

PROGRAMA DE CLASES Y SEMINARIOS A IMPARTIR POR EL PROFESOR THOMAS MOLE

CÁTEDRA HISPANO BRITÁNICA DE DOCTORADO “REINA VICTORIA EUGENIA”

2019-2020

Visit One: December (2 – 5)

Lecture: Books in the World of Things

In this lecture, I will examine the status of books as objects, suggesting that we often tend to overlook their physicality. Our books, however, are leading a double life. They are at once containers of information and material objects. Drawing on a range of examples from the medieval period to the twentieth century, I will consider the difference that it makes when we stop trying to look through to book and start looking at it.

Class: Books in Society

In these four two-hour classes, we will discuss some key themes in the history and theory of books. We will consider how we can learn to recognise the physical features of the book and the role they play in how we understand it. We will think about the role books play in our efforts to understand ourselves and display that understanding to others. We will examine how books get tangled up in our relationships with other people, from those closest to us to those only distantly connected. And we will ask how digitally-mediated bookishness is causing us to reimagine all these things for the twenty-first century.

1. The Bibliographical Code
 - Lucien Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin, ‘The Book: Its Visual Appearance’ (1976)
2. The Bookish Self
 - Tom Mole, ‘Book/Self’ from *The Secret Life of Books* (2019)
3. Bookish Sociability
 - Roger Chartier, ‘Communities of Readers’ (1994)
4. Digital Bookishness
 - Anthony Grafton, ‘Codex in Crisis: The Book Dematerialises’ (2009)

Doctoral Seminar: Reading the Library

In this two-hour class aimed primarily at doctoral students, we will discuss critical approaches to libraries. We will pay attention to the architecture of the library, its catalogue, its arrangement and display, exploring together how these aspects serve to shape the perceptions and experiences of its users and others. Drawing on examples from Europe and North America, we will consider how libraries make visible arguments about the nature of knowledge.

Reading: Walter Benjamin, ‘Unpacking my Library’; Jorge Luis Borges, ‘La biblioteca de Babel’; Tom Mole, ‘Book/World’ in *The Secret Life of Books*

Visit Two: February (17 – 21)

Lecture: What the Victorians Made of Romanticism

In this lecture, based on my monograph of the same name, I examine how the popular media of the Victorian era sustained and transformed the reputations of Romantic writers. I scrutinise the material artifacts and cultural practices that remediated Romantic writers and their works amid shifting understandings of history, memory, and media.

Class: British Romantic Poetry: 1798-1822

The Romantic period witnessed the emergence of the first truly mass audience for poetry. For the first time, poets addressed a massive, anonymous, socially diverse and geographically distributed readership. Literacy rates increased markedly in this period, and the total number of books in circulation exploded. These developments irrevocably altered the relationship between readers and writers. In these four two-hour classes, we will examine how Romantic poets responded to the challenges and opportunities offered by this social, political and commercial environment.

1. William Wordsworth
 - 'Preface' to *Lyrical Ballads*; 'Old Man Travelling' (1798); 'Resolution and Independence'
2. Samuel Taylor Coleridge
 - 'Kubla Khan, or, a Vision in a Dream' (1816); 'Effusion 35 (The Eolian Harp)' (1796); 'Frost at Midnight' (1798); 'This Lime-Tree Bower, My Prison' (1800).
3. Percy Bysshe Shelley
 - 'A Defence of Poetry', 'The Mask of Anarchy', 'England in 1819', 'Ode to the West Wind'
4. John Keats
 - 'When I have fears that I may cease to be', 'On Fame', 'This living hand', 'Ode on a Grecian Urn'

Doctoral Seminar: Romantic Historicism and its Discontents

In this two-hour class aimed primarily at doctoral students, we will examine the rise of historicist approaches in academic discussions of British Romantic poetry over the last thirty years, and the sources of their current problematisation. The class will introduce students to some important debates in literary scholarship of the period, and encourage them to reflect on how their own understanding of Romantic poetry might be situated in relation to those debates.

Visit Three: April (20 – 24)

Lecture: The Life of Books

How do we live with books? In this lecture, I consider how books as objects become meaningful throughout our lives. For many of us, the sources of our attachment to physical books lie in early childhood. At school, we learn to invest emotionally in books as objects in ways that go well beyond the texts they contain. Books are often given on significant occasions, or presented in educational settings. They play an important role in structuring and mediating relationships. And, at the end of our lives, books can be some of the most enduring legacies we leave behind us. Tracking our engagement with books across the life course, this lecture shows how tightly the lives of books and people are entwined.

Class: Books and Technology

Books are themselves a kind of technology, but throughout its long history, the book has assisted at the birth of several new technologies. Print got its start in the world by appearing in a book. In these four two-hour classes, we will examine the long relationship between books and technology, showing how the history of the book and the history of technology are entwined. We will consider how contemporary narratives that oppose paper books to ebooks overlook the long history of relations – sometimes cordial, sometimes antagonistic – between books and new technologies.

1. Books and/as Technologies: Manuscript and Codex
 - Bonnie Mak, from *How the Page Matters* (2011)
2. The Three Epochs of Print
 - Michael Twyman, 'What is Printing?' (1998)
3. Books in the Media Ecology
 - Tom Mole, 'Book/Technology' from *The Secret Life of Books* (2019)
4. The Challenge of the Digital
 - Amaranth Borsuk, from *The Book* (2018)

Doctoral Seminar: Essays in Progress

Students wishing to be considered for the scholarship provided by the British Hispanic Foundation are invited to submit an essay of not more than 2500 words in response to the question 'Are Books Media?' by [DEADLINE]. In this two-hour class, we will workshop essays in progress, in order to provide formative feedback as students work on their essays and help them produce their best work. Students should come with a rough plan for their essay, and be ready to talk about their ideas.