

Detailed Course Evaluation

- 1) *How useful were the pre-course readings? Did you do any additional preparations in advance of the course?*
 1. Very useful and thoughtfully chosen.
 2. Extremely useful and important—I had read most of it before, but reviewed it in the weeks before the course, which I didn't regret.
 3. I've read the suggested readings several times over the past two years and find them very useful.
 4. Very useful, especially the suggested chapters in the *History of the Book in America* volumes.
 5. Read pre-course readings, which set the stage for the remarkable knowledge and content shared by the instructor.
 6. Very useful readings; very comprehensive.
 7. Useful overview from the *History of the Book in America* volumes. I also did some reading in Remer (Rosalind Remer, *Printers and Men of Capital: Philadelphia Book Publishers and the New Republic* [Philadelphia: U Pennsylvania, 1996]), and think it was helpful to get a historical framework with more of an explicit argument than the HBIA readings. Parts of Gaskell should be mandatory.
 8. No {to pre-course prep question—RBS staff}. They were useful, but more as a reference text. I now know what sources to look to with specific research questions.
 9. Yes, but at times redundant with what is covered in class.
 10. Very useful. No additional prep: the recommended and required readings kept me busy.
 11. Readings were very focused on the course material.
 12. Very useful. The lecture and books used for discussion helped to illuminate the foundation they provided.
 13. Very helpful. I did not do additional preparation.

- 2) *Were the course workbook and other materials distributed in class appropriate and useful (or will they be so in the future, after you return home)?*
 1. Yes. It would be worth, though, regenerating the images for better picture quality (too many photocopy generations).
 2. Yes, incredible material in the workbook, which I will use a great deal in the future.
 3. I will continue to refer to the handbook and materials in the future. Several of the reproductions, however, need to be recopied for easier perusal in the future.
 4. Yes, on all three counts. The workbook will serve as the best augmentation to my notes.
 5. Yes.
 6. Yes, although the order of items included was sometimes mysterious. They will be very good resources in the future.

7. The primary sources (from LCP/PHS collections, or as reproduced in the workbook) were terrifically interesting, and simultaneously expanded and made more concrete my understanding of the records and resources from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.
 8. Yes. Sometimes difficult to digest workbook sources in class, but will be valuable for future reference. New, clearer photocopies would be helpful.
 9. Very useful in class, but not sure if I'll continue to use them—are examples of what is being discussed, which is useful.
 10. Yes.
 11. Yes to both. Some of the reproductions were a bit hard to read for aging eyes.
 12. Yes.
 13. Yes.
- 3) *Have you taken one or more RBS courses before? If so, how did this course compare with your previous coursework?*
1. No.
 2. Yes—very similar—rigorous, exacting, fun, challenging; opened me to much new information and many new perspectives.
 3. This is my second RBS course and my first one on book history. My first course was “Desbib,” which I found to be useful preparation for the primary materials shown in class.
 4. Yes, this has been on par with my previous stellar experience.
 5. Yes. Both excellent, each instructor a master in his field.
 6. I had taken a course through the London Rare Books School before. It moved at a faster pace, covered more ground, and included more field trips and extracurricular activities (lectures, visits to rare book dealers, and libraries). This course offered more access to the local library and host institution.
 7. Yes. I've taken a methods course and a very specific course, so this was somewhere in between in terms of focus. It was an overview of 130 years and we did more chronologically.
 8. This was my first course. I hope I can return.
 9. Yes. Previous course had more activities, which helped with learning. Also, stuck more to schedule regarding breaks, &c. This course had a clearer historical trajectory in how it was organized; involved more lecture.
 10. Both excellent.
 11. Yes—one other with Nicolas Barker ten years ago. Both were excellent, each in their own way—mostly because of the instructors.
 12. This is the first non-technical RBS course I have taken. Compared to other courses, this was extremely difficult.
 13. No.
- 4) *What aspects of the course content were of the greatest interest or relevance for your purposes?*
1. I was most directly interested in the second half or so of the chronology (roughly 1780-1830). However, I discovered interesting connections in the earlier material as well.
 2. Really everything—but I appreciated the attention to the bookselling business; I

- also enjoyed the closer-in focus on Franklin and Carey.
3. The wide-ranging overview of the development of the American book and publishing trades.
 4. For my purpose of getting an overview of early American book history, the content couldn't have been more interesting or relevant.
 5. All was relevant.
 6. I am particularly interested in book-bindings and the relationship between printers and binders, but I wanted a broader context in terms of what Americans were reading and whether it was imported or printed domestically. The course certainly helped to answer those questions.
 7. Understanding something about the records of printers, publishers, and libraries, and what they tell us.
 8. This course did not relate directly to my research, but served as a contextual foundation for a historical period and set of objects that I hope to explore further. It has given me a valuable framework for my recent research interests in material texts.
 9. When the instructor demonstrated how he approaches analyzing books and making sense of them in terms of printing /publishing history.
 10. All the content was relevant for my purpose of becoming familiar with the book and publication culture of the period.
 11. The period from the Revolutionary War to 1830 mirrored my collecting interest.
 12. The focus on Philadelphia was of particular interest, as was the discussion of cloth case bindings.
 13. All of it—most specifically aspects dealing with the technical history of book making.
- 5) *Did the instructor successfully help you to acquire the information, knowledge, and skills that the course was intended to convey? Was the intellectual level of the course appropriate?*
1. Yes, absolutely. JG is a clear and engaging storyteller; he balanced very well the “grand narrative,” representative examples, and smaller details.
 2. Oh, my goodness, yes!
 3. Yes! The location of the course at LCP allowed us to see and handle an amazing array of early Americana, meaning that the informational content of the lectures was supplemented with practical experience working with the object.
 4. Absolutely. The course was as intellectually rigorous as expected.
 5. Most definitely. The instructor and my fellow students maintained a very high intellectual level in a very congenial atmosphere.
 6. Yes. The course assumed a certain familiarity with books, book structure, and book culture, but offered the flexibility and openness so that all the attendees—with very different backgrounds and areas of expertise—could share what they knew with one another.
 7. Yes.
 8. Yes! JG is so knowledgeable and humble. He knows everything, but never made me feel shy about asking beginner-level questions. I came in with no background in book history/bibliography, so some content did go over my head.
 9. Yes to information, but not sure about knowledge or about skills. More general, transferable lessons, more synthesis and clear summaries would be useful.

10. Yes!
11. Yes, and yes. The instructor and staff knew how to find material specifically related to the interest of each group member. JG runs the course at a high intellectual level, and there were a lot of smart people in the group.
12. Yes. JG was very knowledgeable and generous with his expertise. The intellectual level was appropriate.
13. Yes.

6) *What did you like best about the course?*

1. All the hands-on work! JG was extraordinarily generous about integrating materials, including ones we requested while here.
2. Seeing examples of the materials we were discussing; doing short “exercises” or activities with the materials; hearing from others, in addition to the teacher, having someone like the instructor who has such a wealth of knowledge in the field, who is also able to draw out students in the class to share their expertise.
3. 1) JG’s affability, knowledge, and passion for the material. 2) Being able to handle significant books related to early American literary culture.
4. JG’s breadth of knowledge of the subject and his generosity with his knowledge and research.
5. Being able to combine imprints and manuscripts with the class content. There is nowhere this could be achieved more successfully. LCP’s collection and the instructor are unequalled.
6. I loved the depth and breadth of JG’s knowledge, and the opportunity to share observations and insights among curators, librarians, art historians, conservators, literary scholars, historians, and students. A great intellectual mix.
7. JG elucidating materials that he has spent decades coming to understand and collect. A privilege.
8. Request day! More generally: hands-on contact with objects (not just books—plates, ephemera, printed broadsides).
9. The deeply knowledgeable and generous instructor. Direct access to LCP’s unbeatable collections.
10. I liked the fact that the instructor, JG, was so authoritative on the topic, with such depth of knowledge.
11. Flexibility; willingness to answer questions and consider issues from many points of view.
12. All the amazing books! And it was wonderful that everyone had a chance to page materials from the collection.
13. Knowledge of instructor. Atmosphere of discussion among participants.

7) *How could the course have been improved?*

1. More daylight! More structured opportunities to interact with members of the UPenn course. Our formal library get-together didn’t involve introductions or opportunities to talk with one another. I felt there was a great deal of listening, especially to Will Noel.
2. No improvements needed.
3. Not possible. It is already a requirement for any serious student of American book history.

4. Two more days!
5. A portable microphone for the speaker would be helpful.
6. {Private comment—RBS staff}
7. Sometimes the trajectory of a class session was almost identical to a section of the *History of the Book in America* reading (JG's chapters). I think JG could have kept more class time for looking at the artifacts by covering the historical survey more cursorily in class lecture.
8. N/A.
9. {Private comment—RBS staff}
10. I would have preferred for logistics to take this in Charlottesville, but it was great to have access to the LCP collections, especially because JG's scholarship uses them so much.
11. The acoustics were a bit challenging since JG speaks in a conversational voice.
12. Can JG get a clip-on microphone for future courses?

8) *Did you learn what the course description/advertisement indicated you would learn?*

1. Yes.
2. Yes.
3. Yes.
4. Yes.
5. Yes.
6. Yes.
7. Yes.
8. Yes.
9. Yes. More focused session on technology and bibliography in book history would be good.
10. Yes.
11. Yes.
12. Yes.
13. Yes.

9) *How do you intend to use or apply the knowledge or skills learned in this course?*

1. In every realm: teaching (with rare materials at my home institution); research (our material was directly applicable); collaborations in future (great opportunities to strategize).
2. I am immediately applying what I gained toward an article in progress, and because of materials I discovered after a tip from the instructor, I will be writing a new article.
3. Research and teaching.
4. Use this solid foundation to continue to learn more about local printing, publishing, and binding history, and to assist researchers in the future.
5. In my profession.
6. I hope to continue building upon my knowledge of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century print culture and bookbinding by pursuing a Ph.D. I also teach book history/book conservation at the undergraduate level, and this class supplied some pertinent details.
7. For teaching survey courses. For collection development.

8. This course has given me a historical and technical framework for further research on the book in antebellum America. I now know what kinds of questions to ask when looking at books from various decades, 1650-1830.
9. In my scholarship and teaching.
10. I have a research project in social libraries that will benefit greatly from the knowledge I gained in this course. I feel much better prepared to put my project in context.
11. Enhance my collecting and bibliographical skills by better understanding historical context.
12. In my everyday work and in interactions with my library's patrons.
13. In my scholarly projects (book in particular).

10) *If your course left its classroom, was the time devoted to this purpose well spent?*

1. See response to Q7, above. I enjoyed seeing the Pastorius *Beehive* manuscript at UPenn in particular.
2. Yes, I enjoyed viewing items from the UPenn collections.
3. I wasn't sure if the visit to UPenn was necessary, as we could have used the time for more instruction.
4. Yes, the trip to UPenn offered a chance to examine in person some items that were key to our course.
5. Yes.
6. Yes.
7. We did not.
8. Yes—I enjoyed the visit to the Kislak Center at UPenn and mixing with the manuscripts class from UPenn at the pub.
9. Visit to UPenn was interesting, but had a big show-and-tell aspect—more access to what is happening at their collections would have been good.
10. Yes! It was interesting and valuable to visit Rare Books and Special Collections at UPenn.
11. Yes.
12. Yes.
13. Yes—Kislak Center, UPenn.

11) *If you attended the Sunday night dinner, was it worth attending?*

1. Yes. It was OK. Poor choice of restaurant.
2. Yes.
3. Yes.
4. Yes.
5. Yes. The networking opportunity in a congenial setting set the tone for the week.
6. Yes.
7. No.
8. Yes
9. N/A.
10. Yes. Nice to start getting to know classmates.
11. Yes.
12. Yes.
13. Yes.

12) *Were the afternoon visits to the Kislak Center and LCP worthwhile? (Additional comments optional.)*

1. Yes. See response to Q7, above.
2. Yes, very.
3. No.
4. Yes.
5. Yes.
6. Yes.
7. No.
8. Yes. Will Noel and Mitch Fraas and Ellen were all great!
9. Yes, with reservations. Seemed like it was mostly a chance to show prized/interesting objects. Not much guiding/instructing of students. Why not make an actual activity for us, besides looking at the books?
10. Yes.
11. Yes.
12. Yes.
13. Yes.

13) *We are always concerned about the physical well-being both of the RBS teaching collections and of materials owned by Special Collections. If relevant, what suggestions do you have for the improved classroom handling of such materials used in your course this week?*

1. I so much appreciated the overall approach and tone here—the carefulness didn't overwhelm us, as I sometimes feel can be the case. Thoroughly professional.
2. None.
3. N/A.
4. All LCP staff present in the room were very attentive and made everyone aware of the importance of careful handling.
5. Everyone knew how to handle the collection.
6. {No response—RBS staff}
7. We passed around a few single sheets with creases without supports. That freaked me out a little.
8. A five-minute introductory do's-and-don't's session would have put my anxiety at ease—though I appreciate that LCP staff trusted that we all knew how to deal with objects carefully.
9. N/A.
10. It was fine: LCP was well prepared for safe handling.
11. Our ability to carefully handle all of the material was wonderful. Don't change a thing!
12. More cradles if possible.
13. None.

14) *Did you (or your institution) get your money's worth? Would you recommend this course to others?*

1. Yes. Wholeheartedly! (as it was recommended to me).
2. {underscored 'money's worth'—RBS staff} Yes, totally.

3. Yes.
4. Definitely yes, and I would recommend this course to anyone interested in this subject.
5. Yes.
6. Yes.
7. Indeed, and absolutely.
8. Yes, and yes. Thank you so much to the RBS Director's Scholarship for allowing me to take advantage of this fantastic and formative opportunity.
9. Yes.
10. Yes!
11. Absolutely to both!
12. Yes.
13. Yes.

15) *Any final or summary thoughts, or advice for other persons considering taking this course in a future year?*

1. I've heard for years about how magical RBS can be, and I feel I've experienced that for myself now. The combination of people (staff and students) was wonderfully stimulating. The materials were astounding. The location (LCP) was perfect given the subject matter.
2. Such an excellent course—don't hesitate to take it!
3. N/A.
4. This was a wonderful experience—so much more so that it was held at LCP, a most appropriate location given the materials we were able to examine.
5. Be prepared and excited about learning from top-notch faculty, as well as knowledgeable participants. Take advantage of the access to original, rare documents.
6. {Private comment—RBS staff}
7. {No response—RBS staff}
8. {No response—RBS staff}
9. {No response—RBS staff}
10. Such a valuable institution. Keep it up!
11. Think about how your area of interest can contribute to the group discussion.
12. It was very helpful to read the recommended books before attending. Make sure you come ready to ask questions! The discussion is the best part.

Aggregate Statistics

Number of respondents: 13

Leave

Institution gave me leave: 5 (38.46%)

I took vacation time or unpaid leave: 2 (15.38%)

N/A: student, retired, or had summers off: 6 (46.15%)

Tuition

Institution paid tuition: 3 (23.08%)
Institution and student shared cost: 1 (7.69%)
Student paid tuition: 4 (30.77%)
Exchange or barter: 1 (7.69%)
Scholarship from RBS: 1 (7.69%)
Fellowship from RBS: 3 (23.08%)

Housing

Institution paid housing: 1 (7.69%)
Institution and student shared cost: 1 (7.69%)
I paid for my own housing: 3 (23.08%)
N/A: stayed with friends or lived at home: 8 (61.54%)

Travel

Institution paid travel: 2 (15.38%)
I paid my own travel: 3 (23.08%)
Fellowship paid: 1 (7.69%)
N/A: I had only local travel expenses: 7 (53.85%)

Which one category most closely defines what you do for a living, or why you are at RBS?

Book collector: 1 (7.69%)
Cataloguer: 1 (7.69%)
Conservator/binder/preservation librarian: 1 (7.69%)
M.A. student (humanities): 1 (7.69%)
M.L.I.S. student: 1 (7.69%)
Ph.D. student (humanities): 1 (7.69%)
Library/University Administrator: 1 (7.69%)
Rare book librarian: 1 (7.69%)
Full or associate college professor: 1 (7.69%)
Other teacher or professor: 3 (23.08%)
Work in a museum or cultural institution: 1 (7.69%)