

**Assignments: Spring 2009**

If men had tackled mechanical tasks with their bare hands and without the help and power of tools, as they have not hesitated to handle intellectual tasks with little but the bare force of their intellects, there would surely be very few things indeed which they could move and overcome, no matter how strenuous and united their efforts.

--Francis Verulam, Lord Chancellor, The New Organon, 1620

January 20—**INTRODUCTION: Change we can believe in?**

**Mediation**

January 27—**THE CLUSTER (MEDIUM/MEDIATION/MEDIA): Chronologies**

“Where were the media before the media?,” Knut Eliassen & Yngve Jacobsen

“Enlightening Mediation,” John Guillory

“Mediating Information 1450-1800,” Ann Blair & Peter Stallybrass

February 3—**THE CLUSTER IN THE 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY: Message/Massage/Remediation**

Selections from Marshall McLuhan and Walter Ong

Selections from Remediation (Bolter & Grusin)

Selections from When Information Came of Age (Headrick), A Social History of the Media (Burke and Briggs), and Fatal News: Reading and Information Overload in Early 18<sup>th</sup>-Century Literature (Ellison)

February 10—**THE CLUSTER IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY: Mediation as Load-Bearing**

“Mediating Antiquarians in Britain, 1760-1830,” Maureen McLane

“Modes and Codes: Morse and the Question of Electronic Writing,” Lisa Gitelman

“Mediation as Primal Word: the Arts, the Sciences, and the Origins of the Aesthetic,”

Michael McKeon

***Detour to Historia and Science***

February 17—**DEDISCIPLINARITY: Information as Physical/History as Plural**

Selections from Historia: Empiricism and Erudition in Early Modern Europe (Pomata & Siraisi)

Selections from Feynman and Computation (Hey), The Bit and the Pendulum (Siegrid), A Different Universe (Laughlin)

Review of Laughlin, Close

***Enlightenment in The History of Mediation***

February 24—**ASKING QUESTIONS: Enlightenment as Thought**

“What is Enlightenment?,” Kant

Selections from The New Organon (Bacon)

Selections from The Politics of Truth (Foucault)

March 3—**ANSWERING QUESTIONS: Enlightenment as Event**

Seminar selects fiction and poetry

Selections of other mediating genres, protocols, and associational practices

Selections from The Jewel House (Harkness)

Shaw’s edition of Bacon (1733)

March 10—**THIS IS ENLIGHTENMENT: Introduction, Part One, Siskin and Warner**

March 17—BREAK

March 24—**THIS IS ENLIGHTENMENT: Introduction, Part Two, Siskin and Warner**

March 31—PROFESSOR AT CONFERENCE

***Mediation and the Future of Literary Studies: Further Experiments***

April 7—**TEST CASE I: Literary History and Book History**

Student-suggested turns to authorship (Wordsworth) and collaborative networks (creating taste)

April 14—**TEST CASE II: Translation and Globalization**

**CONNECT** to research seminar—on “Postcolonialism and Enlightenment: An Experiment in Reconstituting Knowledge”—at NYU’s new link to France’s National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS): the Center for International Research in Humanities and Social Science (CIRHUS)

**CONNECT** to joint event of Graduate Colloquiums

“Enlightenment in India,” Arvind Rajagopal

Selection from The Rise of English Nationalism (Newman)

“It’s 1759 and all that ... or the history you never learnt at school,” The Times of London

April 17—MAKE-UP CLASS?

April 21—**TEST CASE III: New Institutional Tools for Knowing the World**

**CONNECT** to The Re:Enlightenment Project at New York University and the New York Public Library to examine new instruments such as Open Book Publishers

**CONNECT** to the proposed Humanities Initiative Working Research Group on “Technologies of Mediation: History/Translation/Education/Archive”

April 28—**CONCLUSION: Final Projects**

**Requirements:**

- Participation in both in-class and electronic conversations; a minimum of 14 Blackboard contributions will be required.
- A group experiment testing mediation or an alternative umbrella term.
- Final project to be discussed.
- Please take advantage of email appointments for individual conferences.
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