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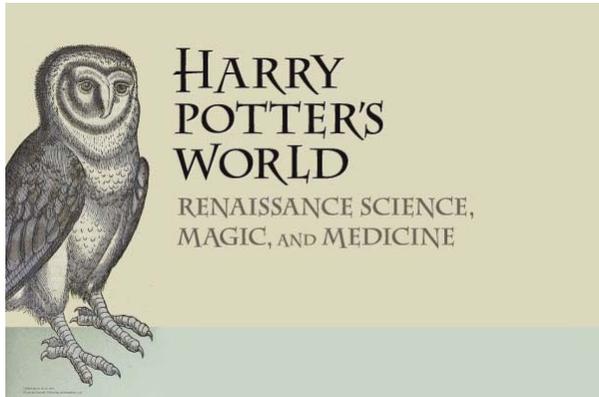
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Booth Library to Host Harry Potter Traveling Exhibition

Aug-07-2009



Harry Potter's World: Renaissance Science, Magic and Medicine," a traveling exhibition that uses materials from the National Library of Medicine to explore Harry Potter's magical world and its roots in Renaissance traditions, will be on display at Eastern Illinois University's Booth Library from Oct. 5 through Nov. 14.

In 1997, British author J. K. Rowling introduced the world to Harry Potter and a literary phenomenon was born. Millions of readers have followed Harry to the Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry where he discovers his heritage, encounters new plants and animals, and perfects his magical abilities. Although a fictional story, the Harry Potter series is partially based on Renaissance traditions that played an important role in the development of Western science, including alchemy, astrology and natural philosophy.

Incorporating the work of several 15th- and 16th-century thinkers, the Potter books examine important ethical topics such as the desire for knowledge, the effects of prejudice and the responsibility that comes with power.

Exhibit panels feature excerpts from the works of 15th- and 16th-century thinkers, such as naturalist Konrad Gesner, alchemist Nicolas Flamel and occultist Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim, and explore their understandings of natural philosophy, medicine and magic. In addition to the experts included in the exhibit, library visitors are also welcome to browse through the full text of manuscripts by Nicolas Flamel and Konrad Gesner through Early English Books Online.

The panels also highlight illustrations from Renaissance texts of some of the fantastic creatures and plants featured in the Potter series, including basilisks, dragons, merpeople and mandrakes, and use them to explore the intersection between the novels and Renaissance thinkers, lore and practices.

The National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health, Bethesda, Md., organized the exhibition. For information about the National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health, visit www.nlm.nih.gov.

Booth Library will sponsor free programs and other events for the public in connection with the exhibition. Contact Stacey Knight-Davis (slknight@eiu.edu) or visit <http://www.library.eiu.edu/exhibits/harrypotter/> for more information.