



Though eBooks, free digital downloads, and .pdf copies make the materiality of the book seem secondary to generic concerns, artistic inspiration, and authorial intent, books' value always has been linked to their physical form: born of the press and circulating through the hands of readers eager for contact with the printed page. Our class will study both the inside and the outside of books, tying form to content from the first press in the seventeenth-century colonial Massachusetts, through to Oprah's book club and Amazon's Kindle. We will meet in Hill Memorial Library and use their extensive collections to better understand how the book has changed over the past four hundred years, even while remaining at the center of the dynamic intellectual culture of America.

We will read Benjamin Franklin's autobiography, Harriet Beecher Stowe's influential novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, the most recent selection from Oprah's Book Club (TBA), and Stephen King's e-novella *Ur*. Class activities will include forays into Hill Library's archives, class discussions, and guest lectures by LSU faculty members. Assignments will consist of traditional analytical and research essays, archival investigations in the library's physical collections and online databases, and a cumulative final. Ultimately, our class will make visible the materiality of the book and render that physicality a meaningful part of its artistic content and cultural value.



Detail from *Franklin the Printer* (1908) by Charles B. Mills.