

### **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 found Gaskell's historical approach to be much more accessible than Bowers's analytical approach. Reading Bowers did not necessarily provide me with an understanding of his particular prescriptions, which only became clear in application during homework here, but I suppose it did prepare my broader horizon of expectation.
  2. Neglected to get the video and did not feel it was a problem. Reading Bowers was absolutely essential. Gaskell was great background, and I'm glad I read it, but it would have been possible to eek by without.... Would not recommend doing so.
  3. Readings were essential to the course—while long, they were *all* used right away for class. The video helped to clarify readings.
  4. As we did not closely discuss production of books in the machine-press period, the second half of Gaskell was not overly helpful. The first half of Gaskell and Bowers were extremely useful. The video is a great visual learning tool, but a bit long.
  5. I didn't get a chance to use the videotape before the course. The other readings were extremely useful, and I wish I'd spent more time with them.
  6. *Very* useful readings—and the video was fun, although I found the assigned Belanger essay more helpful on the whole for basic review.
  7. Very useful and, in fact, essential. Gaskell was a particular pleasure.
  8. Bowers, Gaskell: indispensable. Rest: not so important.
  9. I would have been lost without the pre-course materials and readings. Being a visual learner, the video really helped.
  10. Bowers and Gaskell were both essential.
  11. Doing the pre-course readings was, as promised, essential. Actually taking the course, working with books, made difficult-to-understand parts of Bowers suddenly comprehensible.
  12. The pre-course readings were absolutely necessary, and the suggested order was helpful. The videotape (and text) were helpful for visualizing folding and specific terms, though my copy had repeated skips and was incompatible with my DVD player. Many people no longer have CD/DVD players!
  13. Very useful, though sometimes difficult in the abstract. The Belanger reading was a very clear introductory article.
  14. The pre-course readings were extremely helpful and necessary. I particularly enjoyed practicing imposition with facsimile sheets in the museum that were used as examples in the video.
  15. The pre-course readings were essential for this course. The videotape is perhaps less essential, but a good supplement for those with no descriptive-bibliography experience.

16. The VHS/DVD is a must-see before attending. The basic folding patterns of different book formats is quickly glossed over the opening day. I felt better prepared having watched the movie. The readings also helped prepare me for the class. Even if I didn't understand it all beforehand, the staff was well versed in their Bowers, and could often rattle off a specific page number to help answer my queries.
17. All advance reading was excellent. Bowers is a challenge, so special attention by the would-be student is advised. The video and workbook were excellent and worth re-watching.
18. The pre-course readings were very helpful—however, it would have been nice to get the workbook in advance, as it elucidated many of the more obscure passages of the readings. The video was okay, but very pricey, and I did not realize we wouldn't need the sheets and paper for class, so I saved them—kind of a waste, since we get unlimited folding sheets here.
19. Belanger's article, "Descriptive Bibliography," and the videotape with "The Anatomy of a Book" were very useful prior to reading Bowers and Gaskell.
20. Very useful. Bowers, of course, is hard, and it would have been helpful to have the index and perhaps some glosses ahead of time.
21. The pre-course readings (and the suggested reading order) were very useful. The DVD was a helpful visualization, but not necessarily essential for understanding the readings.
22. The DVD was brilliant, as was Belanger's chapter in *Book Collecting: A Modern Guide*. I'll get both for students in my classes, and would advise future "Desbib" people to explore them in that order. Gaskell and Bowers were great prep. May be nice to add in some more reading on ideas concerning the "ideal text"—nuanced views regarding "standard" text, or to contrast with "ideal" copy-text for editing, &c. Lots of prep reading, but all essential. Thanks.
23. Bowers essential; Gaskell very helpful. I had read them before, and didn't reread in entirety or re-watch video. But they are good foundations.
24. The pre-course readings are an *absolute necessity* for "Desbib." This course would be impossible without the language and the ideas contained in them.
25. Not only useful, but crucial. I had seen "The Anatomy of the Book: Format" before (and had done sheet folding), and I am glad that I watched it again, with more paper to fold—I repeatedly stopped, folded, and re-watched both the 8vo and 12mo parts repeatedly.
26. The pre-course readings were essential. I would not have been able to follow along or to complete the homework without the readings.
27. Gaskell's diagrams are incredibly useful, and I consulted them constantly. Bowers is difficult, but necessary.
28. Very useful, as you were expected to be familiar with basic collation principles upon arrival. I highly recommend reading the Belanger article and watching the format video *first*. Gaskell is more for background reading, but the Bowers reading is crucial.
29. Pre-course reading of the chapters in Bowers was essential. Reading *all* of Gaskell was not. For those of us who work full time, this was difficult and not that helpful. The video was helpful.
30. Very helpful, especially the DVD.

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. The workbook was essential. In general, I found the workbook to be much more useful than Bowers: Bowers's text is multilayered, and poorly indexed, making it difficult to find his buried lemmas here and there. The language of the textbook was also much less ambiguous than the Bowers text.
2. Extremely useful, and I expect I will be referencing it in the future. Happy to see so much exit reading. (And DW's last lecture, highlighting some of the important exit reading, was appreciated.)
3. These materials were great for the week of class, will serve as valuable reference materials, and have inspired many teaching materials I plan to create. Great stuff!
4. I intend to keep my workbook and materials for the rest of my life—they synthesize and organize all the information relevant to bibliographical description in a practical, efficient way.
5. Yes. I can imagine referring back to the workbook and materials in my future work.
6. Yes.
7. I am sure they will be. I am particularly excited for the exit reading lists, which will help me to build on the knowledge acquired this week without requiring me to take extensive notes during class on suggested readings.
8. YES.
9. Absolutely. It will be my *vade mecum*, and I will refer to it often!
10. Yes, and I will definitely use them at work.
11. Yes, very useful, *very* well written, without exception. Sometimes while doing homework, under time pressure, I had to switch back and forth between the course workbook and the museums workbook to find wanted information—my only (minor) complaint, as I wish it was in one place.
12. The workbook was extremely useful, and having the materials in advance (or on Day 1) meant I could prepare for the next day's class and didn't have to try to organize loose handouts.
13. Yes, they were excellent.
14. The course workbook is a treasure, and I will certainly refer to it when I return home to my institution. The exit readings are inspiring, and it is very helpful that they are organized from most essential to least. The annotations are quite on point and even a little amusing.
15. The course workbook and materials distributed were extremely useful, and they will continue to be so in my work.
16. I plan on using them on a research trip next week. Very helpful.
17. *Very* helpful.
18. *VERY!* These were very helpful and well organized.
19. Yes, very much.
20. They were, and will continue to be, very useful. I'd like the workbook in electronic format as well, so I don't have to bring the binder everywhere.
21. Yes. I expect to be drawing on the workbook for my own research and teaching for many years to come.
22. They were wonderful, and will prove very useful in the future. It's great to have a material copy of all we've been taught.

23. Yes—so much good info; wish there was more time to read them! (“Read the museum workbook in the evening before, to guide your choices”—great advice, but at 10:00 p.m., after homework?)
24. They were, and they will.
25. Yes, especially the exit reading list.
26. Yes. I will use these materials as reference guides when I return to work.
27. The workbook did a great job of demystifying Bowers, and of providing very useful guidelines. I’m really happy I’ll have the workbook to consult when I get home.
28. Yes, I’m very appreciative of the exit list (plus, instructors highlighting certain items from this quite extensive list) and the various charts and guides will be handy references to keep at my desk at work.
29. Yes. The exit list is *great*.
30. Yes, I will probably continue to refer to the course materials once I return to work.

3) *To what extent did the Desbib Museums and their catalogs contribute to the success of the course? How could they have been improved?*

1. The museums were quite a treat, especially when they provided specific artifacts for examination. I was a little less fond of the museum that offered multiple bibliographies for our examination. Although I understand the intent—showing us that, after four days, we now had the tools to read, evaluate, and critique these bibliographies—it seemed less of a rare experience and something we could do at later times as much with our “e-lit” reading list.
2. Did not open the museums “catalog” once. I think this is the weakest part of the course, though it was still educational. I liked the paper day the best, with the bibliographies after, because there was an element of problem solving in many stations.
3. I loved the museum format—it was my favorite part of the day because it allowed you to customize your learning to your interest, or field.
4. The number of stations in each museum class was too large—I never had time to make it to every one. There were also too many examples at each station; it got very cumbersome.
5. They were an excellent reinforcement to the other elements, and I was very impressed with the thought and care put into the curation.
6. I really enjoyed the museums—an excellent way to reinforce abstract concepts, and a nice break from book math.
7. These were really key to my experience, both intellectually and psychologically. Intellectually, they allowed us to see a wider selection of books, and the physical processes that go into making them, than we got in lab. Psychologically, they gave me a needed break from the kind of deep examination and analysis of individual items that lab required. So I feel that the museums were both deeply informative and necessary for keeping sharp during lab and not burning out.
8. SO useful! Especially the tactile exhibits (the bibliographies were a little dry).
9. Again, being a visual learner, the museums helped immensely. I would hope that in the future, more time would be allotted for the museums.
10. It was my favorite part of the day. Great materials and write-ups, and I could move at my own pace.

11. The museums and related workbook were excellent. Because it was impossible to cover all the stations, I found myself wishing there had been more time there, but that would have been at the expense of some other activity.
12. Again, having the museums handouts in advance meant I could strategize where I spent my time, except for Day 1, when I missed an entire section (3D Carter). Pre-reading also saved time during the museums.
13. Museums sessions were very interesting and helpful. It was not always possible to spend as much time as desired in museums, but I am not sure how to improve this situation.
14. I truly enjoyed the museums, and learned so much from being able to handle the objects or practice imposition using facsimile sheets.
15. The museums and catalogs were not only informative about their topics, but also provided a model of curation and pedagogy for such displays.
16. The museums sessions were great, especially on the day we looked at different book formats. Having worked on collations for a day, having access to different formats of books and the corresponding descriptions aided in my understanding of key class concepts.
17. Heavily. I feel the museums greatly aided my understanding of the overall context and information pertinent to “Desbib.” All the lab instructors, Melissa Mead, and DW were a great aid.
18. I wish they were a bit more guided. I appreciate the discovery method of learning, but I felt overwhelmed, especially the first day, and did not entirely know what to look for.
19. The museums sessions were indispensable, and helped me a lot to deepen my knowledge.
20. The Monday and Wednesday museums were great. The Tuesday museum seemed not as useful, though it may simply be that I don’t care as much about paper.
21. The demonstrations of the material components of the books were incredibly useful. However, I feel that the more textual, content-based material would have been more successfully conveyed in another manner.
22. Please turn the A/C down—brr! Loved the first session and wanted more time, but could’ve spent thirty minutes less in sessions on paper, &c., from then onwards.
23. Fantastic—only wish there was more time.
24. The museums were exceptional—well curated, and exceptionally well presented. Having “free time” to explore these spaces with ever-ready RBS faculty available was an excellent resource.
25. Quite useful, though I think I was a little too burnt out to fully appreciate all of the bibliographies from the Thursday museum.
26. Day 1 of the Desbib Museum was especially helpful in demonstrating different formats and collation formulas, and I used these as references for the homework session.
27. Museums were a great way to get more hands-on experience and see more examples. Layout was sometimes confusing, and it was hard to tell which number went with what station, but overall I really enjoyed them. It would have been nice to have the answers to questions posed in the write-ups.

28. I especially liked the items like the unfolded sheets and type molds that illustrated concepts difficult to describe in text alone. The binding leathers/cloth binding patterns were also very helpful in clarifying two-dimensional images.
  29. I think we all loved the museums. The hands-on examples were both educational and just fun to see. Having the instructors there was very beneficial.
  30. Museums were great. For longer stations, which could accommodate two to three people, multiple copies of the descriptions would be helpful.
- 4) *How successful were your format and collation labs? How effective was your lab instructor in conveying the material to be covered? How could the labs have been improved?*

### **Christopher Adams**

1. These labs and the homework were the core of the course, and intensely helpful. I would actually have loved more time for homework labs, since it provided an intimate (and shame-free) environment to discuss our questions and (mis-)understandings.
2. Good increase of difficulty over the days, and CA explained everything clearly without talking down. Sometimes we made small mistakes that he did not correct, and I would have liked to see them corrected as a confirmation, even though we usually recognized them when they were on the board.
3. Labs were great! I wish we had had the opportunity to do one book together each day to see our lab instructor's process.
4. No improvement necessary—the labs were the heart of my learning in this course. The books chosen were puzzling, but possible. My instructor was patient, wise, and excellent at conveying vast amounts of data in an understandable method.
5. The labs were very effective. We covered all pressing questions and the instructor clearly addressed them. It was a very effective way to learn through practice and feedback.
6. The labs were the most valuable part of "Desbib." CA was thoughtful and patient, pointing out implications of the formulary that we would certainly have missed on our own. Very productive.

### **James Ascher**

7. I'm not sure I have any suggestions for lab improvements. I found them really well paced and full. The selection of books gave us a truly diverse sample. And the number of books felt perfect. Each day's work was challenging, but manageable. My lab instructor, as noted above, was sensitive to our needs and very helpful in addressing our individual needs. He was always willing to pursue a question and to discuss items at the very physical level and at the theoretical level.
8. One suggestion: include *one* homework project per day that students work on as a group, so they get a chance to benefit from one another's insights while also doing individual work.
9. I looked forward to the labs the most. JA was an integral part to helping me learn. I would say that they were very successful.
10. My instructor was very helpful, and was capable of explaining complex aspects of Bowers's formula.

11. The format/collation/signing/pagination labs were *awesome*. JA is a national treasure. He helped us *think through* how and why the Bowers methodology works, the elegance of it all, the intellectual coherence of it all—never felt we were to “just follow the rules” without a *reason*.
12. The labs were great. JA was very patient with us, and was also willing to entertain our digressions into discussions of bibliographical theory. He was very encouraging, and created a safe space to boldly make mistakes.

### **David Gants**

13. Labs were wonderful. DG was an excellent instructor, and a very effective teacher. In fact, all the instructors were generous with their time and knowledge.
14. The format and collation labs were the highlight of the day, even though the idea of them was initially quite stressful. Our instructor was amazing, and did an incredible job helping us work through thorny problems, while making the process as non-threatening as possible.
15. Lab is the heart of “Desbib.” The expert feedback and coaching is critical to developing skills. My lab instructor’s expertise and passion for the material made each lab something to look forward to.
16. DG is the man. Collation did not come quickly or easily to me, and those labs were essential to doing well on subsequent homework sessions. Also, by seeing my peers’ collations, we were able to critique exemplary (and really horrible) collations. I also liked that no two books presented the same set of challenges.
17. Lab instructor was sterling. Labs could not have been improved. I learned tremendously from my instructor and colleagues. (I didn’t finish a couple books, and I’m unsure if this was my slowness or what—likely so. Wouldn’t cut back, though—this is SUPPOSED to be challenging.)
18. *VERY!!* DG is an *excellent* instructor, and even when we made mistakes he was very kind and understanding. I definitely was able to track my progress over the week, thanks to DG.

### **Shef Rogers**

19. My lab instructor was very kind and always encouraging. I had a lot of mistakes, but I will keep practicing according to his advice.
20. They were great. SR was supportive and clear.
21. The labs were great. However, I would have found it more useful to have the books chosen based on the participants’ historical fields of interest.
22. SR is a wonderful instructor. He explained everything in a clear and interesting manner, and it was nice to be matched with an instructor who works in the same field. He was constantly supportive and encouraging, and his enthusiasm was contagious—many thanks!
23. Really helpful—SR is so encouraging, as well as clear, and has expertise in theory and reference sources. Sometimes we spent longer on a minor pagination issue than perhaps necessary, but great to have freedom to explore in several directions.
24. I found our labs to be excellent—every participant, however, should attempt all the work. There were cases in my lab when participants had not even attempted the texts, thus watering the discussion. Our lab instructor, however, was always ready to supply discussion points, so no real damage was done.

### **Eileen Smith**

25. Very successful. Difficult concepts were thoroughly and clearly covered (sometimes on more than one day).
  26. The labs were very helpful, and ES really took the time to explain each copy. Although I did make quite a few errors, I found these served as opportunities to dig deeper into the process, and I gained more out of the experience.
  27. Very successful! The labs are the heart of the course, and I would have been lost if it hadn't been a hands-on experience. ES was incredibly patient, and explained everything beautifully!
  28. This was my favorite part! ES was amazing—knowledgeable and supportive, and always gearing discussion toward how we might apply this material in a library setting.
  29. Collation labs were wonderful. We would write a formula on the board, and then mutually discuss it. ES used every error as a teachable moment.
  30. The labs were very effective. I can't think of any way to improve them.
- 5) *What aspects of the course content were of the greatest interest or relevance for your purposes?*
1. The intellectual level was more than appropriate, but I do wish that some time might be dedicated to exploring the broader implications of the physical evidence we discovered for talking about larger questions of history. Many of us are not approaching "Desbib" as catalogers or textual editors, but rather as scholars interested in the much broader themes that we hope a print might illuminate for us.
  2. The homework was the most fun and interesting thing, as well as the most relevant. The level was perfect. I did not want a "Books 101" class, but something that assumed a certain level of familiarity, and I got that.
  3. The lectures showing *application* of bibliographical study was *very* interesting and relevant to me. These were all very engaging.
  4. Homework and labs were where I did most of my learning—I now feel proficient in producing bibliographical descriptions on my own. The printing press demonstration was also integral to my understanding the production of hand-press books. The intellectual level was appropriate.
  5. The practical skills of understanding books' construction and describing them were of greatest interest to me. In terms of intellectual level, I would have enjoyed more critical engagement with Bowers and more discussion on applications of bibliographical description.
  6. My goal in taking "Desbib" was to improve my rudimentary collating skills. That has *certainly* happened, and the intellectual level of the course was well judged.
  7. The application of collational formulae was what I was here to learn. But I greatly benefitted from the museums and the print demonstration.
  8. Awesome power intro to how a book is made, and how best to describe those aspects.
  9. Being a cataloger, I was greatly aided by the focus on methodology. Intellectually, it was right on the money.
  10. Learning how to collate, and practicing it. Yes.



11. Clearly, the labs and homework were by far of greatest interest and relevance, museums second, and lectures least of all. It was the labs that, to me personally, justified taking an entire week of work off, without a doubt. It was everything I wanted.
12. The level was good. The challenging and sometimes grueling homework sessions were saved by the upbeat tone of the labs. Together these were the best part. These skills will be directly applied to my research.
13. The more formal and scientific aspects of a huge course. The intellectual level was appropriate.
14. I came to the course to learn how to write collational formulas, and to understand better the construction of a book. To that end, the course was incredibly relevant, and was conducted at the high intellectual level that I had been told to expect.
15. The intellectual level of the class was spot on. The amount of practical knowledge and skill gained from Day 1 to Days 3 or 4 was tremendous.
16. The intellectual commitment for this course is significant. I am particularly interested in how I might apply what I learned to my interest in the history of the book in Britain.
17. It's hard to say what had greatest interest or relevance, but I think it's fair to say that "Desbib" is a great lens through which to engage in the study of book history, and I anticipate this material will be useful for my work.
18. Yes—I will definitely bring back what I've learned to my daily work. While I won't be doing full collational formulas, I will need to determine format and completeness, and this course has definitely improved my skill.
19. The labs and museums were of the greatest interest for my purpose. The intellectual level was perfect.
20. Learning how to collate systematically. I'd done it before, but in a pretty *ad hoc* way. It will be better and easier now.
21. Working with collational formulas and learning about characteristics of early modern printing practices were of most use to me. Yes.
22. I loved collating the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century books. I hated the nineteenth- and twentieth-century books, but I see why we needed to describe them. The set books were always well chosen, full of new and fascinating puzzles. Intellectual level just right.
23. More practice with interpreting and understanding books "at first glance." I don't need to write collations or necessarily understand a whole book from *scratch*, but the ability to seek and find evidence, interpret an existing bibliography, or do so in a pinch makes *all* hand-press research faster, more efficient, and richer.
24. I attended "Desbib" to gain a better understanding of the book as both object and process by learning how to appropriately categorize them—this was, in all ways, a success, and I found the course heavily challenging and entirely intellectually appropriate.
25. The opportunity to look at a large number of books of formulary and collational interest with near-immediate feedback was invaluable to me, and to the quality of my future work. The intellectual level was consistently high, and absolutely appropriate.
26. The collation formula and the identification of formats.

27. This course really made me aware of how to use material evidence, and to what end. It will prove very useful when I teach the history of printing and the book.
28. I occasionally have collation requests in my work, which I will now be able to fulfill much more quickly and confidently (and accurately!). The course also necessarily builds off of analytical bibliography principles that will be generally applicable in my work.
29. Collational formulas (for work), as well as the history of printing (for interest).
30. Greatest: labs, homework, any opportunity for hands-on learning. Yes, the intellectual level was appropriate.

6) *Did the instructors 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 the immediate level. Many lingering questions, such as hierarchy of evidence, the nature of the printer's "intention," &c., remain unclear, but that is inevitable.
2. Yes, and then some.
3. Yes! And answered our many other questions.
4. Yes, 100 percent.
5. Yes!
6. Yes.
7. Yes.
8. Yes, and yes.
9. Absolutely. DW and his instructors are bibliographical rock stars!
10. Yes.
11. *Absolutely*. Especially JA, as noted, but the other lab instructors were uniformly helpful, and *eager* to be helpful. The whole experience was thrilling, in fact.
12. *Yes*.
13. Yes, they all did.
14. Absolutely. The instructors were extremely knowledgeable, approachable, and professional throughout the course.
15. The willingness of the instructors to find answers to obscure questions, seek out new examples and material, and facilitate student areas of interest is really amazing.
16. DG is the man. Even the most challenging problems were crystal clear by the end of labs, but it was also helpful that he did not give explicit answers to different problems or challenges during homework sessions. He lets the students figure it out for themselves.
17. Yes. DG's instruction was thoughtful and nuanced, and helped us to learn successfully. DW's lectures and individual attention scaffolded this work excellently.
18. Yes. DW's lectures were compelling, and his delivery was interesting and engaging. DG was affable and knowledgeable, and made collating a lot of fun!
19. Yes, absolutely!
20. Absolutely.
21. Yes.
22. Yes—also shared fascinating insights into his own research, and made me even more excited about the prospect of following a course on analytical bibliography.
23. Yes. Lectures were great for info and knowledge; lab for knowledge and skills.

24. Yes.
25. Absolutely.
26. Yes.
27. Absolutely. ES was great at relating what we were learning to what we would be doing in our jobs. She not only explained our mistakes well, but also helped us see the logic behind our mistakes before taking us down the correct path.
28. Yes, with suggestions for further lines of research to pursue after the course.
29. Without a doubt! I came having never done a collation formula, but working as a special collections librarian. I was terrified the first day that I would be terrible and “fail” the program, but now I want to get back to work and start collating!
30. Yes.

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

1. Labs and the homework. Labs, especially. Bibliographical description is a craft, and this is an apprenticeship. Small group time with the master is the source of the journeyman’s growth.
2. So hard to choose. The faculty and staff are what make the class so valuable. They were great guides through the week, and regardless of the format I think they would have made it work.
3. I liked the museums and the generally hands-on approach. The practice, and the exposure to materials and examples, is something that makes RBS essential to mastering these skills.
4. The group of instructors.
5. Homework and labs, though five instead of six books a day would have made it more enjoyable so I wouldn’t have been as rushed with my examinations.
6. The labs, where progress was made.
7. The intellectual challenge that the books presented—and my new printer’s hat.
8. I feel like have never *seen* a book before now!
9. The lab sessions; I was lucky to have a great instructor, and I learned the most in them.
10. Both museum sessions and meeting other bibliophiles.
11. The labs—I often walked out intoxicated with the labs—I had the sense that JA appreciated the rather intense level of effort and rigor our cohort brought to the experience. I am very grateful to my cohort-mates, who were superb in every way.
12. See above.
13. The sense that I was learning something complex, important, and valuable. The structure of this class is excellent. What seems unlikely on Monday is possible by Wednesday, and the course design contributes to this in a major way.
14. Collation labs, museums, instructors. And donuts.
15. Homework and the related lab sessions were the most productive part of the course.
16. It was extremely challenging, both mentally and physically. However, the long days combined with working into the nights, sometimes until 10 p.m., helped establish camaraderie among the groups.
17. The high-quality course materials, instruction, group learning, intellectual challenge, and earned insights were each, in their own ways, the best part of the class.

18. *The instructors!* They helped to make seemingly inaccessible material accessible. All very approachable and knowledgeable.
19. I liked best the combination of the lecture sessions and the museum sessions.
20. Learning to think bibliographically. Before, I could describe how a (simple) book was constructed. Now I can (sometimes) explain why it matters to know that.
21. {No response—RBS staff}
22. The homework, the lab sessions. The lab instructor's tutorials and DW's wonderful sense of humor.
23. So many enthusiasts in one place, sharing interests, fun, and intense, hard work (not to say suffering).
24. The breadth of coverage, as well as the challenges posed by tackling difficult books.
25. I really enjoyed the mix of time spent in my cohort with people doing similar work and time spent in mixed groups of people with other interests. As a result I got a good amount of context-specific advice, while simultaneously remaining aware of the diversity of uses for "Desbib."
26. I enjoyed the immersion experience of working with the books during homework sessions as individuals, and then coming together during the lab sessions to find the answers and learn more about the process.
27. The camaraderie with my cohort, the support from the instructors, the intensity! I appreciate the thoughtfulness in putting us into groups that made sense by background and profession.
28. The instructors (DW and ES), and the opportunity for so much hands-on practice with the RBS collection.
29. The museums and the labs. Any chance to do hands-on experiential learning. The chance to confer with other cohorts during those times and draw on their expertise. We had a paper conservator in this session, and her input was invaluable.
30. Individual attention in the labs.

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

1. Yes.
2. Yes. I mistakenly thought that we would cover aspects of description, but in one week that would be impossible, so I am still pleased.
3. Yes.
4. Yes.
5. Yes!
6. Yes.
7. Yes.
8. Yes.
9. Yes.
10. Yes.
11. Yes.
12. Yes.
13. Yes, I believe so.
14. Yes. The course exceeded my expectations because it gave me a well-rounded understanding of the elements of a book (paper, binding, type, &c.). The attention paid in the museums to the material objects and to the physical

structure of books was essential to grounding the abstraction behind the collation formulas.

15. Yes.
16. Yes, and more.
17. Yes.
18. Yes.
19. Yes.
20. Yes.
21. Yes.
22. Yes. I will continue to practice, as there's still so much to learn and perfect, but that's not a problem with the course—this is an “introduction,” and all learning outcomes were achieved.
23. Yes. Best foundation I can imagine without more time. G-20 is also a great place to start. Not absolutely sure I needed both, but they enrich one another, and my skills have improved.
24. Yes.
25. Yes.
26. Yes.
27. Yes.
28. Yes.
29. Yes. And then some! ES was great at tailoring the labs to our practical needs as librarians, and we talked about MARC notes and DCRM(B) pagination, as well.
30. Yes.

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

1. In survey collection relevant to my dissertation.
2. I'll be describing for sale, and using references to compare copies. Also looking to find a job in special collections, and this will help me stand out (and work better).
3. I will use these skills for dissertation research.
4. I will produce my own bibliographical descriptions for bookselling.
5. In my research into and analysis of seventeenth-century printed books.
6. To produce accurate collations of hand-press books for sale.
7. As a rare materials cataloguer, I think that many of the skills will be of direct use, and some will be more useful as I develop personal research interests.
8. At my job in rare books librarianship.
9. I will be able to create the best possible catalog records thanks to this course.
10. Collating books at work.
11. It is, and will be, foundational as I try to step up my own “game” from enumerative bibliographies (three of them) to descriptive and analytical bibliography.
12. Comparing multiple copies, editions, and issues of sixteen German anatomical broadsides with moving parts, and their accompanying text pamphlets.
13. In both my teaching and my research.
14. I will use the knowledge directly on the job, as well as in my future research.
15. I will apply these skills in my research and in my classrooms immediately.
16. In special collections research, in teaching, and in developing a systematic methodology for examining texts.

17. I anticipate using this information in my own research, in work with colleagues, and perhaps in pursuing bibliographical strains of research.
18. See answer to Q5, above.
19. I intend to apply the knowledge in my work, as well as in my own research.
20. To create my own bibliographical descriptions, both as a personal research tool and for publication.
21. This will assist in the research for my current book project, and lays the groundwork for introducing some book history elements into my teaching.
22. {Private comment—RBS staff}
23. To interpret the hand-press books I research more efficiently and in greater depth, as I study their texts and images.
24. I intend to use this knowledge in my own teaching, as well as in my research.
25. To better understand and describe complicated, irregular, and incomplete works.
26. Cataloging.
27. I'm currently focused on outreach and instruction in my job, and I have a particular interest in book history and materiality. This course helped me understand the history of print in ways that have better prepared me to teach students.
28. I plan to collate my institution's books upon reader request. I'm also interested in learning more about digital initiatives related to descriptive bibliography.
29. At work in collating, for reference queries regarding our special collections holdings, to teach to our library school interns.
30. I will be able to improve the quality of my bibliographical records in order to better serve our patrons.

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

1. Perhaps more communication between the groups, in order to get a sense of the *OTHER* books that were being examined, and the difficulties encountered there.
2. Non-European formats are not covered. A lecture or entire course on the challenge of describing them would be wonderful. I wish I knew who could teach it.
3. {Private comment—RBS staff}
4. I have no suggestions for improvement; the course exceeded my expectations.
5. See answer to Q6, above. Five, rather than six, books per day would allow us to spend more time with each book and also enjoy the optional evening activities.
6. A lot of thought and experience has gone into "Desbib," and it shows. There was very little slack.
7. {No response—RBS staff}
8. See answer to Q4, above. Also, "Desbib" people miss out on a lot of the social opportunities that others have—including most of Booksellers' Night—because of the printing demo.
9. I think the course is excellent. However, it might be good to provide a bit more "day" time for homework.
10. No suggestions.
11. If there were some way of making homework books available in early morning, pre-breakfast, even for an hour, it would have made completing homework

assignments more doable. Alternately, same, for post-10:00 p.m. Clemons Library closes.

12. The collation demonstration should be condensed to about thirty minutes.
  13. I cannot suggest any improvements. The week is pretty grueling, but the rewards are great.
  14. {Private comment—RBS staff}
  15. {Private comment—RBS staff}
  16. The course might have been improved with some shades over the windows. It is difficult to see watermarks with a Zelco at certain times of day because of light pollution.
  17. Difficult to improve on excellence.
  18. I wish there were more information about describing illustrations—most of the books I catalog are illustrated in some way, and it would be helpful to explore that topic, as well.
  19. A simple handbook of Bowers's book, edited by RBS staff, would be helpful.
  20. The only drawbacks are things you can't control (e.g., the limited number of hours in the day, or our bodily reactions to fatigue).
  21. I would prefer a bibliography course focused on the hand-press period.
  22. {Private comment—RBS staff}
  23. {Private comment—RBS staff}
  24. To my mind, this course works beautifully as is.
  25. {No response—RBS staff}
  26. {No response—RBS staff}
  27. {No response—RBS staff}
  28. I wish it could last longer!
  29. Maybe more time—you feel like you're just getting the hang of it, and suddenly it's Friday!
  30. A little more time could be spent on skills needed for homework. I felt statements of signing and pagination were taught very quickly.
- 12) *If you attended the evening events (e.g., RBS Lecture, Video Night, RBS Forum, Booksellers' night), were they worth attending?*
1. Yes, and no. Hit or miss. Nick Basbanes's lecture was fun, if not academically up to my standard. The second lecture was far less stimulating.
  2. Yes. "Desbib" people are unable to attend sometimes. Having something late night (after 10:00 p.m.) would be nice.
  3. Yes. These were great, and very relevant to the topic!
  4. Yes. "Desbib" students do not have time to attend Wednesday lecture due to homework. It would be great if you could supply them with a paper copy of the lecture so they do not miss out.
  5. No. I felt I wouldn't have time to complete my homework and make the most of the class sessions if I attended other events that cut into homework time.
  6. Yes. I attended part of the Monday lecture and Booksellers' Night, and enjoyed them both.
  7. Yes.
  8. Yes.
  9. Yes. All events were a little treat to round out a busy day!
  10. Yes.

11. Nick Basbanes's lecture was great. Missed Eric's, for homework, and missed Video Night.
  12. Yes. Booksellers' Night is a must. I was impatient during the one lecture I attended because I had to fit in dinner and still make it back to the library by 8:00 p.m.
  13. Yes, the lecture was very interesting.
  14. Yes, the lecture was relevant to my course and very interesting. I would have attended all the events had it not been for the demands of "Desbib."
  15. {Private comment—RBS staff}
  16. Yes. The lectures were fascinating, and Charlottesville is a beautiful place to stroll on Booksellers' Night.
  17. Yes. Optional evening events add to the texture of RBS, and I was grateful for them.
  18. "Desbib" made it hard to attend any "extracurricular" events—that is one disappointment.
  19. {No response—RBS staff}
  20. Yes. The lectures were good. I missed Video Night because I was collating and cut Booksellers' Night short out of fatigue.
  21. {No response—RBS staff}
  22. Yes.
  23. Yes. Other weeks' lectures have been more informative/exciting, but these were good. I am not the target audience for Booksellers' Night, but it's fun to wander with friends.
  24. Yes, though their scheduling is difficult with the high homework levels. I ended up having to skip two of the events so as to complete the homework—and stayed in the labs until the library closed at 10:00 p.m. each time.
  25. Yes.
  26. Yes.
  27. Yes. Went to the lectures, which were very interesting. Skipped Video Night to do homework. Booksellers' Night was my favorite. It was a welcome break, and a great way to connect more with the community here (both RBS and Charlottesville).
  28. Yes. I attended the two lectures and Booksellers' Night, and enjoyed all of these events. I thought the macro-bibliographical focus of the second lecture was especially interesting.
  29. Yes. I attended both lectures and Booksellers' Night. The lectures were fascinating, and Booksellers' Night was a lot of fun—also fun to spend time with classmates.
  30. Yes.
- 13) *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. Nothing. In fact, instructors were rather liberal in allowing me to all but tear some books to the spine, searching for conjugacy.
  2. Precautions taken were fine in my opinion.
  3. {No response—RBS staff}
  4. Many of the books are falling apart, and require maintenance for preservation.



5. {No response—RBS staff}
6. {No response—RBS staff}
7. {No response—RBS staff}
8. {No response—RBS staff}
9. Everyone handled the items well, and the instructors were clear and concise from the beginning about best practices.
10. None.
11. None.
12. There were no careful handling instructions given out or included in our materials, as I have seen in the course packs from other RBS courses.
13. None. Staff were very good at encouraging proper handling and respect for the materials.
14. {No response—RBS staff}
15. I thought the procedures were well balanced.
16. Fancy white gloves. {N.B.—RBS does not recommend the use of gloves}
17. More foam wedges/cradles, please—the division of our course into sessions meant that, for various reasons, maybe one half were available at any time.
18. I definitely felt like we were given some license to be “rougher” with the books than I normally would be. However, it helped me learn a lot more about the structure of the book.
19. None.
20. I saw nothing inappropriate.
21. {No response—RBS staff}
22. {Private comment—RBS staff}
23. {No response—RBS staff}
24. {No response—RBS staff}
25. Those cloth covered cradles are super slippery.
26. {No response—RBS staff}
27. More book cradles. At first there didn’t seem to be enough.
28. Everyone I saw handled the materials responsibly.
29. Maybe an intro for those who may come from a background such as being new booksellers, and who are not experienced with materials handling. That and more duct tape.
30. Remove the cloth from the cradles! They are too slippery to be useful.

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

1. Yes.
2. Yes. It’s a bargain (especially with a scholarship)! I will be recommending to everyone!
3. Yes! This learning and networking experience was well worth it.
4. Yes, and yes.
5. Yes!
6. Yes, and yes.
7. Definitely.
8. YES.
9. Absolutely. I plan to suggest it to everyone!
10. Yes to both.

11. Yes—yes.
12. Yes.
13. Yes, and yes!
14. Absolutely. I wish I would have taken this course years ago!
15. I will absolutely recommend this course to others who are interested in bibliographical approaches to texts.
16. Yes, yes, yes.
17. One hundred percent. I will recommend this course to colleagues.
18. Yes, yes, yes!!!
19. Yes.
20. {No response—RBS staff}
21. Yes, and yes.
22. Yes, yes—if they're serious and committed enough to want to work hard.
23. Yes; yes, with provisos. It's not much like other RBS courses—of course more time and hard work, but also more *solitary* or *small group* work.
24. Yes, and absolutely.
25. Yes, and yes.
26. Yes.
27. I'm so grateful that I received a scholarship, because I wouldn't have been able to attend otherwise, and I can't imagine not getting to have this experience!
28. Absolutely.
29. Yes! I hope to come back for "Advanced Descriptive Bibliography" or "Analytical Bibliography" next summer (and those thereafter!)
30. Yes.

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

1. "Desbib" is the core of any serious physical understanding of the book *as a material artifact*.
2. *Do the readings*. Bring something warm to wear. If you stay up semi-late stay on the Lawn. Have business cards. Go to the evening talks. DW is quiet, but you will learn a lot from him.
3. Homework goes until late, so you do not have much free time. Bring granola bars! Days are long, but you learn *so much*. Brown College A/C is freezing—so bring warm pajamas. Don't forget layers for the cold libraries, classrooms. Bring a backpack or large tote bag for lugging two books and binder every day.
4. This course is worth every penny and every second of brow-furrowing.
5. It is one of the best-conceived, organized, and taught higher education courses I've ever taken. You leave having acquired concrete and quantifiable skills.
6. {No response—RBS staff}
7. Regarding "Desbib," I quote Douglas Adams: "Don't panic." I was remarkably afraid of this class given the dire warnings I heard from all corners. It was a challenging course, intellectually stimulating, and requiring attention and work. But it was manageable, deeply rewarding, and—dare I say it—fun.
8. {No response—RBS staff}
9. The course is intense, with a lot of information to digest, but it is so enriching that it is well worth the effort.

10. “Desbib” was altogether a great experience, albeit exhausting and difficult at times.
11. I was very, very happy with my experience at RBS. This was a very satisfying experience intellectually. It also made me glad to be a financial supporter of RBS.
12. Definitely do the reading before you come!
13. This is a very special place and a wonderful institution. All of the RBS staff are to be commended for creating such an enjoyable and rigorously intellectual environment. Thanks to you all.
14. Thanks to the staff and instructors who worked so hard to make RBS happen! It was a great experience, and I look forward to returning again.
15. It was an excellent and productive week!
16. DG is the man.
17. This was one of the most useful professional development activities I have pursued in my career. Thank you, RBS!
18. 1) Even though I know it was necessary to break the class down to make it manageable, I felt like I only got to know a very small subset of the class. More group work or rotating groups would be nice. 2) More structured social events—dinner on Day 1 was great. Someone jokingly suggested an RBS dance, but I think there’s something to that. Again, being in “Desbib” reduced my free time for socializing, but I definitely wish I’d gotten to make more friends!
19. Do the reading!
20. Yes. I would recommend it to people who need to learn these specific skills, but it’s not for the casual enthusiast.
21. {No response—RBS staff}
22. Complete the preparatory reading, and be prepared to skip dinner to complete your homework and to work hard. It’s lots of fun, and the book-geek jokes are contagious—you really feel like you’re a part of something wonderful.
23. We had fun commiserating and (come late Wednesday/Thursday) after hours, but it’s less of a community than other RBS classes because of less time and fewer opportunities to get to know people beyond your small group. A rite of passage—glad I did it; feel truly RBS now, but wouldn’t do it again, or another class in this format.
24. “Desbib” and RBS writ large are appropriate, and perhaps important, for non-traditional English-associated scholars, such as those in Technical Communication and Rhetoric. While RBS may seem, at first blush, to be geared towards a very particular group of scholars, my experience suggests otherwise—these experiences, and the people I met, many of whom I now count as friends and colleagues, have broadened my perception of my home field, and greatly enriched my scholarship.
25. {No response—RBS staff}
26. {No response—RBS staff}
27. RBS is an integral part of my career in rare books. After this course, I feel more deeply embedded in the rare book community and more confident as a rare book professional.
28. {No response—RBS staff}
29. It is an incredible week that seems to go by almost instantly. The course was great, the instructors were great, and the other students were great! The sense of

- camaraderie and connection—sitting talking with others who love rare books as much as you do—was amazing.
30. Read the preliminary reading list! If possible, practice on books in your collection. This isn't strictly necessary, but it is helpful to have at least tried collating a book before coming to Charlottesville.

### **Aggregate Statistics**

*Number of respondents: 30*

#### **Leave**

Institution gave me leave: 17 (56.67%)  
I took vacation time or unpaid leave: 1 (3.33%)  
N/A: self-employed, retired, or had summers off: 11 (36.67%)  
Other: 1 (3.33%)

#### **Tuition**

Institution paid tuition: 13 (43.33%)  
Student paid tuition: 6 (20%)  
Institution and student shared cost of tuition: 1 (3.33%)  
Scholarship from RBS (Bibliographical Society of America): 1 (3.33%)  
Scholarship from RBS (Director's): 1 (3.33%)  
Scholarship from RBS (Early Librarian's): 1 (3.33%)  
Scholarship from RBS (ASECS): 1 (3.33%)  
Scholarship from RBS (SHARP): 1 (3.33%)  
Fellowship from RBS (Mellon): 4 (13.33%)  
Other (Institutional grant): 1 (3.33%)

#### **Housing**

Institution paid housing: 13 (43.33%)  
I paid for my own housing: 9 (30%)  
Institution and student shared housing cost: 1 (13.33%)  
Scholarship from RBS: 2 (6.67%)  
Fellowship from RBS: 3 (10%)  
Other: Outside grant from the American Institute of Conservation (AIC): 1 (3.33%)  
Other (Institutional grant): 1 (3.33%)

#### **Travel**

Institution paid travel: 13 (43.33%)  
I paid my own travel: 9 (30%)  
Institution and student shared travel cost: 2 (6.67%)  
Scholarship from RBS: 1 (3.33%)  
Fellowship from RBS: 2 (6.67%)  
N/A: I had only local travel expenses: 1 (3.33%)  
Other: Outside grant (AIC): 1 (3.33%)  
Other (Institutional grant): 1 (3.33%)

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

Antiquarian bookseller: 4 (13.33%)

Archivist: 2 (6.67%)

Book collector: 1 (3.33%)

Cataloguer: 5 (16.67%)

Conservator/binder/preservation librarian: 1 (3.33%)

Full-time student: Ph.D. (humanities): 5 (16.67%)

Librarian with no rare book duties: 1 (3.33%)

Librarian with some rare book duties: 1 (3.33%)

Library assistant/clerk: 2 (6.67%)

Rare book librarian: 1 (3.33%)

Teacher or professor: College: assistant professor: 1 (3.33%)

Teacher or professor: University: assistant professor: 4 (13.33%)

Teacher or professor: University: full or associate professor: 1 (3.33%)

Work in a museum or cultural institution: 1 (3.33%)