

Book History (A004501)

Course size *(nominal values; actual values may depend on programme)*

Credits 5.0

Study time 150 h

Course offerings and teaching methods in academic year 2025-2026

A (semester 1)

English

Gent

lecture

seminar

Lecturers in academic year 2025-2026

Van Remoortel, Marianne

LW07

lecturer-in-charge

Cuomo, Andrea

LW06

co-lecturer

Vorobyev, Grigory

LW06

co-lecturer

Offered in the following programmes in 2025-2026

Master of Science in Teaching in Arts and Humanities (main subject History)

crdts

offering

5

A

Master of Arts in Art History, Musicology and Theatre Studies

5

A

Master of Arts in Historical Linguistics and Literature

5

A

Master of Arts in History

5

A

Exchange Programme Critical Perspectives on Culture

5

A

Exchange Programme Cultures and Languages in Context

5

A

Exchange Programme History

5

A

Exchange Programme Medieval Studies and Auxiliary Sciences

5

A

Elective Set Critical Perspectives on Culture

5

A

Teaching languages

English

Keywords

manuscript, printing, book, periodical, Antiquity, Middle Ages, early modern period, modern period, codicology, analytical bibliography, digitisation

Position of the course

This course introduces students to the history of the book to ca. 1900, with particular attention to the description and study of 1) written materials and manuscripts from Classical Antiquity to the Middle Ages and 2) print media from the early modern and modern period. The course surveys recent trends in the field, where the material dimensions of texts and images have increasingly come to be seen as essential to their understanding as cultural-historical artefacts.

Contents

Introduction to Codicology: Study of materials, structure and layout (mise-en-page), writing, decoration, binding, and the historical development of manuscripts; techniques for the codicological description of manuscripts and script; description of codicological data for the purpose of determining the dating and provenance of the object.

Introduction to print media: Historical development; printing techniques, materials, and print formats (book, periodical); layout and design; circulation and reception; social and intellectual impact; digitisation.

Initial competences

No essential prior knowledge is required. However, students are expected to be familiar with historiographical methods and to be able to independently locate relevant bibliographic sources.

Final competences

- 1 Demonstrate a solid understanding of the processes involved in the production of manuscripts and early printed books.
- 2 Analyse and describe manuscripts and print media in a professional codicological manner, i.e., following descriptive frameworks appropriately discussed in class.
- 3 Apply knowledge of the material aspects of manuscripts and early printed books to scientific research on (literary) history.
- 4 Demonstrate insight into the impact of printing techniques and print media on the organisation and dissemination of knowledge and ideas and on writing and reading practices.
- 5 Reflect critically on the impact of digitisation on the study of print media.

Conditions for credit contract

Access to this course unit via a credit contract is unrestricted: the student takes into consideration the conditions mentioned in 'Starting Competences'

Conditions for exam contract

This course unit cannot be taken via an exam contract

Teaching methods

Seminar, Lecture

Study material

Type: Slides

Name: Slides

Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty

Optional: no

Language : English

Available on Ufora : Yes

Type: Reader

Name: Reader

Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty

Optional: no

Language : English

Available on Ufora : Yes

References

Course content-related study coaching

Students can talk to the teachers after class. They can ask questions via the digital learning platform Ufora or make an appointment via email.

Assessment moments

end-of-term and continuous assessment

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the first examination period

Written assessment

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the second examination period

Written assessment

Examination methods in case of permanent assessment

Participation, Assignment

Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment

examination during the second examination period is possible

Extra information on the examination methods

Participation (10%): Active engagement in seminars is required. Students are expected to contribute to discussions, answer questions, and prepare for seminars by reading short assigned texts.

Assignments (50%): Students complete a series of written assignments through the semester and submit a final project.

Written exam (40%): The final written exam will consist of questions on topics dealt with in class.

Calculation of the examination mark

Your final grade will be based on participation during seminars (10%), written assignments (50%), and written exam (40%).

If a student is absent without a valid reason or does not participate in (any part of) the assessment (assignments and exam), they will not pass and, even if their total score exceeds 8/20, will receive a final score of no more than 7/20.

A passing score for the permanent evaluation can be carried over to the second examination period.

Facilities for Working Students

1. Possible exemption from educational activities requiring student attendance; a task is imposed in substitution after discussion with the lecturer
2. Possible rescheduling of the examination to a different time in the same academic year
3. Feedback can be given during an appointment during and after office hours