



# Revolutions in Communication

*Media History from  
Gutenberg  
to the Digital Age*

*Slides based on the Bloomsbury book by Bill Kovarik*

**Introduction** Overview of course (0.1.1)

# Course information

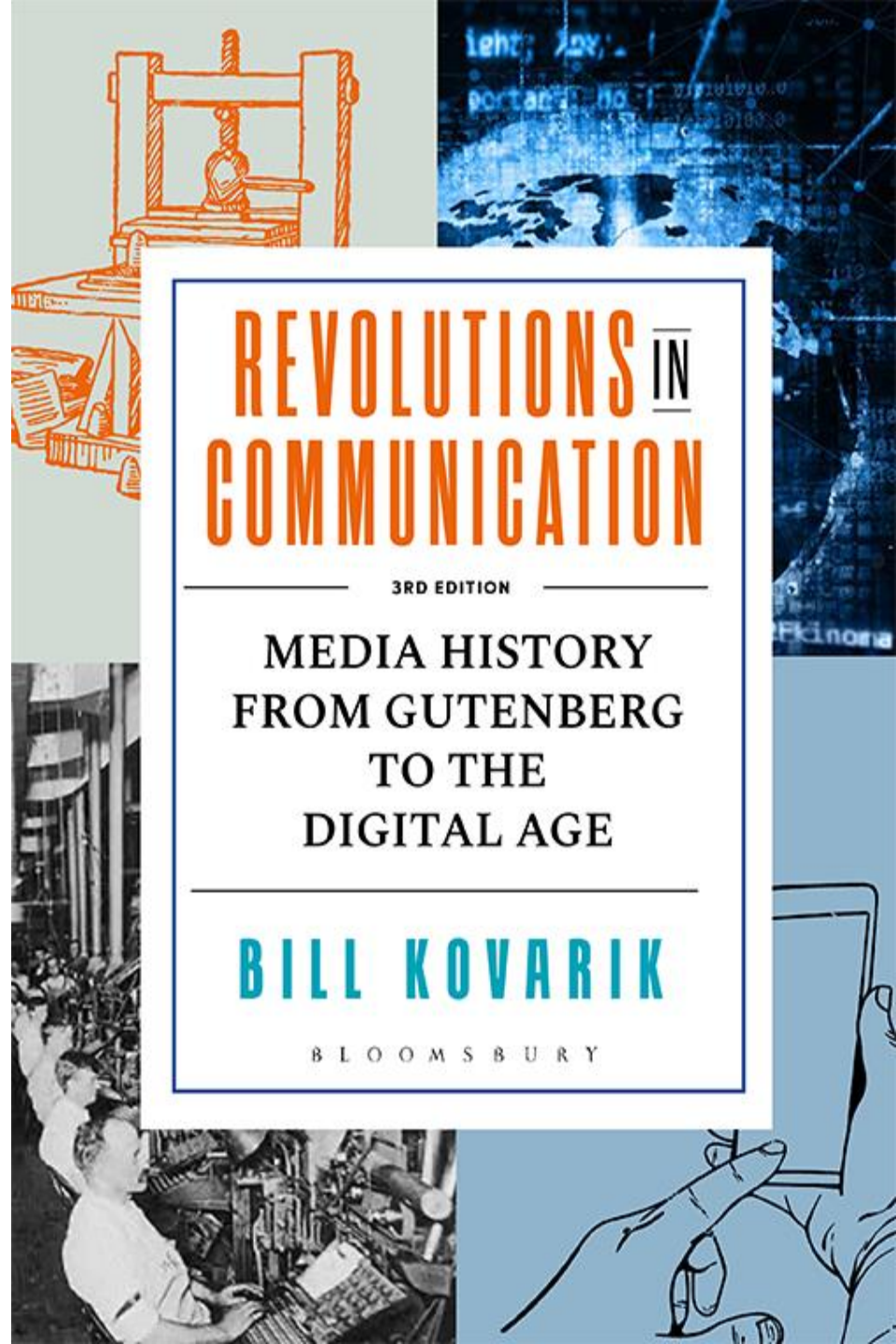
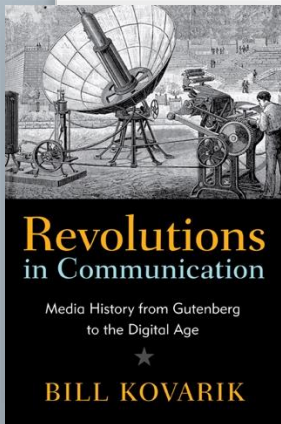
- Three main resources for this course:
  1. Radford's D2L system (learn.radford.edu)
  2. The textbook "Revolutions in Communication"
  3. The textbook's web site:
    - <https://www.revolutionsincommunication.com>
- The D2L system has the schedule, quizzes and drop boxes for the course.
- The course content is in the book
- Additional materials are on the web site

# Textbook

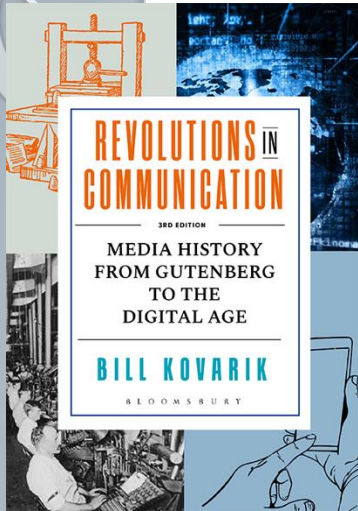
by Bloomsbury  
3<sup>rd</sup> edition 2025

Website:  
[www.revolutionsincommunication.com](http://www.revolutionsincommunication.com)

1<sup>st</sup> edition 2011  
published by  
Continuum  
(Bloomsbury)



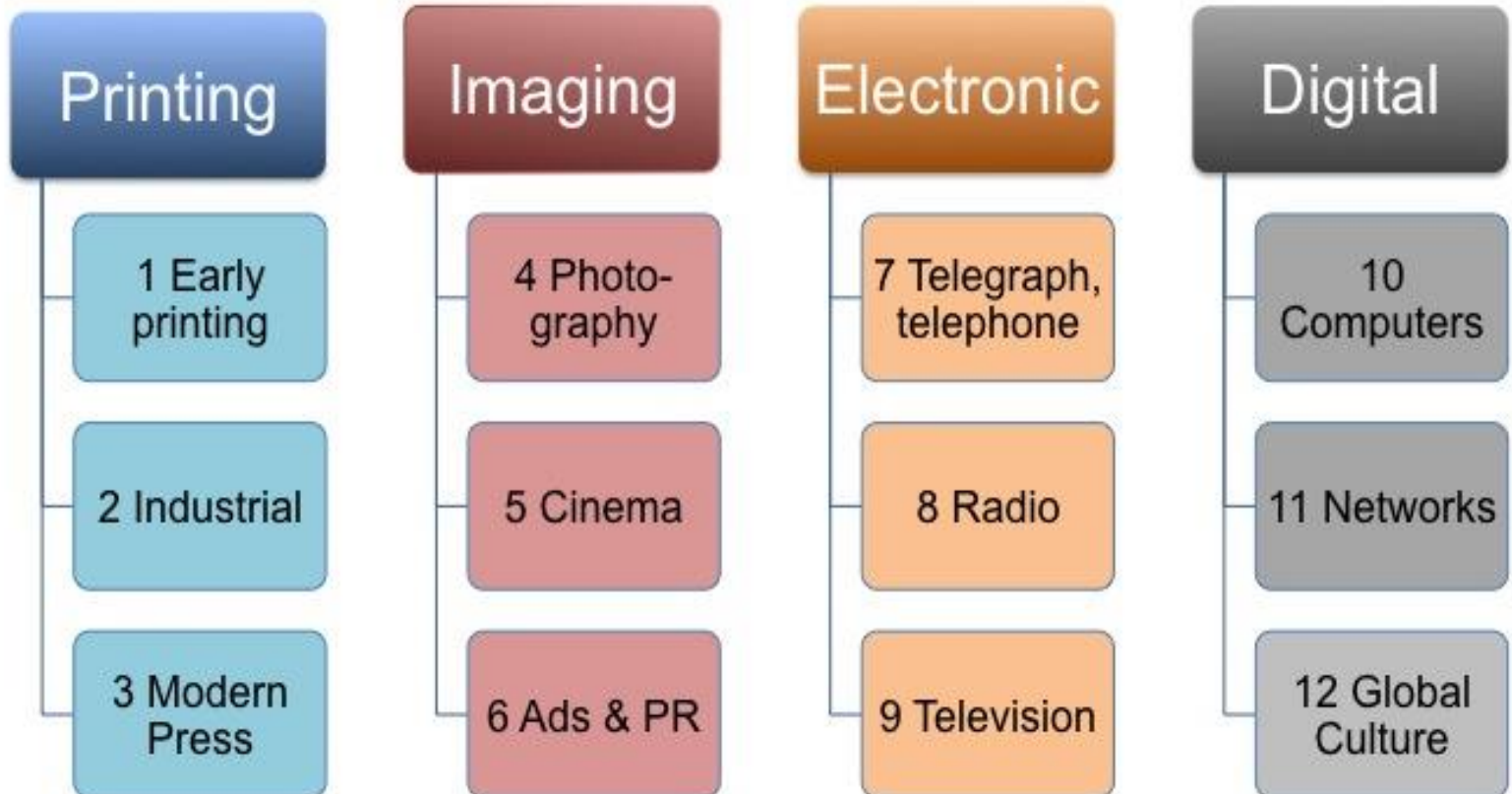
# The textbook has:



- International scope
- Technology framework
- A survey of all disciplines
  - Printing (books, newspapers, magazines)
  - Imaging (photo, cinema, pr, advertising)
  - Electronics (wire services, radio, TV)
  - Digital media (computers, networks)
- Low cost to encourage student use
- Special sections on the web site

# Media history course map

Intro: Exploring media history



# Course web site:

- <https://www.revolutionsincommunication.com>



HOME ABOUT COURSE CHAPTER RESOURCES FEATURES PHOTOGRAPHY CINEMA TV TIMELINES INTERNATIONAL

*Revolutions in Communication*  
**Media history** from Gutenberg to the digital age

**RADIO TIME MACHINE**



**Revolutions in Communication** is a critically acclaimed survey of media history now available through Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and directly from the publisher, [Bloomsbury](#). The book topped the Amazon sales list for media history in 2011, 2012, and 2013. It is widely used in college classrooms from NYU to USC, from Western Ontario to Florida International.

The book is a social and technological history that explores four major epochs of



**MEDIA HISTORY UPDATES**

† **Ancient books online** The Vatican and Oxford's Bodleian libraries began a project in December, 2013 to digitise their collections of ancient books in the interest of democratising scholarship.



# Course web site has:

- Syllabus
- Introduction & Chapter I
- Links to original a/v and documents,
- Reading & discussion suggestions



# As a student you will want to ...

- Read the syllabus
- Keep up with reading, quizzes & assignments
- Know the policies
  - Late work
  - Honor code
  - Disabilities policy
- Consider your own contributions to the class

# As a student you will also ...

- Read, listen, think & participate
- Ask lots of questions
- Consider new perspectives
- Explore classic cinema and TV
- Close your eyes and listen to programs from the golden age of radio

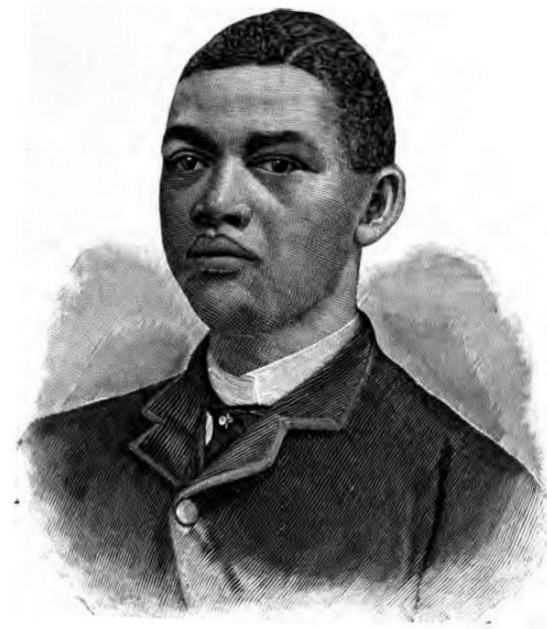
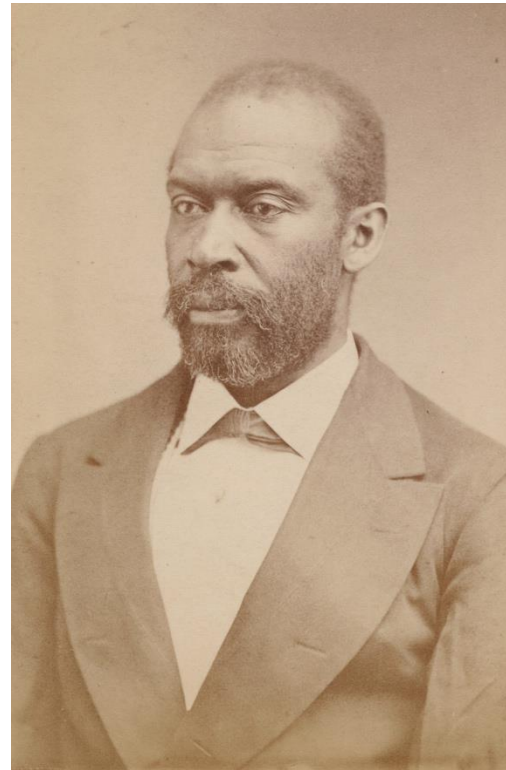
You will meet some of the  
world's most interesting people



# Ben Franklin at the press



# Famous reporters & editors



# Famous reporters & editors



# Famous photographers



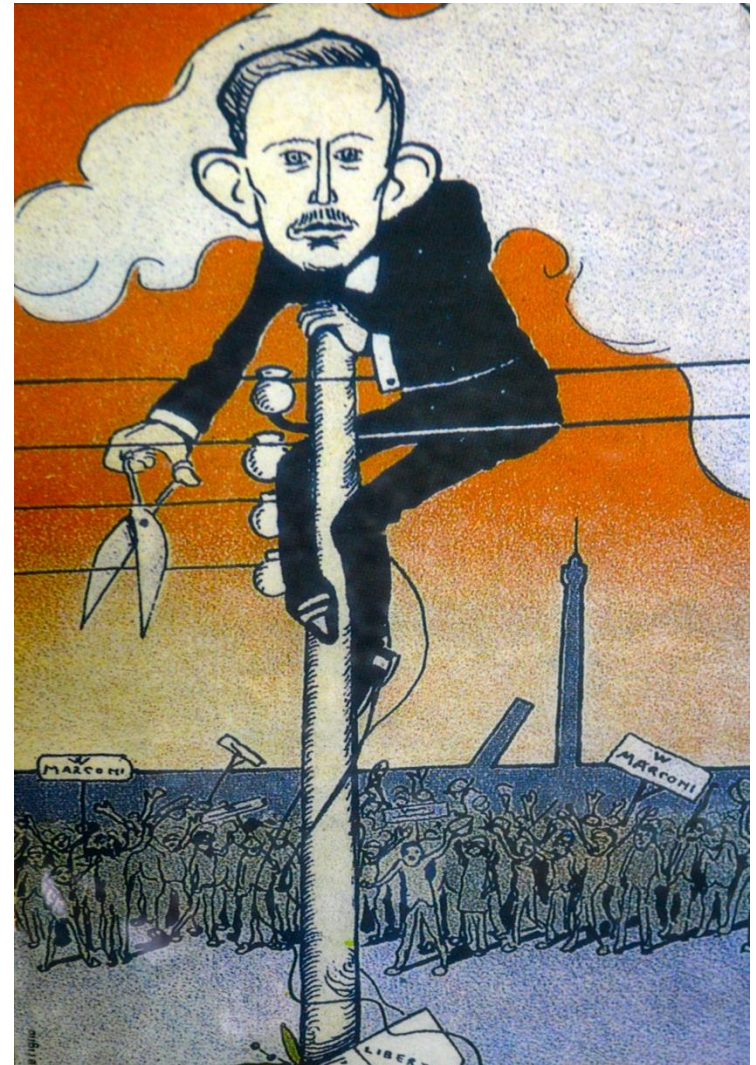
And their work

Stars of

cinema



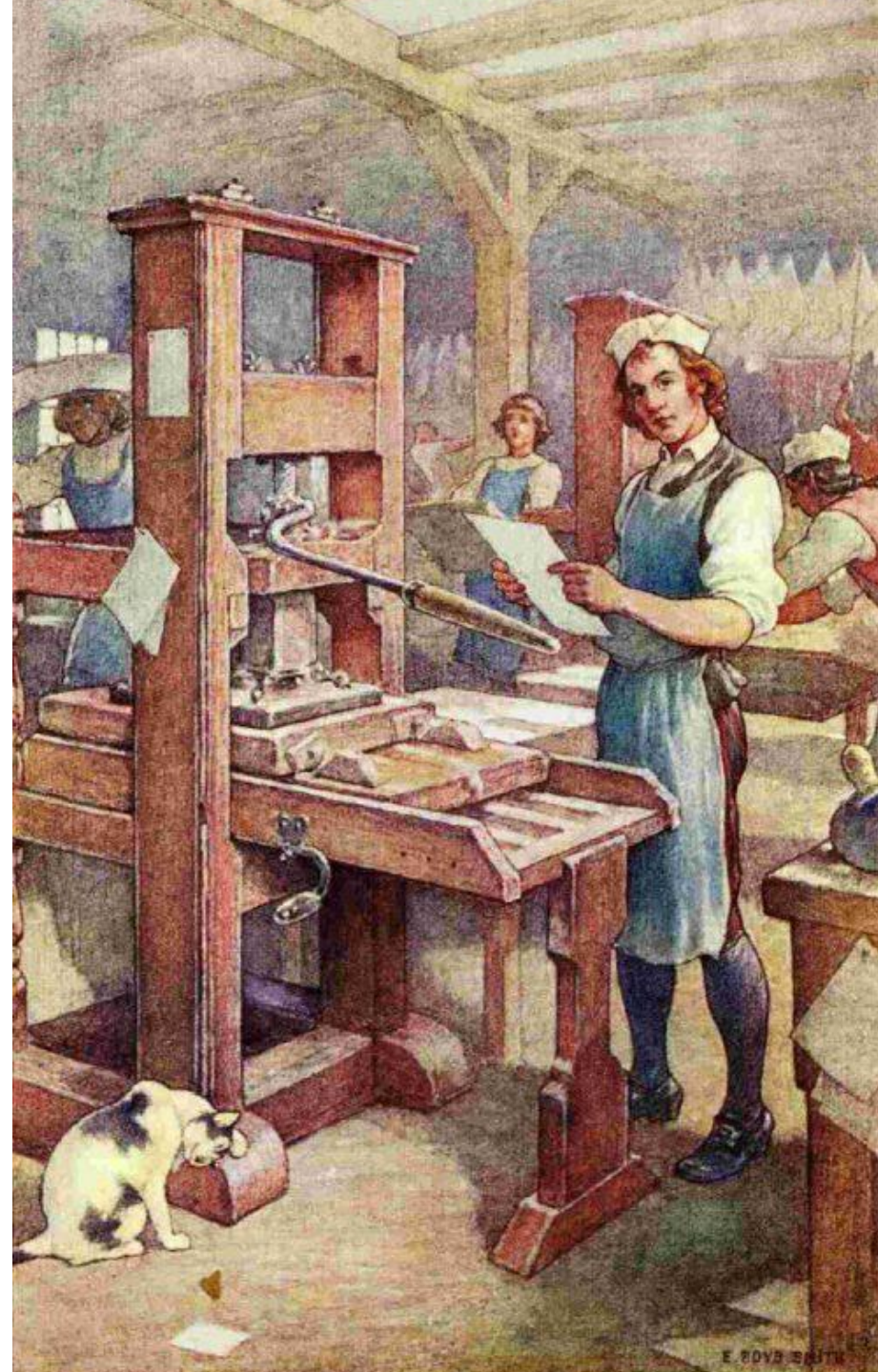
... and radio ...





... and digital media

We're going  
to tell stories  
and ask what  
it was like to  
live and work  
in those  
times.





**Do we live in an Information Age?**

**When did it start?**

**How is it different from living in the industrial age?**



**What are the top five media technologies that have developed over the past 1,000 years?**



**What are some of the  
concerns about  
the impact of digital media?**



**Do technologies mostly take their own course, or are they mostly shaped by social needs?**



**Do we get to choose our technologies? Should we?**

# Why were these Bibles smuggled to Slovenia in barrels?



Next up: *A ghost story from Watt's 'chapel' in London.*



Also Chapter  
0.1b

Introduction  
to the study  
of history.

(Download  
free pdf from  
textbook site)



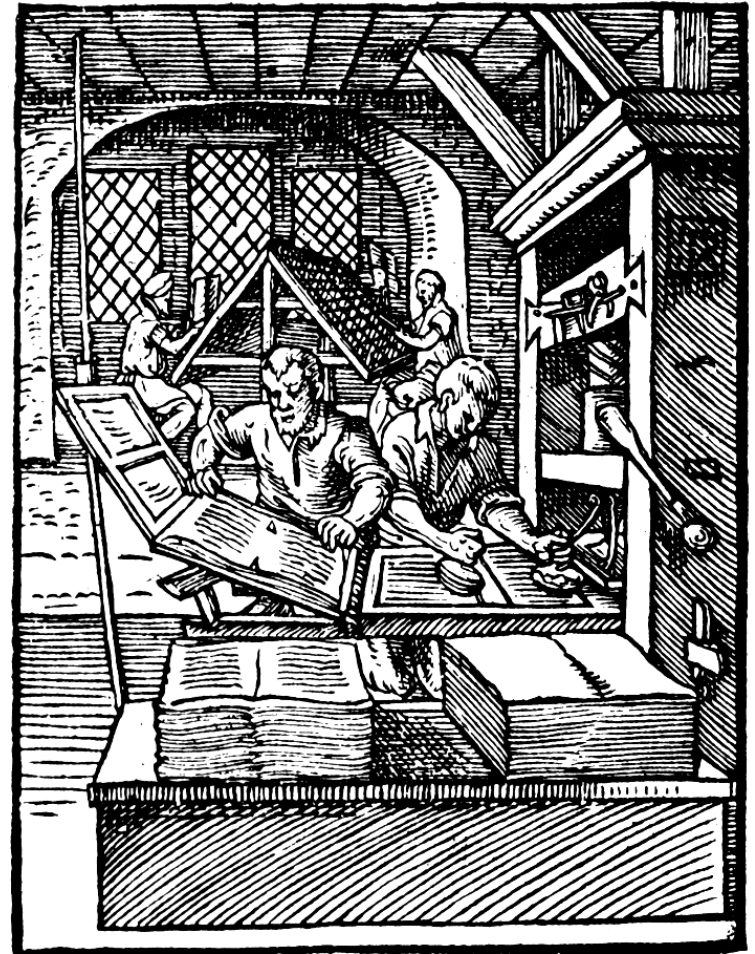
Starting in the 1450s, when the first printed Bibles appeared, the people in the new craft of printing began to develop their own traditions and culture at work.

One of these traditions was that newcomers would pay a “bien venue” initiation fee to the other printers.

Benjamin Franklin arrived in London on Christmas Eve, 1724, having left Philadelphia with a promise of support for his printing operation.

The support fell through, and he took a job with Samuel Palmer in January, 1725, and John Watts in 1726.

He paid his 5 shilling fee (about half a day's wages) when he joined Watts as a journeyman printer.



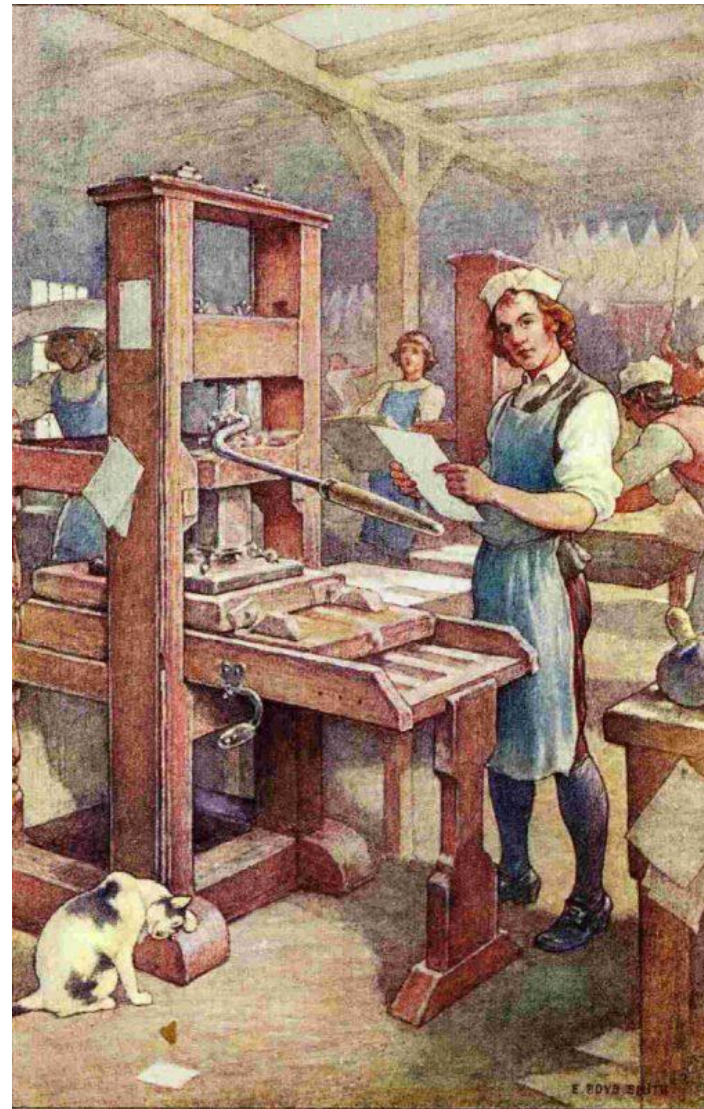
Most of his fellow printers drank lots of ale. Franklin did not drink much ale because he was trying to save money. Because he was a sober sort of worker, and good at setting type, Watt transferred him from the printing chapel to the typesetting (compositor's) workshop.



Now the typesetters wanted their “bien venue.”

*“I thought it an imposition, as I had paid below; the master thought so too, and forbade my paying it.”*

*I stood out two or three weeks, was accordingly considered as an excommunicate, and had so many little pieces of private mischief done me, by mixing my sorts, transposing my pages, breaking my matter, etc., etc., if I were ever so little out of the room, and all ascribed to the chapel ghost ...*



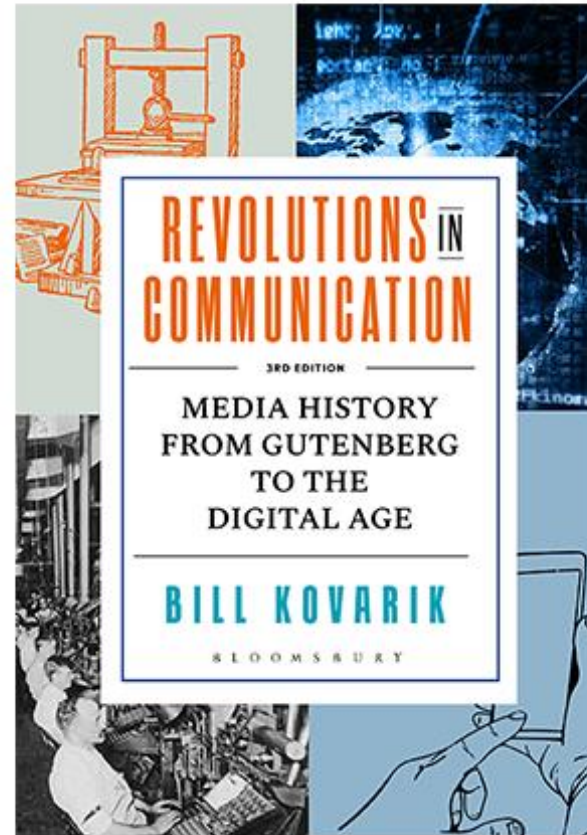


*... which they said ever haunted those not regularly admitted, that, notwithstanding the master's protection, I found myself oblig'd to comply and pay the money, convinc'd of the folly of being on ill terms with those one is to live with continually.*



**Textbook  
published by  
Bloomsbury**

**3rd edition  
2025**









**In class discussion:**

**Do you listen to radio or watch TV the same way your parents did? How has media technology changed in your lifetime?**





Printing  
museum  
Carson CA

... which they said  
ever haunted those not  
regularly admitted, that,  
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master's protection, I  
found myself oblig'd to  
comply and pay the  
money, convinc'd of the  
folly of being on ill  
terms with those one is  
to live with continually.



# Introductions



Hello there. I'm Bill Kovarik, a Radford University professor and instructor for this class. (And, by the way, this is my friend Klaatu, from the Seattle museum of pop culture & science fiction. I'm the handsome one on the right.)

I've been teaching at RU since 1990 and I earned my PhD at the University of Maryland in 1994. I was a professional journalist before that, working for the AP, the Charleston Courier, Time magazine and the Baltimore Sun.

What about you? Let's go around the class with introductions. Where are you from, what's your concentration, where will you be in five years?