Engaging with Special Collections: teaching with rare books and manuscripts at Senate House Library

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Teaching at Senate House Library

• General Library inductions at the beginning of the year

• Information literacy for School of Advanced Study Programmes

• Seminars and classes using Special Collections and other material are the main area of teaching

• Specialising in Manuscript Studies and the History of the Book
Logistics and Practicalities

- Teaching space in the Library
- Maximum class size of 15
- Invigilation by Library staff and guidance on handling
- Sufficient notice period for class bookings
- Condition assessments before and after classes
- Reading Room rules apply
Why Teach with Special Collections

• Enhance the learning experience
• Show collection relevance
• Meet institutional mission
• Bring students back
Selecting Material

• The catalogue and its limitations
• Know your collections!
• Teacher and Library collaboration
Running a Session

• Demonstration
• Let the books speak
• Student examination
Outcomes

• An understanding of the key concepts explored in the session and of the value and contexts of original source material

• A valuable experience of books and manuscripts ‘in the flesh’

• Encourage interest in and use of Special Collections

• Know how to find and access Special Collections material
Thank you!

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https://www.senatehouselibrary.ac.uk/