

TY-05: Ephemera Studies

Ephemera is the concept of studying history through everyday documentation. As an academic subject, Ephemera Studies is very new and there were previously no opportunities to study it at undergraduate level.

The University of Reading has a unique set of resources and several collections of ephemera that are of world-wide importance, including the Maurice Rickards Collection in the Centre for Ephemera Studies and the John Lewis, De la Rue, Huntley & Palmers, and Great Exhibition collections in Reading University Library (University Museums and Collections Service).

The aim of the project was to stimulate the interest of students in ephemera and enable them to see its relevance to their academic and practical work by creating a new optional model for Part 3 students.

So far the module has run for only one year and was chosen by just under half of the Part 3 students on the Design for Graphic Communication programme. For the future the module will be opened up to students from other discipline areas from across the university.



Project Code: TY-05

Discipline: Typography & Graphic Communication

Project Title: Ephemera Studies

Description: As an academic subject, Ephemera Studies is very new and there were no opportunities to study it at undergraduate level. The University of Reading has a unique set of resources and several collections of ephemera that are of world-wide importance. The aim of the project was to stimulate the interest of students in ephemera and enable them to see its relevance to their academic and practical work by creating a new optional model for Part 3 students.

<p>A What is the perceived problem or challenge?</p>	<p>B Enabling Factors What resources will facilitate the project?</p>	<p>C Processes How is this project going to be achieved?</p>	<p>D Objectives What is the end product or result of the project?</p>	<p>E Evaluation Data What methods can be used to demonstrate the success or impact of this project?</p>	<p>F Unintended consequences What have been the unintended consequences of enacting this project?</p>
<p>As an academic subject Ephemera studies is very new and there were no opportunities to study it at undergraduate level. The challenge is to stimulate the interest of students in this unfamiliar area and enable them to see its relevance to their academic and practical work.</p>	<p>The University of Reading has a unique set of resources that have enabled this module to be created. There are several collections of ephemera that are of worldwide importance including the Maurice Rickards Collection in the Centre for Ephemera Studies and the John Lewis, De la Rue, Huntley & Palmers, and Great Exhibition collections in Reading University Library (University Museums and Collections Service). The Department of Typography & Graphic Communication has a long history of research into aspects of printed ephemera and many of the staff have published in this field. The Department works closely with the Ephemera Society (Rob Banham edits and designs their journal The Ephemerist) and also has strong links with the John Johnson Collection (Bodleian Library) and the Victoria & Albert Museum. The Department has related collections of printing equipment and material which help with the understanding of the production of the ephemera.</p>	<p>A new optional module, Ephemera Studies, will be set up for part 3 students. The module will be run by existing staff using Departmental resources.</p>	<p>The end product is a new module (Ephemera studies) which aims to introduce students to the concept of studying history through everyday documents (ephemera). It will give students the opportunity to learn by studying such documents first hand. By the end of the module students should be able to: use ephemera as evidence in historical study, categorise and describe items of ephemera, use a variety of methods to date printed ephemera, and understand the issues involved in exhibiting and reproducing ephemera. Students will develop skills in writing, research, exhibition design, and understanding of technical issues with regard to reproductions of original documents. The module will also enhance their analytical skills.</p>	<p>Module evaluation forms and module convenor's report. Numbers of students enrolling on the module each year. Assessment of the coursework submitted by the students</p>	<p>Students have been introduced to a wealth of original material and as a consequence have learnt a lot about how to correctly handle ephemera, and its storage and conservation. The creation of the undergraduate Ephemera Studies module has led to the introduction of a related MA module: Archives and collections.</p>

TY-01: Ephemera Studies

1. Project Progress and Timeline

1.1 Timeline

Done	Project stage post	planned end date	actual end date
	Start September 2006		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Discussion and liaison with the Centre of Ephemera Studies	Feb 07	Feb 07
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Submission of proposed module description to BoSUP	Mar 07	Mar 07
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Development of module description	Mar 07	Mar 07
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Development of reading list and lecture programme	Dec 07	Dec 07
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Delivery of Ephemera Studies module	Mar 08	Mar 08
<input type="checkbox"/>	Assessment and examination of student work	May 08	May 08
<input type="checkbox"/>	Feedback gathered from students	Apr 08	Apr 08
<input type="checkbox"/>	Evaluation of module	Jun 08	Jun 08
<input type="checkbox"/>	Revision of module content and structure	Jul 08	Jul 08

1.2 Enabling Factors – State resources used in this L&T-enhancement project

The project benefited from the general expenditure on the reorganisation and rehousing of the Typography collections facilitated by CETL resources. The module draws on existing collections and resources both in the Department of Typography & Graphic Communication and outside including the Centre for Ephemera Studies and University Museums and Collections Service (London Road).

The project had no additional resource or funding implications as it is part of the undergraduate programme and as such is delivered by existing members of staff.

1.3 Processes – What were the key challenges in delivering this project?

From our original discussions with the Centre of Ephemera Studies, a proposed module description was submitted to our Board of Studies. The challenge here was to ensure that the module would be available for the following academic year and therefore development work had to be completed quickly. The full lecture programme and reading list followed.

We encountered no major problems in the implementation of the modules, and the delivery of the course mapped on very closely to our original project description. Students seemed enthusiastic and responsive and the logistics of the course worked well.

The module description is provided in Appendix 1.

2. Outputs and Evaluation

2.1 List the evaluation evidence/data collected

Date	Quantitative or qualitative?	Evaluation by...	Description / Method
Apr-08	both	Pt 3 Students 07/08	Module evaluation forms (includes convenor's report)
n/a	quantitative	Series data	Numbers of students enrolling on module each year
n/a	both	Academic Staff	Assessment of the coursework submitted by the students

2.2 Summarise the key results from your data

Full evaluation will not take place until July 2008 as part of the departments overall programme evaluation, when the module evaluation forms and convenors report will be used as part of the process.

2.3 How would you, as the PI, summarise the success of this project?

In general the running of the Ephemera Studies module has gone smoothly. The lectures were delivered as planned and the students seemed fully engaged and motivated throughout. The close supervision of students in an informal way was successful but we feel that they would have benefited from the inclusion of one or two timetabled progress reviews. It may also have been better to run the module over a longer period to give the students more opportunity for self-directed research. If necessary the module will be adapted in the light of pending student evaluation.

3. Impact and Consequences

3.1 How many students (and at what level and in which programme areas) has this L&T enhancement project impacted on?

So far the Ephemera Studies module has only run for one year and was chosen by eight out of seventeen undergraduate students on the Design for Graphic Communication programme. Next year the module will be opened up to students from other discipline areas from across the university.

3.2 Has this project positively contributed to the teaching environment and satisfaction of the academic staff delivering this provision?

In developing this module the staff team have found it very stimulating to consider ways of teaching this relatively new subject area. It has also brought staff into increased contact with the collections and archives and given them greater familiarity with the material. Trying to effectively communicate understanding of the subject to undergraduate students has helped staff reflect on their own approach to the subject of ephemera. The enhancement of the collections and archives in the Department of Typography & Graphic Communication through CETL funding has been particularly important to the Ephemera Studies module as it has enabled better organisation and storage of material used both in the teaching of the module and by the students in their own research.

3.3 Summarise the unforeseen consequences of this project

Students have been introduced to a wealth of original material and as a consequence have learnt a lot about how to correctly handle ephemera, and its storage and conservation. The creation of the undergraduate Ephemera Studies module has led to the introduction of a related MA module: Archives and Collections.

4. Dissemination

4.1 Can you log dissemination activities relating to this L&T Project

It has always been intended to await evaluation of the first cycle of Ephemera Studies before disseminating any information. In the light of a positive response our intention would be to publicise the course to staff and students across the university.

4.2 Beyond this evaluation, do you see any scope for pedagogic research in this area of learning?

As far as we are aware this is the only course available in the specific subject area of printed ephemera. Other institutions who have similar collections may wish to use this course as a model.

Project Developer's names:

Martin Andrews and Rob Banham

Appendix 1

TY3ES: Ephemera studies

Module Provider	Typography	Number of Credits	10 [5 ECTS credits]
Level	H (Hounours)	Terms in which taught	Spring
Module Convenor	Dr RE Banham		
Pre-requisites		Co-requisites	
Modules excluded		Module version for	2007/8

Aims:

This modules aims to introduce students to the concept of studying history through everyday documents (ephemera). It will give students the opportunity to learn by studying such documents first hand.

Assessable learning outcomes:

By the end of the module students should be able to:

- use ephemera as evidence in historical study
- categorise and describe items of ephemera
- use a variety of methods to date printed ephemera
- understand the issues involved in exhibiting and reproducing ephemera

Additional Outcomes

Students will develop skills in writing, research, exhibition design, and understanding of technical issues with regard to reproductions of original documents. The module will also enhance their analytical skills.

Outline Content

After a series of introductory seminars the students will become familiar with ephemera through self-directed study of material in the Department of Typography & Graphic Communication and RUL special collections. The introductory sessions will cover topics such as:

- what is ephemera?
- how to handle valuable documents
- how to date ephemera
- how to identify print processes
- case studies illustrating different ways of analysing ephemera

The students will then select material from available collections for an exhibition of ephemera and produce text and captions to accompany their selections. Together this will form an exhibition of ephemera for which each student will compile an accompanying document.

Brief Description of Teaching and Learning Methods

The introductory sessions will equip the students with the skills and knowledge to direct their own learning through hands-on study of collections available within the University. They will be expected to develop their own brief for the selection of ephemera for display in an exhibition. The students will have to select appropriate material, write text and captions and design accompanying printed or online documentation. Individual tutorials and group seminars are scheduled to monitor and support work in progress.

Contact hours:

	Autumn	Spring	Summer
Lectures			
Tutorials/seminars		10	
Practicals			
Other contact (eg study visits)			
Total hours		10	
Number of essays or assignments		2	
Other (eg major seminar paper)			

Assessment:

An illustrated essay with extended captions (3000-4000 words total) will be 60% of the overall mark. The display and interpretation of the material will comprise the remaining 40%.

Relative percentage of Coursework:

100%

Examinations:

None

Requirements for a Pass:

A mark of 40% overall

Reassessment Arrangements:

Essay to be submitted by 1 September if the module receives a mark of less than 40%.
Mark for display and interpretation to be carried forward.