Art historians, codicologists, and historians of the book have increasingly come to recognize that printed books, like other categories of book, such as codices, were ‘permeable’ rather than ‘fixed’ objects. Just as manuscripts were mutable, their material form and constituent parts manipulable, so too, printed books could be adapted to need or use, their format altered to fit a wide spectrum of functions, in response to contingent circumstances of all kinds. This colloquium will explore the many different ways printed and manuscript books were customized from the fifteenth through the eighteenth century. As bibliographers have amply documented, this customization occurred at every stage of a book’s life: printers and publishers often produced variable copies of the books they promulgated; patrons and proprietors intervened in the assembling or reassembling of the books made for them; and individual owners of all kinds frequently altered the physical structure of their books by inserting, interpolating, subtracting, deleting, rearranging, and correcting texts and images alike. We will consider all these forms of customization and more, but the emphasis of our discussions will fall on the hermeneutic functions of the modifications made by makers and users to the structure of their manuscripts and books.

Friday, April 17
12:15 – 1:30 — Lunch

Session 2: 1:30 – 3:00
Peter van der Coeelen, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen
Customized Versions of Erasmus’s Praise of Folly
Steffen Zierholz, Bibliotheca Hertziana, Max-Planck-Institut für Kunstgeschichte
Early Modern Fore-edge Painting in Italy and England

3:00 – 3:15 — Coffee Break

Session 3: 3:15 – 5:30
Julia Lillie, Bard Graduate Center
Outside the Atlas: Customized Books with Printed Maps in Early Modern Germany
Anne Koening, The Newberry Library
Customized Health: Sigmund Örtel’s Life-Preserving Book, c. 1467
Stephanie Leitch, Florida State University
A Catalogue of Printed Knowledge: Repurposed Prints in an Encyclopedic Hausbuch, c. 1524

Saturday, April 18
11:45 – 12:00 — Coffee Break

Session 2, 12:00 – 1:30
Kelln Michael, Emory University
Reforming Brahmanas: Early Modern Iterations of In honorem sanctae crucis
Brent Purkaple, University of Oklahoma
Anamorphic Perspectives: A Comparison of the Printed Works of Jean François Niceron

1:30 – 1:45 — Concluding Remarks: Publication
1:45 — Lunch