

Humanism For Sale

Making and Marketing Schoolbooks in Italy, 1450-1650

by *Paul F. Gehl*

Humanism For Sale is an experimental, online monograph authored by the Newberry's history-of-printing curator, Paul F. Gehl, and published online by the Center for Renaissance Studies. It is formatted as a free interactive blog, allowing readers to make comments on any part of the book. *Humanism For Sale* concerns the ways books were written, designed, printed, and marketed for schools in Renaissance Italy. It tells the story of how largely similar products packaged for use in highly standardized curricula competed for sales. While humanist philology emphasized slow, critical work on ancient and traditional texts, the educational market and other forms of popularization pulled authors in the opposite direction, toward confecting entirely new texts that could be quickly delivered and frequently reprinted. Latin-trained intellectuals constantly had to resell the elitist ideals of humanism to a public of politicians, churchmen, and influential businessmen.



Humanism For Sale as a teaching tool

We would like to encourage teachers to use *Humanism For Sale* in the classroom, both for its broadly interdisciplinary content and to encourage students to use this online resource interactively. Thus far, professors in graduate history, historiography, and literature classes have used reading-and-comment assignments for classes. Music, art history, and history of science courses could also benefit; some units may also be suitable reading for undergraduates. The following are relatively self-contained units that would be useful course readings.

- **Terence from manuscript to print:** A case study in the printing of one important classical author. Chapter 1, i.e. sections 1.00 - 1.20
- **Vernacular literacy:** Evidence for the growth of non-Latin literacy using early printed sources. Sections 6.00 - 6.02 and 6.08 - 6.15
- **Geography textbooks:** Geographical knowledge and geographical teaching in humanist-influenced settings. Sections 4.14 to 1.19
- **Music textbooks:** The exceptional character of music education in church and humanist schools. Sections 6.16 - 6.20
- **Emblems/emblematics:** What emblems mean and how they were used. Chapter 7, i.e. sections 7.00 - 7.16

We encourage instructors to assign a reading and ask or require students to make a comment or offer a correction in the comment fields—substantive enough to elicit a response from the author of the book and/or from other readers in the class. To receive a response from the author, comments should reflect critical reading of the subject of the assignment. Students could also be asked to comment on the format of the online book and its ease or difficulty of use. Again, the ideal place for this is in the online comment fields, so that the students' ideas can be taken into account in developing the site further.

www.humanismforsale.org/text