Lecture 17: books in the 18th century; do books make revolutions?

I. 18th century reading
- increased access to books: increased literacy (from 30% to 50% male literacy in France overall; up to 90% in some areas), cabinets de lecture and circulating libraries
- extensive vs intensive reading (Rolf Engelsing): more quantity
- new kinds of reading (novels and their emotional reception)

II. English book trade: increased commodification of the book
By mid 18th century increased productivity: from 125 sheets/hr to 320 sheets/hr
- More aggressive marketing: puffs, clouds, money back guarantee; appeal to special audiences (e.g. children’s literature); some books become must-have items—prices often still high, due to booksellers’ cartels, but poised to drop in late 18th with challenges to Stationers’ Company
- Better bankruptcy laws; better distribution to provinces

III. Enlightenment and the French Revolution
- Daniel Mornet on book ownership 1750-80. Trends: decline of religious books (from 50% of French book production in late 17th to 10% in 1780s, from requests for permissions)
- permissions tacites and the circulation of “philosophical books”
- Darnton, *Forbidden Best-sellers*: three kinds of philosophical books: pornography, libelles, and “Enlightenment philosophy”
- Grub Street and the Enlightenment
- Range of “Enlightenment” works: e.g. Diderot and d’Alembert’s Encyclopedie (1750-72); Stoy’s picture academy (1780)
- Enlightenment a revolutionary construct?? (Chartier, *Cultural Origins of French Revolution*)