

A - New Course Proposal V. 7.2022 : Entry # 3539**DEAN Decision**

Approved

Date

10/02/2025

Is this course intracollegiate or intercollegiate?

Intercollegiate

SCHOOL EPC Decision

Approved

Date

10/14/2025

GEC Decision

Approved

Date

01/09/2026

APIRC Decision

Approved

Date

02/02/2026

Begin Form**Today's Date**

09/07/2025

Your Name:

Emily Gerhold

Your Email:egerhold@highpoint.edu**Are you a Department Chair?**

No

Department Chair Name

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Mark Brown

Email address of your Department Chairmabrown@highpoint.edu**By checking below, I certify that my department chair has seen and approved the new course that I am proposing.**

Yes

Please select the appropriate school overseeing this proposal:

Arts & Design

When should this proposal take effect?

Fall 2026

Information for the Registrar**Choose the department designator from the list below.**

DIS

Proposed Course Number?

1000

Is this course cross listed?

No

Does this course replace a current course?

No

What is the title of the new course?

The History of the Book

Write the catalog description of your proposed course:

This DIS course explores the book as both a cultural artifact and a material object. Integrating perspectives from library science and the history of material culture, the course examines the role of books in shaping social, scientific, political, religious, artistic, and cultural change across history. Students will synthesize concepts from multiple disciplines to analyze the evolving functions of books, while also developing creative problem-solving and analytical skills through hands-on work in papermaking, binding, and conservation.

How many credit hours will this course be?

4

How will the course be graded?

Letter grade

A - New Course Proposal V. 7.2022 : Entry # 3539**Please select the course repeat option for this course:**

Not repeatable for credit

What is the offering cycle for this course?

Alternate years

Does your course have any prerequisites?

No

Is this new course being proposed because of a new or revised major or minor proposal?

No

Any other comments for the Registrar at this time?

No

Gen Ed and Academic Programs**Is this course part of Gen Ed?**

- Yes

Does your course count in the general education core (one of the core classes that cannot be double-dipped in your major or minor)?

Intellectual Discovery [DIS]

Please provide a rationale for how your course is integrative. Please explain how you weave in different disciplines or fields of study. If your course is housed within one discipline, please explain how the epistemologies you integrate within the course are different from one another.

The History of the Book integrates perspectives from art history and library science to examine the book as both a cultural force and a material object. Students analyze the historical, social, and artistic impact of books while also engaging in hands-on practices such as papermaking, binding, and conservation. By combining interpretive, historical methods with practical, technical approaches, the course encourages students to synthesize distinct disciplinary perspectives, developing a richer understanding of how books shape, and are shaped by, human knowledge and culture.

Will this course be team-taught?

Yes

Who will team-teach with you and which department / school do they work in?

Gerald Ward, Library (Academic Staff)

Does this course count towards a major or a minor?

Yes

Please list the Major / Minor and if it is Required or Elective

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Minor: Museum Studies (elective)

Is this course part of an academic program?

- This course does not fulfill academic program requirements

Does this course include any community engagement?

No

Does this course participate in the GoGlobal Program?

No

Information for Curriculum Review**Rationale and evidence for new course's consistency with departmental mission:**

There is growing scholarly and pedagogical interest in the history of the book as a way to connect material culture with intellectual, social, and artistic history. Courses of this type are increasingly common in art history, English, and library studies programs nationwide, reflecting the recognition that studying the book provides students with a powerful lens for understanding cultural change. At High Point University, this course fills a curricular gap by giving students the opportunity to engage with both the historical and material dimensions of books, which is an area not currently covered in existing offerings.

The course aligns with both school and university goals by promoting interdisciplinary inquiry, critical analysis, and hands-on learning. It introduces students to global and historical perspectives, while also providing practical skills that connect theory with practice. By synthesizing art historical interpretation with material and technical exploration, the course embodies the School of Arts and Design's commitment to fostering creativity, scholarship, and integrative learning.

List all student learning outcomes for this course.

This course will support the following learning outcomes:

-Teamwork: Students will demonstrate the ability to operate constructively within a team environment by collaboratively analyzing, designing, or creating projects that merge historical, artistic, and technological approaches to the book.

-Integrative Learning: Students will synthesize concepts from art history, cultural theory, and material practice to examine how books function as vessels of knowledge, identity, and cultural transmission, and apply this understanding through creative and research-based projects.

-Creative Problem Solving: Through hands-on projects in papermaking, binding, and conservation, students will analyze challenges of book production, develop innovative solutions, and create their own books that speak to their unique and individual perspectives.

-Analytical Skills: Students will apply historical and theoretical frameworks to evaluate the social, artistic, and cultural significance of books across time.

List any units or content areas that will be required for all sections of this course.

- Foundations of Book History: Definitions of the book, material artifact vs. vessel of ideas, key theoretical frameworks.

- Theories of Knowledge and Transmission: Semiotics, historiography, and case studies of how knowledge is communicated.

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- Historical Development of the Book: Writing technologies, scrolls to codex, manuscript and print culture, typography, and layout.
- Books and Social Change: The role of print in political, religious, scientific, and cultural revolutions.
- Scientific and Technical Books: The germination and preservation of specialized knowledge (e.g., medical and botanical texts).
- Practical Bookmaking Skills: Papermaking, binding, conservation, and exposure to book arts practices.
- Books as Cultural Transmission: Identity formation, artistic/artist books, reproduction technologies.
- The Future of the Book: Digital technologies, AI, and questions of access to information.
- Integrative Assessments: Midterm research paper, hands-on book project, and final reflection connecting historical, theoretical, and practical perspectives.

List any assignments, tests, or other assessments that will be required for all sections of this course.

1. Field Observation Assignment: Students will explore real-world examples of how knowledge is transmitted through various media and contexts. This observational assignment encourages students to reflect on semiotic theory and historiography by identifying and analyzing instances of knowledge dissemination encountered in everyday life.
2. Print & Social Impact Analysis: Students will select a historical printed work (e.g., pamphlet, newspaper, broadside, or book) that played a role in a social, political, or cultural movement. They will write a short analytical piece (2–3 pages) discussing:
 - The context in which the work was produced.
 - How its format and distribution influenced its impact.
 - The role of print technology in amplifying its message.
3. Midterm Research Paper: A 5-7 page research paper requiring students to engage with a previously unused research resource as a primary source. This assignment challenges students to apply theoretical frameworks and historical perspectives to a focused topic related to book history, materiality, or transmission of knowledge.
4. Bookbinding Basics: Students will participate in a hands-on bookbinding activity, learning to use traditional tools and materials to rebind a paperback book. This practical assignment emphasizes craftsmanship and historical techniques, reinforcing the materiality of the book.
5. Final Project & Reflection Paper" The culminating assignment consists of two components:
 - Physical Book Creation: Students will design and produce a physical book that reflects a theme or concept explored during the course (e.g., cultural transmission, the sharing of scientific or artistic knowledge, books as tools of identity formation, the future of the book).
 - Reflection Paper: A 5-7 page written reflection that critically examines the student's creative process, theoretical influences, and the role of books in shaping identity and knowledge.

List any readings or other materials that will be required for all sections of this course.

- Robert Darnton, "What is the History of Books?"
- David Finkelstein & Alistair McCleery, An Introduction to Book History
- Peter Shillingsburg, From Gutenberg to Google
- Leslie Howsam, Old Books and New Histories

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Emily B. Todd and Matteo Pangallo, Teaching the History of the Book

Adam Smyth: The Book-Makers : A History of the Book in 18 Remarkable Lives

List any course policies that will be required for all sections of this course.**Professional Behavior**

High Point University students are expected to uphold the University Honor Code, Conduct Code, and all other policies outlined in the Undergraduate Bulletin and Student Guide to Campus Life. Disruptive behavior or communication that hinders the exchange of ideas or intellectual development will be addressed and tracked via Panther Success Network. Violations may result in civility education, withdrawal from the class, or expulsion. Plagiarism and cheating are strictly prohibited.

Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion

HPU is committed to fostering a diverse and inclusive learning environment. We welcome and respect individuals of all backgrounds, identities, and perspectives. This course will be conducted as an intentionally inclusive community where all students are encouraged to speak and be heard without fear of bias. Respect for others is expected at all times.

Intellectual Property

All course materials—including exams, study guides, presentations, and assignments—are the intellectual property of the instructor and are intended solely for use by students enrolled in the course. Sharing or posting these materials is prohibited and considered a violation of the Honor Code.

University Attendance Policy

Students must attend at least 75% of scheduled class meetings. Falling below this threshold will result in withdrawal from the course (W or WF depending on timing). Faculty will issue Starfish flags at 10% and 20% absence thresholds. Students with approved accommodations through OARS should refer to their Consideration for Absences agreement.

Students with Disabilities

HPU ensures equal access for students with disabilities in accordance with the ADA and Section 504. Students must register with the Office of Accessibility Resources and Services (OARS) and provide documentation. Accommodations are not retroactive. Contact OARS at oars@highpoint.edu or 336-841-9026.

HPU Writing Center

The Writing Center offers support for all stages of the writing process. Consultants help with assignment comprehension, drafting, and revision. Appointments can be made at www.highpoint.mywconline.com. For more info, visit www.highpoint.edu/english/writing-center or email writingcenter@highpoint.edu.

Title IX

HPU supports a safe, violence-free campus. If you or someone you know experiences stalking, intimate partner violence, sexual assault, or discrimination, resources are available:

Title IX Coordinator: www.highpoint.edu/title-ix, 336-841-9138

Counseling Services: www.highpoint.edu/counseling, 336-888-6352

Student Health Services: studenthealth@highpoint.edu, 336-841-4683

Counseling Services

Students experiencing stress, anxiety, or other challenges are encouraged to contact Counseling Services. These confidential services are included in student fees. Call 336-888-6352 or visit www.highpoint.edu/counseling. Office hours: Monday–Friday, 8:30–5:00.

If you would like to specify how requirements for contact hours must be met for all sections of this course, please indicate below. (e.g., if any experiential learning activities will replace seat time)

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N/A

Is there anything else the reviewing parties should know about this new course proposal that hasn't been addressed?

N/A - thanks for your consideration of this proposal!

Sample Syllabus

- [History-of-the-Book-DIS-Proposal.pdf](#)

Additional Documents

- [Email-for-committee.docx](#)