LIBRARY HALL
VOCABULARY LIST

Book of Hours  a small volume of prayers, scriptural excerpts, and devotional text, organized around the canonical hours of the Catholic Church. Such manuscripts, usually decorated with a series of miniatures of scenes from the life of the Virgin Mary, were popular among lay men and women in the later Middle Ages.

Broadside (or Broadsheet)  a single sheet of unfolded paper printed on one side only, frequently containing an official announcement, current news, or popular ephemeral songs or verse, sold unbound.

Folio  (1) a single sheet of paper, folded once to yield four pages of print; or, (2) a large book, the pages of which are folio-sized, as “The First Folio” edition of Shakespeare’s plays. See also quarto.

Illuminated manuscript  a manuscript which has been decorated with colored paints and gold leaf or gold paint, a common practice for luxury books produced in the Middle Ages.

Incunabula  books printed in the early or “cradle days” of printing, i.e. before 1501.

Manuscript  a letter, document or other composition written by hand (as opposed to a work produced in multiple copies by a printing press).

Miniature  a small painting, usually in vivid colors highlighted with gold leaf or gold paint, on the page of a medieval book or manuscript.

Parchment  the skin of an animal (usually a calf or sheep) that has been cleaned, scraped, stretched and prepared for use as a writing surface. Also called vellum.

Quarto  a medium sized book composed of sheets of paper folded twice (hence roughly half the size of a Folio). Abbreviated as “4to”.

Woodcut  a printed illustration made by impressing the design engraved on a block or wood.

Vellum  the skin from an animal (usually a calf or sheep) that has been scraped, cleaned, stretched and prepared for use as a writing surface. Also called parchment.