

# Palaeography, History of the Book, Digital Humanities



## Method Option MSt.

The combined workshops and seminars for the Method Options Palaeography, History of the Book and Digital Humanities provide training in dealing with manuscripts and books across the periods and European languages. The aim is to combine philological training with project work which takes serious the material turn in Modern Languages and will enable students to do editorial work in the age of Digital Humanities. Within the framework of knowledge exchange, these method options cooperate with the local libraries and printers to make use of the unparalleled richness of Oxford resources, especially the Taylorian Institute and the Centre for the Study of the Book.

## Michaelmas: Book Production and Textual Criticism from the Middle Ages to DH

The sessions normally take place Wednesday afternoon, 3-5pm, unless otherwise stated

Wk 1: Show & Tell Introductory Session (Taylorian, Graduate Study Room)

Treasures of the Taylorian with Henrike Lähnemann and Emma Huber

Wk 2: Digital Tools (Taylorian, Room 2)

Introduction to apps, blogs and social media with Henrike Lähnemann and Emma Huber

Wk 3: Masterclass Materiality (Bodleian, Visiting Scholars' Centre)

Workshop quill cutting and parchment preparation with the Conservation Department

Wk 4: Understanding Book Trade (Taylorian, Graduate Studies Room)

Session with Cristina Dondi on Circulation of Early Printed Books

Wk 5: Engaging with Print (Bodleian, Print Room)

Workshop on typesetting and printing pamphlets with Richard Lawrence

Wk 6: Handling Medieval Books (Magdalen Library)

How to handle old books and care for the collection with Daryl Green

Wk 7: Understanding Text-Image-Relationship (Bodleian, Horton Room)

Seminar with Daron Burrows on Apocalypse Manuscripts

Wk 8: Defining your Project (Taylorian, Room 2)

Abstract writing workshop for Hilary Term Project; matching up with supervisors

## Hilary: Project work

Wk 1 & Wk 3: Tutorials with your Project Supervisor

Wk 5: Presenting the Project (Taylorian)

Workshop to present the work-in-progress on the project to the group



## Assessment

Essay of 5,000-7,000 words to be handed in in Hilary Term, Thursday of wk 10

The coursework leading up to it consists of a portfolio of regular practical tasks such as writing a blog post, setting up a flickr site, text transcriptions, basic xml encoding and catalogue entries for books. Ideally, the essay focuses on source material available in Oxford libraries.

### Sample essay topics for History of the Book

- The history of a book / a collection (printing, transmission, acquisition...) such as "Arch. Fol. It. 1478. The European journeys of a Venetian print of Petrarch's sonnets"
- Comparing different editions / translations of a specific text such as "Luther's Bible translation in 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century editions in the Taylorian Institute"

### Sample essay topics for Palaeography & Textual Criticism

- A catalogue entry for a manuscript with a description of significant features such as "A critical description of the manuscript Taylorian Institute, Ms. germ. 1"
- Editing an extract from a manuscript with a critical apparatus "Chansons from MS 8° F.2., a late 18<sup>th</sup> cent. French manuscript in the Taylorian Institute"

### Sample essay topics for Digital Humanities

- A digitalisation of items from the Taylorian Institute such as "The title pages Reformation pamphlets from 1519. A critical comparison"
- Digital edition of extracts with a critical apparatus "Luther's preface to the 'Von der Freiheit eines Christenmenschen'"

### Sneak preview: Using your Method Option for your dissertation research

It is possible to use your method option project for the final MSt thesis. You cannot directly replicate anything you did for your essay but there are many ways of developing your topic further by linking a new research question to the material evidence you gathered for your essay:

- If you had done a sample transcription from a manuscript, you could do a critical edition and translation based on the same manuscript and question existing assumptions re transmission
- If you had studied a specific Reformation pamphlet, you could take in the full set of prints by the same workshop held in the Taylorian collection and discuss their political agenda.

## Project Work in Hilary Term

In Hilary Term, you will work in-depth on a specific project while participating and presenting in further seminars. On Monday afternoons, there are Masterclasses on (alternating) manuscripts and early prints in the lecture theatre of the Weston Library. The whole group meets in week 5 for an afternoon of presentations on the project.

The individual or small group tutorials in HT are intended to help you with your specific project by suggesting further reading and testing your hypotheses. There are a number of potential supervisors depending on your language, strand and period; the final match with a supervisor will happen once you have settled on a research question and a topic.

- French: Daron Burrows (Palaeography), Wes Williams (early modern), Catriona Seth (Enlightenment)
- German: Henrike Lähnemann (Middle Ages, 16<sup>th</sup> c), Helen Watanabe-O'Kelly (17<sup>th</sup> c)
- Italian: Cristina Dondi (History of the Book)
- Digital Humanities: Emma Huber
- Book History: Daryl Green

Further supervisors available depending on your interests / languages