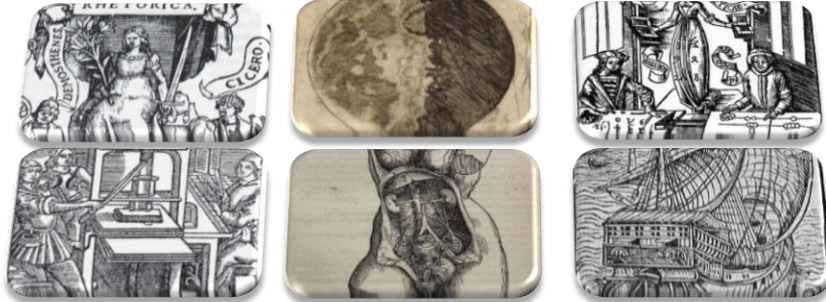


## HIS 331 Seminar: Making Knowledge in Early Modern Europe

W, 1-3:50pm and individual meetings; ARH 229 and Special Collections, Burling Library

Dr. Aysha Pollnitz

(Mears 210, [Pollnitz@grinnell.edu](mailto:Pollnitz@grinnell.edu), (641) 269-9521, Office hours T 4:15-6:15pm and by appointment)



A media revolution has transformed the lives of men, women, and children. We work in knowledge economies, we do business in a global environment, we study to succeed in an information age, and we socialize in virtual networks. We discuss the conveniences and burdens, profundities and banalities, marvels and dangers, prophylactics and temptations of vast amounts of easily accessible data. We could be talking about the United States in 2016, but we could also be talking about early modern Europe, a period in which political, religious, economic, and cultural life was transformed by a media revolution—the technology of the printing press.

This course offers students an opportunity to conduct independent research on aspects of the knowledge explosion which took place in Europe between 1450 and 1700. Its powder keg was stocked with newly recovered ancient texts, with stories derived from Europeans' early encounters with the New World, with increasing contact with Africa and Asia, and with the results of the observation and experimental interrogations of nature.

We will study the concomitant media revolution—the printing industry—which many historians argue ignited and sustained this blast of new knowledge in Europe. The new technology of the printing press enabled textual, numerical, and visual information to be standardized, fixed, and disseminated swiftly and cheaply. We will explore its impact on the liberal and creative arts, on natural philosophy, theology and religious practices, and on personal conduct and manners. We will investigate early modern techniques for collecting and organizing the ever-expanding body of old and new information in museums, libraries, archives, databases, state systems,

universities, and learned societies. Ultimately, we will ask whether early modern practices of communication and information transmission actually redefined the meaning of knowledge for the modern world.

Students with reading skills in ancient Greek, Latin and/or any vernacular European languages will have the opportunity to use their expertise in their research projects. Nevertheless, the course is also well suited for students who wish to work exclusively in English.

### **Seminar learning objectives:**

By the end of the semester, you should be able to:

- Identify a research question in a specific field (in this case, the making of knowledge in early modern Europe);
- Examine early modern printed books and/or images and/or manuscripts;
- Use a variety of electronic databases for research purposes;
- Identify and examine relevant primary sources which will help you to answer your question;
- Identify and evaluate secondary sources which are relevant to your question;
- Create a historical argument in response to your question;
- Analyze evidence, derived largely from primary sources, to support your argument;
- Examine your argument's relationship to other historians' writings on this topic or related topics;
- Create a seminar paper of substantial length (c.25 pages) in clear and grammatically correct English that sets out your argument and the supporting evidence for it persuasively;
- Revise and improve your seminar paper in response to feedback from peers and the instructor;
- Evaluate your peers' historical writing and provide them with constructive feedback;
- Apply appropriate forms of historical citation thoroughly and consistently in your written work.

### **Course Texts:**

Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb and Joseph M. Williams, *The Craft of Research*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008) hereafter Booth.

Other course materials will be available on P-Web. In addition to reading the listed sources in preparation for our meetings you should bring the sources with you to class.

### ***De Officiis, On Duties***

Assessment for this course is designed to help you fulfill the seminar objectives.

1. Attendance and participation (10%)

Attendance is compulsory. I will take a class roll at the beginning of every plenary session. You may take one flexi-day from class without penalty or notice, provided you are not scheduled to make a presentation or take a research challenge, and reschedule up to two individual meetings. I may ask you to provide supporting documentation if illness or misadventure cause additional absences. If you have scheduled sporting, religious, cultural, military, or familial obligations that are likely to intrude on class time you must come and see me to discuss these commitments during the first week of semester. Three or more unexplained absences in total (whether they be from class or individual meetings) will result in overall failure in the course.

After mid-semester break all scheduled meeting will be individual or in small groups. These meetings will take place in our usual class spot so you are expected to be available. If illness or misadventure intrudes on a small group meeting, you should contact me *and* the other student(s) affected.

You are expected to participate actively and thoughtfully in class discussions and activities. Not only will this help you to digest course content and develop analytical and speaking skills but it will make the course more enjoyable for everybody. To participate actively you will need to prepare for each class by reading the set pieces carefully. Annotating your readings or making notes as you go will help you to concentrate on the material, absorb it, and begin to think critically about it. You will probably find that you are reading more swiftly and effectively as the weeks go by. Embrace this development.

2. Debate on the impact of print culture (10%), in class on February 3

In your 2 person team prepare a case for or against the proposition “That print culture affected a knowledge revolution”. Be prepared to speak for 7-8 minutes. We will allocate teams on the first day of class. Please see the assignment sheet for further details.

3. Topic Proposals (draft 5% final version 5%), both due via email 24 hours before your individual meeting in the weeks February 29- March 4 (draft) and March 7- March 11 (draft). .

Compose a Topic Proposal of 3-4 pages, 12 pt TNR, 2 line spacing plus bibliography. Criteria for determining a topic include: personal interest; something with primary sources that you can access primarily from Grinnell and that you have the skills to examine; and that you will be able to analyze in a 25-page paper.

Your submitted proposal should mark the culmination, rather than the beginning, of a process of topic identification and exploration. In planning your proposal, review Booth, pp. 31-65. In your proposal you should:

- explain what your topic is (its subject matter, chronological parameters, national/regional/or inter-regional context);
- identify the historical question you will research;
- describe the significance of your investigation. Use pp. 64-5 of Booth to frame this section. Eg “I am studying ..., because I want to find out ..., in order to help readers understand ...”;
- proposed a one sentence preliminary or working hypothesis. This is what you will be *testing* in your research;
- identify a collection or a number of primary sources which you plan to use to answer your question;
- identify ten significant, peer-reviewed secondary sources you will be using in your research.

See the assignment sheet on P-Web for further information.

#### 4. Primary Source Assignment (10%)

This assignment is due on Wednesday, April 6 by 6pm via email or bring it in person to my house for dinner. It is a 3-4 page (12pt, TNR, 2 line spacing) analysis of some or one of your primary source(s). You will need to do secondary research to contextualize and support your analysis. This piece of writing will be something that you can cut and paste into your final paper but it also needs to stand alone for the purposes of this assignment. It should perform the following jobs:

1. Describe the context in which this source makes its intervention. This is likely to be historiographical—it should help to refute a traditional historical perspective, or lend weight to one side in a debate, or tell us something we didn’t know about an historical question. It might also be discursive or bibliographical.
2. Describe the sources. Who created them? When? What do they show/say? How were they produced/circulated?
3. Interpret the source. This typically means analyzing the speech act performed by the source(s). What did the creator intend them to *do*. Were they created to *oppose* something/someone? Who was the intended audience?
4. Show how the source supports your interpretation—perform a close reading of it.

In planning your analysis, think back to our class meetings and our discussion of the way that other intellectual, cultural, and social historians and/or historians of science have analyzed sources like the one you have selected. Can you apply one of these approaches to your source? See the assignment sheet on P-Web for further information.

5. Historiography, Approaches, and Methods Presentations (10%) in class on Wednesday April 13

Each seminar member will make a 10 minute presentation to their peers on the body of historical scholarship they plan to engage with in their seminar paper. Following the presentation, students should expect to answer questions about this scholarship and about their historical method from their peers and from me for three to five minutes. In planning your presentation, review Booth, pp. 84-100.

In your presentation, you should briefly describe your topic and question and describe the historiographical conversation you will be intervening in. You might identify a relevant debate in existing literature that you plan to take a stand on. You might suggest a way in which you plan to replace, correct, refine, or extend the current frame of research. Alternatively you could describe the way in which your work will fill a gap left by earlier studies. Finally, you should also describe a research *method* that is shaping your approach to your historical questions and/or primary sources. See the assignment sheet on P-Web for further information.

5. Partial draft review; Feedback (10% + 5%) due via email on Sunday April 24 by 9pm

Email a partial draft of your seminar paper (8 pages, 12pt TNR, 2 line spacing) to both me and your designated writing partner. In preparing your partial draft, consult Booth, pp. 186-210, 232-243.

Your partial draft should contain:

- an introduction, with your main argument or thesis **in bold**
- at least five pages of argument and source analysis, with the topic sentence of each paragraph underlined
- Consistently formatted footnotes (see *Course Style Guide* for details)
- An outline of the remaining portions of the paper.

On Wednesday, April 27 the three of us will meet to discuss your work. Between Sunday April 24 and our Wednesday meeting you should read your partner's partial draft and provide written feedback on a hard copy of it or electronically, as long as you save it and bring hard copies to the meeting. Failure to bring two hard copies with you will result in the reduction of your Feedback grade. Otherwise, your feedback will be graded using the following rubric:

- Did the feedback make accurate corrections with respect to spelling and grammar?
- On a separate page, did the feedback describe the argument of the essay?
- On a separate page, did the feedback offer at least one positive comment?
- On a separate page, did the feedback offer at least one critical comment?

- On a separate page, did the feedback offer a helpful suggestion for implementation in the next draft?

In your comments focus on: clarity of argument; persuasive use of reason and evidence in support of this argument; logic in the organization of the paper; critical consideration of existing scholarship; rigorous analysis of primary sources. For advice on a strategy for providing feedback on the clarity and flow of your partner's writing, consult Booth, pp. 268-69. Bring two copies of the feedback to our meeting.

In our meeting, you will receive feedback from both your designated partner and from me. Following the meeting, I will also grade the quality of the written and verbal feedback you offered your partner.

6. Full Draft (15%) due Monday, May 9 by 10am.

On Monday, May 9 by 4pm you should submit a full draft (c. 25 pages, 12pt, TNR, 2 line spacing) of your paper in hard copy. In preparing your draft, read Booth, pp. 244-47. Your full draft must include:

- An introduction with the argument or thesis **in bold**;
- Section divisions (which should reflect your sub-arguments or reasons) marked by a Roman numeral and title;
- Paragraphs with topic sentences underlined;
- An early paragraph or two close to the beginning which situates your argument in relation to the existing historiography;
- Claims supported by evidence derived from the analysis of primary sources;
- Footnotes and a list of works cited formatted consistently (see the *Course Style Guide* for details)
- A conclusion.

I will provide you with verbal and written feedback in your meetings with me on Wednesday. Use this feedback and your own judgment of what you need to do to improve your paper in preparing your final essay. See the assignment sheet on P-Web for further details.

7. Final Research Assignment (20%) due May 18 by 4pm

You should submit a research paper of ca. 25 pages (12pt TNR font, 2 line spacing) including footnotes and followed by a list of works cited. You should remember to back-up your essay every couple of hours when you are working on it. You may submit early. If you are planning to leave campus on or before the due date, you should plan to submit your essay in hard copy before you go. Deputized friends *rarely manage to submit the work of others to the correct office before the deadline*. Late papers will be penalized one full grade per day.

Your assignment will be graded using the following rubric:

| Adherence to Course Style Guide and Instructions | Persuasiveness of argument | Logic of organization | Clarity & precision of expression (includes spelling and grammar) | Originality of intervention | Analysis of primary sources | Critical discussion of secondary sources |
|--|----------------------------|-----------------------|---|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|--|
|  |                            |                       |   |                             |                             |  |

### Extensions:

Each student may have *one* 24 hour extension on an individual writing assignment this semester **other than the Partial draft and Review**. Send me an email requesting the extension and I shall grant it automatically and without regard to cause. This 24 hour period may not be broken into shorter extensions on multiple assignments. Otherwise, any request for an extension must be accompanied by **documented evidence of significant hardship or illness**. One transferable skill you will be practicing is to work with others to meet hard deadlines. Generally, late assignments, submitted without an extension, will be penalized one-third of a grade per day. The **Partial Draft** will be penalized one full grade for every day it is late. The **Final Seminar Paper** will be penalized one full grade for every day it is late.

### Plagiarism

Unless it is explicitly stated in the assignment sheet, all written work and verbal presentations for this course must be entirely your own work. Please feel free to discuss the class and your reading and research with others—in fact *do discuss these things with others* since talking about the material will improve your understanding of it—but you should compose your assignments independently.

I take plagiarism very seriously. It is an act of intellectual dishonesty which shows a lack of respect for your peers, other historians and this College. You should read Grinnell’s formal definition of plagiarism before submitting any written work for this course. In addition I have included a document on Plagiarism in the “Assignments” section of our course website which identifies four types of plagiarism and defines the term “common knowledge” for HIS 331.

### Students with disabilities

Any student with a disability who seeks academic adjustments or accommodations should contact Autumn Wilke, Coordinator of Disability Resources. [wilkeaut@grinnell.edu](mailto:wilkeaut@grinnell.edu), x. 3124, 311-C JRC. Students should also contact me during the first two weeks of class to request adjustments and/or accommodations. All discussions will remain as confidential as possible.

## INTRODUCTION

### **Week 1: Researching the History of Knowledge: An Introduction**

January 27: Meet in ARH 229

In addition to introducing the course, its subject matter and objectives we will

- a) Practice deciphering early modern print and fonts;
- b) Arrange times for individual meetings, so please bring your schedule planner.

We will not have individual meetings in week 1 or 2 to give you and your team time to prepare your side in the debate. If you wish, I can meet your team on Sunday or Monday afternoon to help you workshop your case.

### **Week 2: Debate (10%): That print culture affected a knowledge revolution.**

February 3: Meet in ARH 229

I will provide a brief introduction to the development of print with moveable type in the fifteenth century, then we will stage our debate.

Both sides should read:

Elizabeth L. Eisenstein, "An Unacknowledged Revolution Revisited", *American Historical Review*, 107: 1 (2002): 87-105. P-Web.

Adrian Johns, "How to Acknowledge a Revolution", *American Historical Review*, 107: 1 (2002): 106-125. P-Web.

The Negative should also read:

Adrian Johns, *The Nature of the book* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), pp. 1-40, <http://quod.lib.umich.edu.grinnell.idm.oclc.org/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=acls;idno=heb01007>

The Affirmative should also read:

Elizabeth Eisenstein, *The Printing revolution in early modern Europe*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 3, 8-9, 13-17 (incl maps), 26-28, 30-32 (images)38-49, 56-61, 66-69 (images), 70-71, 104-109, 139-142, 152-53, 162-73,218-220, 234-54. P-Web.

### **Week 3: Introduction to Special Collections**

Individual Meetings in Mears 210: Bring your ideas about a general area or topic that interests you and on which you would like to write your seminar paper. Bring one piece of scholarship (article, book, book chapter) that has shaped your interest and be prepared to summarize it for me. Based on your interests, I will set you another reading assignment for our next meeting.

February 10: Meet in Special Collections:

Read: Lotte Hellinga, "The Gutenberg Revolutions" and David J. Shaw, "The Book Trade Comes of Age", in *A Companion to the History of the Book*, eds Simon Eliot and Jonathan Rose (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), pp. 207-32

Robert Darnton, "What is the history of books?", from *The Book history reader*, eds David Kinkelstein and Alistair McCleery, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (London: Routledge, 2006), pp. 9-12, 17-26. P-Web.

### **Week 4: Methods and approaches for studying "Making Knowledge"**

Individual Meetings in Mears 210: Bring the piece of scholarship that I have recommended for you. Be prepared to summarize it for me and explain the scholarly intervention that the author



was trying to make in a historiographical debate. It may be helpful to bring your notes on these topics to our meeting. Based on your evolving interests, we will identify a primary source (or collection of sources) for our next meeting.

February 17: Meet in Special Collections

Read:

Peter Burke, "The Circulation of knowledge", in *The Renaissance world*, ed. John Jeffries Martin (New York: Routledge, 2007), pp. 191-207. P-Web.

Richard Yeo, "Encyclopaedic knowledge", in *Books and the Sciences in History*, eds Marina Frasca-Spada and Nick Jardine (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 207-224.

John N. King, "Reading the woodcuts in John Foxe's Book of Martyrs", *Tudor books and readers: Materiality and the construction of meaning* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 191-210.

### **Week 5: Primary Sources**

Individual Meetings in Mears 210: Bring the primary source we have chosen and be prepared to tell me about the author/creator/translator, the subject matter and contents, the materiality of the source, and its circulation. In addition to reading and studying your source, you will almost certainly need to do some additional research to contextualize it in the manner I've described. It would be sensible to bring your research notes to our meeting. In addition we will discuss your topic proposal

February 24: Meet in ARH 229

Workshop on locating primary sources using electronic databases, catalogs, websites. It will be followed by a research challenge. Please bring your laptop or tablet.

### **Week 6: Making Natural Philosophy**

Individual Meetings in Mears 210: **Draft Topic Proposal (5%) is due.** Submit via email 24 hours before the meeting.

March 2: Meet in Special Collections

Read:

Ann Blair, "Annotating and indexing natural philosophy" and

Sachiko Kusukawa, "Illustrating nature", in *Books and the sciences in history*, eds Marina Frasca-Spada and Nick Jardine (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 69-90 and 91-111. P-Web

### **Week 7: Making Cross-Cultural Knowledge**

Individual Meetings in Mears 210: **Topic Proposal (5%) is due.** Submit via email 24 hours before the meeting. We will work together in our meeting to develop a research plan (focused on primary sources) for the next 3 weeks.

March 9: Meet in Special Collections

Read: Linda McJannet, "Purchas His Pruning: Refashioning the Ottomans in Seventeenth-Century Travel Narratives", *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 74: 2 (2011): 219-242.

### **Week 8: Old and New Knowledge in the New World**

Individual Meetings in Mears 210: Come to talk about your study of primary sources and contextualization of them using secondary sources.

March 16: Meet in Special Collections

Read: Anthony Grafton, "José de Acosta: Renaissance historiography and New World humanity", in *The Renaissance World* (New York: Routledge, 2007), pp. 166-188.

### **SPRING BREAK**

### **Week 9: Primary Source Analysis (10%)**

April 6: Meet at 1208 Third Ave, Grinnell at 6pm

In lieu of class, come for dinner at my house at 6pm. Let me know about food preferences, intolerances, and allergies. Either bring your primary source analyses or email them by 6pm.

### **Week 10: Historiography, Approaches, and Methods (10%)**

Book an Individual meeting in Mears 210 to put together a plan for your Approaches and Methods Presentation.

April 13: Meet in ARH 229

Historiography, Approaches, and Methods Presentations. The presentations will be followed by an Argument and Introduction workshop.

### **Week 12: Reading and Writing Week**

April 20: Meeting in Mears 210 in designated pairs. Email a preliminary version of your Partial Draft (containing a minimum of an introduction, 2-3 pages of writing, and an essay plan) to me and your writing partner 24 hours before our meeting. We will use our meeting to workshop your work.

### **Sunday, April 24, Partial Drafts (10%) due to me and your writing partner by 9pm.**

Email your draft to Professor Pollnitz and your partner by 5pm.

### **Week 13: Partial Draft Review (5%)**

April 27: Meet in Mears 210 with your writing partner at the designated 1 hour slot. Bring 2 hard copies of your feedback on your partner's Partial Draft.

### **Week 14: Writing Meetings**

May 4: Individual Meetings in Mears 210. Bring the progress you've made towards your Full Draft.

### **Monday, May 9: Full Draft (15%) due by 10am**

### **Week 15: Final Meetings**

May 11: Individual meetings to receive feedback on Full Drafts and make a plan for the completion of your Final Seminar Paper.

**Exam Period**

May 18: **Final seminar paper due by 4pm**