

Week course 'An introduction to the archaeology of the book' Allard Pierson, 2-6 September 2024

Day one

9:30-12:30

Session one: The materiality of the book: Paper, parchment and the making of a codex

From the outset, the codex has had its own particular characteristics, and over the centuries has developed its own codes. The aim of this first session is to explore the basics constituent elements of the codex: the matter on which a book is printed and how it is put together. It will explain how to identify and analyse paper, format and quires.

12:30-13:30: lunch

Free afternoon

16:00: welcome drinks for the participants to the course

Day 2

9:30-12:30

Session two: Understanding the edition. I. Printing, layout and analysing an imprint

The first session on understanding the edition comprises a description of how books were conceptualised and printed. The printer's workshop and the role of the publisher will be analysed before delving into what we can learn from the layout of books, title pages, colophons, privileges and other paratexts.

12:30-13:30: lunch

Afternoon: visit to an Amsterdam library (Artis library / Rijksmuseum)

Day 3

9:30-12:30

Session 3: Understanding the edition. II. Typography and illustration

This session will be devoted to the materiality of the printed page. The first part will look at the nature and evolution of typography up until the twentieth century, its regional differences and codes. The second part will concentrate on the use of decorative material and illustrations – how they were printed and what was at stake.

12:30-13:30: lunch

Afternoon: visit to an Amsterdam library (Artis library / Rijksmuseum)

Day 4

9:30-12:30

Session 4: Understanding the copy. I. The binding

The first impression of a book is formed by its binding. The session will begin with an analysis of how a binding is made and what may be gained from understanding its structure. The materiality and decoration of the cover will then be addressed, with specific points made about geographic and chronological differences.

12:30-13:30: lunch

Free afternoon / Visit of the current exhibition on books and prints at Allard Pierson

18:30: Dinner for the participants to the course

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Day 5:

9:30-12:30

Session 5: Understanding the copy. II. The copy and the user

The final session will be devoted to owner and reader interaction with the book. The study and importance of provenance will be connected to the questions of reading, censorship and use whether determined by annotation, or by less obvious clues such as dirt or wear and tear.

12:30-13:30: lunch

Departure of the participants