

Detailed Course Evaluation

- 1) *How useful were the pre-course readings? Did you do any additional preparations in advance of the course?*
 1. While the required readings were useful for background information, I found the recommended readings more useful for preparing me for the discussions we had in class.
 2. Extremely useful. Several of the readings were texts I had wanted to read for a long time; others were surprisingly useful foundational material for the discussions we had over the course of the week.
 3. Very useful; the book exclusively about prints and printmaking was quite schematic—is there anything more exciting?
 4. The pre-course readings were useful. I did not do any additional preparations for this course.
 5. Kusakawa should be on the required reading list. I found Ivins to be less useful.
 6. Very useful, both the materials on bibliography and more theoretical materials geared toward the content of the course
 7. Kusakawa should be required instead of recommended!
 8. I found them useful; they were extensive enough that I felt no need for advance preparations!
 9. The pre-course readings were helpful. RG provided a list of required readings, as well as supplementary readings. And, in hindsight, the supplementary readings would have been extremely useful for me to read prior to the class.
 10. The one book we were asked to read all of—the Ivins—barely came up, and was not that relevant to my mind. I think it and the Kusakawa should be switched, or less of the Ivins assigned at least. I did a small amount of other reading in the course of my own research.
 11. Very useful. No.
 12. Very relevant and 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. The workbook was, and I think will be, a great resource. The combination of lists of primary materials, relevant passages from primary sources, and extensive list of secondary sources was a great help to me to navigate the course, and I think will be a fantastic reference source going forward.
 2. The workbook materials were both appropriate and useful—it would have been useful to have several of the PowerPoint slides used in the session (the more info-loaded ones) reproduced in the workbook (these were identified in class by many students).
 3. Very, very.

4. The course workbook and other materials were both useful and appropriate. It would have been good to have some of the more complicated slides in the workbook so we could refer to them during class.
 5. Course workbook very useful. Would have liked the slides (especially those with lots of text) to have been available as well. (Most were given as handouts after the fact.)
 6. Yes, very helpful (especially the PDF version of the workbook).
 7. Essential for class, and magnificently organized. I will refer back to the handouts and bibliography for years to come. I was incredibly impressed that each of the scores of books we viewed was given a number in the course book *and* in the libraries themselves.
 8. Yes.
 9. Yes, the handouts were incredibly useful—especially the ones with slide text on them. I plan to refer to those as I research and write.
 10. Yes, but I think more of the text-heavy class slide content should be included in the workbook.
 11. Yes.
 12. Yes, the workbook and handouts were also very useful for the class sessions and for future consultation.
- 3) *Have you taken one or more RBS courses before? If so, how did this course compare with your previous coursework?*
1. No, this is my first course.
 2. No, this is my first course.
 3. Yes. This course was so much better than my last course that it's like comparing oil wells to living plants—no comparison is even possible.
 4. Yes. This was the best course I have taken at RBS, in large part because of the cohort of students, who brought their expertise in a wide variety of disciplines to the table. The conversations were great.
 5. Yes. This was a great class. Nice discussions. Nice work with partners, officially and unofficially, so that our expertise could be shared. The class did a great job of sharing knowledge, as we all came in with radically different perspectives. The assignment due at the end of the week was actually one of the best parts of the week. I would have liked enough time to have everyone have time to print an intaglio (we printed in groups of two, and I wish we had had time to each make one.) This class had more folks with academic backgrounds/focus than most or the other classes I have taken. We physically examined more books in an intense (but brief) way than other classes, and there was less hands-on making of physical products (prints, paper, photographs) than other classes I have attended.
 6. No, this is my first course.
 7. Yes. This was the best class I've taken here!
 8. No, this is my first course.
 9. No, this is my first course.
 10. No, this is my first.
 11. Yes. This class was more “academic” than others I've taken. It was more theoretical and less practical.
 12. I've taken numerous RBS courses. This one is by its nature a bit more abstract or conceptual than some others (e.g., typesetting).

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

1. The pairing of mini-lectures and close looking at/discussion of a large number of primary objects, including printing surfaces, made the class interesting and very useful for my own research and teaching.
2. This is essentially an impossible question for me to answer, as I found the entire week incredibly fascinating and useful. The things most relevant for my own purposes were: 1) the intense discussions with RG, CDM, and my fellow students on the theoretical problems associated with analysis and description of images, and 2) the engagement with the actual books. Even those few topics I was not particularly taken with turned out—by week's end—to have important implications for my main interests.
3. All of our discussions were relevant in their own ways.
4. All aspects were relevant, and I will be bringing much useful information back to my institution to share with colleagues and classes in the future.
5. How materials get used/studied today. The relationship between the various players (author, publisher, engraver), and how that impacts the final production and distribution of the book. Analysis of images and actual examination/handling of these seminal works.
6. Questions about the dialogue between text and image were most closely related to work I am currently engaged in, but issues of book production that once seemed remote from my own work now make me think about new directions for work.
7. Tools for analyzing and reverse engineering the books. The detailed discussion of the "greatest hits" of the history of science. I learned more in the Tuesday morning session alone than I dared hope to learn in the week!
8. On a practical level, learning how to distinguish between etching and engraving was a good one. More generally, the ways of looking that RG and the other participants taught were really useful to me and have caused me to reassess and want to revisit a lot of my previously-used sources.
9. I am most interested in natural histories published in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.
10. I was most interested in the concrete technical aspects of these books' production, and a bit disappointed with the extended theoretical and philosophical discussions we had, interesting as they were. I believe this was partially due to the makeup of the class, but could have been better balanced in the course content as well.
11. Looking at the books, how they were put together, and how the illustrations fit. Also it was good to have lots of practice identifying the different techniques.
12. Just thinking about the subject in a new way, and applying information from the instructor's discussions and the readings to the books I work with on the job.

5) *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. He was very effective at communicating both his ideas about the field and his knowledge of the circumstances of the production of illustrated scientific books. These were some of the best conversations I have ever had about these materials.

- The range of disciplinary perspectives made for very lively and intellectually challenging and satisfying discussion.
2. Absolutely. I was impressed with RG's and CDM's ability to speak persuasively and convincingly to a class composed of students with a wide diversity of backgrounds (intellectual and literary historians, historians of science, art historians, rare books librarians and catalogers, &c.) about topics that were both theoretically and technically complex.
 3. Intellectual level was ideal, and instructor and participants took it up a level every session. I think the aims of the course were conveyed with precision, and there was enough flexibility built in to allow for a rigorous discussion of terminology, methods, and content. I felt that even though the course content was not focused in the historical period with which I am most familiar, there was no shortage of information and knowledge at the table to fill in the gaps.
 4. Yes, the instructors were great at sharing information, knowledge, and skills with us. The intellectual level of the course was appropriate, and was raised by the interaction between faculty and students.
 5. Yes. I have not studied the particular works covered in this course before, and many of my colleagues had, so sometimes discussions/theories discussed were a bit difficult to follow and I did not always have the same vocabulary as they did; but they were good about sharing/explaining/bringing folks when requested. (There were more side conversations/discussions in this class than in previous courses I have taken. No value judgments there. Just an observation.)
 6. Yes; there were lots of opportunities for feedback and questions that kept the class moving along at a rate that seemed to work out for everyone.
 7. I've been studying book history for years, and yet I learned an ENORMOUS amount. I was thrilled that the course was aimed at a high level and assumed a fair amount of prior knowledge of the contents (one exception noted below). Beyond RG's sheer breadth and depth of knowledge, he is a gifted instructor, and tremendously patient and likable.
 8. Yes.
 9. Yes! I feel like I took a crash course that covered the analysis of scientific images, as well as the production of early modern books and prints. I feel ready to engage with these sources with more intellectually satisfying and materially aware approaches than I previously had. I also found the intellectual level of the course appropriate. Though I was not as knowledgeable as many of my fellow students, I benefited immensely from their discussions and background knowledge. I never felt as though they were talking over my head.
 10. Again—I would have liked some more technical knowledge, especially for how often the materiality of books was brought up as a focus of the course. But the class was definitely intellectually stimulating, and I learned a great deal.
 11. Yes. I would say the composition of the class—majority Ph.D.s and Ph.D. candidates—made the intellectual level very high. Possibly too high at times.
 12. Yes, in broad conceptual terms; the subject is large and slippery, so this was the start of a learning and thinking process. The mix of academics and working librarians was fruitful in many ways, but also meant that frames of reference and levels of discussion were not always shared.

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

1. The conversations we had about the materials.
2. The opportunity for intense discussion and collegial, collaborative exploration grounded in RG's and CDM's rigorous presentation of material, vocabulary, and questions.
3. The people. RG and CDM are brilliant, and they selected a group of people that could not have been more engaging, intellectually curious, and friendly.
4. The cohort, and how well we all interacted with each other, learning from each other as well as from the instructors, and challenging each other to think in new ways. I learned something from everyone in the class. I also thought the presentations we did on Friday about one book were fascinating, each of us taking a different approach to the work we had chosen.
5. The number of volumes we got our hands on and were able to examine up close (not just passing along the table, but actual time to study and examine, even if briefly). The knowledge gained from working in small groups/from fellow colleagues.
6. The trip to Dibner Library was probably the greatest part of an overall great class.
7. The discussions! We had an incredible wealth of expertise at the table, and got almost as much from each other as the instructor. I learned a very finely grained vocabulary for understanding the mise en page, the production techniques, and ways to identify intentions in production. The very rigorous intellectual environment was met with a relaxed and friendly class—the perfect combination.
8. RG is fantastic at leading thoughtful discussions, and I really liked the range of backgrounds among the participants and how that enlivened discussion.
9. I loved looking at the various collections in SC, as well as in Dibner and Cullman. I found that those hands-on examinations enabled me to take what we had talked about in class and apply it more effectively than when I was shown examples on the PowerPoint slide.
10. Being able to closely examine so many tools and artifacts of printing. Seeing the Mattioli woodblocks was a highlight for me, and the printing demonstrations. It was great, if a bit overwhelming, to examine so many books as well. Our trip to D.C. was amazing.
11. Seeing the books.
12. Looking at books and learning from RG's extensive personal experience with early scientific books.

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

1. I think that having more required readings that modeled the type of looking he wanted us to do would have better prepared people for the discussions we had.
2. As a colleague in the course suggested, perhaps pairing students for the presentations would have been useful. For the presentations, I'd also suggest assigning everyone to books available in Charlottesville early on in the week—I realize that for some of the books we would not yet have discussed the appropriate vocabulary, technology, &c., but this would simply allow students to develop that understanding by thinking about a specific book over the course of the week. I'd also suggest keeping material that would be extensively discussed over the week (Vesalius, Fuchs, Galileo, Hooke, &c.) off the presentation list. For rare book

- library visits, I'd suggest either fewer books or more time. We all wanted more time!
3. Sometimes less is more—I'm thinking of the books in SC here—more time spent with each book, and perhaps groups of three people, instead of pairs, to get more expertise in each group. I'm in favor of adding two- to three-sentence annotations to the books in the bibliography (not the individual copies, but just general info about the topic, language, and so on). Nothing that would derail discovery though.
 4. I think a couple of short exercises that required us to employ some of the information we were acquiring would be very useful.
 5. Annotations/context for the books we examined. Three minutes per book does not give one very much time to analyze, especially when many times the books were not in English. I would have liked more time for looking at the books for our student presentations. Partnering up for the presentations might be interesting as well—even if each person gave separate presentations, talking with colleagues great for thinking about the image in a new way.
 6. Maybe the “speed-dating,” rotating book inspections could be coupled with more extended time to consider a single book more closely—but don't get rid of the speed runs, as they prompt a very active form of engagement with the texts!
 7. I was a bit heartbroken with the time spent in class on descriptive bibliography, since RG's work is already required reading, AND there is another RBS course on that topic, so this was a disappointing use of time for the several of us already well versed in it. I personally found the letterpress demonstration a repeat, but I assume others got more out of it. Perhaps a brief survey could be distributed to admitted students in advance, so the instructor has a better sense of who has which kinds of preparation? This would leave more time for discussion!
 8. By the end of the week I think everyone felt a little exhausted—perhaps there's some way of making the Wednesday field trip less epic? (I realize this might not be possible because of traffic during rush hours).
 9. As we discussed after the field trip, a little background information about the sources we would be seeing would be helpful. I felt that I spent too much time thumbing through the sources which was great in itself—but I often felt like I was missing something that everyone else knew to flip to. Maybe provide a “Be sure not to miss: the flea, the louse, &c.” so as to inform those less familiar with the texts about their importance.
 10. We saw an intaglio demonstration, but I would have liked a woodblock one. I also would have liked the letterpress demonstration to include a hands-on component as the intaglio one did.
 11. The assignment could be done in teams.
 12. It might be useful to focus by genre or subject to specify and understand the differences and similarities of artistic conventions and visual language in each.
- 8) *Did you learn what the course description/advertisement indicated you would learn?*
1. Yes, the course provided a great overview of the field as well as in-depth examinations of particular books that allowed us to explore the questions raised by looking at illustrated scientific books.
 2. Yes, in the senses that 1) I have a much more rigorous grasp of the material processes and structures associated with the production of early book illustrations, 2) I think I am now better able to express my thinking about scientific illustrations

- to folks coming from different disciplinary backgrounds than my own, and 3) I feel like the class has contributed to the formation of an intellectual community that will impact my work for years to come.
3. I learned far more than what the description promised.
 4. I learned much, MUCH more than I ever thought I would learn, though not all of it was related to the course description.
 5. For the most part, yes. I would have liked more of this: “Students will practice relief and intaglio image making and printing.” It was mostly demonstration, not actual practice.
 6. Yes, plus a lot more.
 7. Yes! The exception was the session spent on economic issues, which wound up feeling peripheral (and again, wasn’t advertised as part of the course).
 8. Yes.
 9. Yes.
 10. Yes, to a point, but as I have written above, the balance of topics wasn’t quite what I had hoped for.
 11. Yes.
 12. Yes.

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

1. This course will directly benefit both my research and my teaching in terms of my exposure to a huge amount of materials and our discussions of methodology when approaching illustrated scientific books.
2. I intend to use what I learned in the course to pursue my scholarly interests and to move forward on a set of projects that would have been far more difficult to attempt without the course.
3. I’ll integrate a number of sources into the book manuscripts I’m working on now, but the conceptual discussions will, I think, reorient what my arguments will be. And all the essays by other participants, including RG and CDM, will immediately become foundations in essays that I’ve hatched this week. I’ve made plans for at least three new essays during the course sessions. Who knows what else will come into being as I process the fruits of the course in the coming weeks, months, years.
4. As mentioned above, I will share this information with colleagues and use it with classes, both when I am presenting particular books that we discussed as well as when I am sharing different works.
5. Talking with my colleagues about how they use these works shifts my understanding of the work that I do to help facilitate that process.
6. I’ll use this material both in my research and teaching; the conversations we had in this course have prompted me to think about a whole new direction of research that the skills I gain at RBS will allow me to head in. I also now have ideas about how to make use of the materials at my own institution for both, so it will be a great opportunity to build relationships with librarians there.
7. It will be *invaluable* in my teaching and in several research projects.
8. I’m finishing up my dissertation research this August, and it will definitely inform how I pursue those loose ends!
9. This course equipped me with the skills necessary to engage with images in scientific texts in ways that historians often shy away from. I repeatedly wrote notes to myself throughout the course about sources I want to engage with in the

- future (or sources I have looked at in the past and am now anxious to return to). One of my dissertation chapters heavily relies on natural histories and travel narratives, and the knowledge and skills that I learned in this class will inform my analysis.
10. My syntactical skills in this area have greatly improved via this course, and my master's thesis will certainly be better as a result. In a more general sense, I expect I will be applying this knowledge in encounters with rare books for years to come.
 11. I just wanted a better understanding of the rare books I work with, many of which have illustrations.
 12. For responding to researcher queries, and for my own research and analysis of illustrations in the books that I study.

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

1. While we saw a dizzying array of books on our field trip and I (at times) resented the three-minute timer, I greatly appreciated the amount of material we were able to see and handle.
2. Yes! Absolutely! I only wish that RBS courses were two weeks long and that we had been able to spend even more time in the rare books libraries we visited. I intend to return to them soon.
3. Absolutely. The opportunity to work with the materials at Cullman and Dibner was crucial for the course development, and now I know about collections and fellowships that I had no sense of previously. And it was also fun.
4. The trips to Cullen and Dibner were a highlight of the course, and the bus trip back and forth was an opportunity for the class to bond even further.
5. Very well spent—the bus was a bit small.
6. Absolutely, and the logistics were handled perfectly.
7. Yes. It was a delight. I personally would have preferred to look at *fewer* books in greater depth, in order to leave more time for reflection and discussion.
8. Yes.
9. Yes! I loved the visits to the libraries in D.C.
10. Yes—our DC trip was well-planned and incorporated an enormous number of books.
11. Yes. The trip to the Smithsonian was exhausting, but worth it. I felt very privileged to be there.
12. Yes, we had a chance to look at many, many books.

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

1. Yes, both lectures were very interesting and thought provoking.
2. Yes—both events (and all three lectures) were fantastic.
3. Yes, lectures were great and I loved hearing the work of my colleagues, especially those early in their careers. Nick, Paul, and Ben were great to listen to.
4. The lectures were great and I always love having a chance to visit certain booksellers for this special evening.
5. Yes—loved BOTH lectures! Both relevant and interesting.

6. The lectures were all great, very accessible to a broad audience, but also quite specifically clear about interventions that can be made in the future for parallel cases.
 7. Great lectures! We were on a field trip Wednesday.
 8. Absolutely—the Galileo talks were the highlight of the week for me.
 9. Yes! Great lecture.
 10. Yes. The lectures were fantastic.
 11. Yes.
 12. Yes. The lectures (Pauley, Needham, and Wilding) were excellent, fascinating.
- 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. N/A.
 2. None.
 3. I thought the handling was excellent, both in the classroom and in SC. I was quite impressed.
 4. Care was taken with the handling of the books—thanks to everyone who pulled and displayed so many books for us to see (even when we were only given three minutes!!).
 5. {No response—RBS staff}
 6. None.
 7. No concerns.
 8. N/A.
 9. {No response—RBS staff}
 10. It was well handled overall. I was a bit shocked that we used plates from the RBS collection to print in our demonstration, but I have no idea of the history of those plates.
 11. N/A.
 12. Classroom use was minimal and fine. I was surprised to see that despite the RBS guidelines for supporting open books, the SC displays were often awkwardly and inadequately supported. {Sketched illustration of two books supported by foam wedges, one “in RBS guidelines” and the other “as displayed in Small Lib.”—RBS staff}
- 13) *Did you (or your institution) get your money's worth? Would you recommend this course to others?*
1. Yes, and definitely.
 2. The course was definitely worth the money (provided by my institution). As for recommending the course to others, I certainly will do so. I will note that for people who cannot secure institutional funding, the cost is very high.
 3. Some things cannot be quantified economically. I would not only recommend this course—I would try to force people to go if I could.
 4. Yes, my institution definitely got its money's worth, and I would not hesitate to recommend this course to anyone working with illustrated scientific texts in a range of disciplines.

5. ABSOLUTELY. My colleagues reminded me why I do the work that I do and re-energized me to get back to it tomorrow.
6. Yes, and definitely yes!
7. Good God, yes.
8. Yes
9. Absolutely.
10. Yes, especially those with a more theoretical interest in the subject.
11. Yes. Yes.
12. Yes, absolutely.

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

1. I think this course was a great introduction to the type of work that is being done at RBS, as it covered elements of descriptive and analytical bibliography as well as content specific problems. This was a great introduction to the topic, and another course that addressed further issues/problems in the field would be a great addition to the roster.
2. I strongly recommend that RG and CDM offer an advanced seminar in the topic, where folks who have taken the initial class or have an equivalent background can pursue the field in even greater depth. As for students considering the course, my only advice would be to keep in mind that the course is an intense engagement with a topic in some ways more content specific than many of the other RBS courses. Applicants should have a lively interest in exploring issues with images and their connection to the history of science and/or the history of the book.
3. There should be a course in Advanced (or problems and issues in?) Illustrated Scientific Book, taught by the same faculty.
4. This was a stellar experience on so many levels. I made great connections that I will carry forth. I would love to see a advanced course in special issues in scientific illustration.
5. Advanced issues in illustration? (Some ideas: hands-on bibliographic description, additional analysis re images in relation to text, &c.)
6. Right now I'm pretty overwhelmed with this fantastic experience, but I will be sure to write with any further suggestions as I think of them. Thanks to all for a phenomenal learning experience.
7. We want more!! Let's have a course in Advanced Illustrated Scientific Book to 1800! Or theories/issues/problems in scientific book illustration!
8. {No response—RBS staff}
9. {No response—RBS staff}
10. Overall the tone of my class was more academic/hyper-intellectual than I expected, but I think it had a lot to do with the disciplines represented by my classmates. The RBS environment is friendly and open, and I felt welcome as a first-timer, if a bit out of my depth!
11. N/A.
12. {No response—RBS staff}

Aggregate Statistics

Number of respondents: 12

Leave

Institution gave me leave: 4 (33.33%)

N/A: student, retired, or had summers off: 7 (58.33%)

Other ("My part-time job has flexibility about time off."): 1 (8.33%)

Tuition

Institution paid tuition: 6 (50%)

Student paid tuition: 1 (8.33%)

Fellowship from RBS (RBS-UVA 1; RBS-Mellon 4): 5 (41.67%)

Housing

Institution paid housing: 5 (41.67%)

Student paid housing: 1 (8.33%)

Fellowship from RBS: 4 (33.33%)

N/A: stayed with friends or lived at home: 2 (16.67%)

Travel

Institution paid travel: 5 (41.67%)

I paid my own travel: 1 (8.33%)

Fellowship from RBS: 4 (33.33%)

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: 1 (8.33%)

Conservator/binder/preservation librarian: 1 (8.33%)

Ph.D. student (humanities): 2 (16.67%)

Dual MA/MLIS degree student: 1 (8.33%)

Rare book librarian: 2 (16.67%)

Assistant professor (college): 2 (16.67%)

Full or associate professor (college): 1 (8.33%)

Assistant professor (university): 1 (8.33%)

Full or associate professor (university): 1 (8.33%)