

THE PROGRAM IN ACTION - 3

The University of Rochester Spring Semester (January – May) 2018

[During the Spring semester of 2017, two institutions in Rochester, N.Y., jointly participated in Manuscripts in the Curriculum. These thoughts were submitted by Anna Siebach-Larsen, Ph.D. Director, Rossell Hope Robbins Library and Koller-Collins Center for English Studies, University of Rochester]

Undergraduate and graduate students in English, history, music, art history, and the medical humanities had the opportunity to work with these manuscripts in classroom settings, workshops, and exhibits. Students in Gregory Heyworth's seminar on the book and technology used UV lights to discern ink and skin types, while graduate student participants in our paleography working group used the manuscripts to learn scripts and book types across the centuries. We also created several public programming opportunities to open up access to the manuscripts to a wide range of members of our community.

This experience was invaluable: it opened up students' understanding of the past, material culture, the history of the book, and the intersections of the humanities and the sciences. It also opened up new possibilities for pedagogy, as well as for new directions in our collection development.

Perhaps the best testament to the power of using these manuscripts in the classroom is the following email from a professor after a class session:

"I can't thank you enough for the wonderful session on medieval manuscripts that you organized for my students yesterday afternoon. I admit that I had been skeptical about what students might get out of spending time with manuscripts when they have no Latin under their belts, but you more than proved the value of letting them loose with the materials!

Your brief introduction to the world of manuscripts and their production was just right, and your remarks gave the students a number of things to look for as they examined the manuscripts. The set of questions you prepared for the students to work through was just perfect in focusing their observations beyond just a "gee whiz" admiration of handling something so old.

It was so wonderful that each student had his or her own manuscript for the class period, and clearly each was proud to show off his or her manuscript to the rest of the class.

You've made me a believer! I'll be bringing more classes through the Robbins (or RBSC, given class size) for similar sessions."

Public Events

Skin, Ink, Paper: Making and Using Medieval Manuscripts

March 21, 3-5 pm

A pop-up event in the main library lobby

Participants were able to turn the pages of the manuscripts and make their own manuscripts at a nearby station.



© Anna Siebach-Larsen

People of the Book: Voices of Manuscripts from the Middle Ages

Lecture by Laura Light, *Les Enlumineures*

April 16, 5 pm

Robbins Library

Open House with Manuscripts Expert Laura Light

April 16, 6-7 pm

Robbins Library



© Anna Siebach-Larsen

Curriculum Use

The manuscripts were used almost weekly in our paleography working group. They were also used in the following classes:

English 167 (Thomas Hahn): The Outlaw Robin Hood: Resistance, Violence, and Social Change in Popular Culture

Data Science / English (Gregory Heyworth): Digital Imaging: Transforming Real into Virtual



© Anna Siebach-Larsen

Music 218 (Andrew Cashner): Music and Religion



© Anna Siebach-Larsen

History 200 (Laura Smoller): Homosexuals, Heretics, Witches, and Werewolves: Deviants in Medieval Europe



© Anna Siebach-Larsen

History 108 (Thomas Devaney): History of Mortality

Medical Humanities 440 (Stephanie Brown Clark): History of the Body in Science and Medicine: Interdisciplinary Perspectives

**Skin, Ink, and Paper:
Making and Using Medieval Manuscripts**

Wednesday, March 21st
3-5pm
Evans Lam Square
Rush Rhees Library

Get your hands on manuscripts from the Middle Ages and make your own to take home

Come and get medieval with us!

Background image:
Ordo Extremæ Unctionis
Dominican Convent of St. Catherine
Nuremberg, Germany, 1481, D.460.1481-001
Rare Books Special Collections & Preservation
Rush Rhees Library, University of Rochester