

## **The Gutenberg Parenthesis**

### **Aniket Alam**

**Name of the Program : B.Tech in Computer Science and Engineering**

**Course Code : HS3.304**

**Credits : 4**

**L - T - P : 3 – 1 – 0**

**Semester, Year : Spring 2023**

**Pre-Requisites : BTech Students: Passed Intro to Human Sciences, and One other HSS elective; CHD 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Year students.**

#### **Course Outcomes:**

After completion of this course successfully students will be able to:

**CO1:** Define the concept of Orality, Literacy, and Textuality.

**CO2:** Describe the features of Oral Societies and Literate Societies.

**CO3:** Explain the importance of Print Technology in historical transformation and the concept of the Gutenberg Parenthesis.

**CO4:** Analyze the various aspects of the emergence of Capitalism, Enlightenment, Modernity in relation to Print Cultures.

**CO5.** Evaluate the range of academic theories relating to global historical transformations.

**CO6.** Develop their own understanding about the role of technology, historical change, and emerging futures.

#### **Course Topics:**

The Gutenberg Parenthesis refers to the 500 year long period of modernity, coterminous with print cultures, within a longer stretch of oral civilisations. This parenthesis started with the print revolution in medieval Europe which turned the world textual over the next few centuries. The parenthesis is perhaps closing now with the emergence of the new, post-textual, orality of the digital age. The idea of the Gutenberg Parenthesis suggests that despite its dominance and prestige, print-literacy is an exception in the much longer trajectory of human thought, which is oral. This primacy of the oral may be in the process of being restored through digital modes of speech and instantaneous ephemeral communication, rather than on asynchronous print communication based on space and time lags.

This course will study Print Cultures as an interregnum within the larger history of oral cultures. It will be organized into the following modules.

- (1) **Orality and Oral Cultures:** The structures and features of oral communications. How this in turn structures mental categories and thought and thus social organization. The specificities of societies based on orality and how scholars define these terms. The idea of primary orality.
- (2) **Literacy and Textual Cultures:** The historical rise of script, literacy and text based civilisations. What are the features and consequences of this technology and how it restructures society.
- (3) **Technology of Print and Print Cultures:** The emergence of print technology in Asia and Europe and its main product: books. The definition of print culture and its historical spread.
- (4) **Historical Transformations:** The changes in society, economy and politics consequent to the spread of print technology and print cultures. The emergence of capitalism, colonialism, Enlightenment Rationality and the scientific revolution. The linkages between printing and new ways of thinking and communicating. The economic, political and cultural effects of mass literacy and education. How the world has become textual.
- (5) **The New Orality:** The emergence of digital technologies and re-emergence of orality and instantaneous communications. The new orality as secondary orality based on textual foundations. How is this secondary orality changing our ways of thinking, of communicating and our social/political structures.

#### **Preferred Text Books:**

1. Walter J. Ong: *Orality and Literacy*
2. Elizabeth Eisenstein: *The Printing Revolution in Early Modern Europe*
3. Alfred W. Crosby: *The Measure of Reality*
4. Umberto Eco: *This Is Not The End Of The Book;*
5. V. Gordon Childe: *Man Makes Himself*

#### **Reference Books:**

1. Lucien Febvre, Henri-Jean Martin: *The Coming of the Book*
2. Fernand Braudel: *Capitalism and Material Life, 1400-1800*
3. Eric Hobsbawm: *Industry and Empire.*
4. Ernest Gellner: *Nations and Nationalism*
5. Marshal McLuhan: *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographical Man*
6. Neil MacGregor: *The History of the World in 100 Objects*
7. Ruth Finnegan: *Literacy and Orality: Studies in the Technology of Communication.*
8. Ruth Finnegan: *Oral Poetry – Its Nature, Significance and Social Context.*
9. Elizabeth Eisenstein: *Divine Art, Infernal Machine: The Reception of Printing in the West from First Impressions to the Sense of Ending.*
10. Umberto Eco: *Travels in Hyperreality.*
11. Roger Chartier: *The Order of Books: Readers, Authors, and Libraries in Europe Between the Fourteenth and Eighteenth Centuries.*
12. David Diringer: *The Book Before Printing.*

13. David Diringer: *The Alphabet – The Key to the History of Mankind*.
14. Jack Goody: *Literacy in Traditional Societies*.
15. Andre Gunder Frank: *ReOrient – Global Economy in the Asian Age*
16. Bhavani Raman: *Document Raj: Writing and Scribes in Early Colonial India*
17. Tapati Bharadwaj: *Beginners Guide to the Early Realm of Colonial Print Culture in India*
18. A R Venkatachalapathy: *The Province of the Book*
19. Krishna Kumar: *Politics of Education in Colonial India*
20. C.A. Bayly: *Empire and Information*
21. Eric Havelock: *Communication Arts in the Ancient World*.
22. C. K. Ogden, I. A. Richards: *The Meaning of Meaning – A Study of the Influence of Language upon Thought and of the Science of Symbolism*.
23. Pierre Maranda, Elli Kongas Maranda: *Structural Analysis of Oral Tradition*.
24. Vladimir Propp: *Morphology of the Folktale*.
25. Benjamin Stolz, Richard Shannon: *Oral Literature and the Formula*.
26. Douglas Boyd, Mary Larson: *Oral History and Digital Humanities – Voice, Access, and Engagement*.
27. Jan Vansina: *Oral Tradition as History*.
28. Max Tegmark: *Life 3.0: Being Human in the Age of Artificial Intelligence*

#### Reference Articles:

1. Jack Goody and I. Watt: "The Consequences of Literacy" *Comparative Studies in Society and History*.
2. Thomas Pettitt: "Opening the Gutenberg Parenthesis"
3. Thomas Pettitt: "Bracketing the Gutenberg Parenthesis"
4. The Edge: "What is the Most Important Invention in the Past Two Thousand Years?"
5. Franz H. Bauml: "Varieties and Consequences of Medieval Literacy and Illiteracy"
6. John Miles Foley: "The Traditional Oral Audience".
7. John Miles Foley: "Oral Literature – Premises and Problems"
8. Eric Havelock: "The Alphabetization of Homer"
9. Bronislaw Malinowski: "The problem of meaning in primitive languages"

#### Grading Plan :

Type of Evaluation	Weightage (in %)
Quiz-1	10%
Mid SemExam	20%
Quiz-2	10%
End Sem Exam	40%
Project	20%

**Mapping of Course Outcomes to Program Objectives:** (1 – Lowest, 2—Medium, 3 – Highest, or a '-' dash mark if not at all relevant).

	PO1	PO2	PO3	PO4	PO5	PO6	PO7	PO8	PO9	PO10	PO11	PO12	PSO1	PSO2	PSO3	PSO4
CO1	-	-	1	2	1	3	2	3	2	1	-	3	-	2	1	3
CO2	-	-	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	1	-	3	-	1	1	2
CO3	1	-	1	2	1	3	3	3	1	1	-	3	-	2	1	3
CO4	-	-	1	2	1	3	3	3	2	1	1	3	-	1	2	2
CO5	-	-	1	1	1	3	2	2	1	1	1	3	-	1	2	3
CO6	1	1	3	2	2	3	3	3	2	2	1	3	-	2	3	3

**Teaching-Learning Strategies in brief (4-5 sentences) :**

The course will be based on classroom lectures and will require intensive reading and writing. On an average, each student will be required to read between 1,000 to 1,500 pages of books and articles and submit written work between 3,000 to 4,000 words, cumulatively. In each class some select students will be given a small topic from the next class to read up on, and they will be expected to initiate discussions around these. Pictures, Extracts from primary sources, audio and video resources will be used to illustrate the points being taught. The project will focus on training students to develop their own ideas, and apply computer science tools, to the topic given.

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