

Consuelo Dutschke
M-10: Introduction to Paleography, 800–1500
9–13 June 2014

Detailed Course Evaluation

- 1) *How useful were the pre-course readings? Did you do any additional preparations in advance of the course?*
 1. The pre-course readings were useful, and helped me understand the topics discussed in class.
 2. The pre-readings were good—I literally had no background before this class in medieval manuscript reading, so it was good to gain some terms. I did not understand a lot of what I read, so that was confusing in the time before class started. I knew that would happen though, and I think I will get a lot more from the reading now.
 3. The readings were a good review for me, or can serve as preparation for those who are not as familiar with medieval history or book history in general. I think a Latin grammar review is a good idea to prepare for this course if you don't work with Latin regularly. For the most part I think the learning in the course came through the reading practice and the experience looking at various manuscripts.
 4. The pre-course readings were extremely useful and well chosen.
 5. They were useful, and will continue to be good books to own as I continue learning paleography.
 6. Very useful. They were wisely moderate in length, giving us a grounding in preparation for the class without overwhelming us before we were even arrived here.
 7. The readings were very helpful. I wouldn't change a thing.
 8. They were very helpful as an overview of the subject, especially of vocabulary. It is not a subject that's easy to commit to memory ahead of time, though.
 9. Very useful. Although not directly discussed very much, they provided a good basis to dive right in on the first day.
 10. The course readings were all excellent.
 11. Very useful. I tried to refresh my Latin some, as well.
 12. Very useful.

- 2) *Were the course workbook and other materials distributed in class appropriate and useful (or will they be so in the future, after you return home)?*
 1. Yes, the course materials were useful. To be honest, I did not look at many of the manuscript facsimiles because they were available online. In order to conserve paper, RBS might simply use Dropbox or a program similar to UVaCollab where instructors may upload images and links to useful websites.
 2. Yes! Everything was relevant—I really appreciate CD giving us all of those manuscript pictures via Dropbox. The workbook was good as well; full of pictures that we used in class sometimes. It will be helpful later to remind me of what I learned, and to practice more manuscript reading.
 3. Yes. The image files allowed me to read along in class on my own computer, rather than the large screen, and will help me to review at home. They are organized by

script and by region, which is very helpful, and the file names identify each manuscript.

4. Yes. I am taking home a very helpful little binder full of transcriptions and notes, and distributing the images in a Dropbox folder was genius!
5. Yes, very useful. I will definitely keep all of the materials to practice with later.
6. Yes, extremely. I will cherish my course folder, handouts, and homework.
7. The materials distributed in class were informative and interesting. I would suggest, however, giving students a handout with the most common abbreviations (especially for p and q words), as flipping through Cappelli can sometimes be difficult since there is some variation. I would also have liked a handout summarizing the main distinguishing features of various scripts.
8. Absolutely. I plan to type up all of my notes so they will be searchable, and to keep the hard copies for reference in my office!
9. YES, lots of great images and handouts. Glad to have both digital and physical files.
10. Very much. CD made all the digital materials available on Dropbox, but added more materials in the workbook that was distributed in class.
11. Most definitely.
12. Very useful.

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

1. I have taken two RBS courses, and they were both excellent. They also complemented each other in ways that will allow me to go further in my research.
2. No.
3. Yes. This one was even better! Much more practical for my purposes.
4. This was my first RBS course.
5. No.
6. Not yet.
7. Yes, I took "Introduction to Western Codicology" in 2011. This course was much more helpful for my research, as I am a literary scholar and work primarily with texts. The pace of this course was also much more reasonable, and the instructor's use of technology made class move efficiently. Because students were provided many of the digital images we were discussing in class in advance, we could focus more on the discussion instead of feeling like we needed to continuously take notes.
8. I have taken two previous courses. This course paired very well with "Introduction to Western Codicology" (Derolez), both for content and for level of instruction.
9. One other, and this one was much better.
10. Only at CalRBS. I thoroughly enjoyed taking this course at RBS, and will come back again and again.
11. N/A.
12. N/A.

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

1. This course gave a great overview of medieval scripts, and I have no doubt that I will be referring to my course notes as I continue my research on manuscripts.
2. Since I am a classicist, it was fascinating to look at the Latin and see how the language changed some in the Middle Ages, as well as to think about how the church preserved most of our important classical texts.
3. To me it was most important to learn to read the texts in various scripts; I am less interested in dating and localizing manuscripts.
4. I primarily took this course to get more comfortable reading medieval book hands, so I really liked that we did lots of practice transcription in class. Paleography is not a spectator sport.
5. The later medieval scripts.
6. All; detailed analysis of manuscripts is exactly what I hoped for, expected, and got.
7. I most appreciated the discussion of French manuscripts and Gothic hands, as that is my area of research.
8. I study manuscripts regularly, and needed both the vocabulary to talk about them and the ability to localize and date handwriting.
9. All of it.
10. Learning to read different scripts from the Medieval period in Latin.
11. Learning to read the script(s) was most important, but every aspect of the course was relevant and interesting.
12. I enjoyed and benefitted from the applied nature of course activities. I especially liked applying what we learned to books in SC and from CD's collection. I also liked that we talked a lot about manuscript decoration, illumination, and so on, in addition to the scripts.

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. It was a pleasure and an honor to work with CD. Paleography can be intimidating, but she showed us effective approaches to dating and locating manuscripts. Her encouragement helped us through challenging transcriptions and created a convivial classroom dynamic.
2. Yes. CD is a great teacher—she asks us questions before telling us exactly what something is, and made us read the text out loud to everyone else; that work of deciphering really helped me learn how to read the different scripts. She also switched it up sometimes and had us work in pairs. And her foresight was definitely correct when she put reading the real manuscripts at the end of the day (save the most hands-on part for when we are most tired).
3. Yes to all. We were mostly graduate students and other academics, and the level was exactly right for us, and for an introductory course in paleography.
4. Yes, and yes.
5. Yes, CD did a great job of teaching the information and keeping the class engaged with the material.
6. Yes. See answer to Q6, below.

7. This course will undoubtedly be an asset to me as I continue to work with medieval manuscripts and edit/translate medieval texts. Though far from being an expert on the subject of paleography, I can definitely say that my skills of reading medieval Latin directly from manuscripts has greatly improved. I would recommend this course especially to graduate students and early career researchers.
8. Absolutely. The course was highly interactive, and I believe all of the students saw our skills improve over the course of the week. The intellectual level was challenging, but appropriate.
9. Yes, I knew some scripts coming in, but I learned so much more. The pace of the course was perfect—intensive, but not exhausting.
10. Yes. CD is a kind and patient instructor. No one was ever made to feel inadequate.
11. CD is an excellent, personable instructor, and she definitely helped us acquire the skills the course intended to convey. I think the intellectual level of the course was just right.
12. Yes. Yes.

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

1. I liked the instructor, my colleagues, the breadth of the topic, and the materials—everything!
2. Reading manuscripts out loud in class and looking at the huge choir book in SC.
3. CD is a great instructor! She helped foster a collegial atmosphere. I liked the in-class practice, all together and in small groups.
4. I particularly enjoyed handling the manuscripts personally and applying our identification skills to actual documents of the sort we might encounter in our work. I liked Thursday's exercise, in which we assigned names and dates to leaves from the instructor's own collection.
5. I liked practicing reading aloud in class. It made me a little nervous, but the collaborative environment was great.
6. The course was kept at a reasonable and relaxed (though rigorous) pace. The material is inherently challenging, so having a smiling teacher who created an encouraging and even joyful classroom environment was delightful. Also, camaraderie with other students, which was fostered by the instructor's approach.
7. CD had a way of making class light and fun, especially during the times when we were becoming restless. She was patient and kind, and never made us feel bad about our Latin. I love the technological and digital aspects of this course. Her expertise in the manuscript holdings of various American institutions, as well as her ability to navigate through various online catalogues with ease, are admirable.
8. We developed a strong camaraderie as a class, which is partly luck of the draw in the mix of students, but is also very much due to CD's sense of humor and welcoming, open attitude.
9. That we were always engaged, doing exercises or looking at manuscripts. CD is fantastic. There's so much information, but she is a great teacher: very encouraging and helpful.
10. Actually examining items from SC. And CD brought her own pieces for us to study.

11. The camaraderie that quickly developed among the students contributed to the quality of the course, and CD's demeanor surely contributed to the development of the camaraderie.
12. The instructor. CD is very skilled at making an arcane subject accessible and enjoyable. She sets a light-hearted, non-judgmental tone that facilitates the experience.

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

1. Maybe we could have had more individual contact time with actual manuscripts (instead of digital facsimiles). Oftentimes we looked at manuscripts in groups, but sometimes it was difficult to get a good look at the artifact (especially in smaller manuscripts).
2. Nothing!
3. I can't think of anything.
4. A better sum-up at the end would have been appreciated. I think this material could be summarized very well in flow-chart form. Is it a choir book? Y/N. If Y, do the rubrics specify times of day? Y/N. If Y, it's for the daily office; if N, it's a missal. That would work well for script identification too. Are the letters connected? Y/N (cursive, non-cursive). Do the s and f descend below the line? Y/N. Is the tail of the g closed or open? Y/N. Anyway, summary at the end would have been good. My notes are very disjointed, actually.
5. Only by adding another couple of days!
6. I don't know that it could.
7. I wonder if it may be worthwhile to consider using applications like T-PEN in future classes.
8. {Private comment—RBS staff}
9. N/A.
10. I wish more trips to SC, or more opportunities to study the script as a complete manuscript, were added to the schedule.
11. I don't see how the course could be improved.
12. N/A.

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.
7. Yes.
8. I had some background in paleography already and expected this course to be a little on the easy side. However, it challenged and enlightened me on many levels!
9. Although the course is specifically about Latin scripts, the knowledge and skills apply much more broadly.
10. Yes.
11. Yes.
12. Yes.

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

1. The skills that I acquired will be invaluable throughout my career and in my research on manuscripts.
2. I now know how to read medieval manuscripts, and I am definitely more likely to use special collections in my future research than I would have been before this course.
3. I work with primary materials in my studies, so it is important to be able to read various scripts, abbreviations, numbers, &c.
4. I'm going to be working with more manuscripts in the future for my dissertation, and now I hope to be able to read them without error.
5. Dissertation research.
6. Primarily in my research, evaluating manuscripts first hand, but also in my classrooms, exposing my students to primary texts.
7. I would like to transcribe a Latin text related to my research. I feel much more confident in my abilities to do so after having taken this course.
8. I will be better able to date and localize the manuscript hands that I encounter in my research.
9. Identifying, localizing, and dating manuscripts; reading manuscripts and marginal notes for my research.
10. I will definitely apply the knowledge gained from this course in my job as a rare book cataloger. Learning to read the script in various styles will certainly help with subject analysis.
11. I haven't done much with manuscripts at this point, but I plan to become familiar with the collections in my area.
12. The course helped me acquire the language and concepts that will help me write a dissertation chapter. I also plan on doing open-ended research in my home institution's collections.

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

1. N/A.
2. N/A.
3. Yes. We went to SC twice. I think the visits were especially useful to those who don't have much experience working with manuscripts. I appreciate that we examined manuscripts from a variety of places and dates, and in different languages, &c.
4. Yes! We visited SC twice to identify manuscripts.
5. I thought our time in SC was well spent.
6. Trips to SC were wonderful. Yes. A must-keep aspect of the course.
7. We visited SC, but I must say that I found Derolez's use of these collections more helpful.
8. The SC trips were very useful, getting to explore manuscripts on our own, in small groups. Nothing beats exposure and repeated practice.
9. SC—yes.
10. Yes, although I wish there was more time devoted to it.
11. N/A.
12. Our time in SC was a highlight.

- 11) *If you attended the evening events (e.g., RBS Lecture, Video Night, RBS Forum, Booksellers' Night), were they worth attending?*
1. The lectures were excellent. One suggestion: this particular week dealt with two modern topics, and it may be interesting to have more variety within the session.
 2. Yes—I came to the two lectures and learned a lot about two fields that I was ignorant of before (some information went over my head, of course).
 3. N/A.
 4. I did not attend these extra events.
 5. The lectures were enjoyable.
 6. Yes. The lecture was great; the video was okay; Booksellers' Night was a lot of fun. They all helped create a sense of community, which is one of the most appealing aspects of RBS.
 7. N/A.
 8. Yes. The lectures were both very interesting, though having a speaker on non-twentieth- or twenty-first-century topics would have been nice.
 9. N/A.
 10. RBS Lecture. Yes.
 11. Yes. I did not attend Video Night. Matthew Kirschenbaum's lecture was very interesting.
 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. Perhaps more individual or pair work (to avoid crowding around manuscripts). It might also be helpful to have a librarian explain how to handle these materials. That way everyone (especially novices) knows not to touch the ink on the folio, understands how to set up a cradle, &c.
 2. Maybe give us clearer instructions on how to handle the manuscripts. I touched the writing a few times because I didn't know! But my classmates were quick to correct me. Thank you for the instructions about only pencils and always washing hands!
 3. Most people in the class have experience working with these materials, but I still think a quick overview of rules would be helpful (e.g., don't touch the text or illustration, don't handle the books with pencil in hand).
 4. No suggestions.
 5. N/A.
 6. N/A.
 7. Everyone handled documents with great care.
 8. {Private comment—RBS staff}
 9. {No response—RBS staff}
 10. Nothing. Everyone is always reminded to wash hands and to handle materials correctly every day.
 11. {No response—RBS staff}
 12. I almost fainted to see how books were handled by students during the first few sessions with rare materials. I would be firmer about enforcing guidelines.

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

1. Yes, and yes!
2. Yes. It was a great learning experience.
3. Yes! I feel like I learned a skill I didn't have a week ago, and I can now continue to study on my own or in more advanced courses.
4. Yes, and yes.
5. Yes, absolutely.
6. Yes, absolutely.
7. Yes!
8. Absolutely. I would recommend this course and Derolez's codicology course as paired classes for any medievalist.
9. Yes, and yes.
10. Yes, and yes!
11. I think so. I would recommend the course. I don't know if I would be able to pay my own way again anytime soon, though. Scholarships are definitely desirable.
12. Yes. Yes.

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

1. I'm very excited to see how much RBS has grown these past couple of years and I look forward to taking more classes. I would love to see more medieval topics, or perhaps a class that discusses the material transition from manuscript to print?
2. I am so glad I did this. It was a last-minute opportunity, which made it even better. I have learned so much this week, from the class material, from my instructor as a person, and from my classmates. RBS is a great way to meet other intellectuals interested in learning! I enjoyed my time a lot, thank you so much!
3. {No response—RBS staff}
4. Bring a sweatshirt. Trust me.
5. {No response—RBS staff}
6. {No response—RBS staff}
7. {No response—RBS staff}
8. I keep thinking I'll eventually run out of classes I want to take at RBS, but that hasn't happened yet, nor have I gotten tired of the unique and welcoming culture of RBS in the summertime!
9. I enthusiastically recommend this course!
10. Thank you for the wonderful experience!
11. This is an excellent course, and CD is truly an outstanding instructor.
12. {No response—RBS staff}

Aggregate Statistics

Number of respondents: 12

Leave

Institution gave me leave: 2 (16.67%)

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

N/A: self-employed, retired, or had summers off: 9 (75%)

Tuition

Institution paid tuition: 2 (16.67%)

Student paid tuition: 2 (16.67%)

Exchange or barter: 2 (16.67%)

Scholarship from RBS: 4 (33.33%)

Fellowship from RBS: 1 (8.33%)

Other: 1 (8.33%)

Housing

I paid for my own housing: 6 (50%)

Scholarship from RBS: 1 (8.33%)

Fellowship from RBS: 1 (8.33%)

N/A: stayed with friends or lived at home: 4 (33.33%)

Travel

I paid my own travel: 9 (75%)

Scholarship from RBS: 1 (8.33%)

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?

Cataloguer (special collections): 1 (8.33%)

B.A. student: 1 (8.33%)

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

Ph.D. student (humanities): 7 (58.33%)

Assistant professor: 2 (16.67%)