VISUAL STUDIES GRADUATE CERTIFICATE
SPRING 2008 COURSES

Image/Word/Object: Rethinking the History of Books and Reading

MDA 599 42293R

Daniela Bleichmar, Assistant Professor
Departments of Art History and Spanish and Portuguese

&
Deborah Harkness, Associate Professor
Department of History

Thursdays, 2:00 to 5:00pm
Huntington Library, San Marino

This seminar will rethink the history of the book and reading in the West from the Renaissance to the present by focusing on the visual and material aspects of books and book culture, in addition to the textual ones that have traditionally dominated the field. Our goal is to take a fresh approach to a field that is currently dominated by two questions: How fixed is print culture? How revolutionary was the print revolution? We propose in this course to move the study of the book in a new direction by approaching books as objects that contain both words and images. It is our contention that the history of the book should include a careful exploration of the material object of the book (delving into matters of design, manufacturing, codicology, and typography), as well as the complicated relationship between images and texts. Similarly, the history of reading can be fruitfully reconsidered by approaching it in terms of the history of seeing (albeit a specialized kind of seeing). In this way, we seek to rethink the history of the book from the vantage points of visual and material culture.

For more information, contact vsgc@college.usc.edu.