

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 great. I appreciated that MW gave us a fairly light reading list that allowed me time to review the suggested readings and to explore additional sections in the books. *A History of the Book in America* is a great resource. I will probably buy other volumes based on my experience with Volumes 3 and 4.
 2. I read chapters from Volume 3 of *A History of the Book in America*, but not Volume 4. Volume 3 definitely prepped me for quickly understanding the material, but I don't know that it was entirely necessary; I think I could have done with just MW's lecture. However, I had also done research in this time period before, so I was already familiar with a lot of what he was talking about. We didn't get to twentieth-century material until Friday, and I didn't feel out of the loop for not having read from Volume 4.
 3. Very useful. There was not a huge amount of pre-reading, so I was able to use the recommended reading for the basic overview and was also able to explore the aspects that interested me most.
 4. *A History of the Book in America* was useful, and should be required—the course should proceed from the assumption that one has read those recommended chapters.
 5. The pre-course readings were excellent. I am especially happy to be exposed to the *History of the Book in America* series. It was pushing it for me to get the required—and some suggested—readings done, so I didn't do any additional preparations in advance.
 6. Pre-course readings are essential. Those selections for this particular class were both necessary and helpful for preparations to the subjects covered, and for discussions held during the course.
 7. The readings gave a great general overview to the time period and all of the topics that would be covered more in-depth during the week. I found the *History of the Book in America* series particularly helpful because you could scan the table of contents for additional material that was of personal interest. Also, the introductions gave wonderful information to help contextualize the period, and provided excellent bibliographies.
 8. The pre-course readings were very helpful, especially if one did not have any prior knowledge of book history. I came to the course with some prior knowledge, but still found that the readings offered an appropriate refresher.
 9. Pre-course readings were incredibly helpful. I had a limited knowledge of bibliographical studies in general prior to this course, and looking over the required, as well as suggested, readings was essential. Everything I read came up at least once in class.
 10. Enjoyed the readings. There could have been more.

11. Great preparation. Make sure you read *all* of the required, and as much as possible of the recommended, readings. Without a prior class, though, Bowers will be overwhelming.
 12. *Very useful.*
 13. Useful, but not necessary. Could be more purposeful to read *after* MW's lectures.
 14. Useful and relevant. I did not.
- 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. No materials were distributed.
 2. We had no course workbook. MW did provide us with a wonderful selected bibliography, as well as a list of YouTube videos demonstrating the more technical book-related processes. I'm very much looking forward to watching those. These will be go-to materials for future research in this period, for sure!
 3. The bibliography and the list of online videos related to book production will be very useful, and I expect to consult both.
 4. N/A.
 5. This class did not have many distributed materials, but I did not miss them.
 6. There was no course workbook.
 7. The supplemental bibliography and list of links to online videos (which explain various techniques for a number of book-making processes) was useful for further investigation, and if a particular topic was unclear.
 8. The materials distributed in class will be especially useful in the future, particularly the bibliography, which is full of useful resources pertaining to topics covered throughout the course.
 9. MW gave us a list of links to videos that was incredibly helpful. Diagrams and prose descriptions can only do so much to explain how a massive machine like a linotype works.
 10. Yes. Will use the list of videos, and will refer to the bibliography.
 11. I am sure I will refer to the extensive bibliography, and will also consult videos from the list given.
 12. Bibliography will be invaluable.
 13. N/A.
 14. Didn't have a workbook, exactly, but materials distributed were useful.
- 3) *Have you taken one or more RBS courses before? If so, how did this course compare with your previous coursework?*
1. Yes. I think this course was on par with the "Desbib" course—but obviously less intense.
 2. Yes. This experience was very, very different, because the courses were very different in terms of subject matter. Last year's was a hands-on, skills-acquisition course, while this one was historical. In terms of depth of material, however, and of coverage and pacing, they were very similar.
 3. Yes. This was the first of the history courses I've taken. It is less hands-on than others, meaning that you don't necessarily leave the course with a solid skill to practice. But I appreciated being able to learn about the many different angles one could use when researching materials of this era.

4. No, this is my very first course!
5. Yes.
6. Yes. The experiences were very similar.
7. No, this is my very first course!
8. No, this is my very first course!
9. No, this is my very first course!
10. Yes. James Green's class. These two classes work well together.
11. I have taken one previous class, and this one was just as stimulating and enlightening. Both classes have given me the groundwork for, and desire to continue, study on my own.
12. Yes—excellent as before.
13. N/A.
14. No.

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

1. I was especially interested in the sections on book distribution and publishing. I think it's difficult to understand the networks from reading alone, and MW laid things out very clearly for us.
2. I was interested in publisher-author relations, as well as in the actual technology involved in industrial book production. I'd have loved to have heard more about the twentieth century, also, because while I know a lot about the nineteenth-century book trade, I'm very unfamiliar with the twentieth century.
3. I very much appreciated the exercise of organizing all the different editions and printings. This provided an idea about how one could get started with a real life project to examine the print history of a given book. I finally understand stereotyping, and how plates were used, repaired, replaced, and transferred!
4. Anything and everything about the nineteenth century! So basically this entire class was of great interest to me.
5. As someone who selects a wide range of books for library special collections, I found all the content relevant and interesting.
6. MW proves bibliography is insufficient if it does not consider evidence beyond the book. Where he showed his success as a scholar working with the Ticknor and Field records within the Houghton Mifflin Company records at Harvard University, he demonstrated practical research skills that are most relevant to my purposes.
7. After the general groundwork was laid for the time period, I found our discussions of production, distribution, and readership extremely fruitful for my own personal research. MW is an incredible resource for these matters, and was able to answer virtually every question asked of him.
8. Portions of the course that covered authors' involvement in the publishing process were particularly helpful to me and my own research. Discussion of particular works and the examination of copies of those works in class will be useful in the future, as I am teaching and interacting with other members of the staff at my institution.
9. I am a scholar of twentieth- and twenty-first-century literature, so the more modern topics were more relevant. Mostly questions of distribution, copyright, publisher-author relationships, and so on. That said it was still very interesting

- learning the more technical things going on in book production in the mid-nineteenth century.
10. Manufacture of the book and materials.
 11. Really *all* aspects. If not of direct *practical* interest, they were of *theoretical* interest, essential to understanding the larger picture and to making meaningful connections between disciplines.
 12. All were of interest and relevant.
 13. Historical context regarding the production of books and MW's overview of book distribution—especially walk-throughs regarding his approach to publishers' archives.
 14. Explanation of printing processes, stereotypes, linotype, &c.
- 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. I would say that sometimes MW gave us some pretty basic information because he wanted to make sure we all had the same knowledge base (about things like collation and papermaking). I like review—I think it's important. I also liked that people in this class were coming from a lot of different backgrounds. But, I felt that some of the information that was not specific to the period could have been covered by making stronger recommendations for pre-course reading for people not familiar with book production or bibliography.
 2. Definitely. MW communicated a lot of information in a very brief period of time, but it still didn't feel like too much. The intellectual level was appropriate: I would describe it as a compressed introductory course to studying books in this time period.
 3. Yes.
 4. Absolutely. MW has such a vast amount of knowledge about publishing during this period, and he wanted to make sure that he covered info that we were interested in.
 5. Yes to both.
 6. For the most part, the instructor conveyed information in a forthcoming, welcoming manner. His idiosyncrasies are those of a fine scholar with a passion for his subject. The intellectual level of the course, however, could be more rigorous. This is no fault of the instructor, but rather of the uneven level of experience of those enrolled in the course.
 7. Yes; I learned a great deal in this course. Even though I had taken general introductions to descriptive bibliography and printmaking prior to this summer, there were several talks throughout the week that really opened my eyes to what was happening during the Industrial Era, especially when we were able to do in-class case studies and hands-on work.
 8. Yes. MW successfully conveyed the information I expected to acquire when I registered for this course and more! The intellectual level of the course was appropriate and was enhanced by the other students in the course, as well as by MW's extensive knowledge of the topics covered.
 9. Yes, definitely. Both in and outside of the classroom, MW gave knowledgeable answers and helped steer me in the right direction with future inquiries.
 10. Yes. A lot of information was covered.

11. Absolutely! It's hard to imagine a better outcome of the class. I learned more than I could have imagined was possible in one week. A truly marvelous experience.
12. Yes—very much so—intellectual level fine.
13. Yes I learned a lot. Intellectually, there could have been more integration of students' expertise, and more discussion of historiography.
14. Yes indeed. Yes, I feel it was.

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

1. Working with multiple copies of the books is an excellent way to illustrate the major issues of the course.
2. Learning about all the printing presses! So exciting! Also the Linotype and Monotype machines.
3. Again, the edition/printing exercise. I also liked hearing about the projects of my fellow students, which put this topic into some context. It was wonderful to see examples of publisher records and the kinds of things one might see in those archives.
4. MW—he's such a character! Knowledgeable, and generous with it.
5. The session on Whitman was a remarkable lesson in book editions, printings, and issues, as well as in providing insight into Whitman himself. This session was also good for illuminating material from earlier lectures related to such things as binding history.
6. The traditional explanation through evidence, the teaching collections employed by the instructor, and the clarity of the course as created with some intention by the instructor.
7. The in-class case studies and visits to SC were the most helpful to me. Being able to apply the information we learned to a real-life situation (i.e., organizing a series of books with nothing more than the physical information presented within them) was very illuminating.
8. The time period covered by this course fit almost exactly with the period of literature that I am interested in studying. Even the portion of the course that fell outside of my usual time period offered new insights into concepts that apply to book production throughout the nineteenth century in America.
9. We had two sessions in SC where we looked at two books as case studies in publication history. This was engaging and very interesting. These were both books with which MW was very familiar (particularly the Whitman), and his expertise made looking at these rare books a great experience. The daily organization was also good—having discussions in the morning and more hands-on things or case-studies in the afternoon. Very good to hear everyone's research interests on the first day as well, so we had these in mind as the week went on.
10. Seeing examples of printing plates, industrial-era books, Linotype movies. History of manufacture during this time period was very interesting.
11. One outstanding feature is the way the lab sessions work together with the lectures and the discussion part.
12. 1) SC day with Whitman editions—amazing talk—very inspirational. 2) References during lectures and discussions of potential sources (above and beyond the bibliography).
13. The discussion/demonstration of Whitman's authorial interventions into the publishing process.

14. The contextualization of the production of nineteenth- and twentieth-century books.

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

1. {No response—RBS staff}
2. I wish MW could have spent less time on basic, intro-level bibliographical analysis, like format. Even though we opened that discussion, I feel like valuable time was wasted doing that, while we could have been talking about other things. I also think that for the SC sessions, these would have worked better if MW hadn't needed to walk around the room showing each of us the materials each time there was something to see. This slowed down the pace of the session, and in the mid-afternoon when people were already starting to drag, the slower pace was sometimes difficult to handle in terms of alertness. My suggestion would be to have all the books on a long table in book cradles, then have us gather around and look at them while MW talked. Supervised by MW, the RBS follower, and the SC librarian, the materials would be well looked after, and we'd be up and moving around and more engaged. These were fascinating sessions, with lots of great materials to see and stories to hear from MW, but I need to be moving around this time of the day, or I fall asleep. The last thing is that MW is not very open to questions. He encourages questions, but only when he has finished talking about a subject, by which time our questions are no longer in context—or we've forgotten them.... More openness to spur-of-the-moment questions and discussion would have been helpful as far as engaging the students.
3. Because there was some variation in knowledge of some basic elements of early book production (such as how type is set), I might recommend stating that it will be assumed that students have this knowledge, and provide suggested resources if not already familiar. This could save some time in class. It wasn't too much of a problem, though. I would have loved to hear more about ideas for projects in this field and how one might get started.
4. I appreciate MW's interest in our projects, but we either needed less time to discuss them in class, or "office hours" when we could chat one on one.
5. The poor sound conditions in the room were a distraction and took considerable time to try to improve: a sound system should be added in the future.
6. The course could be improved by limiting the number of students to twelve, and by assigning a small project to undertake during the week. Whether this be a bibliographic or historical project, such an assignment may help bind the week together and create a sense of ownership in the students over the ideas learned during the many sessions.
7. Perhaps more open-ended discussion questions for the class to go over as a whole.
8. {No response—RBS staff}
9. More time in SC! More hands-on time with books and more clearly indicated Q&A times.
10. Discussion on the first day could have been shorter or moved to another day when we had more to say and ask. Parts of the day were rushed, other parts slow.
11. I cannot imagine a better way to teach this topic (or any topic!).
12. {No response—RBS staff}

13. More reading; more focus/discussion on readings. Perhaps more effort to involve students in course content. A week-long research project, as another student suggested, is one idea.
14. I think we could have had a bit more access to various materials.

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

1. Yes.
2. Yes.
3. Yes.
4. Absolutely.
5. Yes
6. Yes.
7. Absolutely! I feel extremely confident to discuss printing concerns during the Industrial Revolution, and have even picked up a number of helpful tools and tips for conducting my own research during this time period.
8. Yes, and more.
9. Yes.
10. Yes. Nice range of information.
11. Yes.
12. Yes.
13. Yes.
14. Yes.

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

1. I am hoping to use the information about publishing, distribution, and reading practices to better illuminate my library's local history collection for our patrons.
2. I'm planning on studying more early twentieth-century authors and materials, so what we learned about that time period will definitely come in handy.
3. Possibly an exhibit, working with student researchers, sharing knowledge with colleagues.
4. In both my research and my teaching.
5. Collection development and use of my institution's collection with researchers.
6. I intend to use the skills learned in outreach exercises and to convince my colleagues that books printed in the industrial age are of consequence if considered appropriately as evidence of their production.
7. I hope to use the information learned during this course throughout at least one of my dissertation chapters. I also hope to incorporate aspects of this course into a possible article and/or conference presentation.
8. I was inspired by our discussion of subscription books in this course, and I intend to look further into this topic on my own. Our extensive coverage of Whitman's work will be useful for my own instruction. When teaching classes on Whitman using special collections materials, I will be able to better explain Whitman's involvement in the publishing process through concrete examples.
9. Currently working on a project in SC—information I learned in class, as well as in conversation with MW, has given me new ideas on how best to approach my project and the collections themselves.
10. {No response—RBS staff}

11. Working with undergraduate students and faculty to integrate books, their publication, production, and distribution history into a whole variety of academic disciplines, from American studies, English, creative writing, to modern languages. I will also work on an exhibit on publishers' bindings.
12. Scholarship.
13. What I've learned about book production will provide new perspectives on studying history of communication, print culture, &c.
14. In cataloging relevant books.

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

1. We visited the SC twice. I think these sessions were great—I liked getting out of the classroom. MW's lectures were really strong in these sections, but I wish we'd been able to be more active during them. (After lunch is the sleepy hour for many people.)
2. Yes, except see my comment in Q7, above, about the SC sessions.
3. Time in SC was wonderful, and absolutely worthwhile.
4. Mostly. The trips to SC were interesting, but I preferred the more interactive, hands-on workshops that we did in our classroom.
5. The time at SC was great.
6. Very well spent. Our trips to SC were not onerous, and our instructor was respectful of staff there.
7. When we went to SC, our sessions were always very informative and helpful in illustrating the topic of the day within the confines of a specific case study.
8. The time we spent in SC was very well spent. The experience of looking at materials there could not have been replaced by digital copies or facsimiles.
9. N/A.
10. SC, yes.
11. Yes! We made two visits to SC, and they were extremely interesting.
12. Very well-spent time in SC.
13. Yes. Sessions in SC were excellent demonstrations of content covered during lectures.
14. Yes—SC was very helpful.

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

1. I didn't attend Movie Night because I was too lazy to go back after a ninety-minute break. I might have gone if it had started at 5:30 p.m., like the lectures.
2. All the lectures were fabulous, as has been my experience with the other RBS lectures. Booksellers' Night was also wonderful; book time plus time reveling with bookish people is always a great thing!
3. Pretty interesting topics, and Movie Night was on a topic directly relevant to our class.
4. Scott Casper's lecture was really interesting, and he's an engaging speaker. I did not prefer Monday's lecture because it was more of a show-and-tell.
5. {No response—RBS staff}
6. The lectures were excellent. They provided fresh perspective from a cutting edge collector and an accomplished scholar. They infused the week with a real

- seriousness, and were highlights of the session. Video Night is a great way for students who are not in the same course to meet one another. I did feel a bit guilty about not buying any books at Booksellers' Night, but do hope that RBS can somehow maintain only the best relations with all booksellers in the Virginia community.
7. I found the lectures very stimulating and helpful, especially Scott Casper's talk, as I look to the job market and hope to teach some aspects of book history in the future.
 8. The Wednesday night lecture was especially helpful because it gave me ideas for my own teaching. The linotype video at Video Night was interesting and enjoyable.
 9. Yes! Video Night and Booksellers' Night were great opportunities to do fun things with other RBS-ers, and the lectures were informative, while also introducing me to new topics or fields of study.
 10. Yes.
 11. Yes. The evening events are definitely worth attending, even if they fall outside your area of interest. It's a great way to learn something new, and adds to the immersion character of the week.
 12. Yes.
 13. Yes.
 14. 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. {No response—RBS staff}
 2. ...It might be a good idea to have one of the RBS staff go over handling of materials at the beginning of each course with both the faculty and students present. Standards of careful handling may not be the same for everyone, and we should all be on the same page—ha-ha.
 3. Maybe a twenty-minute "handling materials" lesson after tour or before first class for people who don't already have experience in this area?
 4. I have no suggestions.
 5. Our teacher was extremely careful and watchful. He did not hesitate to instruct students in handling materials. I can't think of any better ideas.
 6. RBS may be overly concerned about the physical well-being of the UVA SC collections. To fix this, try to work more collaboratively with SC staff who are, after all, our colleagues. Classroom handling of RBS teaching collections was as expected and perfectly safe. Perhaps there was too much of it—and not enough time to really inspect each item.
 7. N/A.
 8. I was concerned about the way materials were being handled at several points throughout the week. I think it would be helpful if instructors covered proper handling procedures on the first day of class.
 9. N/A
 10. Handling seemed fine.
 11. {No response—RBS staff}

12. Perhaps a brief overview, ten to fifteen minutes, at orientation on handling of materials—how and why—in addition to reminders about hand washing.
13. Things went fine as far as I can tell. The objects in the RBS collection are meant to be handled.
14. Everything was handled circumspectly and all precautions observed; I cannot think of any.

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

1. Yes—I'm happy I took this course.
2. I would definitely recommend the course to a scholar planning to study books in this time period, but lacking experience doing so. Great preparation for doing this research!
3. Absolutely.
4. Absolutely.
5. Yes.
6. Yes.
7. Absolutely!!! I would strongly encourage others to attend RBS courses in the future!
8. I do feel that I got my money's worth, and yes, I would recommend this course to others.
9. Yes, and yes.
10. Yes!
11. Absolutely! I have done nothing but rave about last summer's class, and will do so again for this course.
12. Yes. Definitely.
13. Yes, to the right person.
14. Yes I did. Yes I would.

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

1. {No response—RBS staff}
2. {No response—RBS staff}
3. My recommendation for future students is to do the basic reading, explore your own area of interest, and come with questions that you would like addressed. The course (at least as was taught this year) had many opportunities to address individual topics/areas.
4. It was an amazing week—enjoyed myself inside and outside the classroom!
5. {No response—RBS staff}
6. RBS is wonderful, and it need only keep up its already high standards and preserve all worthwhile longstanding traditions. It is exciting to watch it become more a part of the UVA campus and organization. Perhaps, RBS should seek to be “RBS @ UVA,” and not merely RBS as a stand alone unit. Regarding this particular course, I think it would be appropriate to allow MW to devise a new class as he expressed his desire to do so on a number of occasions during the week. “The American Book in the Industrial Era, 1820-1940” could be improved by allowing MW to teach another course. After all, he has taught this course many

- times, and is not bringing to it as much energy as he might bring to a new course, for example, on “Researching Publishers Records.”
7. I would strongly recommend these courses to graduate students who come from fields outside of the normal English or Library Science programs that are commonly associated with history of the book or book studies courses—the information learned is applicable to ALL fields and very eye opening.
 8. This is a wonderful course, both for those individuals who are interested in the Industrial Era in America and also for those who are interested in book history in general.
 9. If you know plenty about rare books, this is the place to learn more and meet like-minded people. If you know nothing, this is the place to start! Hopefully I’ll be able to come back soon.
 10. It was a great class. MW is one of a kind.
 11. If you do your reading as required and recommended, you will have the best educational experience possible. I cannot recommend RBS classes highly enough.
 12. From the course, I gained a valuable overview *and also* specific information from the teacher, which will save me many steps in pursuing my research. I always enjoy learning from others outside the classroom during break discussions or over meals.
 13. It was a good week, and I learned a lot.
 14. Most enjoyable week. I hope to attend again. Thanks to all!

Aggregate Statistics

Number of respondents: 14

Leave

Institution gave me leave: 7 (50%)

I took vacation time or unpaid leave: 1 (7.14%)

N/A: student, retired, or had summers off: 6 (42.86%)

Tuition

Institution paid tuition: 6 (42.86%)

Student paid tuition: 2 (14.29%)

Exchange or barter: 1 (7.14%)

Scholarship from RBS (Director’s 2, unspecified 1): 3 (21.43%)

Fellowship from RBS (RBS-UVA 2): 2 (14.29%)

Housing

Institution paid housing: 6 (42.86%)

I paid for my own housing: 4 (28.57%)

Scholarship from RBS: 1 (7.14%)

N/A: stayed with friends or lived at home: 3 (21.43%)

Travel

Institution paid travel: 5 (35.71%)

I paid my own travel: 6 (42.86%)

Scholarship from RBS: 1 (7.14%)

N/A: I had only local travel expenses: 2 (14.29%)

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

Archivist: 3 (21.43%)
Cataloguer: 1 (7.14%)
Conservator/binder/preservation librarian: 1 (7.14%)
M.L.I.S. student: 1 (7.14%)
Ph.D. student (humanities): 3 (21.43%)
Librarian with some rare book duties: 1 (7.14%)
Library/University Administrator: 1 (7.14%)
Rare book librarian: 1 (7.14%)
Work in a museum or cultural institution: 1 (7.14%)
Other (Scholar/writer): 1 (7.14%)