

## *Transitions between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*

*3 creds.,  
1<sup>st</sup> semester*

*Dr. Nora Rodríguez Loro  
Universidad de Salamanca  
[norarloro@usal.es](mailto:norarloro@usal.es)*




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### **Aims and Objectives**

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This course offers a historical overview of the transition from manuscript culture to print culture in medieval and early modern England. It examines how books were made, read, used and controlled before and after the invention of the printing press. Key topics include materials and techniques of manuscript production, paleography, codicology, book formats, early modern hands, and the impact of print on literacy, religion and society.

**By the end of the course, students will be able to:**

- Identify and describe key features of medieval manuscripts and early printed books.
- Understand the historical context of the shift from manuscript to print in England.
- Conduct basic paleographical analysis of English manuscripts from the medieval and early modern periods.
- Use bibliographic and archival tools to locate, describe, and cite primary sources.
- Critically evaluate the cultural and social impact of the printing revolution.
- Develop skills in manuscript description, transcription, and textual analysis.

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### **Course Program.**

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#### **Unit 1 – Introduction to Manuscripts and Book History**

- Overview of manuscript culture in medieval England
- Materials and techniques in manuscript production (parchment, ink, *scriptoria*)

- Layouts, language and iconography
- Marks of ownership and use

## Unit 2 – Paleography and Codicology

- Introduction to medieval handwriting and common abbreviations
- Codicology: understanding book structure, quires, bindings
- Conventions for transcription and citation

## Session 3 – From Script to Print: The Printing Press and Its Consequences

- Gutenberg's press and its spread
- The transition in England: Caxton and the first English printers
- The printing press as a cultural and religious agent of change (humanism, Reformation)
- The English Bible, censorship, and print regulation

## Session 4 – The Book in Early Modern England: Uses and Readers

- Commonplace books and miscellanies
- Printed book formats and components (title pages, colophons, margins)
- Manuscripts in the age of print: continuity and adaptation
- Marginalia, annotations and the history of reading

## Session 5 – Researching Primary Sources: Libraries, Catalogues, Databases

- Finding manuscripts and early printed books
- Using archives and digital tools (e.g., EEBO, ESTC)
- Citing and referencing manuscripts and rare books
- Planning and conducting archival research

## Session 6 – Textual Transmission and Editorial Practice

- Provenance and the life of a book
- The history of textual editing and transmission
- Case studies: transmission of medieval texts into print
- Paleography exercises

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## Methodology

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This course combines **lectures, seminars, workshops** and **guided research**. Theoretical content will be delivered through lectures to provide students with the essential background for paleographical analysis and book description. Students will participate in paleography exercises, work with digital facsimiles and archival databases, and complete independent study tasks. Emphasis is placed on collaborative discussion and practical engagement with primary sources.

As the course is conducted in English, students are expected to have an advanced proficiency in the language (minimum C1 level according to the CEFR).

## Assessment

The assessment of this course is based on the following components:

- Paleography Workbook (30%)
  - Transcription and analysis of selected manuscript extracts
  - Annotations on handwriting styles and abbreviations
- Research Portfolio (30%)
  - Bibliographic description of a manuscript or early printed book
  - Archival search reflection and citation exercise
- Final Essay (40%)
  - A 2,500–3,000-word research essay on a topic related to manuscript or print culture

## Bibliography and Resources

- Boffey, Julia and A.S.G. Edwards, *A New Index of ME Verse* (Ldn: BL, 2005), sometimes abbrev as *NIMEV*
- Boyle, Leonard. *Med. Latin Palaeography: A Bibliographical Introduction* (Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1984)
- Brantley, Jessica. 'The Prehistory of the Book', *PMLA*, 124 (2009), 632-39.
- Briquet, C.M. *Les Filigranes* (1907), ed. Allan Stevenson, 4 vols (Amsterdam: Paper Publications Society, 1968)
- Brown, Carleton and Rossell Hope Robbins, *An Index of ME Verse* (New York, NY: Index Society, 1943)
- Coleman, Joyce. *Public reading and the reading public in late med. England and France* (Camb.: Camb. UP, 1997), esp. chapters 1 and 4-6.
- Cutler, John L. and Rossell Hope Robbins, *Supplement to the Index of ME Verse* (Lexington, KY: U of Kentucky P, 1965)
- Dawson, Giles E. and Laetitia Kennedy-Skipton, *Elizabethan handwriting 1500-1650* (Ldn: Faber, 1968)
- Gillespie, Alexandra. 'The History of the Book', *NML*, 9 (2007), 245-86
- Gillespie, Alexandra. 'Med. Books, Their Booklets, and Booklet Theory', *EMS*, 16 (2011), 1-29
- Gneuss, Helmut. *Handlist of AS MSS: A List of MSS and MS fragments Written or Owned in England up to 1100* (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Med. and Ren. Studies, 2001)
- de Hamel, Christopher. *A History of Illuminated MSS* (Ldn: Phaidon, 1994)
- Hamer, Richard. *A MS Index to the Index of ME Verse* (Ldn: BL, 1995)
- Hanna, Ralph. *Introducing Med. Eng. Book History* (Liverpool: Liverpool UP, 2013)
- Hanna, Ralph. ed., *Pursuing History: Middle Eng. MSS and Their Texts* (Stanford, CA: Stanford UP, 1996), Introduction.

- Howsam, Leslie *Old Books and New Histories: An Orientation to Studies in Book and Print Culture* (Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2006), especially chaps 1-2.
- *International Med. Bibliography*: <http://apps.brepolis.net/bmb/search.cfm>
- Jackson, Heather. *Marginalia: Readers Writing in Books* (Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2001)
- Ker, N.R. *Catal. of MSS Containing AS* (Oxf.: Clarendon Press, 1957)
- Ker, N.R. *Med. Libraries of Great Britain*, 2nd edn (Ldn: RHS, 1964)
- Lapidge, Michael. *The AS Library* (Oxf.: Oxf. UP 2006).
- Mak, Bonnie. *How the Page Matters* (Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2011)
- Medieval Libraries of Great Britain, 3: <http://mlgb3.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/>
- Mooney, Linne and others, *The DIMEV: An Online Open Access Digital Edition of The Index of Middle English Verse*, online at <http://www.dimev.net/>
- Parkes, M.B. *Their Hands Before Our Eyes: A Closer Look at Scribes* (Aldershot: Scolar, 2008)
- Pearson, David. 'What Can We Learn by Tracking Multiple Copies of Books?', in Robin Myers and others, ed., *Books on the Move: Tracking Copies through Collections and the Book Trade* (Ldn: BL, 2007), 17-37
- Pearson, David. *Eng. Bookbinding Styles 1450-1800* (Ldn: BL, 2005)
- Petrucci, Armando 'Reading in the Middle Ages', in *The History of Reading: A Reader*, ed. Shafquat Towheed, Rosalind Crone and Katie Halsey (Abingdon: Routledge 2011), 275-82.
- Petti, A.G. *Eng. Literary Hands from Chaucer to Dryden* (Ldn: Arnold, 1977)
- Preston, J.F. and L. Yeandle, *Eng. Handwriting 1400-1650* (1992)
- Pulsiano, Philip. A.N. Doane and Matthew T. Hussey, ed., *AS MSS in Microfiche Facsimile* (Binghampton, NY: MRTS, 1994 -)
- Ringler, William A. Jr, *Bibliography and Index of Eng. Verse in MS 1501-1558* (Ldn: Mansell, 1992)
- Rumble, Alexander R. 'Using AS MSS', in Richards, ed., *AS MSS: Basic Readings*, 3-35
- Tanselle, Thomas. *Bibliographical Analysis: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009)
- Wakelin, Daniel. *Scribal Correction and Literary Craft: English MSS 1375-1510* (Camb.: Camb. UP, 2014)
- Watson, Andrew G. *Med. Libraries of Great Britain. Supplement to the Second Edition* (Ldn: RHS, 1987)

### Additional Information

The bibliography will be made available to students on the virtual platform prior to the sessions and as the course content is delivered.

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## Schedule

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The course meets once or twice a week. Students will be provided with a schedule and a tentative calendar at the beginning of the course. We will have six sessions, which will be distributed over the five weeks of the first teaching period (first semester).