



SAN GEMINI PRESERVATION STUDIES

**(WVU) Syllabus for ARHS 451:  
Professional Field Experience:  
Introduction to the History and Craft of Book Bindings\***  
3 credit hours  
(SGPS) SG 204A – 3Units

Summer Semester, 2024ts

Session 1: First two-weeks (June 3 – June 14)

Meets Monday – Friday, 8:30 AM – 1:30 PM, Morning Lectures and 3:00-7:00 for workshop  
San Gemini, Italy

Location: Piazza San Giovanni Battista 8, Centro Giovanile classroom

Instructor: Professor Gloria Conti

Email: [gloria@chartaconservation.com](mailto:gloria@chartaconservation.com)

Office hours: on site TBA

**Note:** this is a course that can only be completed in San Gemini, Italy and not on the WVU campus or online. There are flight, meal, and program costs related to the course. Please go to the WVU Education Abroad website for current cost information.

<https://educationabroad.wvu.edu/>

**\*Must be taken with the following co-requisite**

ARHS 452: Professional Field Experience, Introduction to the Preservation and Preventive Conservation of Books

**No prerequisites required**

**Catalog Description**

Through a lecture and workshop format, this course introduces students to the history and evolution of Western and Oriental bookmaking, from the handmade codex to pre-industrialized book-making processes. Students craft four traditional books and in the process learn the materials, tools, sewing structures and assembly process of the various elements.

**Additional Information:**

This course is designed primarily to provide knowledge and skills to people going into the field of book conservation/ preservation and management of book resources, although it can also be useful to people going into the field of bookbinding and book design. For those planning a career as book conservators, this is a good introduction to the field to be followed up by further education. For those planning to manage book collections or archives, it offers basic skills in analyzing the nature of bound material, understanding the state of conservation, and identifying the particularities, unique features and evolution of book structures.

Students of the following subjects can find this program useful: Bookbinding, book

conservation and preservation, library science, library management, archival sciences, management of rare book collections, book design, and history of technology.

### **Student Learning Outcomes:**

Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:

- Describe and define book components and writing supports
- Identify and explain differences of book binding structures
- Design and create four historical types of book bindings

### **Recommended Reading:**

- Boudalis, (2018). *The Codex and Crafts in Late Antiquity*, Bard Graduate Center
- *Comparative Oriental Manuscript Studies: An Introduction*, (2015). Ed. by A. Bausi (General editor), P. G. Borbone, F. Briquel-Chatonnet, P. Buzi et al.
- Roberts, C. & Skeat, T.C, (1983), *The Birth of the Codex*, Oxford University Press
- Szirmai, (1990), *The Archaeology of Medieval Bookbinding*, Ashgate

### **Materials will be provided.**

**A current list of tools needed will be sent to students.**

### **Description of Assignments:**

Create from scratch four blank page books using four historical bindings systems and original materials and tools: 1) the unsupported sewing structure (Islamic style); 2) the Western medieval style binding; 3) the limp parchment binding; and 4) the modern case binding. Some historic materials, such as parchment, which is expensive will be in part substituted with modern imitations.

### **Grade Breakdown:**

Term paper: 8-page paper on a topic to be assigned 20%

- Your paper will be evaluated on content, organization, and clarity.

Exam: mixed format – quiz and essay questions. 20%

Book #1 (Unsupported sewing structure (Islamic style) 15%

Book #2 (Western medieval-style binding) 15%

Book #3 (Limp parchment binding) 15%

Book #4 (Italian Tacketed Stationary Binding) 15%

- Grading is based on successful technique not aesthetics (quire construction; sewing; creating textblock, end bands, cores, sections, boards, covering, lining, trimming, decoration, etc.).

### **Grading scale:**

94-100 = A

90-93 = A-

87-89 = B+

84-86 = B

80-83 = B-

77-79 = C+

74-76 = C

70-73 = C-

67-69 = D+


64-66 = D

60-63 = D-  
 Below 60 = F

**Late Assignment Policies**

Projects may be completed in any order as there is no individual deadline, but ALL work must be completed by the final day of class in San Gemini, Italy. The workshop lab is dismantled the following day after the program ends and students will not have access to materials or lab space. No work is accepted after the last day of class.

**Course Schedule**


Date	Day	Lecture 8:30-1:30	Workshop 3:00-7:00
6/5	Sun	<b>Arrival in San Gemini</b>	
6/6	Mon	<b>Brief historical overview of Umbria; Urban Evolution of San Gemini</b>	<b>Visit to Roman city of Carsulae</b>
6/7	Tue	<b>Book components and terminology, writing support/media: Overview of bound written material</b> Tablets Scrolls Bamboo books Palm leaf books  Codex <b>Paper: Overview</b> Manufacture techniques Eastern paper Western paper  Machine made	<b>AFTERNOON WORKSHOP: 1) Unsupported sewing structure (Islamic style)</b>  
6/8	Wed	<b>Book components and terminology, writing support/media: Parchment: Overview</b> Manufacture techniques Identification of animal skins  <b>Book components and terminology, writing support/media: Decorative papers</b> Glue paper Xylographic paper Printed paper Marbled paper	<b>AFTERNOON WORKSHOP: 1) Unsupported sewing structure (Islamic style)</b>

6/9	Thu	<b>Book components and terminology, writing support/media:</b> <b>Writing area</b> Pricking Ruling Margins Pagination <b>Inks</b> Carbon ink Iron gall inks Mixed inks Printing inks Text decoration <b>The book structure: general notions about book structure and terminology</b>	<b>AFTERNOON WORKSHOP:</b> <b>2) Western medieval-style binding</b>
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The section: fly leaves, paste down, types: integral, separate (diagrams)</li> <li>• Sewing: unsupported: “Eastern” (Coptic-Islamic- Byzantine)</li> <li>• Sewing thread: vegetable fibers (linen, hemp, cotton), animal (silk, wool), synthetic</li> <li>• Supports: cord (single, double), tape, leather (tanned, alum tawed–strip single double, tongue, split, twisted)</li> </ul>	
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6/10	Fri	<b>The book structure: general notions about book structure and terminology</b> • Sewing techniques Without supports: sewing with curved needle, chain stitch, kettle stitch With support: with straight needle, on cords, single, double, all along, herringbone sewing • Sewing techniques Sewing support variations Knots, when, where and how to make them	<b>AFTERNOON WORKSHOP:</b> <b>2) Western medieval-style binding</b>
6/11	Sat	No class	
6/12	Sun	No class	

6/13	Mon	<p><b>The book structure: general notions about book structure and terminology</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spine shapes: Rounded and backed, flat</li> <li>• Spine lining materials: vegetal materials (cotton, linen cloths)</li> </ul> <p>Animals (leather, parchment), reused fragments  Manuscript and printed waste</p> <p><b>The book structure: general notions about book structure and terminology</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Techniques: over-all, transfer, comb, panel, slotted</li> </ul>	<p><b>AFTERNOON WORKSHOP:</b>  <b>2) Western medieval-style binding</b></p>
6/14	Tue	<p><b>The book structure: general notions about book structure and terminology</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adhesives</li> </ul> <p>Starch paste  Animal glue (rabbit, bovine, ovine, mixed)  Synthetic adhesives</p>	<p><b>AFTERNOON WORKSHOP:</b>  <b>3) Limp parchment binding</b></p>

		<p>How to recognize them and what and how to use them in conservation</p> <p><b>The book structure: general notions about book structure and terminology</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• End bands: Western/Eastern with or without cores. Material for the cores: vegetable cord, animal (leather strips)</li> </ul> <p>Material for sewing: vegetable threads (linen, cotton), silk</p>	
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6/15	Wed	<p><b>The book structure: general notions about book structure and terminology</b></p> <p>Techniques:  Primary sewing: number of cores (single or double), front or back bead, warps, number of tie downs (structural or decorative)</p> <p>Secondary sewing (decorative): number of cores, materials, techniques for sewing (chevron, etc.), laced or not laced to the boards</p> <p><b>The book structure: general notions about book structure and terminology</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Book edges—trimming of the edges</li> </ul> <p>Techniques: trimming of the edges (with or without the boards, blade marks), with or without squares</p> <p>Decoration of the edges: painted (sprinkled, painted, marbled, etc.), goffrated, gilded</p>	<p><b>AFTERNOON WORKSHOP:</b></p> <p><b>3) Limp parchment binding</b></p>
6/16	Thu	<p><b>The book structure: general notions about book structure and terminology</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Boards Materials: wood, paper laminate, pulp board, millboard, manuscript/printed waste)</li> </ul> <p>Techniques:  Board attachment (lacing in, sewn, lining attachment)  Board profiles (bevels, squares)</p> <p><b>The book structure: general notions about book structure and terminology</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Covering material</li> </ul> <p>Materials: paper, parchment, leather, cloth/fabrics (vegetable, synthetic)Deterioration processes of</p>	<p><b>AFTERNOON WORKSHOP:</b></p> <p><b>4) Italian tacketed stationary Binding</b></p>

		<p>tanned leather, alum tawed leather  Identification of the animal species,  Leather tinting  Leather skiving</p>	
6/17	Fri	<p><b>The book structure: general notions about book structure and terminology</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Covering with adhesives: vegetal (starches)  Animal (cow hide, pig hide), synthetic (PVA, EVA, etc.)</li> </ul> <p><b>The book structure: general notions about book structure and terminology</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Turn-ins: sequence of turning the leather on the boards, different techniques in trimming the corners</li> </ul> <p><b>The book structure: general notions about book structure and terminology</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decoration of covers techniques: blind, gilded, etc. Tools for decoration</li> <li>• FasteningsFastening materials (leather, iron, bronze, silver)Fastening components (ties, straps, pins, clasps, catchplates)</li> </ul>	<p><b>AFTERNOON WORKSHOP:</b>  <b>4) Italian Tacketed Stationary Binding</b></p>

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<https://tlcommons.wvu.edu/syllabus-policies-and-statements>