

### 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. I wish I'd been able to obtain more of the books in advance, because what I was able to read—whether recommended or required, whether discussed in class or referenced or left alone—really helped me in keeping up with the incredible pace and volume of information. I found Pearson's book particularly helpful.
  2. Pre-course readings were useful for providing context and good foundational knowledge.
  3. Very good/interesting. I did some additional reading.
  4. The assigned readings were difficult to acquire. Some books were not available even in libraries (or were in SC only), some were apparently out of print, and a couple were prohibitively expensive when available. I don't think there were alternative readings to assign—this is just the way things are in this area/field.
  5. Very useful to prepare for course. The suggested readings were good to read.
  6. Very! I had read or at least heard of many of them and found the others quite useful. I also spoke to several people who had taken this course before.
  7. Very, very useful. I couldn't quite finish them all, but everything I read was helpful (and good reading in its own right).
  8. Very useful. I read or looked at most of the materials listed.
  9. They were difficult to track down; I couldn't find any.
  10. The readings prepared me for the information that was discussed in class. Yes, as I read, I asked colleagues and mentors questions.
  11. The reading list was definitely helpful, but perhaps overly extensive.
  12. Useful, although not all easy to find. I substituted a couple of related titles (Nixon, *Five Centuries of English Bookbinding*; Hobson, *Humanists and Binders*).
  13. They were very useful, but now that I have seen the bindings I will reread some and get even more.
  14. Very useful.
  
- 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, very. While much of what it included was material I'd read in the pre-course readings, it was a good synopsis. I'm particularly glad for the timeline JSvL included, which I plan to revisit when I get home and supplement with the (copious) notes I took in class.
  2. Yes. I look forward to looking over the workbook when I return home.
  3. Yes. I will use them. I *loved* getting the workbook in PDF form (and I used that in class, annotating it digitally).

4. The workbook was excellent; it will be a usual reference in the future. I very much appreciated receiving the digital copy beforehand, and was surprised that a printout was distributed. The digital copy allows me to see the photos in color.
  5. Yes. Seeing some of the books from the workbook's bibliography has been useful before I buy or request them via interlibrary loan.
  6. Absolutely—the workbook is so thorough! There is a ton of useful images and information, and JSvL did a great job of referring back to its contents.
  7. YES! JSvL's workbook is exemplary.
  8. Yes, the workbook was the *most* useful component, since all of the topics are not covered in one source. JSvL, write that book!
  9. Yes. I look forward to enjoying the workbook for future research.
  10. All the materials distributed.
  11. The workbook mirrors the lectures and, as such, will be useful in the future.
  12. Very useful, although it would have been nice to have the printed version earlier.
  13. The workbook will be invaluable in assimilating and passing on what I learned.
  14. Appropriate, useful (and will be in the future).
- 3) *Have you taken one or more RBS courses before? If so, how did this course compare with your previous coursework?*
1. No, this is my first course.
  2. No, this is my first course.
  3. It was slightly/significantly less intensive.
  4. Yes. This course compares very well with the two previous courses. This instructor, like the others, is approachable and helpful, wears his formidable learning lightly, and teaches well.
  5. Yes. This has been one of the best.
  6. This was my first.
  7. This is a classic RBS course: precisely at the very high standard that all RBS courses share.
  8. Yes, this is my third course. It was on par with the excellence I have come to expect from RBS. JSvL's knowledge, enthusiasm, and stories are incredible.
  9. Yes. This course was on par with others I have taken.
  10. Yes, I have taken two other courses. All of the courses were equally wonderful and directly related to my job.
  11. No.
  12. One previous course. This one involved fewer hands-on activities/exercises (reflected difference in topic). Instructor for this one somewhat more autobiographically inclined.
  13. No.
  14. Yes. This course equally as interesting and well presented.
- 4) *What aspects of the course content were of the greatest interest or relevance for your purposes?*
1. Learning about the development of binding structures and gold-tooling designs.
  2. {No response—RBS staff}
  3. Seeing the scope of material in context and “together.” Obviously, JSvL was a *huge* element of interest/value.

4. The historical development of processes—technical, social, cultural.
  5. JSvL's experience and scholarship, and also the bookbinding examples from Europe, especially the Netherlands.
  6. I have learned quite a lot about binding structures over the years, but was very interested in design changes over time—how to contextualize them geographically and historically.
  7. It was all very interesting and useful. It was all more or less equally relevant—except the very early bindings and the modern designer bindings, which I don't work with, but those sections were extra interesting. Everything was great.
  8. Bindings during the early printed book through hand-press era. But I learned a tremendous amount about all aspects of binding and tooling.
  9. It was all relevant and interesting to me. The instructor did a great job of surveying the subject.
  10. I now understand more fully how to compare and contrast bindings by time period and country.
  11. The publishers' binding portion was of greatest interest to me on a personal level; bindings of the eighteenth century were most relevant in terms of my work.
  12. I knew some of what we covered in a related/anecdotal way; it was very helpful to have a synoptic view.
  13. Everything!
  14. All aspects equal.
- 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. At moments I felt a little behind the curve because I hadn't already been exposed to as many books as most of the others in the class—most of my learning is from reading—but I feel like I have a solid grounding now to begin to catch up.
  2. Yes.
  3. Yes...it is very much a surface-level course and more or less perfect to that end.
  4. Yes. The level seemed appropriate for those already experienced in the area while at the same time was reachable by the (comparatively) less experienced.
  5. Yes. It was challenging, but completely worthwhile.
  6. Yes! This course was so full of information, but it never felt like it was over my head. The RBS collection's bindings that we saw really helped to tie in what we'd learned.
  7. Yes, and yes. It was a challenge to keep up with fifteen centuries' worth of design trends, but it's exactly what I was hoping for. Magnificent.
  8. Yes, he did. Yes it was. JSvL is great at conveying his love of bindings and knowledge.
  9. Yes.
  10. Yes! The instructor helped me acquire the information, knowledge, and skills described in the course description. The course intellectual level was perfect.
  11. The instructor was obviously extremely knowledgeable in this field, and conveyed great amounts of information in a fairly short time.
  12. Yes, although the pace is pretty fast and there's a lot of detail.
  13. JSvL made everything understandable, adding stories and history—fascinating!
  14. Yes. Yes.

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

1. JSvL. He's so incredibly knowledgeable and generous with his knowledge, and friendly and funny, and utterly not intimidating, though he really could be. Oh, and as far as classroom stuff goes, the exercise of identifying hides was very helpful—it really helped me synthesize what we'd been seeing in the workbook and PowerPoint slides and in the demo books JSvL showed us each day.
2. Seeing real examples of materials and bindings that we could handle and look at closely.
3. Seeing/handling some of the books....
4. The instructor's style combined with his extensive knowledge and experience. *OR* the wonderful books we saw. Can't choose!
5. JSvL.
6. JSvL was absolutely wonderful at addressing our questions, and was encouraging of us sharing our own information—this resulted in some great discussions in class across our connected but different disciplines.
7. JSvL himself, of course! An expert, a world-class scholar, a brilliant teacher, and a kind man. I'm in awe.
8. Listening to the stories... so many great stories about his career, bindings, whatever.
9. JSvL is one of the kindest and most knowledgeable people I have ever met. I feel very lucky to have taken a course taught by such a distinguished book scholar.
10. I enjoyed seeing all of the different bindings. The course handbook and readings will now be used as reference tools at work.
11. The instructor was wonderful. Also, seeing the examples up close and personal was great.
12. I was happy with all of it, but I especially appreciated the diverse mix of students: academics, librarians, trade people, binders.
13. Listening to JSvL!
14. Seeing the modern and contemporary fine bindings.

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

1. I'd have been glad for more exercises like the leather identification, again to help synthesize all that information.
2. Having more quizzes, perhaps just a little bit of homework.
3. Perhaps a bit more "hands-on" elements, though that is complex given volume of material and timeframe.
4. I would have liked to receive digital copies of all the PowerPoint presentations and a listing/bibliography of books we saw in SC.
5. Distribute slides after each day for us to review overnight.
6. It could only be improved by having even more time with JSvL!
7. It was perfect. It focused slightly more heavily on luxury bindings than I thought it would, but that's not a complaint. (Perhaps I didn't read the description well enough.)
8. Break up the slideshow with real examples.
9. N/A.
10. Could you make it longer, please?

11. Less PowerPoint. (However, given that it is a survey course, I'm not sure how else one would do it.)
12. I think it would help to spread out the chronological survey and have one SC session per day for three days rather than all at once. I appreciate the exemplary value of the Mame bindings, but I wonder if they need so much time: I was sorry we didn't have time for twentieth-century American fine binding in the survey. While the table exhibits were okay, layout and placement of tables needs more thought. Seminar room is quite cramped, and there is a lot of standing involved.
13. {No response—RBS staff}
14. {No response—RBS staff}

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

1. Yes, very much so.
2. Yes.
3. Yes.
4. Yes.
5. Yes. Learning more about bookbinding history has been grand. Learning it from JSvL was great!
6. Yes.
7. Yes.
8. Yes.
9. Yes.
10. Yes.
11. Yes.
12. There wasn't much on social and practical aspects of binders/binderies, but JSvL was up front that he wasn't going to cover much of that.
13. Yes.
14. Yes.

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

1. Both in studying and practicing book repair—understanding better what I'm working with—and in designing new bindings.
2. {No response—RBS staff}
3. I am in the trade and do a fair bit with bindings...and more so moving forward. This was "foundational" for me....
4. My personal scholarly pursuits and in teaching bookbinding in my local arts community.
5. To better assess my institution's collection and cataloguing.
6. The context that I've gained will help me tremendously in describing bindings in my current conservation work—understanding *why* things were done and, as a result, *the best approach* to take in treating them. It will also help in conversations with clients, in helping them understand what they have.
7. I am much better able to date bindings and judge their level of luxury or intended audience. Additionally, I have been inspired to see if I could possibly afford to start collecting some of the things we saw!
8. I will use it in talking about the collection I work with, and will incorporate it into classes.

9. I will use it mostly for personal research and collecting.
10. I will use the knowledge daily as I do condition reports.
11. I intend to use the knowledge daily in cataloging.
12. I expect to use some of what I learned in various classes of my own; much of it will also be useful as background knowledge for my research.
13. We have been given a book bindery and printing press, which we are developing into a book arts program. This course will help me teach some of the history to the students.
14. In my business as a book buyer, bookseller, and appraiser.

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

1. To SC, and yes.
2. {No response—RBS staff}
3. Yes. I {heart} SC!
4. N/A.
5. Yes. Visiting UVA SC was well worth it!
6. Yes—the time spent in SC was crucial!
7. SC: perfect in every way. Its position near the end of the course meant that it served as a general review, which was *tremendously* helpful for retaining the information. Thanks, Petrina!
8. N/A.
9. Yes. SC visits were fantastic.
10. {No response—RBS staff}
11. To SC; yes.
12. Yes—SC visit was good.
13. Yes.
14. Yes.

11) *If you attended the evening events (e.g., RBS Lecture, Video Night, RBS Forum, Booksellers' Night), were they worth attending?*

1. Monday was outside my area but exposed me to interesting ideas. Tuesday, with Paul Needham, was utterly compelling. Bookseller's Night would have been better for me if I'd had an acquisition purpose in mind; for me it was more of a leisurely tour of the bookshops in town.
2. {No response—RBS staff}
3. Yes...all. Aside: Nick is my hero.
4. N/A. Could not attend.
5. Yes. The lectures were engaging. It would be nice to watch the other lectures over the summer not in my session.
6. Yes.
7. Yes. Ben Pauley, Paul Needham, Nick Wilding—wow! RBS lectures this year have been more than usually splendid.
8. Yes. Nick Wilding/Paul Needham was amazing!
9. Yes.
10. Yes. The lectures gave me several things to think about.
11. Yes.
12. Yes. Galileo lectures were great!

13. Yes.

14. Yes. The Needham/Wilding lectures were fascinating.

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

1. The books were handled with extreme care, and we were told when we shouldn't touch.

2. {No response—RBS staff}

3. I was actually a bit surprised at how *little* we were allowed/encouraged to handle materials....

4. I would have liked more time to examine the books (that were sturdy enough to handle). Could a staff member open the room early and monitor us as we spent free time examining them on our own?

5. The collections were presented in a very accessible manner.

6. Both JSvL and Vince encouraged us not to handle objects that were particularly fragile, so this did not seem to be an issue.

7. Classroom handling was great. Books were circulated so that we were allowed to touch, but didn't *have to—excellent* for the preservation of collections. And JSvL warned us carefully about especially delicate items. Great job.

8. Was under control and seemed fine.

9. N/A.

10. {No response—RBS staff}

11. {No response—RBS staff}

12. N/A.

13. {No response—RBS staff}

14. {No response—RBS staff}

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

1. Yes, yes, yes.

2. Yes, would highly recommend.

3. Yes. I would recommend it.... I hope to return for JSvL's advanced seminar.

4. Absolutely, to both.

5. Yes. Yes!

6. Yes! And yes!

7. ABSOLUTELY! This course, and the resulting relationship with JSvL, is probably worth much more than I paid for it.

8. Yes. And yes.

9. Yes.

10. Yes, my institution got its money's worth. I will recommend this course to others.

11. Yes, and yes.

12. Yes.

13. If I did not, it's my fault, not RBS's. Yes, I will recommend it!

14. Yes. Yes.

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

1. Take this course. And take it while JSvL is still teaching it—he is an international treasure.
2. {No response—RBS staff}
3. Keep up the good work.
4. Small point about classroom set up: It may not be possible, but it would help a lot if the tables along the sides could be angled/raked so we could see our colleagues better.
5. Take this course. It is very much worth it!
6. I had a truly wonderful time at RBS. The days were full of so much information, yet even after class I found myself wanting to and being given the opportunity to continue the conversation with a great group of new friends and colleagues!
7. I am continually in awe of the way RBS manages to cope with challenging circumstances, like the multiple staff illnesses we had this week. I am tremendously grateful to everyone for working *so hard* to maintain an excellent student experience. I've never seen anything like it.
8. Great as always! Thanks, JSvL.
9. This course was mainly lecture based, and may not be appropriate for students who need a discussion-based learning environment.
10. For library staff, I would recommend the course to anyone involved with any aspect of rare book librarianship.
11. It was great. This program is a jewel.
12. {No response—RBS staff}
13. {No response—RBS staff}
14. {No response—RBS staff}

### **Aggregate Statistics**

*Number of respondents: 14*

#### **Leave**

Institution gave me leave: 7 (50%)

I took vacation time or unpaid leave: 3 (21.43%)

N/A: student, retired, or had summers off: 3 (21.43%)

N/A: self-employed or work irrelevant to course: 1 (7.14%)

#### **Tuition**

Institution paid tuition: 9 (64.79%)

Student paid tuition: 3 (21.43%)

Exchange or barter: 1 (7.14%)

Scholarship from RBS (Director's): 1 (7.14%)

#### **Housing**

Institution paid housing: 6 (42.86%)

Student paid housing: 4 (28.57%)

N/A: stayed with friends or lived at home: 4 (28.57%)



**Travel**

Institution paid travel: 6 (42.86%)

Student paid travel: 4 (28.57%)

N/A: I had only local travel expenses: 4 (28.57%)

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

Antiquarian bookseller: 2 (14.29%)

Archivist: 1 (7.14%)

Conservator/binder/preservation librarian: 3 (21.43%)

Cataloging/preservation/archival work: 1 (7.14%)

Full-time student: M.A. (humanities): 1 (7.14%)

Librarian with some rare book duties: 1 (7.14%)

Rare book librarian: 1 (7.14%)

University assistant professor: 1 (7.14%)

University full or associate professor: 1 (7.14%)

Work in a museum or cultural institution: 1 (7.14%)

Other: Recent MLIS graduate: 1 (7.14%)