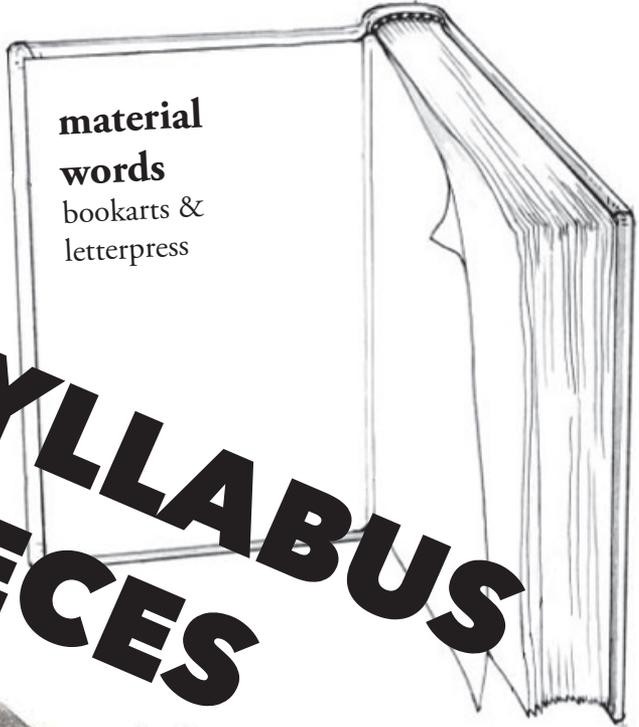
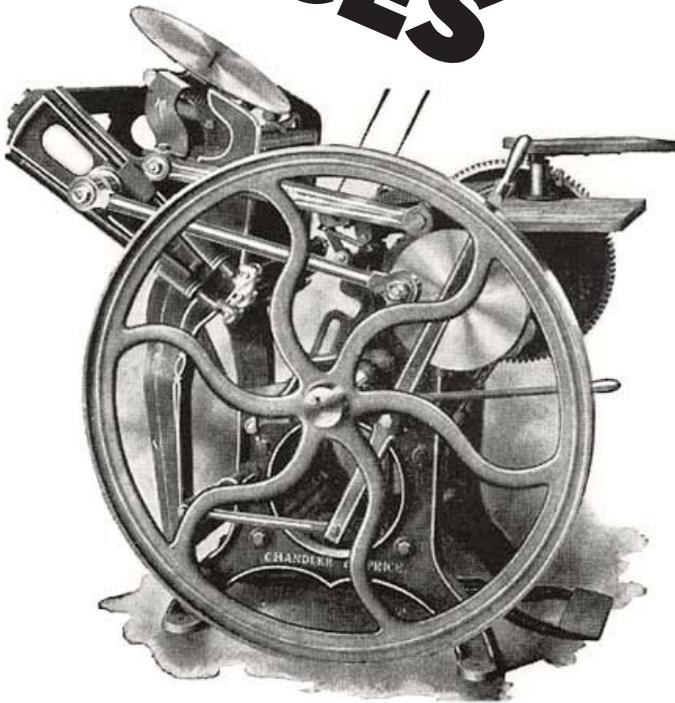


**material  
words**  
bookarts &  
letterpress

# SYLLABUS PIECES



# MENU

## *hors-d'oeuvre*

letterpress proficiency collaboration

material design: two words - any media

material design: short poem prose presentation

artist's book: found object

artist's book : invisible cities

rare book room observation and analysis

bookbinding proficiency: one coptic (practice or finished)

weeks

1-4

## *entrée*

Select One Artist's Book Experiment in Theme:

1 *theater of the mind*

2 *reflection on language/alphabet/technology*

weeks

3-6

Select One Binding/ Letterpress Craft Development:

1 *hard cover book (blank)*

2 *letterpressed poem*

## *plat principal*

**Individual Project** - see proposal and development process

weeks

3-10

# *assiette partagée*

work developed in our shared workshops with *Materializing Foods*

weeks  
2-3-4...6-7-8

## *à la carte*

[choose 2]

Artist's Book Experiment in Form: Altered Book

Artist's Book Experiment in Theme: Material, Food, Books

Artist's Book Experiment in Form: Fold Structures

Binding: French Link

Binding: Sewing on Cords

Binding: Repeat hard cover / rebind / repair

Letterpress: large run (C&P)

Letterpress: booklet / multi-page piece

Letterpress: multi-color broadside

*à la carte concepts can be combined*

weeks  
4-10

## *Your meal / portfolio*

Seven Low-Stakes Practice Snacks (*hors-d'oeuvre*)

One Artist's Book Experiment in Theme (*entrée 1*)

One Binding or Letterpress Craft Development Piece (*entrée 2*)

Individual Project (*plat principal*)

*Miscellaneous work related to shared workshops (shared Friday afternoons)*

Chosen additional practice (*à la carte* — may be integrated into individual project or further development on shared workshop exercises)

# assignment basics

## *required exercises (hors-d'oeuvres)*

### **1. letterpress proficiency collaboration**

This is the outcome of our full-class walk-through of typesetting and printing. You'll set two lines of a poem according to specifications. We'll lock up the poem in the Vandercooks and print altogether to learn the basic of the printing process. After this, if you want to continue with letterpress tasks, you'll still need some instruction and supervision. Special instruction will be available for those interested in trying out the C&P platen press.

### **2. two words**

This design/materials challenge is to produce a technically precise and thoughtfully designed pair of pieces.

#### RULES

- Two different materials; one word on each
- Material and media selection, word/letter design choice, type choice, layout, scale, and presentation all conspire to enhance, comment on, or express something interesting (perhaps unexpected) about the relationship between the two words.

### **3. paper & text design: short poem/prose presentation**

This is a book arts experiment or, more simply, an experiment in presenting some short text in a three-dimensional way. For our purposes, most (if not all) book forms are 3D. The only thing ruled out here is a flat piece of paper... as soon as you make a fold, you're in three dimensions. You select the text you want to present. Sometimes a fragment can be more enticing than a whole poem or short piece of prose... something about the fragment gives you room to do something visually/spatially to augment, support the language. Legibility may not be your main goal, but the relationship between the text and

the presentation must be considered as much as possible. Your presentation need not be experimental, but strive for something more than what might be called “mere decoration.”

#### **4. artist’s book: found object**

This will be an in-class experiment. Everyone will gather, as possible, some random, disposable materials (but not actual garbage) to contribute to a stockpile of materials. Working with things other people have brought, we will “make books”... or book sculptures.. or book-like objects... or objects that somehow relate to our experiences or dreams of books... or books for aliens... or ...?

#### **5. artist’s book : invisible cities**

This is an interpretative at-home assignment. You’ll select from a collection of very short prose pieces from Italo Calvino’s novel *Invisible Cities*. Your task is to create an expressive visual/physical/bookish (experimental or conventional) form to contain the text. Please strive to reproduce (in any way) the full text into your creation.

#### **6. rare book room observation and analysis**

This task will take place in class, when we visit the rare book room together, and it will live in your class notebook. After spending some time looking through the collection, you’ll spend 10-15 minutes with a single book and write out observations and analysis about its form, meaning, design.

#### **7. bookbinding proficiency: one coptic (practice or finished)**

This will largely be completed in class as your first lesson in hand-bookbinding. The Coptic stitch is not the easiest stitch, but its challenges prepare you for the subtleties of the steps and materials involved in most traditional codex binding.

**OTHER ASSIGNMENT DETAILS WILL BE GIVEN IN CLASS**

# LETTERPRESS

Letterpress printing is the practice of hand-setting metal pieces of type, each one a letter, punctuation, or space, and finely printing the results. The Evergreen Book Arts Studio has accumulated a motley and substantial collection of “fonts” and image cuts over the years and boasts two fantastic “flat-bed” proofing presses and a dynamic, early 20th century platen press.

The practices of hand setting type and printing tends to fascinate writers, readers, printmakers, and graphic designers for a variety of reasons, and in this program, you’ll have a chance to explore the materiality of this world-shaping technology. At the same time, letterpress is not for everyone; it’s meticulous, unforgiving, and time-consuming.

You’ll get to try it out in this program and then decide whether and how it fits into your investigation of “material words”.



# Artists' books

The essential consideration we'll make when we think about "artists' books" is that the emphasis is on the relationship between FORM and IDEA.

We're used to the *bookness* of books fading into the background when we read. A book is a tool, a container. Even all the things we learn to love about books we also take for granted or, in effect, don't take at all... that is, much as we may prefer the paper codex to the kindle, our affection is pure nostalgia and has nothing to do with what a book MUST be OR with the ideas at stake in the things we read in books.



Though we notice that our writing practice changes when we use books instead of typing, we are just scratching the surface of the formal capacities of "bookness."

"What needs to be in a book?"

"What are books good for?"

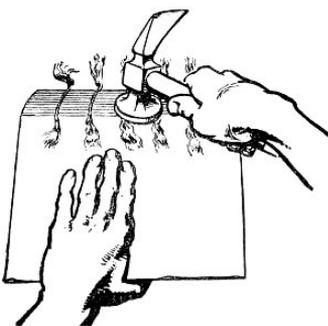
Did the novel you just finished reading need to be in book form, or would it have been just as good of a novel on the kindle? What kinds of novels can we write for kindles that we couldn't write before?

If the book can be, instead of a container for words, something akin to a canvas, what can it do? What kind of artistic surface / object is it? Canvases, for painters, behaved for centuries like windows. How do books behave?

What might we do to exploit and challenge their behavior, their qualities and effects?

What cultural baggage do books carry that intrigue us, that we can activate and turn into expressive power?

What is our general understanding of what books / codexes are? Are they particular kinds of objects or just one of many means of structuring and preserving information, holding memories?



## Bookbinding

Theoretically, one can make a book out of anything... what is a book, anyway? Is a kindle a book? Is a clay tablet a book? Is a scroll? A thumb drive? A tattooed body? The book format that we are most used to has the more particular name of *codex*: a number of sequenced *leaves* bound together on one side—the *spine*. The art and craft of the codex is such a thoroughly developed discipline and popular form that we won't try to pretend it isn't central to our understanding of bookness—more to the point: key to our feelings about books as a part of culture, knowledge, and imagination.

Accordingly, your basic introduction to hand bookbinding will focus on the codex form. At the same time, you'll experiment with and be exposed to other bookmaking practices. In many ways, the crafts involved in the traditional codex can prepare you well to divert into and experiment with other forms. Beyond the craft of books, you might think about the idea of the book in our culture, and explore how how artists and writers have responded to the form and history of books.

§

This introduction to bookbinding will enable you to create simple hard cover books and give you a foundation from which you can build your knowledge and skills independently through further reading and experimentation.

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You'll need a number of tools and materials for your introduction to bookbinding. For specific projects, you may need to purchase additional materials and tools.

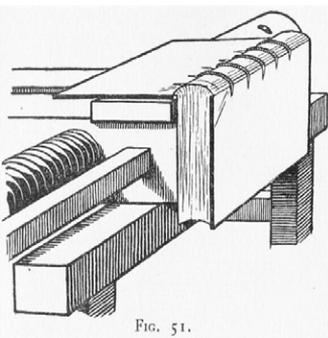


FIG. 51.