

## **"From shelf to byte. A history of writing from the ancient to the contemporary world."**

**June 27 – July 08, 2016**

Summer School organized by the **RAM (Ricerche e Analisi Manoscritti) Study Centre of the Department of Classics and Italian Studies of the University of Bologna**, in collaboration with the **College of Liberal Arts** and the **College of Advancing and Professional Studies of the University of Massachusetts Boston**.

### **Introduction**

The Summer School "From shelf to byte. A history of writing from the ancient to the contemporary world" is a two week intensive course dedicated to the history of handwriting and of the book in the West.

This historical approach is not only a study of literacy and traditions that have almost disappeared, but also an amazing journey into a cultural spaces whose heritage survives also - although in new and different shapes - in the contemporary world and throughout the digital era. This course seeks to discover the several cultural links between the past and the present of the handwriting and of one of its most important results: the book.

Through classes and cultural activities, we will retrace the main phases of this fascinating trip, rediscovering the wide influence of the western graphic and library culture and the extraordinary handwritten heritage of our country, in particular in Bologna.

Drawing on the innovative methods of **Digital Humanities** students will contextualize their archival research within read-write platforms, such as blogs, wikis, Facebook status updates, and Twitter feeds, in order to identify the shifting character of writing conventions today.

Finally, through some lessons and practical exercises of **Calligraphy**, we will see firsthand the value, the potentialities and the beauty of longhand writing.

The course is open to all the university students and to all those who are interested, as long as they have a high school diploma. Specific qualifications are not required; at the time of the registration, nevertheless, a short

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preliminary test will have to be filled in, so to define the base level of each participant.

### **1) Classes** (44 hours, 1 hour = 50' min.)

Classes will take place from Monday to Friday in Bologna, at the Aula Gualandi of the Department of History, Cultures and Civilizations (Piazza S. Giovanni in Monte, 2) and will be managed as lectures, with the direct involvement of students and with practical reading exercises and interpretation of ancient manuscripts.

Most of the lessons will be dedicated to the analysis of the handwritten Latin writing from Antiquity to the Humanism, up to the passage to the world of printing. In particular, the following themes will be analyzed: introduction to Latin Paleography, definition of its area of interest and methods and of the potentialities of this kind of study (Prof. M. Modesti, 2 hours); the main phases of the history of Latin writing in the Middle Ages (A. Zuffrano, PhD, 2 hours) and during Humanism (L. Iannacci, PhD, 2 hours); the functions of writing: books vs documents (A. Zuffrano, PhD, 2 hours); from the Roman abbreviation system to *SMS* (F. Manservigi, PhD, 2 hours); introduction to the history of Codicology and to the history of handwritten book (Prof. L. Quaquarelli, 2 hours); the illustrated book: short history of Italian Illumination (P. Cova, PhD, 2 hours); the juridical book from the Late Roman antiquity to the Middle Ages (L. Iannacci, PhD, 2 hours); from the handwritten book to the printed one (Prof. P. Tinti, 2 hours); the shapes of the first printed books (Prof. A. Mueller, 2 hours).

An in-depth analysis will be dedicated to the history of Bologna in the Middle Ages - with reference to its institutions, its written sources (I. Santos Salazar, PhD, 2 hours) and to the process that led to the birth of the first University of Europe in the city (Prof. F. Roversi Monaco, 2 hours) - and during Humanism (15<sup>th</sup> century), through the analysis of some literary sources (A. Severi, PhD, 2 hours).

For what concerns the present, we will see that several characteristics and conventions of the modern digital writing have ancient origins, which can be linked to writing typical of some literary genres of the past, like letter writing

and the medieval commentaries (Prof. A. Mueller, 6 hours) and, finally, how it will be possible to preserve and enhance the extraordinary cultural heritage coming from the ancient written texts with the new methods and computer techniques (Prof. F. Tomasi, 2 hours).

The last part of the course will be dedicated to the art of calligraphy, meant as one of the possible ways to rediscover the value, the potentiality and the beauty of longhand writing. After a first theoretical lesson dedicated to the acknowledgment of the origins and of the characteristics of this fascinating art (A. Salice, 2 hours), students will be involved in a practical exercise, based on a particular writing style (B. Calzolari and A. Salice, 2 hours).

## **2) Lessons in libraries and archives** (11 hours, 1 hour = 50' min.)

A part of the course will develop at the main cultural institutes of the city, so that students will have direct contact with handwritten sources and will test firsthand some of the arguments analyzed during the in-class lessons. Special attention will be given to the issues concerning the preservation of the handwritten and book heritage and to the cataloguing methods (Dr. V. Roncuzzi, 2 hours). In particular, tours will include the State Archive, the University Library, the Medieval Museum and the Archbishop Archive.

## **3) Cultural activities** (24 hours)

The course will include also guided tours, which will take students to the discovery of the most important museums and artistic monuments of the city:

- "The main artistic treasures of Bologna" (P. Cova, PhD, 3 hours): Basilica of San Domenico, the Seven Churches, Santa Maria della Vita, Piazza Maggiore, San Petronio, Accursio Palace, the Neptune's fountain, King Enzo's palace, the Two Towers.

- "On the path of Writing between East and West" (F. Manservigi, PhD 3 hours): Archaeological Museum.

- Medieval Museum (P. Cova, PhD, 3 hours)

- "The University of Bologna: 1000 years of History" (P. Cova, PhD, 3 hours): San Francesco – the Doctors' tombs, Piazza Maggiore and Accursio tower, Archiginnasio, San Giacomo, Santa Cecilia oratory, Poggi Palace

Saturday 2 July: one day guided tour in Ferrara:

- "Ferrara, a small Renaissance capital city" (P. Cova, PhD, 12 hours): Cathedral, Trento and Trieste square, Museum of the Cathedral, Estes castle, Schifanoia, Palazzina of Marfisa d'Este, walk between Ariostea square and Palazzo dei Diamanti dedicated to the Addizione Ercolea.

All the lessons and cultural activities will be in English or will be translated into English.