

Martin Antonetti
H-30: The Printed Book in the West to 1800
9–13 June 2014

Detailed Course Evaluation

- 1) *How useful were the pre-course readings? Did you do any additional preparation in advance of the course?*
 1. The readings were very helpful. The terminology especially was helpful in preparing for the class.
 2. Very useful! They helped set the stage for the lectures and discussions we had in class.
 3. Great! Carter's *ABC for Book Collectors* is one that I have used before, and is always a good reference source. Chappell's *A Short History of the Written Word* was a good overview of the history of print, with a particular focus on type, which was an area that I was less familiar with.
 4. The readings were very useful.
 5. Essential, very relevant, and not onerous. For the first time I found myself wanting to read ahead to further chapters.
 6. Good background for the class.
 7. Very useful. It helped to have a solid overview and follow that with a detailed offering through the course.
 8. Very helpful required readings—they set the foundation for the course content.
 9. Useful, especially Carter.
 10. The readings were very useful in providing a background and vocabulary for the course.
 11. The pre-course readings set the stage for the class, although I would not have felt lost had I not read them.
 12. {No response—RBS staff}

- 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, having tools to help visualize folio sizes, &c., was very helpful, as was the printing and bookbinding demo.
 2. Yes—they will be very helpful for future reference.
 3. Yes! I didn't use every available space in the class workbook, but it was helpful to have names and dates handy, as well as a general indicator of where we were in the lecture.
 4. It would have been nice if the lecture references in the workbook were off to one side so I could take notes next to them instead of having to write around them.
 5. Very much so. I will adopt for myself in the future the instructor's strategy of seeding the workbook with a list of names and topics to be covered and space around them to take notes. This will be very handy as I refer back to the fifty-plus pages of handwritten notes I took.
 6. Exceptionally helpful; I intend to use them in the future as a reference.
 7. Yes. They were quite useful. I will be using them as reference sources in my work.
 8. Yes, the workbook is helpful as a reference. I needed more room for notes, but the

- packet is just fine the way it is.
9. Yes, but I would like to see a list of titles we viewed in SC.
 10. The workbook was very useful in helping us to follow along with the lecturer. I also liked being able to take notes in my workbook.
 11. The workbook and other materials were extremely helpful, and I most likely will continue to reference them after returning home.
 12. {No response—RBS staff}
- 3) *Have you taken one or more RBS courses before? If so, how did this course compare with your previous coursework?*
1. {No response—RBS staff}
 2. Yes. Compared with other courses, this one met, if not exceeded, the quality of the previous RBS courses I've taken. Well worth the time and money spent!
 3. Nope, first time.
 4. The course compared very favorably!
 5. I have taken several, and in each class I am amazed at how much material can be covered so efficiently. I cherish every visit to SC, and I also love the chance to study materials alongside fellow students from such a broad range of professions and disciplines.
 6. Yes. This was the best of the three that I've taken.
 7. I have taken one other course. This course was more broad, as the other was focused on a particular subject, but definitely solidified my knowledge of early printing.
 8. {No response—RBS staff}
 9. {No response—RBS staff}
 10. {No response—RBS staff}
 11. {No response—RBS staff}
 12. {No response—RBS staff}
- 4) *What aspects of the course content were of the greatest interest or relevance for your purposes?*
1. The history aspect of the class was great. I also enjoyed learning about the physical construction of early printed books and their bindings.
 2. It's helpful to know more about the history of the book in the hand-press era.
 3. I am working towards a career in special collections librarianship, so the intensive lectures and hands-on experience were invaluable.
 4. It was very helpful to have the historical background relating to the transition between manuscript and printing, and the various typefaces.
 5. I will now have many more ways in which I can interact with the materials in the stewardship of my library, and I hope I can find more ways to infiltrate the curriculum with book studies.
 6. 1) Technology of papermaking and printing. 2) Social history of the book during this period. 3) SC time.
 7. The greatest interest was in early printing and binding examples.
 8. The theoretical context, the practical demonstrations, the pedagogical examples.
 9. Illustration and binding.
 10. The whole course was useful and interesting. I especially liked the demonstrations

and time in SC—these really illustrated what we’ve been talking about and helped all the information come together.

11. Pedagogical advice on teaching this field.

12. {No response—RBS staff}

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. Absolutely. This class was challenging, but never overwhelming.

2. Yes—MA’s lectures were all extremely thoughtful and informative. I appreciated how generous he is with his knowledge. The intellectual level was spot on.

3. Absolutely. I never felt like I was floundering, but I never felt bored, either. Everything was clearly explained and interesting.

4. The intellectual level of the course was very appropriate. I also liked the pace of switching among lectures, demos with RBS collections, and the trips to SC. The sections followed each other very smoothly.

5. Top-notch. The interactions among instructor, librarians, and book professionals made the class much more than it might have been. “I’m so glad you asked that question” was the theme of the entire week. It was lovely to be in the midst of such engaged participants.

6. Absolutely; exactly what I’d hoped for.

7. The intellectual level was very appropriate, and MA was a great teacher in navigating the wealth of examples and information about this era.

8. Yes. Absolutely. The level was perfect.

9. Yes.

10. Yes, we moved at a swift pace so we could cover everything, but this way I feel like I have a better general sense and some details of book history, 1450–1800.

11. Yes—the class was very well organized and included a variety of activities that all helped convey information.

12. {No response—RBS staff}

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

1. The opportunity to work with books in SC. Getting to spend a lot of time with a few books (especially with MA there to guide us through them) was awesome, and really made real to me the concepts discussed in the lectures.

2. The lectures were excellent. Also, the press demonstration was invaluable to learning about printing techniques. I also appreciated that we focused deeply on a few books during our SC visits.

3. Besides having access to some of the gems of SC, it was wonderful to have a space where questions and ruminations were encouraged and engaged. I feel like a lot of my scattered knowledge of book history was solidified and strengthened, and I feel like I have more confidence going forward when engaging with this subject matter. On another note, MA was a wonderful teacher: absolutely knowledgeable and kind. This is probably the best class I’ve taken in years.

4. Reviewing concepts with the RBS demonstration books that you could handle closely.

5. Hands-on activities and close observation have no equal, and there was general

- agreement that the instructor's strategy of limiting the number of objects and spending a good deal of time on each one (as opposed to passing them around) was the best way to get the most out of each object.
6. SC time.
 7. I liked the typographical studies we conducted as well as the socio-historical analyses we explored for each work and period covered.
 8. The instructor. He is authoritative, kind, clear, organized, generous, patient, and gracious! He made the week fly by. It was a delightful experience.
 9. The interactions with the books themselves.
 10. MA! His teaching style really made this course unique. He encouraged questions and discussion, and facilitated a real atmosphere of collegiality and learning.
 11. The camaraderie and engagement of the students made the class very enjoyable. The instructor's enthusiasm and deep knowledge of the subject made it a privilege to be part of the class.
 12. {No response—RBS staff}

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

1. I wouldn't change anything, other than maybe having more time to work on our book presentations. Working with a book and then presenting it to the class was so rewarding, and I think everyone could have spent more time looking over their texts.... Maybe being able to get into the classroom during break times would have solved this. It was nice that we were able to come back from lunch early to work with the books.
2. It might be helpful to have a bibliography of the SC books we viewed.
3. Make it another week longer!
4. I don't have any suggestions.
5. More stuff, always, but see response to Q6, above!
6. Better A/V system.
7. Perhaps more material.
8. Perhaps some moments for reflection—it is a lot of material. I opted out of some evening activities in favor of reflection.
9. More time with the project books would have been helpful.
10. N/A.
11. N/A.
12. {No response—RBS staff}

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

1. Yes.
2. Yes.
3. Yes.
4. Yes.
5. Yes.
6. Yes; exactly what I'd hoped for.
7. Yes.
8. Yes.
9. Yes.
10. Yes.

11. Yes.
12. {No response—RBS staff}

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

1. I intend to use the knowledge generally as background information as I pursue a career in special collections, and specifically at my internship this summer, where I will be cataloging pamphlets printed in the eighteenth century.
2. I'll use this in my work with undergraduate and graduate students in English.
3. I hope the knowledge gained here will help me find employment in a place that will set me up for a life-long career working with special collections materials. I can envision referencing this knowledge in all my future work.
4. It will help me in the assessment process when preparing a conservation treatment proposal.
5. Pursuing a Certificate of Proficiency with RBS; looking for a staff-share in my institution's special collections library.
6. In bookselling.
7. I work in reference, and this course will aid my understanding of the materials in my institution to better serve our researchers.
8. I will use this new knowledge to provide better service to our patrons in answering reference questions and providing instruction.
9. To inform my research with a better understanding of the history of the book.
10. I can use my new knowledge to provide better service to our patrons in answering reference questions and providing instruction.
11. The information learned during this course will be shared publicly with visitors to my organization via presentations and formal class instruction.
12. {No response—RBS staff}

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

1. Yes! I loved the typesetting/printing demo; it helped me understand a lot of the content about punch cutting in one of the advanced reading books we were assigned.
2. Yes—this was highly valuable.
3. Absolutely. The ability to see SC items in person certainly helped support classroom learning, and gave us space to use our critical-thinking skills and knowledge from lectures to do our own detective work.
4. The trips to SC were very useful and complemented classroom lectures.
5. We made several trips to SC, and they were a core aspect of the course.
6. Yes; SC time was very valuable. So was time in the print room and with the printing press.
7. Yes. Our visits to SC and the printing/type demonstration were very useful in solidifying the information learned in lectures.
8. Yes. Trips to SC were a wonderful part of the course.
9. SC was an integral part of the class.
10. Yes, the SC time was invaluable.
11. Very much so.
12. {No response—RBS staff}

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

1. Yes.
2. I attended all but Video Night, and they were all worthwhile.
3. Booksellers' Night—we tried to go to four shops, but only two were open. I would have liked to have seen more! I did get a free book from the fellow over at Daedalus, though.
4. The Wednesday night lecture gave me very useful insight into digital humanities, which is outside my area of expertise.
5. YES!
6. Video Night was so-so.
7. Yes.
8. I don't feel as strongly about the evening events. I attended two—they were enriching, but did not compare to the course in terms of value to me.
9. Yes, partly. Some events were of no interest.
10. Yes.
11. Yes.
12. {No response—RBS staff}

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. None.
2. N/A.
3. I didn't see anyone mishandling materials (they are professionals, I suppose) but it couldn't hurt to have a five-minute book-handling lesson on the first day.
4. No suggested improvement.
5. All participants were respectful of the age of materials, and staff took good care to make sure things were there when we needed them and put away carefully afterward. The electronically locked room was a minor annoyance when considering the value of the items temporarily locked inside it.
6. No.
7. {No response—RBS staff}
8. {No response—RBS staff}
9. {No response—RBS staff}
10. N/A.
11. Classroom handling did not appear to negatively affect the collections; I appreciated the opportunity to work with such rare materials.
12. {No response—RBS staff}

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

1. Yes, and yes! I look forward to coming back next year.
2. Yes, and yes!
3. Certainly. It's a wonderful course, appropriate for a wide variety of professionals.

- We had graduate students, recent graduates, librarians in music, special collections and academic librarians, one student with a background in law, one bookseller.... I think everyone got something out of it.
4. Yes! Absolutely!!
 5. Yes, and yes, without a doubt.
 6. Yes. I will highly recommend it.
 7. Yes. I would recommend this course to anyone wishing to learn about the hand-press period.
 8. Yes, and yes.
 9. Yes.
 10. Yes, definitely.
 11. Yes, most definitely.
 12. {No response—RBS staff}

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

1. I went into this class *thinking* I wanted to be a special collections librarian, and I left *knowing* I want to be a special collections librarian.... This class gave me the exact experience/introduction to book history that I was looking for!
2. I had high expectations for this course, and it exceeded every one of them. I can't recommend it enough!
3. I already can't wait to come back. Thank you for the wonderful experience!
4. {No response—RBS staff}
5. {No response—RBS staff}
6. No.
7. This was a wonderful experience, and I am so grateful that I was able to visit and learn so much again.
8. Take this course! I cannot imagine a more productive, enriching, or practical use of five days.
9. This was an invaluable experience for me, but I do think that many students were better prepared than I since I had no rare book experience. It was just a bit more challenging for me. Nonetheless, I think it was very rewarding.
10. Everything about RBS is great: the instructors and students, class content, pace, &c.
11. This has been a wonderful way to delve more deeply into the rare book field.
12. {No response—RBS staff}

Aggregate Statistics

Number of respondents: 12

Leave

Institution gave me leave: 7 (58.33%)

I took vacation time or unpaid leave: 3 (25%)

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

Tuition

Institution paid all (or almost all): 6 (50%)
Institution and student shared cost: 1 (8.33%)
Student paid tuition: 4 (33.33%)
Scholarship from RBS: 1 (8.33%)

Housing

Institution paid all (or almost all): 4 (33.33%)
I paid for my own housing: 6 (50%)
N/A: stayed with friends or lived at home: 2 (16.67%)

Travel

Institution paid travel: 3 (25%)
Institution and student shared cost: 1 (8.33%)
I paid my own travel: 6 (50%)
N/A: I had only local travel expenses: 2 (16.67%)

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

Antiquarian bookseller: 1 (8.33%)
Book collector: 1 (8.33%)
Conservator/binder/preservation librarian: 1 (8.33%)
Full-time student: M.L.I.S.: 1 (8.33%)
Librarian with no rare book duties: 3 (25%)
Librarian with some rare book duties: 3 (25%)
Library/University administrator: 1 (8.33%)
No response: 1 (8.33%)