Lecture 23: final lecture

Exam prep handouts; review session; PLS COMPLETE EVALUATIONS!!

I. A glimpse of the book market today:
Market for books in US today, see BookExpo America
Booksellers: independents, chains and by direct mail or internet; foreign
Book buyers: libraries (university, school, public), 3rd party, individuals
Publishers: university, trade (semi-trade), religious, other special interest
A mature market—very competitive; pressure on marketing and advertising
(decline in newspaper-buying in 2005 (5%) attributed to do-not-call list!)

II. Some of my reflections on technology and society:
• Some supercession: tablet to roll to codex; papyrus, parchment, paper
• But much coexistence: orality, mss, print + multiple electronic media
• New technologies mean new codes to learn—signals from a book, a
website etc.; may have an impact on human activities and relations
• Gaps (in time, in form) between first development and wide reception
• Successful technologies are shaped by and respond to social context

III. Some of my reflections on the history of the book:
This field offers historians and literary critics awareness of a range of new
evidence to aid in interpreting texts and their production and reception.
These forms of analysis are most useful not in the abstract but when included among the contextual elements specific to a particular time/place.
-authors and texts are affected by the conditions of production. How much does production cost? Who is paying for it? Under what conditions of profit-making (e.g. privileges, patents, copyright, competition etc)?
-readers read texts that are accessible to them: consider cost, literacy, languages, distribution, marketing, libraries and other forms of sharing
-readers appropriate texts and shape the transmission of an author’s ideas according to their interests and habits of thought. These can be individual or more widely shared (due to habits formed in schools, families, religious or ethnic or national groups)
-controlling access to texts has often seemed important to parents, churches, governments; historically certain categories of readers have seemed most important to protect: women, children, the lower orders/working classes. Even in the absence of formal censorship market forces often lead to some self-censorship.