

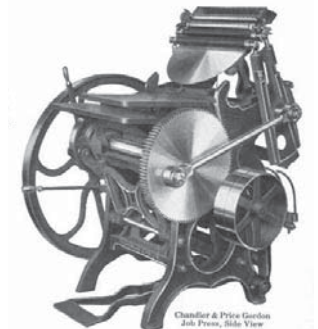
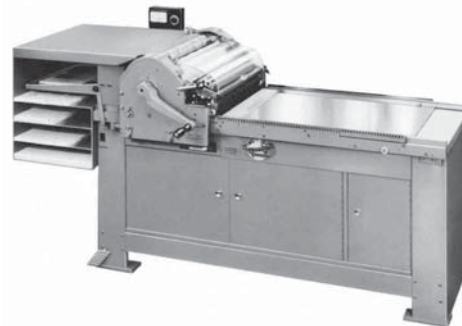
Dolphin Press: Letterpress
PR 248.01
Spring 2009
January 21 to May 6
Wednesdays, 4 to 10 p.m.

Mary Mashburn, Instructor
Kyle Van Horn, Assistant

Contact information:
Mary: mary@typecastpress.com
443-629-0128
Kyle: kvanhorn@mica.edu

This course is designed to introduce students to the art and craft of letterpress printing, including its history and modern practice. Students will learn how letterpress printing has evolved in the last 100 years, from its central role in the printing industries to its transformation into a fine arts and niche commercial enterprise. Students will utilize traditional elements of letterpress, including lead and wood type, as well as techniques that allow the modern printer to move from digital file to polymer plate. The course will focus on printing on the Vandercook proof press but will cover other presses and their roles, both historical and modern, in letterpress printing.

Class projects will combine foundation printing skills and project and design problem-solving. Critiques of printed pieces will cover the concerns of fine printing craftsmanship, the creativity of the concept, and the success of visual communication.



The production of work in this shop relies on type being sorted at the end of a project.
Use this handy form to keep track of your fonts.

small broadside

font name	size	case	#/color
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

business cards

font name	size	case	#/color
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

post cards

font name	size	case	#/color
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

coasters

font name	size	case	#/color
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

large broadside

font name	size	case	#/color
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

font name	size	case	#/color
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

...and yes, in case you were wondering... all grades will be withheld until all type is correctly put away.

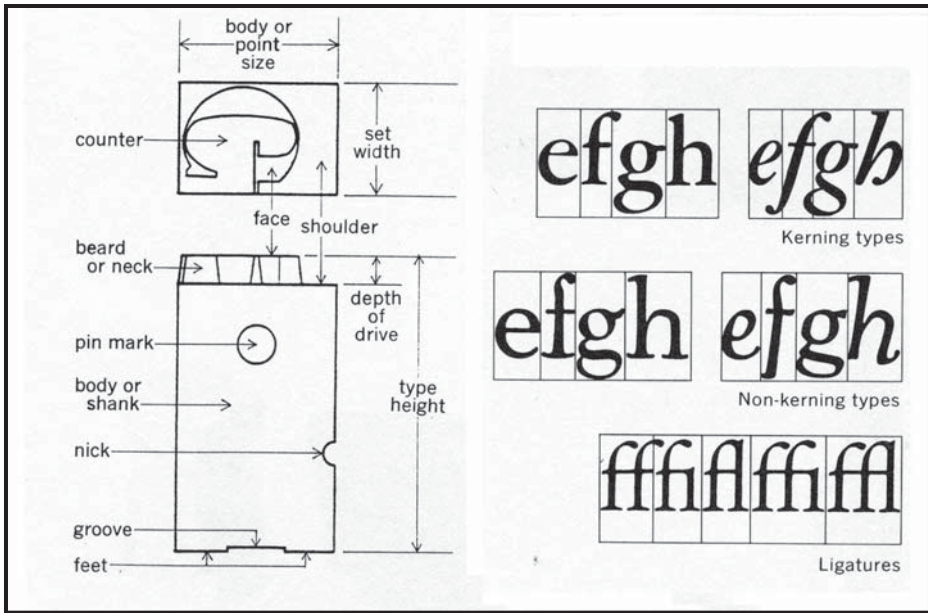


Image source: American Metal Typefaces of the Twentieth Century

Pied Type Unsorted type, usually as a result of its having spilled or dumped. (AVOID THIS.)

Point 72 to the inch; 12 to the pica. Unit of measure for type.

Quads Non-printing units of metal used to create space between text characters.

Quoin Sliding wedges or expansion units that lock type and spacers into place.

Quoin Key Tool to tighten and loosen quoins.

Sans Serif Without serifs (a more modern design). Univers is an example of a sans serif typeface (See also Serif)

Serif The little lines at the top and bottom of letters. They aid your eye in reading along the lines of type. Garamond is an example of a serified typeface. (See also Sans Serif)

Slug Strip of spacing material 6 points thick and greater.

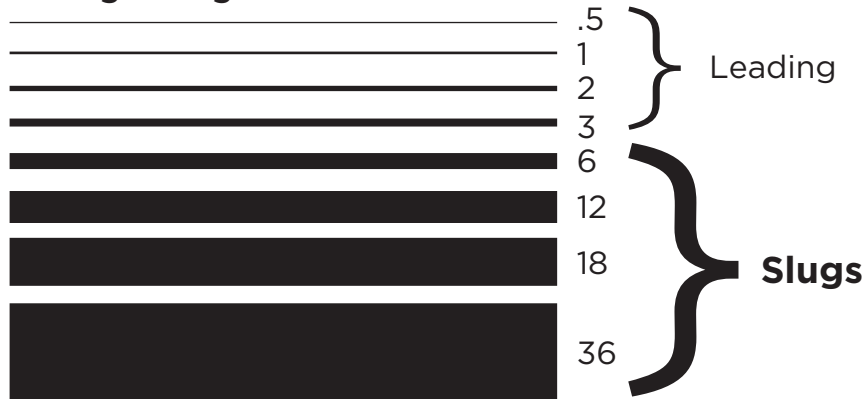
Text Text sizes are those about 14 points or smaller. (See also Display.)

Tympan Paper The stiff (yellow) paper that is used atop packing on the press. It cushions the type and also allows the image to be printed and then wiped off, leaving a ghost image that can be used for registration.

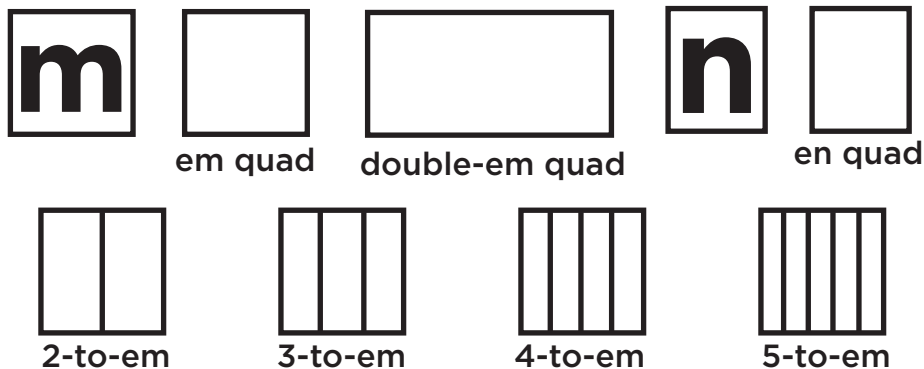
Type High In the US and England, .918 inches. Continental Europe uses taller type, but foundries there will often plane it down for American and English printers.

Typeface The design of the characters. (See also Font and Family.)

Leading & Slugs



Spacing & Quads



LETTERPRESS VOCABULARY

Bed The flat surface on which the type is placed for printing.

Brass Thin space, 1 point thick, used for kerning type. See also Copper.

Cabinet (Type Cabinet, Stand) The support for dustless cases, with a tilted top for one or two cases.

Case (Type Case.) Drawer—but don't ever call it a drawer—with compartments ("boxes") for storage of type. The original design has a lip at the front; later dustless cases were designed without a lip and in a tighter-fitting stand to keep dust and debris out of the cases.

Composing Stick Shallow, adjustable tray in which type is set or arranged before it is locked into the chase.

Copper Thin space 1/2 point thick, used for kerning type. See also Brass.

Display Fonts sized approx. 16pt and over. (See also Text.)

Distribute The term for returning type to the case after printing. In England, they "diss" type.

Family An entire family of type, e.g. regular, medium, italic, bold, etc.

Font All the letters, figures, and punctuation of a particular size and style of type. "Font" in letterpress refers to the set of type, not the actual design of it. (See also Family and Typeface.)

Form Type and/or cuts, plus spacing material, assembled and locked in a chase ready for printing.

Furniture Hardwood or metal blocks in specific lengths and widths [measured in picas], used to fill in the space around the type on the bed.

Galley (Galley tray.) Metal (steel or brass) tray on which to store set type or forms.

Grippers On a cylinder press, round pieces operated by a foot pedal that grab the paper. They release only when the press is taken all the way to the end of the bed.

Kerning A component of letterspacing, used to remedy problems between letter pairs.

Leading Spacing between lines of type.

Letterspace The space between individual letters.

Ligature A combination of letters to form one piece. Fonts usually come with ff, fl, ffl, fi, ffi, and may have others for style (such as ct or st) or for other languages (such as æ or œ).

Make-ready A carefully-placed stenciled sheet of packing that will control pressure and therefore make the impression more even. More informally, the act of making sure all parts of the form print evenly.

Nick Indention in the top side of type used to identify the correct orientation.

Ornament A small, decorative element cast into type metal like type. They can be intended for solo use or in a line to make a border. Some come in multiple parts to create a two- or three-color image.

Packing Paper that is stacked behind the printing paper to achieve the desired amount of pressure.

Pica 12 points; 6 picas to the inch. Sometimes referred to as "line" in reference to wood type. Unit of measure for line length. (See also Point.)

Attendance and Participation:

Printing trades have historically been passed along not by textbook or self-teaching but by those new to the craft learning from more experienced printers. That tradition will be a key part of the class, so attendance is critical. Students are expected to be present for and ready to work in every class for the entire time allotted. Each missed class or missed portion of a class will affect your final grade.

- Arriving late or leaving class early *two times* equals *one absence*
 - Two unexcused absences will result in a lowering of your grade
 - Three unexcused absences will result in a failing grade.
- E-mail Mary at mary@typecastpress.com about any absences.

Grade:

50% completion and success of projects

50% attendance and participation

Final Critiques will be held on May 6th.

Class structure:

Class will begin with the introduction of new themes and areas of study, followed by application of those themes to a project. Short presentations on letterpress topics, from instructors and students alike, will be included from time to time. A substantial portion of class time will be devoted to learning on the presses as we work on projects.

Projects to be completed during the semester:

- Small broadside
- Business cards
- Postcards
- Coasters
- Large broadside (part of class project)

These projects will be defined more fully as the class progresses.

Class rules:

No cell phones ringing or used for talking or texting in class. No headphones, ear buds etc. No food, no drink unless it's liquid in an enclosed, capped bottle or mug.

HEALTH / SAFETY

-All the type in this room is made of lead, and all of the chemicals in the room are solvent-based. Please remember this for the duration of the class. It is *imperative* that hands are washed before eating.

-All long hair should be pulled back for class.

-Aprons are recommended - the presses have all been recently oiled.

-Closed-toe shoes are required.

-Gloves are required, either solvent-proof disposable nitrile or reusable Bluettes. You'll need gloves every time you clean the press or mix ink.

-Food is not allowed in the room. Drinks are allowed if they are in a bottle or travel-cup with lid.

ADA COMPLIANCE

In MICA's efforts to provide the highest possible quality educational experience for every student, MICA maintains compliance with requirements of the ADA and section 504. Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact Mary Mashburn privately to discuss specific needs. Please contact the Learning Resource Center at 410-225-2416, in Bunting 458, to establish eligibility and coordinate reasonable accommodations. For additional information please refer to:
<http://www.mica.edu/learningresourcecenter/>.

Resources And Books:

BEST PLACES TO START: David Rose of Five Roses Press has posted an excellent overview of letterpress: www.fiveroses.org/intro.htm. Included are online resources for history, supplies, manuals, the art of printing, and good descriptions of letterpress machines.

Recommended: For a front-row-seat view of the interests and problems of letterpress printers working today (plus a lot of idle chatter), join the Letpress listserv. Interesting mix of retired

printers, hobbyists, and designers turned printers. Make sure to get it in DIGEST form so you can skim it for interesting information; otherwise, your mail box will be flooded. A quick link to the listserv can be found on the Five Roses Introduction to Letterpress Printing page; or google "letterpress listserv". It's the first link. **remember to confirm your subscription**

* Note that the David Rose introduction above has several other books you might want to consider.

PLEASE NOTE: The web is a rich resource for letterpress information and supplies, from blogs to more formal web sites like www.briarpress.com for discussions, links, press information and classifieds. Kyle will also maintain a running list of web resources: <http://kylevanhorn.com/teaches/letterpress>

Books (not required for the course but useful if you plan to continue on in the inky arts):

"General Printing" by Glen U. Cleeton, Charles W. Pitkin, Raymond Cornwell, 1963 edition reissued 2006 by Liber Apertus Press (www.liberapertus.com or on Amazon).

Great introductory book for traditional letterpress printing with lots of photos and illustrations.

"Printing Digital Type on the Hand-Operated Flatbed Cylinder Press by Gerald Lange" (Second Edition). Bieler Press, 2001. Very dense and more than a little obsessive-compulsive, this manual still has plenty of interesting information and food for thought on Vandercooks and photopolymer by an early Vandercook adopter and master.

"Paragraphs on Printing" by Bruce Rogers, Dover Publications (www.doverpublications.com). An American typographer and book designer working in the early to middle part of the 20th century, Rogers was printing adviser to Cambridge and Harvard university presses, and to commercial houses specializing in limited editions and fine printing. Dover Publications book has a number of inspiring illustrations that focus on his use of type and ornament.