

Detailed Course Evaluation

- 1) *How useful were the pre-course readings? Did you do any additional preparations in advance of the course?*
 1. They were useful for many aspects. Having a background in theology was also very helpful.
 2. Pre-course readings were essential.
 3. The pre-course readings were extremely useful to me. I found them dense, demanding, and exhilarating. It's important to allow plenty of lead time, not only for books like Swanson and Duffy, but also for the heavily illustrated works where it's necessary to flip back and forth between text and plates. The more familiar I was with the illustrations, the better I could understand and make connections with what RW showed us.
 4. They were very helpful. There were a lot, and they were quite dense, so I found myself skimming sections that I later wished I had read more carefully.
 5. Very useful. Since I am now retired, I actually had time to read many of the suggested items.
 6. Very important.
 7. The pre-course readings were very helpful. I looked at a few of my institution's manuscripts prior to the class.
 8. The readings provided important background information. They were very useful. I reviewed some Latin vocabulary and grammar before the course, which did not turn out to have been necessary.
 9. Would limit to no more than five. RW's books were the most helpful and engaging.
 10. Pre-course readings were extremely useful and well chosen. They gave adequate preparation, and I did not need to do anything beyond the reading to prepare for the course.
 11. The pre-course readings were very helpful, particularly those focusing on the liturgy.
 12. They were very useful if, perhaps, a little too onerous.

- 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 materials (and notes I took) are invaluable, and will help me with subsequent study.
 2. Yes, very useful, and they provide an excellent outline for further study.
 3. The workbook is so rich and deep—it's amazing how much information it has! It will certainly continue to be of use to me in both reading and museum-going. It constitutes a rich reference source in itself.
 4. Yes.
 5. Yes.
 6. Yes, and yes.

7. The workbook was very helpful—especially the section on calendars.
 8. They were very useful during class workshops, and they will be important reference sources for the future, particularly the bibliographies.
 9. Yes.
 10. The workbook was useful, though a bit more information in the workbook would allow for less note-taking. For example, a list of the sections of a typical book of hours would have helped.
 11. I found the workbook helpful, so much so that I wish that it would have been distributed prior to the course.
 12. Yes, in conjunction with notes taken in class, they will be helpful.
- 3) *Have you taken one or more RBS courses before? If so, how did this course compare with your previous coursework?*
1. Yes. They were both intense, information-heavy courses, which I liked.
 2. Yes, four. This one compares very favorably because of the detailed organization.
 3. N/A.
 4. Yes. This was definitely more content-specific, as my other courses dealt more with history of materials.
 5. Yes. It was superb, as was the other RBS course I took with Barbara Shailor on medieval manuscripts.
 6. No.
 7. I have taken an RBS class in the past. Both classes I have taken were extremely well organized and informative.
 8. No.
 9. No, this is my first class.
 10. No.
 11. This was probably the second most enjoyable to date. (David Whitesell's will be hard to beat.)
 12. Yes. I much preferred this class, partly due to its subject matter, but also the hands-on experience of working with original manuscripts.
- 4) *Which aspects of the course content were of the greatest interest or relevance for your purposes?*
1. I was interested in *everything* RW taught.
 2. Understanding the structure of calendars; the meaning and interpretation of iconography.
 3. I was most interested in understanding the components of prayer books, and how to read the “signs” of what a book is and how it is organized.
 4. I was more interested in the art-historical aspects than the religious-history aspects.
 5. Greatest interest was looking at the actual manuscripts (and a few facsimiles).
 6. 1) Seeing the extraordinary manuscripts up close; 2) learning to interpret the manuscripts; and 3) the way the manuscripts opened up windows into the lives of people in medieval times.
 7. I knew very little about the organization, history, and use of medieval manuscripts prior to this class.
 8. The analysis of different kinds of medieval liturgical books and books of hours was

extremely useful, as was the brief introduction to Latin abbreviations and paleography. The explanation of medieval practices with regard to time was also extremely helpful.

9. Viewing the manuscripts and learning about their history.
10. The entire course was useful to me on a broad scale—it helped me get a sense of the methods and interests of a curator/medieval-manuscript specialist. In this way it helped me think about methods of inquiry/research.
11. The illuminated miniatures were the most appealing and interesting aspects of the material we looked at, for my purposes.
12. Understanding the evolution of the illuminated manuscript as a genre. When do we find missals, breviaries, and books of hours, and what specific needs did they fill?

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. RW is a fabulous teacher. I learned more than I expected to learn. Yes.
2. Yes, definitely. The intellectual level was appropriate, but very challenging.
3. The level was perfect for my purposes. RW was so generous in sharing his knowledge and insights, and conveyed a sense of collaborative investigation even while guiding us with his expertise.
4. Yes, he laid everything out very clearly, and gave very good tools for figuring things out, which we were able to apply in class exercises. I think he did presuppose some ability to read and understand Latin at a basic level and to understand blackletter script. He also assumed we had a good knowledge of church history and saints, some of which I got from the readings, but which were still stumbling blocks for me.
5. Yes, yes.
6. Yes; yes.
7. The intellectual level of the course was good. I enjoyed the lectures followed by hands-on exercises. I believe these exercises will help me retain the course information.
8. Yes—the course clearly built to the moment when students would be able to test what they had learned by cataloging a book of hours. The intellectual level was appropriate.
9. Yes/yes.
10. Yes, and yes.
11. Yes, I think so.
12. Yes.

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

1. {No response—RBS staff}
2. The instructor's wit and graciousness, as well as the close attention to details in the illuminations.
3. I really enjoyed the hands-on cataloging exercises, which came at exactly the right point in the week. We had seen many examples of the structure of the books, but to describe one was a very different experience, and made me feel as if I'd begun to

- acquire a new skill. New synapses formed!
4. Of course, seeing these beautiful books close up, and getting a sense of how and why they were used. I also enjoyed figuring out how to localize texts.
 5. RW is a terrific teacher, very nice, personable, charming, knowledgeable, fun, and passionate about the topic!
 6. The instructor very skillfully gave us the tools with which we can go forward on our own to research and analyze illuminated manuscripts.
 7. My favorite part of the class was the chance to handle and work directly from books of hours. The lecture outlining general characteristics of books of hours was very helpful.
 8. RW is an excellent instructor. The depth, enthusiasm, and humor that he brought to the course was the best part of the experience. The richness and variety of the Morgan's illuminated manuscript collection was also a huge advantage of taking the course here.
 9. RW! Well, also reviewing the original manuscripts, the hands-on exercises, and the exhibition tour.
 10. The best part was actually working with a manuscript hands-on. I think this was the best way to learn how to handle and navigate a manuscript, and also allowed us to use what we had learned about books of hours.
 11. The books of hours, and being at the Morgan Library.
 12. Beginning to understand, and better interpret, various types of illuminated manuscripts, their functions, and their place in devotional practices. Questions of dating and localization were fascinating, too.

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

1. {No response—RBS staff}
2. Larger study space, especially in showing the manuscripts. Everything seemed quite crowded; perhaps, too, using a Lazy Susan to show books.
3. I can't imagine how the course could be better than it already is!
4. Perhaps a suggestion that students would benefit from a basic knowledge of Latin. I didn't see anything about this on the website. I was able to stumble my way through, but it was a little tough having to read Latin aloud and interpret it. I don't think you need a very sophisticated level, but some.
5. It was quite perfect.
6. I don't see any way it could be improved.
7. Sometimes it was difficult to see the original materials. Going back and forth between real materials and digital projections would be helpful. I wish there had been more time to ask questions. Perhaps include a brief lecture on manuscripts used outside of the church?
8. Some of the breaks were a bit too long and/or disruptive of the flow of the class.
9. End the class a little earlier (4:30 or 5 p.m.). Shorter lunch/shorter day.
10. Perhaps more hands-on or guided hands-on experience would be better.
11. Having content similar to that of the workbook distributed beforehand. Some of the pre-course reading was rather dense, and distillations would have been appreciated.
12. It was excellent!

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

1. Yes.
2. Yes, definitely.
3. Yes.
4. Yes, though there was a lot more about religion than I had expected, though I probably should have guessed that!
5. Yes.
6. I learned more than what I thought I would learn. I did not realize how many skills would be taught.
7. Yes.
8. Yes.
9. Yes.
10. Yes, mostly. I thought we were going to learn about “masters” and where their names came from, and hoped to learn techniques for distinguishing scribes’/artists’ hands, but we did not.
11. Yes and no. I was expecting more of an art historical/connoisseurship approach to the material, so I was a bit disappointed at first, but still enjoyed the course immensely!
12. Yes.

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

1. {No response—RBS staff}
2. Do more detailed cataloging of our own manuscripts, as well as use them more effectively in the classroom and in outreach.
3. I plan to read further in this field (manuscripts) and will enjoy manuscript exhibitions even more for understanding better how the books “work.” It also helps, of course, for further readings in art history in general.
4. I don’t think I actually will use or apply it at work, but it certainly adds to my personal appreciation of these manuscripts.
5. General knowledge and enjoyment. More trips to museums and libraries to see illuminated manuscripts. I am a retired librarian.
6. I intend to do some research.
7. I will be beginning a survey of medieval manuscripts when I return to my job. The survey will focus on treatment of these materials, but I will now have a much better understanding of their content. I will be able to more easily discuss these materials with our curator.
8. I plan to pursue a career in rare book librarianship or curation.
9. General reference to the knowledge a historical figure would have needed for performance of their work.
10. I hope to become a professor of medieval art history with a specialization in medieval manuscripts. This course will certainly be applied to my dissertation research and beyond.
11. In my bookmaking practice and my scholarship.
12. I will use this knowledge profitably in curating the NYPL’s Spencer Collection.

10) *If your course made any trips outside the classroom, was the time devoted to this purpose well spent?*

1. {No response—RBS staff}
2. {No response—RBS staff}
3. N/A.
4. We visited the Reading Room, which was nice to see (as I'm always interested in how libraries other than mine function), and an exhibit of the Crusader Bible, which I enjoyed.
5. N/A, except to the Crusader Bible exhibit within the Morgan, which was a very interesting critique of an exhibit.
6. The trip to the Reading Room was very useful, as they discussed how to get access to the collection. The trip to a Morgan exhibit of the Crusader Bible was short and interesting.
7. Yes, I enjoyed visiting the Morgan exhibition very much. The exhibition of manuscripts relates very directly to my work so it was good to hear the Morgan's take on things.
8. {No response—RBS staff}
9. N/A.
10. N/A.
11. N/A.
12. {No response—RBS staff}

11) *If you attended any optional evening events, were they worth attending?*

1. I was unable to attend the evening lectures.
2. {No response—RBS staff}
3. N/A.
4. Did not attend.
5. N/A.
6. Social lunch on Friday.
7. Now.
8. {No response—RBS staff}
9. N/A—didn't attend.
10. N/A. Could not attend lectures at Morgan, unfortunately!
11. Yes.
12. {No response—RBS staff}

12) *We are always concerned about the physical well-being of the collections used during RBS courses. If relevant, what suggestions do you have for the improved classroom handling of the materials used in your course this week?*

1. None. RW is very professional about handling materials.
2. See above (Q7)—use of a Lazy Susan and a larger room.
3. Except for the cataloging exercise, the works were handled almost exclusively by RW. When we handled the books ourselves for cataloging, he gave careful advice about using cradles and snakes, and about having clean hands.
4. We were asked to wash our hands before handling books, but there were a few times during the class where students were asked to turn pages, and they were not

asked to wash their hands, and who knows if they had applied lotion. I was concerned because some of the illuminations went right to the edge. Students should be reminded that hand sanitizer is *not* an adequate substitute.

5. {No response—RBS staff}
 6. None.
 7. I believe that all materials used in the class were handled very carefully.
 8. None.
 9. None.
 10. I noticed some students handling their manuscripts in a way that seemed slightly incorrect, but RW did not correct them, so I assume it was okay. A brief personal tutorial might have helped.
 11. A brief demonstration of how to handle materials on the first day would be helpful. Don't worry about insulting people.
 12. {No response—RBS staff}
- 13) *Did you get your (or your institution's) money's worth? Would you recommend this course to others?*

1. Yes. Yes.
2. Absolutely. This course was exceptional, and RW was inspiring in making me want to learn more. Besides the gracious sharing of his knowledge, he was kind and considerate. He also provided details on how we can learn more with other research sources. Definitely would recommend.
3. Money's worth and more! I would definitely recommend this to others.
4. I probably would have benefited more from a class that emphasized the materials more, but for what it was, it was extremely dense and well put together.
5. Yes (and this is saying a lot, as the course was very expensive, and I had to pay for it myself!). Yes.
6. Yes. Yes.
7. Yes. I would definitely recommend this course to others.
8. Absolutely! I would definitely recommend the course to anyone interested in medieval manuscripts or religious books.
9. Yes/yes.
10. Yes!
11. Yes! Yes!
12. {No response—RBS staff}

14) *Any summary thoughts about your Rare Book School experience, or advice for persons considering taking this course in a future year?*

1. It would be nice if RBS could arrange some kind of housing. It was a wonderful course. I am very glad I came. The course does not discuss manuscripts as physical artifacts. (I don't remember if the course description mentioned this.)
2. {No response—RBS staff}
3. Any time spent listening to RW talk about manuscripts is time well spent. The time and organization and preparation he brought to the class were remarkable. I am so grateful to him and to RBS. I particularly enjoyed the range of backgrounds, interests, and ages of my fellow students.
4. Some knowledge of Latin helps, and know your religious history, saints, &c.

5. Maybe you can come with another course to give in NYC! Prefer not to go back to Charlottesville.
6. The instructor, RW, was always engaging, always interesting, and *so* organized that every minute was valuable. This is *very* stimulating and compelling. It is a very hands-on and participatory class and he was very kind and helpful when we stumbled. I suggest taking just a little time to find some Gothic Latin script online to practice reading it if you are not already accustomed to it.
7. {No response—RBS staff}
8. {No response—RBS staff}
9. Sit back, relax, and enjoy!
10. This was a wonderful experience! It was such a privilege to study at the Morgan and to see the great works from the collection in person, with no glass barrier!
11. Wonderful experience as always!
12. {No response—RBS staff}

Aggregate Statistics

Number of respondents: 12

Leave

Institution gave me leave: 6 (50%)

N/A: student, retired, or otherwise have my summers free: 5 (41.67%)

N/A: self-employed, and could arrange my own leave: 1 (8.33%)

Tuition

Institution paid tuition: 6 (50%)

Student paid tuition: 5 (41.67%)

Scholarship from RBS: 1 (8.33%)

Housing

Institution paid housing: 4 (33.33%)

I paid for my own housing: 2 (16.67%)

N/A: stayed with friends or commuted from home: 6 (50%)

Travel

Institution paid travel: 4 (33.33%)

I paid my own travel: 1 (8.33%)

N/A: I had only local travel expenses: 7 (58.33%)

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

Archivist: 1 (8.33%)

Conservator/binder/preservation librarian: 2 (16.67%)

Full-time student: M.L.I.S.: 1 (8.33%)

Full-time student: Ph.D. (library and info services): 1 (8.33%)

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

Rare book librarian: 1 (8.33%)

Retired: 2 (16.67%)

Other: 2 (16.67%)