The Renaissance Studies Program presents the third lecture in its “Forms of Knowledge and the Renaissance Uses of the Liberal Arts” series:

Ann Blair
Henry Charles Lea Professor of History, Harvard University

“Transferable Skills” in Renaissance Pedagogy

5:30 p.m., Wednesday, November 18, 2015
Oak Room, Indiana Memorial Union

“Transferable skills” has become a mantra today in encouraging undergraduates to concentrate in the humanities. A humanist education became fashionable in the Renaissance for a variety of reasons, among them some equivalents to our “transferable skills” argument. In particular humanist pedagogues praised note-taking as an essential skill which was developed in their teaching both in the classroom and in private instruction. This talk will offer a survey of the principal forms of student note-taking in the late Renaissance, using evidence from note-taking manuals and from surviving notes in the margins of printed texts and in free-standing manuscripts, ranging from France 1550-1650 to colonial Harvard.

Ann Blair is a leading intellectual historian who has pioneered the sub-discipline of the organization and structure of knowledge in the early modern period. A recipient of fellowships from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the MacArthur Foundation, the Mellon Foundation, and the Guggenheim Foundation, she is the author of The Theater of Nature: Jean Bodin and Renaissance Science (Princeton UP, 1997), and Too Much To Know: Managing Scholarly Information Before the Modern Age (Yale UP, 2010). She has co-edited, with Jennifer Milligan, Toward a Cultural History of Archives, a special issue of Archival Science (2007) and, with Richard Yeo, Note-Taking in Early Modern Europe, a special issue of Intellectual History Review (2010).

This lecture is made possible through the support of the College Arts and Humanities Institute, the College of Arts and Sciences, the Mary-Margaret Barr Koon Fund of the Department of French and Italian, the Department of History, and the Department of History and Philosophy of Science. The lecture will be followed by a reception.