MDIA 350: Cultures of the Book (Spring 2024)

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Course description
This course traces the long history of the book from the manuscript codex to the eBook. We will explore the development of writing surfaces, inks, book formats, movable type, mechanization, and new media. We will discuss the various agents and institutions that make, censor, distribute, destroy, read, edit, write in, remediate, and collect books. In addition to chronological and geographical overviews, we will take up case studies of important books like the Book of Kells, the Gutenberg Bible, the Quran, the Maya codices, and the Diamond Sutra, as well as widely distributed books like almanacs, Victorian periodicals, and pocket books. We will meet in the Special Collections and University Archives classroom, where we can work with materials from the UVic collections. You will have an opportunity to adopt a book and work to understand why its content, form, and history matter to us today. Our ultimate aim is to understand the book as an evolving information technology and many-faceted material object that has shaped cultures around the world.

Delivery method
Lectures, case studies, hands-on exercises, video demonstrations, and discussions

Textbook

Readings and resources in Brightspace

Assignments
20% Quizzes
50% Adopt-a-Book (5 exercises on a book of your choice from Special Collections)
30% Capstone project