

ENG 6075 Deconstruction and New Media Theory

Fall 2013

R, Periods 3-5

Professor Richard Burt

Course Description: This will survey some of the central text written by Jacques Derrida, particularly those that bear on new media. The premise of this course is that books are random access machines that both resist and seduce their readers. As we read Derrida's texts, we will also read book history, focusing on the ways in which distinction between scroll and codex is reworked in new media (scrolling functions, keyboards, pdfs). That history will be under constant philosophical pressure about what a book is, what a machine is, what it means to read and to reconstitute a reading, the fate or the chances of reading, and what Derrida "calls "unreadability." We will consider the book on paper and online as a more or less resistant random access machine. Readings will include Jacques Derrida, *Paper Machine*; "[Typewriter Ribbon, Ink \(2\)](#)" in *Without Alibi*; Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever*; Jacques Derrida "Meschances"; Jacques Lacan "TUCHE AND AUTOMATON," in *Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*; Pierre Bayard, *How to Talk About Books You Haven't Read*; Gérard Genette, *Paratexts*; Matthew Kirschenbaum, "[Extreme Inscription: A Grammatology of the Hard Drive](#)," in *Mechanisms*, Henry Petroski, *Book on the Book Shelf*; Jacques Derrida, "The Double Session"; Edgar Allen Poe, *The Purloined Letter*; Jacques Lacan, "Seminar on *The Purloined Letter*"; Jacques Derrida, "Le facteur de la vérité," Jacques Derrida, "For the Love of Lacan." Two short papers and weekly written questions on the reading.

Requirements:

Books: Honore de Balzac, *Peau de Chagrin (Wild Ass's Skin)*; Jacques Derrida, *Paper Machine*; Jacques Derrida, *Dessimination*; Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*; Jacques Derrida, *The Post Card*; Jacques Derrida, *Truth in Painting*; Cornelia Vismann, *Files: Law and Media Technology*; Franz Kafka, *The Trial*; E.T.A. Hoffman, *The Golden Pot*; Edgar Allen Poe, "The Purloined Letter"; Hermann Melville, "Bartleby the Scrivener"; ; Friedrich Kittler, *Discourse Networks*.

[All books are in the UF textbook annex](#). They may also be ordered online, of course. There is an [Amazon Student free 2 Day delivery](#) program . (I am not affiliated with Amazon's program in any way and do not benefit if you join). And [Amazon perhaps also sucks laborwise](#). It's part of the "serve us" economy.

This app (for iphones and androids) may or may not make you feel better if you use it when you shot: [Buycott](#)

Weekly written responses to the readings; one report, given in class, on a book not assigned; FUTURE PERFECT ASSIGNMENTS: three proposals (200k) for longer essays (that would be around 6-8k each if you wrote them a later time as essays and published them). Each essay will have its own method / anti-method of selecting texts and for setting up a problem / raise new questions about deconstruction and (new or old) media. Call it thinking. Since we will be doing a lot of reading, each student will be responsible for leading discussion on one of the assigned readings each week.

All assigned readings not listed on the requirements page will be available in pdf form for free. All films will be screened at no charge.

***All beginnings are dangerous.*--The poet has the choice of either raising feeling from one step to the next and thus eventually increasing it to a very high level--or else attempting a sudden onslaught and pulling the bell-rope with all his might from the beginning: both have their dangers: in the first case, that his audience may flee out of boredom, in the second, out of fear.**

Friedrich Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human II*, "Mixed Opinions and and Maxims," section 163, ed. Gary Handwerk (Stanford UP, 2013), 67.

THIS IS A CRASH COURSE IN DECONSTRUCTION AND MEDIA THEORY

August 22: On the Way as an Introduction--What is orientation in thinking? What is called thinking?; What is philosophy? [the question of the question](#); what is a medium?; why do philosophy and literature meetup? writing as pharmakon (drug / poison and cure); [invention and illegality](#); [responsibility and irresponsibility](#); deconstruction and proper names; psychoanalysis and proper names; lists, indexes, and inventories; textual criticism versus literary criticism; [textual forensics](#); genetic criticism (text and "fortext" [avant-texte]) versus posthumographic criticism; [text versus \(history of / the end of\) the book](#); facsimiles and diplomatic transcriptions; paratexts (what goes unread); invisible to reading versus unintelligible; reading online and reading on paper; reading several books at the "same" time; linear reading versus random access reading; reading the first and last words versus the first word before the first and the last word after the last; double readings (reading between the lines, exoteric and esoteric; "palimpsestous" reading versus "parergonal" reading; "internal" reading versus "external" reading; reading between punctuation marks); close reading versus far reading versus [distant reading](#) / [stop reading](#) (are you still [reading?](#)" SK--"Is anyone still reading me?"

My dear reader . . . I pronounce the matchless prophecy that two-thirds of the book's few readers will quit before they are halfway through, which can also be expressed in this way—out of boredom they will stop reading and throw the book away. . . . My dear reader--but

to whom am I speaking? Perhaps no one is left at all. . . . Alas, alas, alas! How fortunate that there is no reader who reads all the way through, and if there were any, the harm from being allowed to shift for oneself when it is the only thing he wishes, is, after all, like the punishment of the men of Molbo who threw the eel into the water. *Dixt* [I have spoken].

[Soren Kierkegaard, "Letter to the Reader from Frater Taciturnus" in *Stages on Life's Way*](#) (plus some Heidegger)

), decision and danger (when / where to stop reading? Can you control your own compulsion to read? Can you meet your responsibility to read? Do you know what a responsible reading even is? can friends let friends read drunk?); literature as allegory in deconstruction versus literature as ornament (epigraphs) in media studies; bird's eye synoptic surveys and maps, or descents into maelstroms and whirlpools; loops (Lev Manovich, [Language of New Media](#)); microreadings; error and correction; topologies and atologies; the question concerning technology; work of art; literature and literariness; literature and philosophy; positive histories and literary touchstones; publish-ability (and uncensoring); "unreadability"; uneditability"; "untranslatability"; language as a medium, and writing as a drug; questions, paths, detours, circles, oblique, indirect (philosophy); citation; the uncanny (doubles)--back to palimpsests; authorship / anonymous authorship; repetition compulsion; analogue versus digital media; textuality, [paratextuality](#), transtextuality, hypertextuality (palimpsests--again); "materiality" versus "spectrality" (or "immateriality"); medium as gadget and medium as person who talks to the dead (Spiritualist); the support or "subjectile"; media and disabilities (invention of the telephone and Alexander Graham Bell's deaf mother); attachment (disorders); paper; notation, annotation; war, technology, and entertainment ("militaryinfotainmentindustrialarmedservicescomplexnationalsecuritystate"); survivance; detours, paths, [circles](#), leaps. [Derrida's "final words"?](#) Cf . Derrida's Heideggerian lexicon in "Psychoanalysis Searches" in *Without Alibi* and his lengthy endnote at the end of *Rogues* insiting on the total difference between deconstruction and Heidegger's *Destruktion*; "Would you like Derrida when he's angry?" the endnotes to his response "Marx & Sons" at the end of *Ghostlier Demarcations*; the postscript to *Demeure*; Derrida's fierce criticisms of Giorgio Agamben at the end of *The Beast and the Sovereign Vol. 1*; posthuman--animal and human; machine and human; animal and human; biopolitics; theology, negative theology, and political theology; empiricism and phenomenology; survivance--genealogies of deconstruction and new media theory; *Demon of writing* (modesty topos), *Paper Machines*, and *Paper Machine*; Keven McLaughlin, *Paper Work*; to grasp the abjection of deconstruction in new media "theory" (wikipedia entries)--see Dworkin, *No Medium*), see what happens to Paul de

Man on formal materiality in Matthew Kirschenbaum's "[grammatology](#)" of [the hard drive](#). When does user friendly access (no reading necessary; nothing to gag on; everything tastes yummy) become useless information, self-important, rhetorical condescension, delusional affirmation to the point of being salvific or apocalyptic, even the enemy of thought (incalculable, unmeasurable)?; credos ("vibrant" matter) versus homesickness, the uncanny, and melancholy (bad vibes?) as the condition of philosophy and literature (Novalis and Heidegger); fetishism; gadgets; prostheses; bibliophilia / bibliomania and biblioclash; Bio(thanato)politics; biosecurity; biobibliopolitics; letters and post cards; media supports; *Weltliteratur*; comparative literature; comparative philology; comparative texts (presupposed unity of whatever is composed); telepathy and telephones calls . . . analogue / digital divide in different media (the book, film, photography, music, painting, and so on)

Recommended: Immanuel Kant, "[What is Orientation in Thinking?](#)" and Martin Heidegger, *What is Called Thinking?*

Clips from [The French Connection](#) (dir. William Friedkin, 1971) and [The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie](#) (dir. Luis Bunuel, 1972)

Recommended Reading:

Geoffrey Hartman. "Psychoanalysis: the French Connection." *Psychoanalysis and the Question of the Text*. Ed. Geoffrey Hartman. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1978, pp. 86-113.

August 29: Plato, [The Phaedrus \(First half of the dialogue scanned\)](#), Plato, [The Phaedrus 1.0 \(the rest of the dialogue\)](#); (Derrida focuses mostly on the end of the dialogue--in what I have called "1.0"--; so read that, but also look at pp. 534-41 in part one); Jacques Derrida, "Plato's Pharmacy" in *Dissemination*; Jacques Derrida, "The Rhetoric of Drugs," *Differences*, Vol. 5, 1993 ([first version](#); [second version](#)--read either one, but feel free to compare them too).

Assignment Due by August 28, 5 p.m.: Write short critical responses--300 words each--to the three readings. Email your responses (in one word document) as an attachment to this email address: richardburt33@gmail.com.

Recommended Reading (in general): Jacques Derrida, [Of Grammatology](#) Trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press. [1997 (1967)] ([de la grammatologie](#)); Gérard Genette, [Paratexts](#); if you have some time to kill, you might want to compare and contrast [Jonathan Culler's](#) account of close reading with John Guillory's in "[Close Reading: Prologue and Epilogue.](#)" *ADE*

Bulletin 149 (2010), pp. 8–14. See also Geoffrey Hartman, [*The Fate of Reading*](#)(1975)

September 5: Sigmund Freud, ["The 'Uncanny'"](#) (1919) and Sigmund Freud, [*Beyond the Pleasure Principle*](#) standard edition (1919; "Fort / Da" discussion) and E.T.A. Hoffmann, *The Sandman*; [Sigmund Freud, "Note on the Mystic Writing Pad"](#); Jacques Derrida, ["Freud and the Scene of Writing"](#); Jacques Derrida, ["Paper, or Me, You Know . . ."](#) (New Speculations on the Luxury of the Poor)," in *Paper Machine*.

Recommended: [Jentsch, "The Uncanny"](#); recommended (with caution): Thomas Elsaesser, ["Freud and the Technical Media: The Enduring Magic of the Wunderblock,"](#) in *Media Archaeology*, ed. Erkki Huhtamo and Jussi Parikka (U.C. Press, 2011), 95-117; [Walter Benjamin on toys.](#)

September 12: Paul de Man, ["The Return to Philology"](#) in *The Resistance to Theory*; [Paul de Man, "The Dead-End of Formalist Criticism"](#); Paul de Man's [paratextual dead ends](#); Paul de Man, ["Heidegger's Exegeses of Holderlin"](#) in *Blindness and Insight*; Seth Lerer, ["Errata: Mistakes and Masters in the Early Modern Book,"](#) in *Error and the Academic Self* (2003), 15-54.

Recommended: James Joyce's publications as case studies in editing and error the cult of the unfinished manuscript; "restored" and "corrected" editions (William Faulkner, for example); Jacques Derrida on a typo versus a Freudian slip in "De Tout" in *The Post Card*; [Tim Conley on *Finnegans Wake*](#); [Don Ault, "Unreading 'London'"](#); (see also the [Annotated *Frankenstein*](#) and [*The Original Frankenstein*](#) Mary Shelley (Author), Charles E. Robinson (Editor), Percy Bysshe Shelley (Collaborator); Jacques Derrida, [*Ulysses Gramophone*](#)

September 19: Book history and titles: Required Reading: Jacques Derrida, ["Before the Law" / "Vor Dem Gesetz"](#)) Franz Kafka, ["Before the Law,"](#) ([Orson Welles narrates a slightly abridged version here](#)) and Franz Kafka *The Trial*; [Maurice Blanchot, "The Last Word"](#) in *Friendship* (1971; trans 1997) and [Maurice Blanchot, "The Very Last Word"](#) in *Friendship*(1971; trans 1997); [Maurice Blanchot, "Kafka and Brod"](#) in *Friendship* (1971; trans 1997)

[Endnotes to all three Blanchot essays.](#)

Recommended Reading and Viewing: The E/State of Kafka's Papers: [KAFKA'S LAST STORY](#) Directed by Saqi Bornstein

[Kafka](#)

Kafka's Paper; two newspaper articles: "Kafka's Last Trial" [here](#) and [here](#).

First paper due Sept. 20: PROPOSAL FOR AN ARTICLE YOU WILL (POSSIBLY) HAVE WRITTEN AFTER YOU WRITE YOUR DISSERTATION TOPIC (1k words): "Who Has the (Very) Last Word in Kafa's Case?"s on Max Brod's "readings" of Kafka's will in [three postscripts Brod wrote to three successive editions of *The Trial*](#). Read these postscripts on your own with Maurice Blanchot's three essays in mind.) [Email your responses \(in one word document\) as an attachment to this email address: richardburt33@gmail.com.](#)

September 26: Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression* vs. [Wolfgang Ernst, *Digital Memory and the Archive*](#)

Recommended: Wilhelm Jensen, [Gradiva](#); Sigund Freud, [Moses and Monotheism](#); and [here](#); [Sigmund Freud, "Jensen's Gradiva"](#); and Freud, ["Analysis Terminable and Interminable"](#)

October 3: Cornelia Vismann, *Files: Law and Media Technology* and Hermann Melville, *Bartleby the Scrivener*

Recommended: [Sven Spieker, *The Big Archive: Art From Bureaucracy*](#)

October 10: Honoré de Balzac, *The Wild Ass's Skin* (*Le peau de chagrin*) and Jacques Derrida, ["The Book to Come"](#) and ["The Word Processor"](#) in *Paper Machine*; Kevin McLaughlin, ["The Coming of Paper/ Aesthetic Value from Ruskin to Benjamin,"](#) *MLN* 114/5. Let's Repeat: Jacques Derrida, ["Paper, or Me, You Know . . ."](#) (New Speculations on the Luxury of the Poor)," in *Paper Machine*.

“Another version, in short, of Balzac's *La Peau de chagrin* — *The Wild Ass's Skin*. The successor to parchment made of skin, paper is declining, it is getting *smaller*, it is *shrinking* inexorably at a rate that a man grows old. . . .”

Jacques Derrida, “Paper or Me, You Know,” *Paper Machine*, 42

(Consider *The Wild Ass's Skin* in relation to E. T. A. Hoffman's "The Sandman.")

Recommended: Maurice [Blanchot, "The Book to Come"](#); [Markus Krajewski, *Paper Machines: About Cards & Catalogs, 1548-1929*](#) (endnote as critical genealogy and critical orientation); Lucien Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin ["The Coming of the Book: The Impact of Printing, 1450-1800 \(Third Edition\)"](#); Derrida "End of the Book" in *Grammatology*

(see screen grab below) Amazon.com as canon-formation ("trending now") and symptom of what gets read and goes unread. (Academic research as silo-building and "knowledge" storage)

Book Description

Publication Date: **July 30, 2013**

At the turn of the nineteenth century, publishing houses... But it was not just the advent of mass printing that created... writers played a crucial role in adjusting readers to this... want books occurred through more than the technological... making of such bibliographic fantasies was importantly

Examining novels, critical editions, gift books, and... *Books* tells a wide-ranging story of the book's identity and

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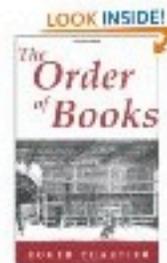


**Book Was There:
Reading in
Electronic Times**

➤ **Andrew Piper**

★★★★☆ (4)

Hardcover

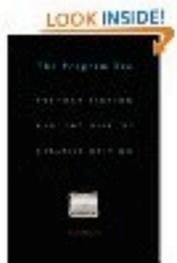


**The Order of
Books: Readers,
Authors, and ...**

➤ **Roger Chartier**

★★★★☆ (4)

Paperback



**The Program:
Postwar Fiction
the Rise ...**

➤ **Mark McGowan**

★★★★★ (4)

Paperback

October 17: Return to Cinder? Jacques Derrida, *The Postcard*, "Envois" as a "destroyed correspondence," pp. 3-15; 21; 31-34; 39; 50-53; 59; 61; 68-76;

79; 80; 129-30; 132; 208-22; 250-52; 256; read the back cover of the *Post Card*, signed "J.D."; and Jacques Derrida, "Telepathy" (consult the two French versions [1](#), [2](#), but read the second version translated into English in [Psyche, Inventions of the Other](#) vol. 1); read Jacques Derrida's "Telepathy" both as a stand alone article and as a missing chapter of the *Postcard* (see added footnote in the second French version) and read Jacques Derrida's "Telepathy" in consultation with the texts Derrida discusses in it, namely, Freud's two essays on telepathy and Freud's essay on dreams and the occult:

Sigmund Freud, ["Dreams and Telepathy"](#)

Sigmund Freud, ["Psycho-analysis and Telepathy"](#)

Sigmund Freud, [Dreams and Occultism](#)

This class will be an exercise in reading around Derrida with and without gravity, taking "Telepathy" to be one pole and the "Envois" another. Freud is their orbits. But both poles are internally split; Telepathy has been revised and republished; it is or is not a missing chapter of the *Post Card*; the "Envois" is like a preface, but it was written as if after the rest of the book had already been written (Derrida comments on chapters of it after the "Envois" using the past tense; some of these chapters have been republished or recycled in the book; see the headnotes to each chapter). You may also want to skim Alan Bass's "Glossary" in the *Postcard*. Derrida cites passages from the *Post Card* in *Cinders*. [Derrida's writings may be comparable to space station disasters, living on even as they are already becoming ashes.](#)

Recommended Readings: Freud and Jones, [correspondence on telepathy](#); Freud on [premonitory dreams](#); Freud, ["Mourning and Melancholia"](#); Jacques Derrida, *Cinders*; [Bernhard Siegert, Relays](#) (chapter on the [postcard](#)); [Arlette Farge, Subversive Words: Public Opinion in 18th Century France](#); and [Arlette Farge, The Allure of the Archives \(The Lewis Walpole Series in Eighteenth-Century\)](#); Michel Foucault, ["Lives of Infamous Men"](#) and [Foucault's Pharmacy](#)

October 24: [Martin Scorsese's Hugo](#) and [Chris Marker's La Jetée](#) (write short responses to each film)

October 31: Friedrich Kittler, [Discourse Networks 1800/1900](#), Chapter Two, "Language Channels," 70-123; post-hermeneutic (unreadable, like a silent film), [E.T.A. Hoffman, The Golden Pot](#); [Freud on déjà vu](#)

Recommended Readings: [Media Archaeology](#); Michel Foucault, "The Statement and the Archive" in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, 79-134; Avital Ronell chapter on Paul de Man and technology in *Stupidity*

November 7: Un/Translability (and the transposition / inscription of media)

Friedrich Kittler, [Discourse Networks 1800/1900](#), required: 265-290; recommended: 327-46.

Required: Walter Benjamin, ["The Task of the Translator"](#) (revised trans. in *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings, Volume 1, 1913-1926*, ed. Michael W. Jennings, Harvard UP., 1996), pp. 253-63

Recommended: Consult Walter Benjamin, ["The Task of the Translator"](#) (Harry Zohn trans, discussed by de Man)

Required: Jacques Derrida, ["Des tours de Babel"](#) in *Psyche, Inventions of the Other Vol 1*, pp. 191-226.

Required: Walter Benjamin, Paul de Man, ["'Conclusions': Walter Benjamin's 'The Task of the Translator'"](#) in *Resistance to Theory*, 73-105

Recommended: Consult Paul de Man, ["'Conclusions' Walter Benjamin's 'The Task of the Translator'" Messenger Lecture, Cornell University, March 4, 1983.](#)

CRASH LANDINGS

November 14: [Edgar Allan Poe, "The Purloined Letter"](#) (1844), "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" (1841), and "The Mystery of Marie Rogêt" (1842); Jacques Lacan, "Seminar on the *Purloined Letter*," in [Ecrits / Écrits; as lectures \(in French\) in Lacan's seminar II \(The Ego\)](#); related lectures in [Lacan's Seminar 2](#)

[Email your responses to these readings on November 13 \(in one word document\) as an attachment to this email address: richardburt33@gmail.com.](#) And email me your report (300 words) on the class discussion November 15 [torichardburt33@gmail.com](#)

November 21: [Edgar Allan Poe, "The Purloined Letter"](#); Jacques Derrida, "The Purveyor of Truth," / "Le facteur de la vérité" in *The Post Card* (you may also want to consult or compare Jeffrey Mehlamn's translation in [Yale French Studies](#); Jacques Derida ["For the Love of Lacan"](#) (see Derrida's two anecdotes about Lacan, one of which concerns the publication of the first edition of the *Ecrits / Écrits*) in *Resistances to Psychoanalysis*

Recommended Reading: ; Sigmund Freud, ["The Resistances of Psychoanalysis"](#); [L@k@@n](#); The Norton *Ecrits*, trans Alan Sheridan

[Email your responses to these readings on November 20 \(in one word document\) as an attachment to this email](#)

[address: richardburt33@gmail.com](#). And email me your report (300 words) on the class discussion November 22 [torichardburt33@gmail.com](#)

Assignment Due November 23: PROPOSAL FOR AN ARTICLE YOU WILL (POSSIBLY) HAVE WRITTEN AFTER YOU WRITE YOUR DISSERTATION TOPIC (1k words) What difference does having an "archive," a fuller biobibliography of Lacan's un/published works on Poe's detective stories, fuller than the bibliography (see "original" bibliography below) Derrida cites in "The Purveyor of Truth" / "Le facteur de la vérité," what difference does this archive (see below) make to your understanding of Derrida's essay on Lacan reading Poe in "The Purveyor of Truth" / "Le facteur de la vérité," ? (Pay close to how Derrida packages [in footnotes] the publication history of Lacan's *Ecrits*.)

"Original" bibliography: [Edgar Allan Poe, "The Purloined Letter"](#) (1844), "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" (1841), and "The Mystery of Marie Rogêt" (1842); Jacques Lacan, "Seminar on the *Purloined Letter*," in *Ecrits / Écrits*; Jacques Derrida, "The Purveyor of Truth," / "Le facteur de la vérité" in *The Post Card* (you may also want to consult or compare Jeffrey Mehlman's translation in [Yale French Studies](#); Jacques Derrida ["For the Love of Lacan"](#)

"Archived" biobibliography: [Edgar Allan Poe, "The Purloined Letter"](#); ; [as lectures in Lacan's seminar II \(The Ego\)](#); related lectures in [Lacan's Seminar 2](#); Jacques Derrida, "The Purveyor of Truth," / "Le facteur de la vérité" in *The Post Card* (you may also want to consult or compare Jeffrey Mehlman's translation in [Yale French Studies](#); Jacques Derrida ["For the Love of Lacan"](#) in *Resistances to Psychoanalysis*

I will meet with each of you individually in my office 4314 Turlington, on December 2, to return your paper with my comments and to hear your thoughts about the course. Please contact me to set up a meeting time. :)