

Russell Lecture: 'How Printing Transformed Western Culture (and How it Didn't)'

10/27/14



Princeton University Historian Anthony Grafton will present Alfred University's (AU) annual Russell Lecture on Thursday, Nov. 6 at 8 p.m. in Nevins Theater, Powell Campus Center. Grafton will discuss "The Triumph of the Book: How Printing Transformed Western Culture (and How it Didn't)." Admission is free and open to the public.

Grafton, who earned bachelor of arts and master of arts degrees and a doctoral degree in history, all from the University of Chicago, focuses his studies on the Renaissance and Reformation and historiography. He is particularly interested in the cultural history of Renaissance Europe, the history of books and readers, the history of scholarship and education in the West, and the history and development of science.

His most recent project is a large-scale study of the methods used by 16th- and 17th-century European scholars in assigning dates to historic events, reconstructing ancient calendars, and reconciling the Bible with other accounts of the past.

Grafton is the Henry Putnam University Professor of History at Princeton, where he has worked since 1975, teaching undergraduate and graduate courses on art, magic, and science in Renaissance Europe; the history of books and readers; and introductory courses on historiography and the history of Western civilization.

Some of Grafton's recent publications include intellectual biographies "Leon Battista Alberti: Master Builder of the Italian Renaissance" and "Joseph Scaliger: A Study in the History of Classical Scholarship," as well as "Defenders of the Text: The Traditions of Scholarship in an Age of Science, 1450-1800" and "Bring Out Your Dead: The Past as Revelation," two collections of essays on several of his areas of interest. He has published 10 books in total and contributed to nine others.

The Russell Lecture, sponsored by the AU College of Liberal Arts & Sciences and the Human Studies Division, has been conducted annually since 1970. The lecture honors the memory of Willis Russell, former historian and department chair, who taught at AU from 1926 until his retirement in 1964.

Each year, the lecture brings a nationally recognized historian to campus to deliver an address. French historian

William D. Irvine delivered the lecture in 2013, with previous guests including Pulitzer Prize winners Michael Kammen of Cornell University and Martin Sherwin of George Mason University.