



THE NEWBERRY

Center for Renaissance Studies

Winter/Spring 2016 Ten-Week Graduate Seminar
at the Newberry

Thinking with Stones in Early Modern Europe

Led by **Rebecca Zorach**, *Northwestern University*

Fridays, January 15 to March 18, 2:00 to 5:00 pm

Application deadline: December 1



This seminar asks how it might change the study of early modern Europe's material culture to organize our thinking around one particular type of matter: stone. Using theoretical reference points associated with the "new materialism" and ecocriticism, we will try to think from (or around) the position of stone, stones, and stoniness in a series of different ways:

- mining
- building
- writing
- growing
- imaging
- healing
- decaying.

Tracing the many manifestations of stone in early modern culture (ca. 1400-1800), we will in the process touch upon many key cultural phenomena for this period, from architecture to collecting to medicine to geology. Over the course of the term, each student will prepare and carry out one or more short presentations of rare books in the Newberry's collection. Presentations will involve contextualizing the author, the text, the edition, and any illustrations, giving a few examples of passages and images (they do not assume in-depth familiarity with the entire book) and will enable students to gain familiarity with the study of early modern books and begin developing a research topic for a final paper of 15-20 pages, due at the end of the term.

Prerequisites: Latin strongly recommended but not required; other research languages (French, German, and Italian in particular) are welcome. Previous coursework in early modern art history, history, and/or literature desirable.

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