

Faculty of Arts and Letters



HIST2200 Western paleography : A) introduction to paleography (15 hours) B) paleography in the western Middle Ages (15 hours)

[30h] 3.5 credits

This course is taught in the 1st semester

Teacher(s): Jean-François Nieux, Baudouin Van den Abeele
Language: French
Level: Second cycle

Aims

By the end of this course of introduction to paleography (A), the student will be able to :

- recognize and define by combining theory and practice, the principal types of western writings;
- understand their evolution in the context of cultural practices in the West.

Moreover, he will have received a primary introduction to techniques for reading these documents.

By the end of the course of paleography of the western middle ages (B), the student will be able to :

- master the principal systems of medieval abbreviations;
- decipher a medieval manuscript in Latin or in French.

Main themes

A. Introduction to paleography

Examples at hand, the first part of the course lays out the major stages in the evolution of western writing, from the IIIrd to the XVIIIth century, and ensures a first introduction to deciphering operations. Going beyond purely technical considerations, it illustrates paleography's contribution to knowledge of the written culture of the medieval and modern world.

B. Paleography of the western middle ages

Centred on the western middle ages, the second part of the course shows scribes at work and situates the types of writing in use from the XIIth to the XVth century : written books, handwriting, diplomatics. Explaining their filiation and evolution, it introduces the student to evaluating and dating them. Through deciphering exercises, abbreviation systems are decoded.

Content and teaching methods

Contents : A. Introduction to paleography : After having defined the role and objectives of paleography, the course successively treats writings from antiquity and the high middle ages (briefly), Carolingian writing, Gothic writings, humanistic writing, modern writings; each time placing them in the context of their development and utilization and proposes a first introduction to paleographic reading techniques. B. Paleography of the western middle ages : The course consists of an introduction to abbreviation systems in vigour from the XIIth to the XVth century, followed by exercises for deciphering narrative and diplomatic documents.

Methode : A. Introduction to paleography : Formal lectures illustrated by many specimens of writing. B. Paleography of the western middle ages : After a few lecture courses, exercises in reading documents prepared by students.

Other information (prerequisite, evaluation (assessment methods), course materials recommended readings, ...)

Prerequisites :

B. Paleography of the western middle ages : Knowledge of Latin is recommended.

Evaluation : A. Introduction to paleography : oral examination bearing on theoretical and practical aspects. B. Paleography of the western middle ages : oral examination including an exercise in deciphering.

Teaching materials : Student notes.

A syllabus including, notably, reproductions of specimens of representative writing.

Programmes in which this activity is taught

ISLE3DA/ME Diplôme d'études approfondies en philosophie et lettres
(médiévisique)

Other credits in programs

ARKE21	Première licence en histoire de l'art et archéologie	(3 credits)
HIST21	Première licence en histoire	(3.5 credits)
HIST22	Deuxième licence en histoire	(3.5 credits)
ROM21	Première licence en langues et littératures romanes	(2.5 credits)
ROM22	Deuxième licence en langues et littératures romanes	(2.5 credits)