

Faculty of Arts and Letters



HIST2210 Codicology

[15h] 1.5 credits

This course is taught in the 2nd semester

Teacher(s): Jacques Pijcke
Language: French
Level: Second cycle

Aims

By the end of instruction, students should be able to :

- understand the codex as an archeological witness to our cultural past;
- reconstitute the various stages in the composition of a medieval book;
- point out the material indices helping us find a manuscript's origin and sometimes date it.

Main themes

The first part of the course is theoretical : it involves the examination of different stages in the composition of a code : written supports - composition of copy-books - folding the leaves - page setting - stitching and ruling - transcription methods - the copyist 's working tools- decoration and binding. Thus the course is more interested in the study of the container than the contents. With the help of facsimiles, we shall try to show the particularities a researcher may encounter in a codex while doing a codicological description. The course seeks to show the links existing between the material stages in the fabrication of a manuscript and the transmission of the texts conserved therein : the manuscript is by its essence the cultural witness to its epoch.

The second part of the course is practical. Each student is asked to describe a manuscript of his choosing and to put the theoretical information that was presented during the first part of the course to work.

Content and teaching methods

The first part is theoretical : it consist of the examination of the codex fabrication stages (scripture supports, quires composition, pricking and ruling systems, layout, transcription methods, scribe tools, decoration and binding. The course is more focused on the material aspect than on the content. We try to show with facsimile the possible particularities of a codex dicovered during the description. We try then to establish the existing relationships between the material appects and the transmission of the conserved texts : a manuscript is by definition a cultural testimony of its period.

The second part is practical. Each student must describe a manuscript of his choice with the help of all therotetical information received during the first part of the course".

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

Evaluation : One half of the evaluation bears on knowledge of theoretical fundamentals taught in the course. Codicological description of a manuscript is considered a practical exercise and constitutes the second part of the evaluation.

Teaching materials : Student notes. Didactic material (videodiscs, material from the period, parchment, ruled copy-books, quill pens, elements of decoration, etc.) serve to illustrate each course. Students are invited to use as their reference manual : Introduction à la codicologie , de J. LEMAIRE (Publications de l'Institut d'Etudes Médiévales. Textes, études, congrès, 9). Louvain-la-Neuve, 1989.

Other credits in programs

CLAS21	Première licence en langues et littératures classiques	(3 credits)
CLAS22	Deuxième licence en langues et littératures classiques	(3 credits)
HIST21	Première licence en histoire	(2 credits)
HIST22	Deuxième licence en histoire	(2 credits)