

Information Guide | Oxford

Welcome to Rare Book School!

FOR MORE THAN FORTY YEARS, the bibliographical community has been supported and nourished by the work of Rare Book School (RBS). From its tentative beginnings at Columbia University, the School has educated several generations of librarians, collectors, academics, conservators, and booksellers, producing a network of loyal alumni, talented faculty, and dedicated friends around the globe. In the process, it has also earned a reputation as the world's premier institution for the study of bibliography and book history. We are delighted that you will soon be a part of that distinguished tradition, and of our School's promising future. We look forward to welcoming you to Oxford for your Rare Book School course.

This *Information Guide* will provide general information about what to expect during your course week. Upon arrival, you'll receive a copy of the *Student's Vade Mecum* with additional information to ensure that your stay is as productive and enjoyable as possible. (N.B. Please bring the present guide with you when you take your RBS course; it contains valuable information not repeated in the *Vade Mecum*.) We eagerly await your arrival, and look forward to a wonderful session!

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RARE BOOK SCHOOL
University of Virginia
Post Office Box 400103
Charlottesville, VA 22904-4103
Telephone: 434-924-8851
rbsprograms@virginia.edu
www.rarebookschool.org

RBS in Oxford

OXFORD, England was founded during the ninth century on the banks of the Thames, Cherwell, and Isis rivers. It is home to the oldest university in the English-speaking world, Oxford University. Comprised of thirty-six colleges, Oxford has been ranked the top institution of higher education in the world since 2017. Set in the picturesque landscape of Oxfordshire County, it is twenty-one miles from Blenheim Palace.

The second-oldest library in Britain, Oxford's Bodleian Library holds more than thirteen million printed items and has been open for scholastic use since 1602.

This year, the Bodleian Library will host the Rare Book School courses: "Transmission of the Bible from the Beginnings to 1500" taught by Peter Toth, Cornelia Starks Curator of Greek Collections at the Bodleian Library, and "Researching Medieval Manuscripts: From Cataloging to Cultural History" taught by David Rundle, Senior Lecturer in Latin and Paleography in the Centre for Medieval and Early Modern Studies at the University of Kent.

We're excited that you've decided to join us in Oxford this summer, and we want to do all we can to deliver an exceptional educational experience. If you have any questions about the course, or about RBS generally, please email us at rbsprograms@virginia.edu.

The RBS Week

All RBS students are expected to be in attendance and on time for all regularly scheduled classes, labs, and field trips. This is to ensure the quality and community of RBS as a School, and we insist that participants attend all sessions of their courses, unless presented with the most extraordinary of circumstances. Practically speaking, this involves a full-time commitment of one-and-a-half hours on Sunday evening, 9 a.m.–5 p.m. Monday through Thursday, and 9 a.m.–4 p.m. Friday. Please make your travel plans accordingly!

SUNDAY EVENING, **Opening Reception**

RBS students will convene for registration and a meal (location TBA). The time will be announced soon, but it will be after 5 p.m. Once there, all students will receive a copy of the *Student's Vade Mecum* and a name badge.

N.B. If you plan to attend this event, RSVP by email (rbsprograms@virginia.edu) no later than 26 May.

Late arrival: We strongly suggest attending the Sunday night registration, but if you are unable to make it, please email us (rbsprograms@virginia.edu) and let us know. If you do not attend, you will need to register at your classroom at 8:50 a.m. sharp on Monday morning.

MONDAY through THURSDAY

8:50 a.m.* **Registration (Monday Only)**

RBS students will convene for registration.

9–10:30 a.m.* **First Period**

Classes meet.

10:30–11 a.m. **Morning Break**

Light refreshments will be provided.

11 a.m.–12:30 p.m.* **Second Period**

12:30–2:00 p.m. **Lunch**

Classes break for lunch. There are several restaurants within walking distance of the library.

2:00–3:30 p.m.* **Third Period**

3:30–4 p.m. **Afternoon Break**

Light refreshments will be provided.

4–5:30 p.m.* **Fourth Period**

FRIDAY

9–10:30 a.m.* **First Period**

Classes meet.

10:30–11:30 a.m. **Morning Break**

Refreshments will be provided as part of the Library's "Coffee Morning" event, featuring a presentation by a visiting fellow.

11:30 a.m.–1 p.m.* **Second Period**

1–3 p.m. **Lunch**

Classes break for a long lunch. By tradition, students take their instructor to a group lunch on Friday (you are not obligated to attend). Advance reservations are strongly recommended.

3–4 p.m.* **Third Period**

4 p.m.* **Course Evaluations**

Students receive course completion certificates and fill out RBS course evaluations.

Friday, 4:15–6 p.m. **Closing Reception**

RBS will host a closing reception (location TBA). Drinks and hors d'oeuvres will be provided.

A more detailed schedule will be available soon.

** Required activities are noted by asterisk*

Before you arrive

Reading Lists

Most RBS courses have advance reading lists or assignments that RBS instructors expect their students to complete before they arrive. These are outlined at www.rarebookschool.org/reading.

Students should come to class prepared. Those who have trouble locating required readings might try obtaining them through interlibrary loan (ILL), from used or antiquarian booksellers through the Antiquarian Booksellers Association of America (ABAA), or online via sites such as www.bookfinder.com or www.vialibri.net.

Arrival & Departure Logistics

When thinking about your transportation arrangements, please remember that staying over Friday night after the last day of class can be an excellent idea, if you can swing it. Arriving a day early may also be a good idea, as it can provide an opportunity to settle in, overcome jet lag, &c. RBS first-timers are often surprised by the intensity of the experience, so be sure to get some sleep before class starts!

Problems

Please let us know if you encounter problems on any front. If such problems occur before you arrive, email (rbsprograms@virginia.edu) or telephone us (434-924-8851, 8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.; voicemail after hours). If you encounter issues with tuition payments, contact RBS Accounting Specialist Michael Taylor at 434-243-2920, or by email (michael.taylor@virginia.edu).

Should any difficulties arise during the course, please bring your concerns to a faculty member, an RBS staff member on site, or contact us at Rare Book School.

Accommodations

There are a number of Bed & Breakfasts, guest houses, and hotels within walking distance of the Bodleian Library. The [UniversityRooms.com](https://www.universityrooms.com/en-GB/city/oxford) website can be a good place to find and book rooms: <https://www.universityrooms.com/en-GB/city/oxford>

Summer is a busy season for scholars visiting Oxford, so accommodations do book quickly. We encourage you to book your room early. Contact rbsprograms@virginia.edu for more information.

Transportation

More information will be available soon.

Advance Advices

What to Bring

At RBS, dress is business casual for all events. Summer in Oxford can range from mild to warm, with average temperatures ranging from 88 degrees Fahrenheit in the daytime to 66 degrees at night. *With these temperatures and classroom comfort in mind, please pack appropriately.* In general, bringing comfortable shoes and an umbrella is also a good idea.

RBS participants are expected to come to class prepared, and are required to be on time. Bring a watch. If you wish to take notes, plan accordingly. Pencils, paper, and other supplies are available at nearby convenience stores. Before leaving home, check the course description and the reading list on the RBS website for specific instructions on what to bring. (It is not, for instance, always necessary to bring copies of your advance reading.)