

Beware. Here be dragons. Bamberg, Staatsbibliothek, ms. 1



MEMS 3001A

RESEARCHING THE MEDIEVAL AND EARLY-MODERN PAST

Medieval Manuscripts

Hands-on History Edition

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Class hours:

Thursdays, 11h30-14h30,

Office hours:

After class on Thursdays

Location:

Main classroom is the Book Arts Lab, MacOdrum Library

This syllabus is a condensed version of the course guide (currently still in development!) online: <https://marc-saurette.gitbook.io/mems-3001/>. Please consider the website authoritative – i.e. the most up-to-date and complete version of the syllabus. I intend to use our online guide as a way to offer course materials, provide links to online resources and to store how-to guides. If you want to quickly get a sense of what the course will cover this year, look at the [schedule](#) (online) which outlines lecture topics, readings and exercises for each week.

MEMS 3001 is a seminar-style class focused on small group learning with a hands-on component. Each class will involve discussion of assigned readings and completion of in-class exercises. This year, we will be exploring the late-medieval manuscripts and early printed material – working with exemplars from Carleton's Archives and Special Collections. I have found that the best way to teach about manuscripts is through hands-on learning. We will spend much of our time in Carleton's Book Arts Lab creating facsimiles of medieval manuscripts in Carleton's collection. We have only a little information about our two manuscripts (and dozen or so folios), so in class we will work together to unlock the secrets of their origin and provenience. By creating AND analyzing, students will develop a feel for how medieval manuscripts were made and how to describe them.

Through our contact with originals and facsimiles, students will learn about the medieval and early modern history of communication. When we say that we “scroll” through a webpage or use the abbreviation “@” as part of an email address, we evoke ghosts of textual cultures flourishing before the rise of printed books. When we skim through a book's table of contents and its index to read efficiently or we wonder how to use the semi-colon properly, we are drawing on medieval textual innovations that remain in use today. Not only does manuscript culture live on in contemporary books and thinking, but medieval manuscripts themselves are taking on a new life – in growing online collections that grant us access to a library of medieval texts larger than anything possible during the Middle Ages.

By the end of this course, students will:

1. become familiar with the field of book history and manuscript studies
2. know how to find medieval manuscripts in print and online catalogues
3. learn how to read and make sense of medieval manuscripts
4. understand how medieval books were copied and assembled

5. understand how medieval books were transformed when printed
6. learn how to use medieval evidence and learn the advantages and difficulties of working with them
7. come to understand the limitations of evidence (and thus our knowledge) of the Middle Ages. Being a medieval historian means that you must come to terms with ambiguity and that you will not always have a clear answer.
8. You will learn terminology (i.e. the language used by professional historians) and different ways (i.e. methodologies) to describe and catalogue medieval evidence.

In terms of practical skills:

1. You will have hands on experience with the techniques, tools and materials of medieval book-making
2. You will learn how to closely read and analyze medieval and early print sources
3. You will learn how to work independently and as a group, using digital "enterprise" tools to plan and execute written assignments. You will learn ways to manage your time and your workflow.

Schedule

The summative schedule offered here is subject to revision as we go forward – changes may happen depending on world-wide geopolitical events, pandemics and the sort. Perhaps we might devise a new schedule in response to any particularly keen interests developing among the students.

Key Dates for Winter Term (2023)

- January 9th, 2023. First day of classes in Winter term.
- January 20th, 2023. Last day for registration and course changes. Last day to withdraw from winter courses with a full fee adjustment.
- February 20th-24th, 2023. Winter break, no classes.
- March 15th, 2023. Last day for academic withdrawal.
- April 7th, 2023. Statutory holiday. University closed.
- April 12th, 2023. Winter term ends.

Week	Date	Topic
1	January 12th	Orientation
2	January 19th	Meetings with manuscripts
3	January 26th	Mise-en-page
4	February 2nd	Writing and Scripts
5	February 9th	Abbreviations
6	February 16th	Rubrication and Decoration
7	February 23rd	Reading Week. No Classes.
8	March 2nd	Binding
9	March 9th	Presentations
10	March 16th	Early Printed Works
11	March 23rd	Print workshop I
12	March 30th	Print workshop II
13	April 6th	Showcase

Why Study Medieval Studies?

Everyone has their own reason to study history and if you're in this class, you likely already have a sense why it appeals to you. The AHA (American Historical Association) will tell you about the [good job prospects](#) that await you after graduation (it was written before the pandemic, mind you...). This practical advice supersedes the previous explanations from [1985](#) and [1998](#). Read these explanations and you'll see that even the reasons to study history, have a history. I don't think many people study history because they worry, as George Santayana put it, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it".

When I've asked students over the years, "why did you take this or that course" they have tended to say they decided to take history (or medieval studies) because of a book, movie or video game that they played – maybe when they were kids, maybe what they were playing at the time. That "something" kindled an interest in the period and a desire to learn more. That's why I study and teach the Middle Ages. Long long ago (the 1990s) in a land far, far away (i.e. Winnipeg), I fell in love with the period by reading novels about the Middle Ages - especially Arthuriana like T.H. White's [Once and Future King](#) or Thomas Berger's [Arthur Rex](#). So I studied history because I fell in love with the subject and then, during university, became passionate about how exciting the world of the past showed people to be. The past was a wonderful refuge for me to explore its complexity and to see a world so different (but related) to our own. It suggested ways in which our world could be different (for better or worse). It revealed how people who say that the world "has always been this way" are usually lying. So I saw the study of history as liberating. And this, I deeply believe, is the value of History. It liberates us by showing us how we (as individuals or as a society) could be different and better.

Communication

Communicating with one another is the key to a successful class. The best way to contact the professor is as a chat or post via Teams.

Almost all non-classroom communication should happen via the Teams platform. We can message privately, post general messages to channels, we can meet in an audio or videoconference as a whole or in small groups/ one-on-one.

- The static website on <https://marc-saurette.gitbook.io/mems-3001/> will be the main source of information on basic course information, including a detailed syllabus, schedule of readings, assignment descriptions, and topics under discussion, expectations etc.
- Our "MEMS 3001" group on MS Teams will provide a dynamic workspace for class announcements, discussions, as well as where video conferences could be run. It will be a hub with links to tools and readings we will be using in the course. Note: you must be logged in to your Carleton email account to access Teams.

Since we will often announce and reiterate a variety of important logistical information live in class (not all of which will be necessarily announced elsewhere), you need to attend class consistently, and check with colleagues about whether you missed any logistical information if you were not able to attend a class. We strongly believe that live interaction with your fellow students and the professor is one of the most efficient, effective and valuable parts of the learning experience of any university course.

When written communication is necessary, we will exclusively use the Teams messaging system. Please note - we will not be using our Carleton email to communicate regarding this class, but rather, we will do all written communication via Teams to ensure that none of our messages go missing.

We will do our best to respond to your message as soon as feasible and definitely within two days. Please note, however:

- Two working days starts from the first receivable working hours after they are sent. So, if you email us on Friday at 5pm, it will be considered to have been officially received as of Monday 9AM, meaning that we will seek to respond by Wednesday 9AM. It also means if you email us at noon Thursday, for example, we will seek to respond before Monday at noon.
- Please also note that we might not always be able to respond within 48 hrs. We might need to discuss the issue between the profs and TA – and that might take us longer than 48 hrs. Moreover, given the current COVID-19 context and the higher than normal enrollment numbers, there might be other circumstances that will make it impossible to respond within 48 hrs.

Given all that, if it is possible to do so, it is almost always more efficient to connect with us live before/after class and/or during office hours (one of which we have every day of the week).

Readings

Students will be responsible for **diligently and carefully** reading the assigned texts.

Readings will be available via the online social annotation site, [Perusall](https://perusall.com). You will need to sign up for an account if you have not previously. Instructions are available on the website, <https://marc-saurette.gitbook.io/mems-3001/course-information/digital-tools/perusall>. To access the course readings, after you have created an account, use the course code: **SAURETTE-YVEPD** on Perusall.

You will not need to purchase any textbooks for this class.

Coursework

[This is only a brief summary of coursework; detailed notes about coursework are/will be posted on the class website.]

Social Annotation:

Social annotation takes the usually solitary act of reading and allows students to do it in community with one another. By using digital tools to highlight, comment, or otherwise annotate a text, students “do the reading,” but do so in conversation with their peers. Social annotation is an age-old process that is very medieval. What is different is speed. It would take centuries for texts to accrue a surrounding commentary, but we can do it online in real time in a very short span. Commentary (medieval or modern) can link to other media, can define key terms, provide further details or contradict the main text. We are, in essence, crowdsourcing (you being the crowd) the readings to allow you to deepen and expand your knowledge.

Perusall allows us to organize all our readings in one place so that we can annotate them together. Hypothes.is allows us to do this for websites. We can use your annotation and commentary to highlight areas of confusion and disagreement and explore debates (amongst yourselves and in the field). You can use annotations to ask questions or answer them for your fellow students. The key is that we can do it together.

Participation

Our plan is to give students a wide variety of opportunities to actively participate in the course:

- Annotation and commenting on Perusall. Students are asked to read, comment on and reflect on the assigned readings via Perusall.
- Discussing readings during seminar
- Q+A periods during class time: students are encouraged to add questions/comments throughout discussions
- Small group breakout sessions during class
- Discussions with professor during office hours

If the professor assesses that a student has consistently (i.e. in every class) participated at an exceptional level throughout the term, the professors may decide to reward bonus marks, above what the student has self-assessed.

Exercises

The bulk of the work for class will consist of weekly exercises that we begin in class (and are described on the course website). Sometimes you will need to complete preliminary work in advance of class. I will usually provide some explanation and an initial introduction to the exercise, but much of the work will need to be completed on the student's own time. Students will be expected to complete specific tasks around manuscript analysis and measurements, finish certain number of annotations, using digital tools and the such.

These exercises revolve around getting to understand a particular medieval text in Carleton's collections. Each week students will work progressively to analyze and reproduce aspects of the folio they have chosen to work on. By the end of term, students will create a facsimile (as best we can), of their folio and be able to describe what it is, what it says and why we should care about it.

Exercises can be consulted here (not all instructions are complete as of December, 2022): <https://marc-saurette.gitbook.io/mems-3001/course-information/exercises>

Examples of the kinds of exercises we will do:

- Measure and copy the layout a medieval page
- Cut a medieval pen
- Practice medieval writing
- Create a medieval illumination
- Transcribe a medieval text
- Editing a medieval text in modern type

Presentation

In week 9 (March 9th, 2023), students will make a 10 minute polished presentation on their work so far this term, showcasing their findings on the folio they have worked on, as well as presenting their facsimile. The goal is neither to have a perfect understanding of the folio nor create a picture-perfect reproduction, but instead to note unexpected discoveries, as well as challenges and failure – and what you learned from them. Your presentation should offer a reflection on your research and creative process, and as such, should focus less on the conclusions/outcome than the working towards them.

The professor will provide a template for describing medieval folios to guide your presentation/ preparatory work.

Leading the seminar

Once during the term, each student will be responsible for leading the seminar. This is a formal activity in which the student takes on the role of the discussion leader. Discussion leaders must read the assigned readings in advance of their chosen week in advance, and by the Friday of the week before (i.e. 6 days before the seminar to be led) must post guiding questions to Teams to help focus the reading for other students. Each seminar will begin with the student-leader introducing the readings, raising and gathering interesting or perplexing issues from each of the other students/ or as noted on Perusall. A good presenter will evidence an ability to contextualize the readings knowledgeably, and to note or critique the theoretical stance (if applicable). The goal is to facilitate discussion, so avoid lecturing.

Major Project

By the end of the term, students will have produced a body of work that explains and strives to reproduce the labour and skills of medieval scribes and early modern printers. Our final project seeks to communicate this information to a public audience. We will take over the display cabinets on the fourth floor of Paterson Hall to exhibit what you have created, as well as to teach others about the work you have been doing. In the last weeks of class, we will spend time in class (and outside of class) conceptualizing a small exhibition, writing explanatory text and displaying our work. The final class of the year will be the installation of the exhibition and perhaps a launch party.

Process Letter

At the end of the term, students will be asked to submit a written (500 word) critical self-evaluation (*critical* in the sense of "using logic and evidence to argue"), describing their learning and how their work evolved over the year. This document is not worth marks *per se*, but is intended as the means for the student to shape their final assessment by the professor. In other words, it allows you to put your work into perspective.

The goal of the Process Letter is for you to make an argument primarily for participation but also for your overall grade that you will propose for yourself. I provide here some of the guiding questions that should be taken into account to provide evidence/ justification for your suggested grade.

- Discuss your process as a learner: evaluate your engagement with course content by reflecting on how you handled all aspects of this course. What specific parts of your process worked and what parts would benefit from some adjustments? Why?
- Discuss the products you generated as demonstrations of your learning: evaluate how your work has changed across the semester. Did certain elements improve more than others? Did certain elements become easier or more challenging? Describe.
- What will you do with this knowledge in future semesters? Make a commitment to yourself.
- What have you learned about yourself—as a learner and a member of a learning community—in this course?

Assessment

I want all of you to succeed in this course and it would make me very happy to be able to give all of you an A. I just need you to give me a good reason to do so.

Due to the experiential nature of this class, many aspects of the course cannot be assessed using traditional scholarly grades. Instead, we will be using a simplified form of assessment for this class. All work will be assessed as either Unsatisfactory, Satisfactory or Excellent. If all your work is assessed as **Satisfactory**, you will receive a B. If all your work is assessed as **Excellent**, you will receive an A+. If you receive a mixture of these two, your grade will fall somewhere in the middle. Work deemed **unsatisfactory** (F) can be reworked and submitted for reassessment until deemed satisfactory. Participation will be self-assessed.

Your final mark will be assessed based on your completion of the following coursework:

Assignment Type	Relative Weight
Reading & Annotations	15%
Participation	25%
Leading Seminar	10%
Exercises	25%
Presentations	10%
Final Project	15%

Deadlines

In years past, I begin the year outlining to each class the dire consequences that arise from not handing something in at the assigned time (e.g. first maledictions, then drastic cuts to marks on a *per diem* basis). This year, we're going to try something different. I'm going to trust you and we're working with the honour system.

However, the class only works if you do the assigned work each week and it will become an insupportable burden if you do not complete exercises in the week they are expected to be completed. If lateness becomes a recurrent issue with specific repeat-offenders, I reserve the right to reimpose draconian mark penalties of one grade lost (i.e. A becomes a B) every 24 hour period it is late.

Extensions and Accommodations

The current university policy for asking for special extensions due to illness is available from the Registrar's office, which has a COVID-19 self-declaration form (https://carleton.ca/registrar/wp-content/uploads/COVID-19_Self-declaration.pdf). Students can use it to ask for deferral/extensions for term work. Students can submit this form, instead of having to get a doctor's note.

As far as I am concerned, you do not need to give me (Marc Saurette) a doctor's note or a self-declaration form. You can just let me know if problems or illnesses have arisen and we can discuss timelines and strategies for you to complete your work. If you have been sick and this has delayed you from completing assignments, please let me know sooner rather than later so that we can work with you to come up with a new plan/ timeline. I understand that illness can mess up your intended work timeline, so the more information I know, the more I can help you plan.

Class Requirements

1. Students are expected to attend classes, read assigned readings, and participate fully in class discussions, exercises, and activities. Assignments are expected to reflect an understanding of the readings assigned and the themes discussed in class. All assignments must be completed for the student to pass the course.
2. All students must abide by Carleton regulations on academic honesty.

Additional Regulations, Rules etc.

Copies Of Written Work Submitted

Always retain for yourself a copy of all essays, term papers, written assignments or take-home tests submitted in your courses.

Plagiarism

The University Senate defines plagiarism as “*presenting, whether intentionally or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.*” This can include:

- reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else’s published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one’s own without proper citation or reference to the original source;
- submitting a take home examination, essay, laboratory report or other assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else;
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, or paraphrased material, concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another’s data or research findings;
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another’s works and/or failing to use quotation marks;
- handing in “substantially the same piece of work for academic credit more than once without prior written permission of the course instructor in which the submission occurs.”

Plagiarism is a serious offence which cannot be resolved directly with the course’s instructor. The Associate Dean of the Faculty conducts a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They can include a final grade of “F” for the course.

Course Sharing Websites And Copyright

Classroom teaching and learning activities, including lectures, discussions, presentations, etc., by both instructors and students, are copy protected and remain the intellectual property of their respective author(s). All course materials, including PowerPoint presentations, outlines, and other materials, are also protected by copyright and remain the intellectual property of their respective author(s).

Students registered in the course may take notes and make copies of course materials for their own educational use only. Students are not permitted to reproduce or distribute lecture notes and course materials publicly for commercial or non-commercial purposes without express written consent from the copyright holder(s).

Statement On Class Conduct

The Carleton University Human Rights Policies and Procedures affirm that all members of the University community share a responsibility to:

- promote equity and fairness,
- respect and value diversity,
- prevent discrimination and harassment, and
- preserve the freedom of its members to carry out responsibly their scholarly work without threat of interference.

Carleton University Equity Services states that “every member of the University community has a right to study, work and live in a safe environment free of discrimination or harassment”. [In May of 2001 Carleton University’s Senate and Board of Governors approved the Carleton University Human Rights Policies and Procedures. The establishment of these policies and procedures was the culmination of the efforts of the Presidential Advisory Committee on Human Rights and a Human Rights Implementation Committee.]

GRADING SYSTEM

Letter grades assigned in this course will have the following percentage equivalents:

A+ = 90-100 (12)	B = 73-76 (8)	C - = 60-62 (4)
A = 85-89 (11)	B - = 70-72 (7)	D+ = 57-59 (3)
A - = 80-84 (10)	C+ = 67-69 (6)	D = 53-56 (2)
B+ = 77-79 (9)	C = 63-66 (5)	D - = 50-52 (1)

The following additional final course grades may be assigned by instructors:

DEF	Official deferral of final exam (see "Petitions to Defer")
GNA	Grade not available. This is used when there is an allegation of an academic offence. The notation is replaced with the appropriate grade for the course as soon as it is available.
IP	In Progress – a notation (IP) assigned to a course by a faculty member when: At the undergraduate level, an undergraduate thesis or course has not been completed by the end of the period of registration.
WDN	Withdrawn. No academic credit, no impact on the CGPA. WDN is a permanent notation that appears on the official transcript for students who withdraw after the full fee adjustment date in each term (noted in the Academic Year section of the Calendar each term). Students may withdraw on or before the last day of classes.

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by the instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.

REQUESTS FOR ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request the processes are as follows:

Pregnancy obligation: write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details see the Student Guide: <https://carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf>

Religious obligation: write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details see the Student Guide: <https://carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf>

Accommodation for Student Activities: write to the professor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details see <https://carleton.ca/senate/wp-content/uploads/Accommodation-for-Student-Activities-1.pdf>

Survivors of sexual violence: As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and is survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy. For more information about the services available at the university and to obtain information about sexual violence and/or support, visit: <https://carleton.ca/sexual-violence-support/wp-content/uploads/Sexual-Violence-Policy-December-1-2016.pdf>

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: The Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send me your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (if applicable). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with me to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the [PMC website](#) for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (if applicable).

PETITIONS TO DEFER

Students unable to complete a final term paper or write a final examination because of illness or other circumstances beyond their control or whose performance on an examination has been impaired by such circumstances may apply within five working days to the Registrar's Office for permission to extend a term paper deadline or to write a deferred examination. The request must be fully and specifically supported by a medical certificate or other relevant documentation. Only deferral petitions submitted to the Registrar's Office will be considered.

ADDRESSES (613-520-2600, phone ext.)

- Department of History history@carleton.ca
- Registrar's Office (3500) registrar@carleton.ca
- Academic Advising Centre academicadvising@carleton.ca
- Paul Menton Centre (6608) pmc@carleton.ca
- Centre for Student Academic Support – Study Skills, Writing Tutorials, Bounce Back csas@carleton.ca