

English 206: Literary History

Project Essay 3

In the previous projects you pursued questions involving individual texts and then authorial careers. In this final project, you will decide what kind of question to ask, and it will have to do with the reception of books at the Easton Library Company (1811-1862). There are two main ways to look at reception: through library holdings, since shareholders had a lot of say as to what was acquired, and through loan records, since they indicate what people actually took off the shelves. It's important to remember, though, that such records don't generally show us what people *read* – more what they *meant to read*, or at least look into. In this assignment, you should give yourself permission to experiment, to try things out, and to talk to me about how things are going. You will also submit a 1p. summary of your research question and where it's leading you so far when it's your turn to workshop your project; these summaries are due by 5pm the day before your scheduled workshop.

Essays will be graded according to the following criteria:

- Specificity and viability of the research question you used;
- Choice and use of evidence to develop your argument;
- Clarity of expression in presenting your argument.

The essays are to be 5-6pp. long, double-spaced with MLA citation style. They are due **5pm on Monday, November 24** on Moodle.

The goals of this assignment are:

1. To apply the skills from previous projects in a context that gives you more intellectual freedom;
2. To introduce you to the potential roles that digital tools can play in studying literary history;
3. To develop your sense of what can count as relevant context in literary history.