

## History of the Illuminated Book - Description Dr. Dorothy Verkerk



The History of the Illuminated Book will be designed with a historical progression as well as a thematic progression since each western European culture created illuminated books that raise various methodological issues. The Late Antique period saw the gradual move from the roll to codex format with profound repercussions for the readership and the relationship between text and image. In the Carolingian period, illuminated books were symbols of a renewed Holy Roman Empire and were used as gifts to further the political ambitions and religious reforms of Charlemagne's dynasty. The Insular Books, such as the Book of Kells, introduce the use of ornament as a means to sanctify the Word, often raising the illuminated book to relic status. The move from scriptoria to workshop in the Gothic period initiated the "professional" scribe/artist who created decorated books to meet the growing need for books for personal devotion.

The nature of illuminated books is ideal for an interdisciplinary seminar, with each participant drawing upon their area of expertise to enhance the breadth of inquiry. The relationship between text and image will be emphasized, but issues of patronage (royal, ecclesiastical, personal, gender) and function will also be addressed. This seminar is designed for all graduate students who would like to develop their visual and textual analysis skills.