Introduction to Text Technologies

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Course Description
Why, how and with what effects do humans communicate? What difference does the chosen technology of communication make to the ways in which the receiver understands the message being conveyed? This course provides an introduction to the complex interactions between textual cultures and the interdependent technological systems that have influenced the way we manufacture, transmit, adapt, consume and interpret representations of human experience. During the course, we shall look at the meaning of modern ‘texts’ and ‘technologies’ from the nineteenth-century industrial revolution to the present day. We shall ascertain the modes in which language takes physical form from print to photography, the development of sound recording mechanisms, film, radio, television, and the digital environment.

Course Outcomes
By the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Identify and describe the characteristics of the major technologies of communication in use in the modern world.
2. Discuss the relationships between the technologies, and their major transformative modes.
3. Evaluate the impact of technologies on audiences, utilizing contemporary theories, such as reader-reception and media studies in that evaluation.
4. Work effectively in small collaborative groups to research the methods of production of text technologies and the mechanics of their materiality and functionality.

Ways of Thinking/Ways of Doing
This course will meet the Social Inquiry and Aesthetic and Interpretative Ways of Thinking/Ways of Doing.

Assessment
1. Ten online reading responses in a variety of distinctive media, demanding an acquisition of the different skills required for each. These will include using Wikis, blogs, Twitter, Instagram, and CourseWork Forum. 20%

2. A short paper of 1000 words analyzing the methods and effects of textual transformation from one technology into another. 20%

3. A ten-minute exhibition pitch (with #5). 20%

4. Engaged and well-prepared participation in class. 10%

5. A final project: the Librarium of Text Technologies (ten items, curated and displayed in a cogently themed and described exhibition). 30%

**Suggested Reading**
Katherine Hayles, *How We Think: Digital Media and Contemporary Technogenesis* (Chicago, 2012)

**Schedule**

1. i) The Study of Text Technologies I: What is it?
   ii) The study of Text Technologies II: Where are they?

2. i) What came before the Machine I? Paintings to Print
   ii) What came before the Machine II? Hand to Mechanisation

3. i) The World in Black and White
   ii) Bit Part Publishing

4. i) Democratising Literacy
   ii) All the World’s Knowledge

5. i) Capturing Image
   ii) Capturing Sound

6. i) Text is all around us: Stanford as Text Technology
   ii) Making History: radio text as propaganda

7. i) The rise of Mass Media I
   ii) Mass Media II

8. i) Music from Four-Track to Spotify
   ii) Celebrity as Text
9.  i) Social Media  
    ii) The Digital World  
10. i) and ii) Pitching the Librarium Exhibitions