

Detailed Course Evaluation

- 1) *How useful were the pre-course readings? Did you do any additional preparations in advance of the course?*
 1. Useful. More preparation and specific reading assignments would have been useful for me and for everyone else.
 2. I found the pre-course readings very useful, though I could not manage to gain access to all the books on the syllabus.
 3. The pre-course readings were very helpful.
 4. Many of the pre-course readings were difficult to find, but the packet provided by the instructor was excellent.
 5. Useful.
 6. The readings were appropriate, and useful. The bibliography given leads to other pertinent bibliography.
 7. The pre-course readings were detailed and extensive. I was unable to locate many of the required readings, unfortunately. Those at my library were unavailable to take home and peruse. The books I was able to acquire were fascinating and very accessible for beginners.
 8. Though sometimes difficult to track down, the pre-course readings introduced the ideas and terminology well.
 9. I was able to read through the entire list of recommended readings, which I found to be extremely helpful in following the lectures. I knew many of the terms ahead of time.
 10. Pre-course readings were very useful. I did not make it through all, but intend to continue to use the bibliography to reinforce and expand what I've learned here.
 11. The readings, while some were difficult to acquire, were very useful. I read a few other readings on the topic that were more available to me.
 12. Very useful (but I have to admit that I did not get through them all).

- 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. Very useful workbook.
 2. I am particularly grateful for the workbook. I have extensive notes from these five days of sessions, but having the workbook—and importantly, helpful images—provide a lucid and detailed structure that is invaluable.
 3. The workbook is fantastic, and I anticipate using it for quite some time.
 4. The course workbook was excellent, and I will refer to it frequently in the future.
 5. Yes. Will continue to be useful hereafter.
 6. Most of the information in the workbook reflects what was offered in the lectures, and therefore particular points stressed by JSvL. Where objects in public collections are reproduced, it would be helpful if catalogue/accession numbers were cited. It was helpful to receive the workbook electronically a few days before RBS started.

7. Yes, the workbook was incredibly useful, and I imagine it will continue to be so. I learned something new and riveting every time I opened it.
8. Due to the extensive nature of the topics covered, the workbook goes into considerable detail where class discussion couldn't. It is a wonderful supplement for after-class reading prep and post-RBS reference.
9. Yes, the workbook will be useful when I need to refresh my memory of certain terms and points in history.
10. I was only able to glance at the workbook, and I think having it in both paper and electronic formats (with color) will be something I refer back to often.
11. Absolutely. This workbook will be a stopping-off point for further study, and a firm foundation for those studies.
12. Yes, very.

3) *Have you taken one or more RBS courses before? If so, how did this course compare with your previous coursework?*

1. No, first course.
2. No, first course.
3. This course was on par with TB's "Illustration." Both courses cover lots of material, on difficult to define or technically blurry topics.
4. No, first course.
5. All have been good.
6. This was my first RBS experience.
7. No, this was my first course.
8. N/A.
9. No, this is my first course at RBS.
10. I've had two other classes—all three very useful to my work—but this was more of a survey course whereas the other two were more practical, so therefore hard to compare. Each class was taught by a master in the field, and therefore I'm lucky to have had these professors.
11. I have taken five courses previously, and this course was one of the best.
12. This is my second course at RBS. I think both were probably equally useful.

4) *What aspects of the course content were of the greatest interest or relevance for your purposes?*

1. It is difficult to cover 1,500 years in five days. Perhaps too much time spent on the earliest examples, but other than that well paced.
2. The technical aspect I was interested in learning was the general trends of bookbinding techniques for purposes of identifying date ranges and geographical location, while hoping also that, with such an overview, I would gain a better appreciation of the changing conceptions of book structure, decoration, and aesthetic development.
3. {No response—RBS staff}
4. The entire class was relevant to my interest, while the sections that dealt with historical book structure were most relevant to my professional work.
5. Seeing exemplar books while discussing types of bindings.
6. Gaining an overview of the history of bookbinding from a foremost expert in the field. A critical examination of the literature assigned would have been interesting.

7. I would become very intrigued during JSvL's tangents and stories. Anything involving his personal experience was very engaging. Really, the whole course was relevant and fascinating.
 8. The information I gained in this course will greatly assist in dating bindings through techniques and decorations, as well as helping locate their geographic origins and historical context.
 9. Everything. Since I teach bookbinding structures from various points in history, I can reflect on so much that was covered when I present to my own students.
 10. I enjoyed some of the tactile exercises we had on the final day—us really engaging with bindings, commenting on and discussing them with our cohort. But I realize we would never get to this without the previous days of class, which weren't hands-on.
 11. JSvL's deep knowledge of the subject and the reinforcement of availability of the archival materials.
 12. The historical survey and materials portions were very relevant. Visit to SC was very interesting.
- 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. Without question. We were taught how to look and observe. Intellectual level was just right.
 2. Yes. The course laid important groundwork in such a remarkably efficient, succinct fashion in the first day, and that went a long way in informing the remainder of the course.
 3. Yes. JSvL was very generous with his knowledge.
 4. The class was very much on target, and while the volume of information was difficult, it was rather like being pleasantly full.
 5. Yes, on both counts.
 6. Given the broad nature of the course, this is a difficult question to answer. More time for analyzing materials and beginning to learn how to describe bindings would have been appropriate. I would have liked some more in-depth discussion of individual binders and designers as case studies.
 7. Yes. I am a beginner, so I was furiously taking notes and trying to absorb information. The course was fairly fast paced, but still wonderful, and I certainly feel I have gained a great deal of knowledge, and have most assuredly been inspired.
 8. Yes, JSvL provided excellent instruction, and kept class discussion at an intellectual, yet accessible, level.
 9. JSvL was extremely receptive to my additional questions. He presented so much information, that I feel more confidence in recognizing bindings and teaching historical aspects of bookbinding.
 10. Yes.
 11. Yes, yes, and yes. The level was certainly appropriate for me.
 12. Yes.

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

1. The many examples. The knowledge, experience, and equally admirable spirit of the instructor.
2. JSvL's stories and anecdotes give a personal touch and dimensionality to concepts that might otherwise be lost in my mind among overwhelming details. I also feel that I learn something more because of this analysis, enriched with storytelling—something particularly enduring and endearing.
3. It was a complete survey of bookbinding. We started with book design in the Middle Ages and continued through to present day. Which I don't think can be done with someone who knows any less than JSvL.
4. The portions of class when we were able to see actual books were excellent, and provided a real treat, especially the trip to SC.
5. Well-informed, enthusiastic instructor. Highly interested students who contributed to the conversation.
6. JSvL's experience shines through all of the material. Stories about acquisitions for the Royal Library, developing the collection for teaching at RBS, and discovering new subjects of interest within the history of bookbinding were most interesting. This information cannot be found in the literature of the subject.
7. I enjoyed the demonstrations and the visit to SC the most—though just going through the PowerPoint/overview was highly enjoyable and informative.
8. There was a large variety in terms of students' focus areas, so their questions coupled with JSvL's extensive knowledge really gave an in-depth perspective to discussion.
9. The amount of knowledge packed into the course felt very much worth the time and money put into the class.
10. The interaction with the instructor, who is very knowledgeable, and with colleagues across the field made it a very worthwhile course. I feel I've gained many perspectives as there was no one else in this section who does the work I do.
11. The confidence that JSvL and my classmates instilled in me that this is a fascinating subject that deserves further investigation.
12. I think the course provides very useful specific information as well as a general context, which allows us to develop a way of thinking about and understanding book-bindings. This means that if confronted with a type of thing we did not specifically encounter in the class, we now have the tools to figure it out.

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

1. I would have liked one or perhaps two slow and step-by-step analyses of tooling. An opportunity to witness or even try our hand at tooling would have been very helpful. Even passing around tools would have been helpful, but using the tools even better.
2. I wish there were more time for questions and discussion!
3. I would have liked to study more book construction. We touched on book construction in the Middle Ages and then quickly went to book cover design for most of the rest of the course.
4. Perhaps two JSvLs, in the future, if another could be found. The course was excellent, and did not leave me wanting.
5. Perhaps put all the PowerPoint presentations on a website for RBS students.

6. The collection for RBS has been carefully assembled, but there was too little time to work with it. The same can be said for the reference library—the books can be seen on the shelves—but there was no time to use them.
7. I wish it could have been longer. There is so much material.
8. Extend it for another week/month/year so we can see everything JSvL would like to show? In terms of a week-long course, it truly was wonderful.
9. {No response—RBS staff}
10. There just wasn't enough time to cover everything.
11. If it were two weeks long.
12. At times, the historical survey became long—it might be better to break up the presentation and museum portions more, meaning to alternate more often.

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

1. Yes, satisfied in this regard.
2. Yes... and so much more.
3. I did, in a manner of speaking; I did get a history of bookbinding, though much of the course was book cover design, as opposed to construction or materials.
4. Yes.
5. Yes.
6. Yes.
7. Yes.
8. Yes.
9. Yes.
10. Yes.
11. Yes.
12. Yes.

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

1. Continue reading in the field, looking at more bindings and acquiring bindings.
2. For research.
3. Reference and conservation.
4. Daily in my conservation work as I assess items at the bench.
5. Will use the knowledge when evaluating items in our institution's collections and making purchasing decisions.
6. As a launching pad to delve more deeply into the subject.
7. I can't wait to go home and analyze my own collection! This course has augmented my desire to pursue conservation in graduate school and in the professional sphere.
8. I hope to bring this knowledge into my library's special collections, where we might direct our collections or databases to support further study of the book as a physical structure.
9. For my own use as a bookbinder to inform my technique and artistic decisions. Also to others when I am teaching such techniques and discussing materials and equipment.
10. I will now use a keener eye when cataloging, and I hope to be able to provide my patrons with more accurate and more consistent descriptions of bindings in our collections.

11. I hope to use my new skills to more accurately and fully catalog books and to buy bindings for my own collection.
12. I will go back to my collection and use this knowledge to learn about it and describe it more effectively.

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

1. Useful visit to SC.
2. Yes: the SC visit was a wonderful, guided opportunity for imagining how our newly acquired knowledge should/could operate in practice.
3. SC here at UVA, which was very useful.
4. As noted above, yes.
5. Yes. We visited SC, where we were able to see books not available in the classroom.
6. Our class spent most, but not all, of one day visiting SC. It was wonderful to see examples of bindings styles studied in the course. There was too little time, however, to examine them in any detail. A checklist with the catalogue numbers would have been welcomed so that one could return to the library to view them more closely.
7. Yes. The visit to SC was definitely a highlight.
8. We took a trip to SC, where we saw wonderful examples of bindings in person and were able to test what we had learned.
9. We spent almost a full day in SC. It was time well spent, getting to see physical examples of what we've discussed in class.
10. Yes—we visited SC to see examples of things we'd discussed in class. This was very helpful.
11. We went to SC, and it was just about perfect.
12. Yes, SC visit was excellent.

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

1. Monday's lecture by Mark Tomasko was great. Wednesday's lecture was a bit insular, and more about a brief period of academic history than the history of ideas. Of interest only to a select group of participants.
2. Yes.
3. Yes, some more than others, but they were very thoughtful gestures and learning opportunities. The added benefit is that I was still out meeting people in the program.
4. They either expanded my knowledge, or introduced me to a new area of interest.
5. Yes. I learned something from the lectures.
6. Yes. Meeting old friends and getting acquainted with people in related fields is an essential part of the RBS experience.
7. Yes. The lectures are very instructive, and Booksellers' Night is a great experience especially for collectors, both amateur and advanced.
8. Yes.
9. Yes.
10. Yes. My only complaint was the power outage, which cut our videos short, and there was no way to reschedule.
11. Yes.

12. Yes.

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. Allow more careful handling.
2. {No response—RBS staff}
3. Everyone at RBS was extremely cautious with the material.
4. I felt comfortable with the level of care.
5. Instructor seemed to handle the materials well, as did the staff who assisted.
6. Objects were well protected. Handling was strongly discouraged.
7. No.
8. Collections were handled responsibly.
9. {No response—RBS staff}
10. Only the instructor handled the books, so no comment.
11. None.
12. {No response—RBS staff}

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

1. Heartily.
2. Certainly! I look forward to taking the continuation of this course.
3. I did. I would, though I would recommend studying up on book construction through the twentieth century.
4. Yes, and very much.
5. Yes. I hope that at least three persons from our institution will attend next year.
6. Yes, of course!
7. Yes, and yes.
8. Yes. In sheer enjoyment alone, but of course also in the knowledge I came away with!
9. Definitely, I most certainly would recommend this course, and hope to take another course from JSvL.
10. Yes. Yes.
11. Yes, and most definitely yes.
12. Yes.

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

1. Positive experience. Friendly and welcoming group... It was a great and diverse group of students. The variety of backgrounds and interests were a big plus. I am very pleased to see RBS thriving, and more open both as a community and intellectually.
2. {No response—RBS staff}
3. JSvL is a wonderful professor. He is charming, knowledgeable, and generous. I very much enjoyed my time taking his class.

4. I hope to see you next year.
5. For people who work professionally with rare books and want to keep current with the discipline, interact with other professionals, and learn new skills, no continuing education opportunity exceeds in value RBS.
6. {No response—RBS staff}
7. My advice for those considering this course is just to jump in! The subject matter is fascinating, and the instructor is highly experienced and encouraging. My RBS experience was exactly what I had hoped and more.
8. I'm coming back every summer I get the chance. This course made my year. Thank you for offering it and making it such a lovely experience!
9. {No response—RBS staff}
10. {No response—RBS staff}
11. Do it; you will hunger for more.
12. The best thing about RBS is probably getting to meet and interact with other book people.

Aggregate Statistics

Number of respondents: 12

Leave

Institution gave me leave: 7 (58.33%)

I took vacation time or unpaid leave: 1 (8.33%)

N/A: student, retired, or had summers off: 2 (16.67%)

N/A: self-employed or work irrelevant: 2 (16.67%)

Tuition

Institution paid tuition: 6 (50%)

Student paid tuition: 2 (16.67%)

Exchange or barter: 1 (8.33%)

Scholarship from RBS: 2 (16.67%)

Fellowship from RBS: 1 (8.33%)

Housing

Institution paid housing: 5 (41.67%)

I paid for my own housing: 5 (41.67%)

Fellowship from RBS: 1 (8.33%)

N/A: stayed with friends or lived at home: 1 (8.33%)

Travel

Institution paid travel: 6 (50%)

Student paid travel: 5 (41.67%)

Fellowship from RBS: 1 (8.33%)

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

Antiquarian bookseller: 1 (8.33%)

Cataloguer: 1 (8.33%)

Conservator/binder/preservation librarian: 4 (33.33%)

B.A. student: 1 (8.33%)

Ph.D. student (humanities): 1 (8.33%)

Librarian with some rare book duties: 1 (8.33%)

Rare book librarian: 1 (8.33%)

Teacher or professor: Other: NBSS Workshop Instructor: 1 (8.33%)

Other: Church historian: 1 (8.33%)