New: Origin of Type Frameworks (OTF) Course

The OTF Course, organized by the Dutch Type Library, offers an online practical and theoretical study of type design and font technology. The course is taught via Zoom and delves deeper into what type design and font production actually entails, by evaluating and questioning how to approach the subject, also from less common points of view. This is done by exploring and analyzing the historical, aesthetic, and technical aspects of type design and typography. The aim is a deep understanding of what exactly this comprises and a quantifiable translation of this knowledge into practical digital applications.

In short, the OTF course covers all the usual ingredients of type design education, such as studying written source models, drawing, spacing, kerning, investigating font sizes, (automating) font production, and so on. But in addition, there is also a unique and cutting-edge approach, based on almost 40 years of experience in vocational type-design education, combined with academic research. For example, the relationship between the archetypal frameworks and the intrinsic morphological systematization of the underlying writing models is carefully examined, which means that more attention is paid than just to letter forms. This approach has proven its strength over the past 15 years during the Expert class Type design course in Antwerp:

https://typedrawers.com/discussion/635/grand-cru-classes-sprouting-from-antwerp-soil/

The OTF Course is taught by Dr. Frank E. Blokland and Dr. Jürgen Willrodt. Together they have over 80 years of experience in the type industry.

Frank (Leiden, 1959) is a type designer and has been senior lecturer in type design at the Royal Academy of Art (KABK) since 1987. From 1995 to 2025 he was senior lecturer and research fellow at the Plantin Institute of Typography in Antwerp. Frank founded the Dutch Type Library in 1990 and in October 2016 he successfully defended his PhD dissertation on Renaissance font-production standardization at Leiden University.

Jürgen (Hamburg, 1952) studied physics and mathematics and obtained a PhD in theoretical particle physics in 1976. As a software engineer, he became the lead developer of the IKARUS system since the early 1980s and developed interpolation, autotracing and hinting algorithms, as well as special algorithms for Kanji separation.

An important role in the course is reserved for Frank's dissertation. In *On the Origin of Patterning in Movable Latin Type: Renaissance Standardisation, Systematisation, and Unitisation of Textura and Roman Type* https://openaccess.leidenuniv.nl/handle/1887/43556 he argues that Renaissance typographic patterns were partly determined by requirements for the early font production. Today's typographic conventions are thus not only the result of optical preferences that preceded the development of movable type, but at least as much the result of standardization that facilitated the production of Renaissance type and subsequently formed the basis for typographic conditioning.

The 2025–2026 course starts on October 14, 2025. Registration is possible until September 14, 2025. More information can be found at:

https://www.lettermodel.org/OTF-course.html

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– Image 1: *Frank (left) and Jürgen in the ᴅᴛʟ studio discussing their proprietary font editor.*

– Image 2: *Frank (left) and Jürgen in the ᴅᴛʟ studio discussing their proprietary font editor.*

– Image 3: *Renaissance matrices and foundry type cast as part of Frank's research at Museum Plantin-Moretus, Antwerp.*

– Image 4: *Measuring the widths of justified matrices with a digital caliper in Museum Plantin-Moretus, Antwerp.*

– Image 5: *Photographing matrices with a digital microscope in Museum Plantin-Moretus, Antwerp.*