
Postgraduate Certificate in Professional Vintage Book Restoration

Introduction to Book Restoration

Introduction to Book Restoration: Key Terms and Vocabulary

Bookbinding: The process of physically assembling a book from an ordered stack of paper sheets that are folded together into sections or sometimes left as a stack of individual sheets. The stack is then bound together along one edge by either sewing with thread through the folds or by a layer of flexible adhesive. Alternative methods of binding that are cheaper but less permanent include loose-leaf rings, individual screw posts or binding posts, twin loop spine coils, plastic spiral coils, and plastic spine combs. For protection, the bound stack is either wrapped in a flexible cover or attached to stiff boards. Finally, an attractive cover is adhered to the boards, including identifying information and decoration. Book artists or specialists in book decoration can also greatly enhance a book's content by creating book-like objects with artistic merit of exceptional quality.

Sections: A group of folded sheets of paper, usually 4, 6, or 8 pages, nested inside each other to form a gathering of pages ready for binding.

Endpapers: The first and last sections of a book, which are often made of a heavier paper or board and are attached to the boards or case of the book. Endpapers serve to strengthen the binding and provide a smooth surface for the paste-down and free endpaper to adhere. The free endpaper is the first page seen when a book is opened; it is often decorated with an ex-libris plate or other ornamentation.

Boards: Stiff cardboard or thick paper used to protect the pages of a book. Boards are attached to the spine of a book and can be covered with a variety of materials, including cloth, leather, or paper.

Case: A book cover consisting of boards, spine, and hinges attached to the text block. The case is made separately from the text block and is later attached.

Spine: The outer edge of a book where the sections are gathered and bound. The spine can be rounded or flat and is often decorated with the title, author, and publisher information.

Hinges: The flexible joints where the endpapers meet the boards or case. Hinges allow the book to open and lay flat.

Paste-down: The part of the endpaper that is attached to the board or case. The paste-down provides a smooth surface for writing or decoration and protects the text block from damage.

Headcap: A thin strip of material, usually cloth or leather, that covers the top edge of the spine and protects it from wear and tear.

Tailband: A decorative strip of material, usually cloth or leather, that is adhered to the top and bottom edges of the spine. The tailband adds strength and flexibility to the spine and provides a visual accent.

Rounding and Backing: The process of shaping the spine of a book by first softening the spine and then shaping it to create a rounded or flat contour. Rounding and backing help protect the sections and improve the book's stability and durability.

Sewing: The process of attaching the sections to the spine using thread. Sewing provides a strong and flexible binding that can withstand the stress of frequent use.

Adhesive Binding: The process of attaching the sections to the spine using a layer of flexible adhesive. Adhesive binding is a quicker and cheaper alternative to sewing but is less permanent.

Edge Treatments: The process of decorating or protecting the edges of the pages of a book. Edge treatments include gilding, coloring, rounding, burnishing, and marbling.

Gilding: The process of applying a thin layer of gold or silver leaf to the edges of the pages of a book. Gilding adds a luxurious touch and protects the edges from wear and tear.

Coloring: The process of applying a colored pigment to the edges of the pages of a book. Coloring can be done using a variety of methods, including spraying, brushing, or dipping.

Rounding: The process of shaping the edges of the pages so that they form a rounded contour. Rounding helps protect the edges from wear and tear and improves the book's stability and durability.

Burnishing: The process of polishing the edges of the pages to a high sheen. Burnishing adds a decorative touch and protects the edges from wear and tear.

Marbling: The process of creating intricate patterns on the edges of the pages using a variety of pigments and techniques. Marbling adds a decorative touch and protects the edges from wear and tear.

Restoration: The process of repairing or preserving a book to restore its original appearance, stability, and functionality. Restoration can involve a variety of techniques, including mending, reinforcement, resewing, recasing, rebacking, refurbishing, and recovering.

Mending: The process of repairing tears, losses, or other damage to the pages or cover of a book. Mending can involve a variety of techniques, including tear repair, page reattachment, and spine repair.

Reinforcement: The process of adding extra strength or support to weak or damaged areas of a book. Reinforcement can involve a variety of techniques, including hinge reinforcement, spine reinforcement, and corner reinforcement.

Resewing: The process of reattaching the sections to the spine using thread. Resewing can be necessary when the original sewing has failed or when the book needs to be rebound.

Recasing: The process of attaching a new case or cover to a book. Recasing can be necessary when the original cover is damaged or when the book needs to be rebound.

Rebacking: The process of replacing the spine of a book. Rebacking can be necessary when the original spine is damaged or when the book needs to be rebound.

Refurbishing: The process of cleaning, polishing, or otherwise improving the appearance of a book. Refurbishing can involve a variety of techniques, including edge polishing, spine cleaning, and dust jacket repair.

Recovering: The process of replacing the cover of a book. Recovering can be necessary when the original cover is damaged or when the book needs to be rebound.

Conservation: The process of preserving a book in its original state, without altering its appearance or functionality. Conservation can involve a variety of techniques, including cleaning, humidification, deacidification, encapsulation, and housing.

Cleaning: The process of removing dirt, dust, or other contaminants from a book. Cleaning can involve a variety of techniques, including brushing, vacuuming, and solvent cleaning.

Humidification: The process of adding moisture to a book to soften or relax the spine or pages. Humidification can be necessary when a book is brittle or when it needs to be rebound.

Deacidification