

**#1 Personal essay (due 8/29)**

What do you expect to get from this exploration into the worlds of books and publishing? How would you describe your attitude toward books—are you an avid reader, or someone who reads only when you have to? What kinds of books do you enjoy? Are you a writer? What do you write? Have you ever been interested—or involved—in the editing, illustration, publishing, or selling of books? What are your personal and professional dreams for involvement in the writing and publishing industry? In a 500- to 700-word essay (following the guidelines in your syllabus), address some of these questions with an aim toward personal introspection and, also, introduction among your fellow students. Take as creative or innovative an approach as you wish, but be grammatical and neat while you're doing it, please.

**#2 Book case history (due 9/5)**

Choose a book whose text, author, and physical format you'd find interesting as the basis for class discussion. It might be one that you liked reading, one you like looking at for its cover or illustrations, one that was influential in shaping some part of your literary consciousness, one that or one that you feel is important for some other reason.

Write a 500- to 700-word analysis of the book's characteristics, as best you can detect them without reference to any outside sources. What can you tell about its purpose, its audience, its sales potential, its design, its manufacturing? What can you tell about its author?

BRING YOUR BOOK TO CLASS along with your paper; we'll discuss physical characteristics of the book and its cover, as well as aspects of the text, author, publisher, and marketing.

**#3 Resource report (due 9/14)**

This assignment involves locating specific resources that will be helpful in doing research in the field of book publishing. In order to research past history, or to locate current information, you must know how to navigate both the library and the Internet and search out the treasure from the vast universe of, well, stuff.

With the help of a reference librarian, identify one hard-copy resource (book, journal, reference book, index, archive, etc.) that is particularly useful with regard to *learning about book publishing*. Include full details of title, author, and publication; provide a call number or other location information; and explain how this resource is useful. Also tell how accessible the information is, and how it should be used. How is the information arranged? Is there an index that helps you locate details? If the resource is a periodical, how often is it issued? Where is it located?

Also identify one online or digital resource that, likewise, is useful with regard to publishing. I don't mean "the Internet," but one specific Web site or online archive that could be found there. (I'll give you an example: the Web site for Writers and Their Copyright Holders at <http://tyler.hrc.utexas.edu>. It tells you who holds the copyright

to many contemporary works, and how to find them.) Include full details of title; try to discern who authors or publishes the information. Provide a complete URL. Explain how the resource is useful, and how it is arranged or searched.

Your report should run 700 to 1,000 words.

#### **#4 Author case history (due 9/26)**

Write a 1,000-word case history on a living author of your choice. Your paper should be arranged to cover the following areas: brief biography, genre(s) in which the author writes, and information about the author's relationships with his/her agent, editor, and publisher. Details regarding recent book deals, and current news from industry sources, are particularly helpful. Include a selected primary bibliography (that is, a list of major books the author has written and their year of publication, in reverse chronological order). Use at least three sources, one of which must come from the library rather than the Internet. To avoid plagiarism, synthesize the information you find in various sources into your own analysis, making sure to cite sources within your paper as appropriate.

Be prepared to discuss in class. It's helpful to bring one of this author's books with you. Your grade will depend on how well you grasp the aims of the assignment, how thoroughly you have researched and presented your report, and how skillfully you have written your report.

Useful sources include the *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, *Contemporary Authors*, *Something about the Author*, [www.authorsontheweb.com](http://www.authorsontheweb.com), *Publishers Weekly*, and a host of journals, newspapers, and popular magazines.

#### **#5 Publisher case history (due 10/12)**

Write a 1,000-word case history on a currently operating publishing house, as assigned by the professor. Your paper should be arranged to cover the following areas: brief history, list areas in which the publisher specializes (if any), and information about how the publisher considers manuscript submission. You should include information about the publisher's founders and current-day CEOs or editors, and provide a list of major authors and/or books the publisher has handled. You should also note where the publisher is based, and whether they have any subsidiary offices or imprints. Use at least three sources, one of which must come from the library rather than the Internet. To avoid plagiarism, synthesize the information you find in various sources into your own analysis, making sure to cite sources within your paper as appropriate.

Be prepared to discuss in class. It's helpful to bring one of this publisher's books with you. Your grade will depend on how well you grasp the aims of the assignment, how thoroughly you have researched and presented your report, and how skillfully you have written your report.

Useful sources include the *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, *Books in Print*, *Writers' Market*, *Publishers Weekly*, and books devoted to particular publishers' histories.

#### **#6 Book auction project DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS TO COME; dates in syllabus**