Visual poetry

This course examines objects with a dual nature: literary artifacts that are also visual compositions, texts that function simultaneously as pictures. While a primary focus will be on Italian 20th century experimental literary forms (parole in libertà, poesia visiva, concrete poetry), students will also explore a wider historical range of such textual-visual hybrids, from the classical world to the Middle Ages, the Renaissance and the Baroque period.

In order to trace the transnational circulation of visual models, comparative examples and references from English and other languages will be offered. Specific readings/discussions will address theoretical issues raised by iconic texts—how do we read visual poetry? What does it mean to be a reader and a viewer at the same time?