**HIST 489: 001 Seminar—Readings**

**Scandals, Censors, and other Controversies in the History of Communication**

**Fall 2014**

**Instructor: Dr. Lisa Nocks**

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**Catalog Description:** Intended to combine study of specific topics, which vary each year, with attention to the methods for researching and writing history, these small classes for history majors in their senior year prepare students for the following semester's research project and culminate in a brief paper describing a proposed topic and the historical documents and sources to be used. **Open to senior history majors**

**This course focuses on textual controversy in the history of communication. We** consider how book piracy, radical thought, book burning, censorship, theft, forgery, and pornography are related to the developing modes of information processing and distribution from the Middle Ages to the present. Readings related to intellectual property, law, public policy, popular literature, the entertainment industry, belief, science and medicine, gender, and literacy allow students with different research interests an opportunity to explore possibilities for their senior thesis.

Prerequisites: Completion of the GUR in English (6 credits), Cultural History (3 credits), Basic Social Sciences (6 credits) an upper level History course (3 credits) and senior standing. From the syllabus:

**Course Overview:** Communication technologies have been at the center of conflicts over who might access, produce, and distribute information since antiquity. We examine a number of controversial texts that relate to how information exchange and intellectual freedom play out between the Middle Ages and the present. We cover printing, control over mail, journalism, the broadcast media, and the internet. We will discuss different aspects of social behavior and their relation to communication technology, such as religion, science, politics, and medicine. We will cover such concepts as monopolies of knowledge, media’s role in the public perception of specialized knowledge and the role of belief systems in communication controversies. Both the books and supplemental readings are meant to inspire and support your term project, and to encourage comparative and contextual thinking about human ambivalence toward our communication tools.

**Course Objectives:** As a result of engaging in discussion of the course texts and tools to support research methods, students should

-- develop coherent and articulate analysis and arguments about the nature of human communication.

-- write relevant reviews of the existing literature

-- develop an original and relevant research paper on the history of a controversy.

-- clearly articulate ideas regardless of methodological approach.

-- improve personal research, writing, and editing skills.

-- demonstrate an organized approach to making and argument and supporting a thesis.

-- demonstrate correct use of Chicago Manual of Style footnotes and bibliography.

**Course Requirements:** (Two semester sequence with HIST 490)

1. Regular attendance and participation in discussions of the readings.

2. One class presentation in which you lead a discussion of a selected course text. (Fall semester)

3. A written project proposal that outlines your focus, thesis, review of relevant literature, and methodology. (Fall semester)

4. Two short response papers (3-5 pp.) on selected supplemental material. (Fall semester)

5. An article-length essay on a specific controversy related to communication including thesis, historical background, and analysis of the controversy.

6. An annotated bibliography. (Use Chicago Manual of Style/Turabian .)

These texts are on order at the NJIT Bookstore in the Campus Center.\*

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| **Author** | **Title** | **Publisher** | **ISBN** | **Edition** |
| **Required** |  |  |  |  |
| **Wayne C. Booth** | **The Craft of Research** | **U Chicago P** | **978-0226065663** | **3** |
| **Alan Munslow** | **Routledge Companion to Historical Research** | **Routledge** | **978-0415385770** | **2** |
| **Adrian Johns** | **Piracy: The Intellectual Property Wars from Gutenberg to Gates** | **U Chicago P** | **978-0226401195** | **Rpt** |
|  Recommended |   |   |   |  |
| Fernando Báez | A Universal History of the Destruction of Books Sumer to Iraq | Atlas | 978-1934633243 |  |
| Kate Turabian | A Manual for Writers of Research papers, Theses, and Dissertations | U Chicago | 9780226816395 |  |
| Robert Darnton | Forbidden Best-Sellers of Pre-Revolutionary France | Norton | 978-0393314427 |  |

\* Required and supplemental texts to date.