigate the "cult of authorship" in literary culture by exploring the various behind-the-scenes work that bring print to its audience.

Major Assignments

- I. Exam on Book History (20%)**
A test asking students to explain important developments in the history of the book as a format and the history of print technology.
- II. Copyediting a Book (20%)**
Students will help copyedit and proofread *Codex*, a volume being published by the Digital Press @ the University of North Dakota.

III. Questions to an Editor (10%)

In conjunction with Jeff Shotts' visit for the UND Writers Conference, students will each develop five interview questions based off concepts discussed by class readings.

IV. Profile of a Press (25%)

A group research project where students will learn about the publishing industry by taking an in-depth look at the mission statement, booklist, web presence, and marketing strategies of a specific press.

Group Presentation (5%)

Additional Grade Elements

V. Short Assignments (10%)

VI. Class Participation (10%)

Attendance

I expect all students to be prepared for class everyday; being prepared means paying close attention to scheduled assignments, doing the homework, and bringing relevant materials with you to class. Much of the reading for the class will be distributed on Blackboard. ***If you do not bring the text we are reading to class, you will be considered absent for the day.***

You are allowed **five** absences without penalty— following your fourth absence, your grade in the class will begin to drop by **a half-a-letter grade** per absence. Plan ahead if you think you might miss class for religious holidays or for other scheduled events. Just because you inform me of an absence beforehand does not mean that it does not count towards your total. ***I do not distinguish between excused and unexcused absences – you are allowed five absences – be they excused or unexcused – before your grade begins to decrease, unless other special arrangements have been made with me ahead of time.*** For every two days you are late to class, you will be marked for one absence. If you are more than 15 minutes late to class, you will be marked absent for that day. If you miss a class meeting, you are responsible to contact your peers or **come to my office hours** for materials and information you've missed. Finally, you are responsible for keeping track of your own absences. A sign-in sheet will be used daily and absences will be thus recorded. Please be conscientious of your class participation – make sure you get the sign-in sheet, and please don't expect me to keep a running tally of your absences!

Scholastic Dishonesty

At UND, we trust in the excellence of our students and in the integrity of our academic programs. We also trust that your good ideas become better when you test them against the ideas of others. So for this course, feel free to discuss your ideas about the major writing assignments with other students. Collaborating on question/answer homework assignments or open-book quizzes, however, is not acceptable; these types of assignments are designed for me, your instructor, to monitor how you are handling specific parts of the course materials. Blatantly taking someone else's words, ideas or concepts, and using them without citing your source is plagiarism. So is using another student's essay, or part of his or her essay, as your own. In the world of writing (academic writing especially), this is a serious crime, and is treated as such. Anyone who uses non-documented material from another source, including online sources, will receive a **failing grade** for the entire course and will be referred to the Dean's office for possible further disciplinary action.

Plagiarism, or any other form of scholastic dishonesty, is a serious offense and will be subject to official university policy and punitive action as found in the "Code of Student Life" available at <http://sos.und.edu/csl/index.php?main=1&pg=s3&subpg=3-3>.

If you have any questions, always feel free to ask me. It's been my experience that those writers who plagiarize are those who feel overwhelmed by the assignment and out of desperation, use someone else's work to stand in for their own. If you get so frustrated with an assignment that you feel like your only option is to plagiarize, come see me. My role as a teacher is to help students, not to punish them—*please* use me as a resource to help you write, brainstorm and work out the ideas for your essays.

Deadlines

All written assignments must be submitted on the due date, and missing the class when the assignment is due doesn't mean your assignment isn't late. Turning in an assignment on time is part of doing the assignment, and late work will be graded down, regardless of how well it's executed.

Lateness penalties are as follows:

- Final drafts. For every day that a final draft is late, you will lose **five** points on the final grade.
- Short assignments. All late assignments may receive a maximum of **half-credit**, regardless of how late they are.

Using Recording Equipment in Class

If you need to tape or record classroom activities, you may do so for *personal* use or for all students presently enrolled in the class. However, you may not further copy, distribute, publish or otherwise use for any other purpose without my express written consent.

Technologies

For this class, we will have access to a cluster of new laptops owned by the English department. It should go without saying that these laptops are to be used for class-related work only. You will

receive one warning about misuse. After that, you will be marked absent for the day. The same goes for personal computers, tablets, smartphones and any other technology.

Learning Disability

If you have a learning disability that could impair your progress in this course, please contact Disability Services on campus (<https://und.edu/disability-services/>) We can arrange to accommodate your learning style based on DSS recommendations. Please notify me at the semester's beginning of your learning needs--do not wait until the semester becomes overwhelming to acknowledge the problem.

General Guidelines For Submitting Assignments

- Please submit all assignments via submission links on Blackboard, unless otherwise noted in the syllabus.
- All papers, including daily assignments, must be typed, numbered, double-spaced, with 1” margins. (Note: The default spacing in MS Word is 1.25”)
- Carefully edit and proofread all texts to eliminate problems in grammar, spelling, and punctuation.
- Any time you cite an essay, film, or book in your main essays, you will need to include a Works Cited section of your essay that provides complete and accurate bibliographic information of the material mentioned in your essay. If you're not sure how to cite sources, ask!

Documents that do not meet these and other assignment-specific requirements will not be graded. They will be returned to you and when resubmitted will be treated as late submissions. Pay attention to these details for handing in your final drafts. Superficial errors do not necessarily signify poor thinking, but they do indicate a lack of precision and nonchalance toward the task. When you write papers for your courses within your major, your professors will expect high quality, readable prose. Use this class as a stepping stone toward that end. You'll have to plan your writing process to make time for proofreading—printing a just-written paper 10 minutes before class time will probably not yield terrific results.

On-Campus Writing Resources

I encourage all students to take advantage of the Writing Center in the basement of Merrifield Hall. All students are eligible for one-on-one tutoring, but you must make an appointment. Remember, though, that tutors are not editors. It is not their job to “correct” your work or simply edit it while you go on Facebook. Think of the writing tutors as supplementary instructors for the class. They can address some issues (from the lowest-level to the highest) in much greater detail than I can since are not responsible for teaching you academic argumentation. For those of you who feel anxious about the requirements of this class, I recommend that you establish a relationship with a tutor early in the semester and rely on their expertise regularly.

Writing Center, web address: <http://und.edu/academics/writing-center/>

ESL Resource Center, Merrifield Hall, Room 112. The ESL Resource Center arranges tutoring and/or conversation partners for multilingual speakers seeking more practice with

the English language. Contact Mary Monette for more information:
mary.monette@UND.edu or call 701-777-3624.

Student Success Center, Memorial Union, Second Floor. The Student Success Center offers advising, learning services, and specific program to help students meet their educational goals. Individualized assistance and assessments are available.
<http://und.edu/student-affairs/studentservices/>

Grading Policy and Scale

- A Exceptional. Assignment criteria met with creativity, rigor, and insight. Rich theoretical, historical, and creative analysis of the objects grounded within the larger academic context. Ideas articulated with convincing detail and display careful planning. Research and writing is lucid. Errors in style in grammar are rare and never prevent easy comprehension.
- B Good work. Displays sustained analysis, concentration and effort, although mainly recapitulated from class discussion and/or directly from class sources. Minor style problems never completely obscure the writer's meaning.
- C Acceptable, but uninspired. There may be a glaring conceptual or execution problems. Work mostly descriptive with little to no historical, critical, or theoretical analysis. Serious issues with validity and/or depth of research. (Note: this is the median grade in the university system)
- D Unsatisfactory work. Ideas never move beyond generalizations. No analysis of any kind. Lacking research and focus. Work displays little to no grasp of the goals of the assignment.
- F Fail. Student does not submit complete work and/or shows no attempt to meet the expectations of the assignment and course.

Expectations for Class Conduct and Reading

Much of the reading for this class will come from handouts distributed via Blackboard. You are required to closely read these articles. Furthermore, you are required to bring a version of each article to class. I *strongly* prefer that you bring a printed copy, but I understand that many of you prefer to read on media devices. I will allow you to bring copies on your devices, but with a caveat. If, at anytime in the semester, I get the feeling that people are not reading the articles or that they are using their devices for non-class related activities, I will revoke this privilege and require everyone bring printed copies of the articles to class.

Class Participation

Class time is yours; never forget that. We need to use our time together efficiently to give you all what you deserve. Making your voice heard during class discussion and brainstorming is the best way to ensure that we accomplish this together.

In terms of logistics, your in-class participation grade falls to my discretion and can nudge a borderline grade higher or lower. When you contribute to class discussion, be sure that your comments are helpful and constructive. You should be ready to participate in general class discussion at least once a week, and you should always be prepared to generate thoughtful input in small-group discussions and peer review work. Be sure to be supportive of your peers' ideas, even when you disagree with them.

If you have questions about the policies of this class, review the syllabus first, and then contact me.

I reserve the right to make any alterations, additions, or subtractions I see fit.



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Course Schedule

UNIT I: The Book as Physical Object

Week 1

Wednesday, January 11: Introductions and course preview.

Friday, January 13: Houston, xv-18 and first few pages.

Week 2

Monday, January 16: No class; MLK Jr. Day.

Tuesday, January 17: Homework: Reading Interface Description. See Blackboard for details due by 5PM.

Wednesday, January 18: Houston, 19-78.

Friday, January 20: Houston, 79-128.

Week 3

Monday, January 23: Houston, 128-154 and 283-310. (Very important. Don't skip this!)

What's a codex ? How you make one?

Wednesday, January 25: Work-day: Analog Typesetting and Digital Layout.

Set your own lines of type and upload them to InDesign.
Export, Fold, and Print.

Friday, January 27: Houston, 155-219.

Include an image into your Codex.

Week 4

Monday, January 30: Houston, 219-260.

Due: Your own, personal codex.

Wednesday, February 1: Houston, 261-282, 311-333.

**Friday, February 3: Review of *The Book* for book history exam.
Be sure to bring your book to class!**

Week 5

Monday, February 6: **In class Exam. Bring a writing utensil!**

UNIT II: The Book as Information Technology

Wednesday, February 8: Birkerts, "Reading the Tea Leaves" (*LP21*)

Friday, February 10: Thompson, "Introduction" (BB).

Week 6

Monday, February 13: Nash, "What is the Business of Literature?" (*LP21*)

Introduce *Codex* and DP@UND.

Wednesday, February 15: Saller, ix-24. (*SCE*)

Friday, February 17: Saller, 25- 49. (*SCE*)

Week 7

Monday, February 20: **No Class; President's Day.**

Wednesday, February 22: Saller, 101-136. (*SCE*)

Friday, February 24: Saller, 147-169. (*SCE*)

Week 8

Monday, February 27: Class work day.

Wednesday, March 1: Class work day.

Unit III: The Book as Consumer Good

Week 9

Monday, March 6: **Due: Final proofs of Codex Chapters.**

Smith, "The Overnight Success of Lookout Books." (*LP21*)

Wednesday, March 8: Anderson, *The Long Tail* (BB)

Friday, March 10: Stadler, "The Ends of the Book: Reading, Economies, and Publics."
(*LP21*)

March 13-17: No class; enjoy Spring Break!

Week 10

Monday, March 20: Slager, "Coming to Milkweed Editions." (*LP21*)

Wednesday, March 22: No class; UND Writers Conference.
Due: Shotts Interview Questions. Submit via Blackboard by 5PM.

Thursday, March 23: I'll be moderating the "Voices" Panel at 12 Noon in the Ballroom of the Memorial Union. Come see me, and maybe hear the answer to your question.

Jeff Shotts, editor of Graywolf Press. Presentation 2PM, Ballroom.

Please do your best to attend both events. You will receive extra-credit for doing so.

Friday, March 24: McNamara, "American Literature Needs Indie Presses." (BB)

Week 11

Monday, March 27: Friedman, "The Future Value of a Literary Publisher." (LP21)

Wednesday, March 29: Striphas, *The Late Age of Print*, Excerpt. (BB)

Friday, March 31: Woll, "Introduction" excerpt (BB).

Week 12

Unit IV: The Book as work of Collective Genius

Monday, April 3: Woll, "Define your Niche" (BB). **Pay particular attention to "Develop a Clear Vision: The Mission Statement," 29-33.**

Wednesday, April 5: Benjamin, "The Author as Producer." (BB).

Friday, April 7: Introduce Final Project: Profile of a Press.

Week 13

Monday, April 10: Start *Genius* (2016).

Wednesday, April 12: Finish *Genius* (2016)

Friday, April 14: No class.

Week 14

Monday, April 17: No class.

Wednesday, April 19. Woll, “Editors” (BB),

Due: 1 page response analyzing how *Genius* creates and complicates stereotypes of what it means to be an “author” or a “writer.”

Friday, April 21: Bates, “10 Lessons” (BB) and Thompson, “Appendix 1” (BB)

Week 15

Monday, April 24: **Rough Draft of Press Profile Due via Blackboard.**

Conferences in class.

Wednesday, April 26: Workday.

Friday, April 28: Group presentations 1.

Week 16

Monday, May 1: Group Presentations 2.

Wednesday, May 3: Course wrap-up. Course Evaluations.

Friday, May 12: **Final Press Profile Due.**

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Final Project: Press Profile

All semester I've argued that small presses as vital part of the larger publishing ecosystem. As we know, it takes many people to bring a book – any book – into being. We've tried our hands at doing much of this work: we've copy-edited, developmentally edited, copyset, and graphically designed both non-fiction and poetry. Now, in for final project of the semester, we are going to research the business operations and marketing strategies of a few small presses in order to gain a better grasp of how they do their work.

Process

This is a group project and each group will contain four members. You will divide the labor accordingly: one person will be responsible for researching the presses' list, sales, and mission statement; one person will be responsible for researching the presses' marketing strategy (including where their books are reviewed, their newsletters/promotional materials, and tracking down advertisements in publications); one person will be responsible for researching the size and expertise of their staff, the members of their board, partners, and financial information (if available); and one person will be responsible for researching their web, blog, and social media presence.

Once you've completed your separate research assignments, you will work together to produce **one collaborative** document that explains what the press does, how they do it, and, most importantly, make an argument for why you think they are successful at filling their niche.

Expectations

From each group I expect:

- one polished final document of 6-8 pages profiling the respective press.
- Detailed statistics about sales and the size/content of their list
- Clear interpretations of how the presses' mission statement compares to their marketing strategies
- A clear explanation of how they fund their work and the labor of their team
- Examples of effective marketing/social media promotions and rationale for why these may have succeeded.

- A collaboratively written introduction and conclusion that offers an *argument* why the press has been successful
- A short group presentation where the group walks the rest of the class through their findings and explains each person's contribution to project.

From each individual I expect:

- A 1-2 page explanation of their specific research process and what they learned about the publishing industry more broadly more completing this assignment.

Some Questions you should ask yourself, and possibly answer while writing this essay.

- What is this press known for?
- How do they define their niche?
- How did they become known for this?
- What is their best-selling book of all time?
- What is their staff like? How big is it? What kind of experience do they have?
- What presses are their most direct competitors?
- What is the history of the press? What big events shook up their operations?
- What words best define their marketing strategy?
- What venues often review their books?
- What kind of awards have they won? How do they let the reader know about it?
- Where do they market their books?
- What is the most distinctive aspect of their web presence?
- How often do they use social media? How do they use it?

Rough Draft due Monday, April 24 by 9a.m. via Blackboard.

Final Draft and individual reflection due Friday, May 12 by noon via Blackboard.

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Film Response: *Genius*

Writers are often the main characters of films, and they are perhaps the most frequent main characters of contemporary novels. Editors, however, are rarely, if ever, thrust into the narrative limelight. Indeed, in the film, Perkins claims that “editors should be invisible.” For better or worse, *Genius* goes against this advice.

Please submit a 1 page (250 word) response to the film. Do not just “review” the film, but please try to explain how its representation of the editorial process compares with what we’ve learned about it over the course of the semester. There are many things that could you interpret for us, but some of the questions that came to my head are:

- How does Perkins’ description of his work compare to the way Shotts (and others) describe theirs?
- Who is more stereotypical in their role, Max Perkins or Thomas Wolfe? How does their relationship complicate our understanding of the writing-editing-publishing process?
- How are women portrayed in this film? How does it fit with what we know about “The Lost Generation” of American fiction?
- Who is the “Genius” of this film? Why? Is there just one?
- Critics have called this film boring and in need of serious some script-editing. Would you agree?

Please submit your finished response via Blackboard by class time on Wednesday, April 19.