

Todd Pattison
B-75v: American Publishers' Bookbindings, 1800-1900
12–16 June, Online Only

Narrative Course Evaluations

1) *Were the pre-course reading assignments useful? Are there any readings that you would like to see added or removed in future years?*

1. All very useful!
2. Yes, they were very useful! I think watching TP's lecture, "Adhered-Boards Construction and the Transition to Case Binding" (RBS) would have been worth the time as well.
3. Yes, the prep was useful!
4. Good, helpful.
5. {private response}
6. {no response}
7. Yes, the pre-course readings provided helpful context/background for the topic, especially if you are not already familiar with publishing history or binding terms.
8. I thought they were all very useful and not too overwhelming. I appreciate that the readings were broken up by required and recommended so that I could prioritize my time in preparation for the course.
9. The reading assignments were very useful.
10. Perhaps pre-course reading could be tailored to a few topics of interest (e.g., early bindings, book designers, bindery labor, &c.).

2) *What are your thoughts on the course workbook and/or other teaching materials distributed during class? Was the content appropriate and useful? Will it continue to be useful for you after the course?*

1. All appropriate, useful, and very interesting! I always learn so much and walk away saying how full my brain feels!
2. Everything is very useful. I didn't look at the workbook much during the class, but I can return to it and I'm sure it will come in handy when I need a refresher. I took a ton of my own notes. The material samples are great to have on hand too.
3. Very thorough and helpful.
4. Helpful and informative.
5. {private response}
6. {no response}
7. Many resources, offered by the instructor and others, will be great to reference moving

forward.

8. Oh my gosh ... I think the course book and the bibliography that TP has compiled will be an invaluable resource to me in the future. It was worth the tuition just to have access to that!
9. The course workbook was extremely helpful, and provides an abbreviated view of the lecture. I expect to refer to it often in the future.
10. Greatly appreciated the workbook for use after the course. Would also love to have a handout to use during the lectures to follow along.

3) *Which aspects of the course were most intriguing and relevant for you as an individual? Did you walk away with any new insights, ideas, or project plans?*

1. I knew almost nothing about American publishers' bindings and feel like I am now much better informed because of this class!
2. I have a much deeper understanding of the intricacies of binding styles of this era and was introduced to things that I never had the time to sit down and study before. I also love that TP challenged us to reconsider historic scholarship on the subject and reconsider its accuracy. The emphasis on the labor of women was also very compelling to me, as women did so much but remained nameless for so long.
3. I study British and Irish books so I took this course to balance out what I'm learning for my Ph.D. TP's approach is so organized and well thought out that I feel I learned more in this course than in any other I've attended so far. He kept apologizing for having so many slides but they were amazing and so helpful to see examples of all he covered. I came to the course intrigued by the cross-Atlantic children's book trade (I focus on works by Maria Edgeworth and she was printed in America frequently, TP even showed us a book of hers), but after this course I feel inclined to dive into this in relation to the late nineteenth-century cover design and gift editions for children. Authors like Edgeworth, who were considered passé were being reprinted in editions designed to attract parents, grandparents &c.; banking on a nostalgic 'classics' market. I'm interested in TP's concluding "full circle" idea, and how that trend may have traveled to or from America, and what the exchange of ideas might have been.
4. History and comparison, examples. I feel more comfortable looking at bindings and including the information in local records
5. {private response}
6. {no response}
7. It was most relevant to me to understand the general history and development of publishers' bindings throughout the century. Learning about specific publishers and/or binders was excellent. Walking away with helpful terminology as well.
8. This course has totally changed the way I look at nineteenth-century books. As a conservator I was most interested in structure, manufacture, and materials. This course opened my eyes to how much binding history taught in conservation programs is

lacking and/or misrepresenting the nineteenth century. I cannot wait to survey my collection with fresh eyes and knowledge from this course.

9. While I'm more familiar with the binding structure and conservation of publishers' bindings, I found the lectures about the organization and finances of the publishing industry to be most interesting. The division of labor within these large binderies and how mechanization affected the labor force was also very intriguing to me.
10. Loved the last day discussing designers for more personal interest. Discussions on early bindings were very interesting and made me better appreciate and reconsider this period.

4) *Did the instructors help you to acquire all the skills and information promised in the course description? Did you learn what you had hoped to learn?*

1. I learned everything promised and more!
2. Yes!
3. I feel so much better able to identify structural features of books, I learned so much.
4. Yes, in person would provide a more hands on experience with specimens.
5. {private response}
6. Yes and more.
7. Yes, tons of actionable information and resources!
8. Yes and then some. I think I came in with a very narrow view of what constitutes an American publishers' binding, which was quickly blown to bits. And what I came in most interested to learn about ended up being just a drop in the ocean compared to the rest of the information I walked away with.
9. Absolutely!
10. Yes.

5) *How do you plan to use the skills and knowledge acquired during your time here?*

1. I will use this knowledge in my professional and private work, both.
2. My approach to working with these bindings will be much more sensitive and inquisitive going forward. When I describe them I can go into much more detail. When I teach people how to repair them, I will have much more context to add.
3. Everything TP covered relates to my book history research in some way. Plus the basic instruction on book building was clearly presented and invaluable.
4. In description of items in our collections.
5. {private response}
6. {no response}
7. For identification and accurate description of bindings.
8. I first want to start surveying our collection for these types of bindings and working with our curators to catalog them better. I would love to help spread awareness and

appreciation for this period in book history and advocate for the preservation.

9. I will have more of the necessary historical context to appreciate and treat books from the nineteenth century, particularly the earlier transitional structures.
10. Better identify, describe, and date nineteenth-century bindings.

6) *Who might benefit the most from taking this RBS course?*

1. Anyone and everyone interested in books, design, conservation, librarianship, cataloging, and collecting.
2. Catalogers, conservators, rare book sellers, librarians, book artists, bookbinders, and publishers.
3. Book historians, special collections librarians, collectors, academics, bibliophiles, &c.
4. People in special collections or anyone interested in books and their history and development
5. {private response}
6. {no response}
7. Anyone with an interest in learning about the development of publishers' bindings of this period.
8. I think catalogers and conservators have the most to gain from this class. But I think anyone with an interest in the nineteenth-century binding industry and book collecting will love this class.
9. Anyone with an interest in collecting nineteenth-century bindings, their history and conservation, or nineteenth century material culture in general (tools, machinery, &c.) would benefit from taking this course.
10. Library professionals (especially cataloguers) and anyone with an interest in better understanding the construction and context of nineteenth-century American publishers' bindings.

7) *If applicable, what were the most powerful, or otherwise noteworthy educational moments in the course? Were there any "aha!" moments you'd like to share?*

1. The changes in binding design reflected social changes and economics of the time. I studied Sociology and Economics as a college student, and this was such interesting information to me.
2. Not all books that look like typical case bindings are really case bindings and you shouldn't assume anything—this course really confirmed that we should not judge a book by its cover! While not surprising, the abuse of women in the industry was staggering. They were treated as less worthy than machines and got paid nothing for it—I did not expect to have such an interesting gender study during the course of the week and I really appreciated it.
3. {no response}

4. Learning what to look for in bindings and book construction to aid in description.
5. {private response}
6. {no response}
7. Looking at books on our physical shelves throughout the week, I was able to identify characteristics that I previously would have missed—an immediate improvement in my ability to understand the items in our collection!
8. TP has done a wonderful job of taking a difficult online platform and making it accessible through the use of tons and tons of visual examples. I think some of the most important discussions we had and revisited over the course of the week was how to define an American publisher's binding. And TP continued to provide examples that might alter or contradict a definition we came up with. It was a really good exercise.
9. While I'm familiar with the adhered boards structure, TP had plenty of examples and explanations to illustrate why this particular structure can be confused with case binding. I feel more confident now when examining a binding to determine which might be these earlier structures.
10. Learning how women were a significant labor force in binderies during this period—fascinating.

8) *Are there any other ways in which the course could have been improved?*

1. No, it was 100% perfect!
2. The only improvement would be to have it in person again! I really missed that aspect of the course.
3. {no response}
4. {no response}
5. N/A—I only wish I could meet everyone in person.
6. {no response}
7. {private response}
8. {no response}
9. While I appreciate the instructor and staff making themselves available for evening seminar style sessions, my work schedule and commute made it difficult for me to attend them. I would have preferred an additional day of class and an hour to ask questions at the end of each session.
10. I would love more links to videos as pre-course materials.

9) *Do you feel that you got your money's worth? How likely are you to recommend this course to others? **On a 1–10 scale**, 1 would indicate that you disagree that you got your money's worth, 5 would indicate a neutral response, and 10 would indicate that you agree that you got your money's worth.*

1. 10

2. 10
3. 6
4. 9
5. 10
6. 10
7. 10
8. 10
9. 9
10. 10

10) *If your course made any (virtual) field trips outside of the classroom or had guest speakers, do you feel that they enhance the course experience?*

1. N/A
2. N/A
3. {no response}
4. {no response}
5. N/A
6. {no response}
7. N/A
8. N/A
9. N/A
10. N/A

11) *Do you have any additional thoughts or advice for anyone considering taking this course in a future year?*

1. Take it and learn as much as you can! It's a fantastic course!
2. Just that they should take it!
3. {no response}
4. {no response}
5. {private response}
6. {no response}
7. Virtual courses depend a lot on the engagement of the people taking them. Participate, ask questions, go to the after class happy hours, bring physical examples of things you have questions about or want to share—you'll get more out if you put something in.
8. I was unable to attend any of the evening discussion portions and wish I had been able to do so! I do not think I missed out on any major bits of information but it would have been nice to visit with classmates and TP in a more informal manner. So I would recommend that people make the effort to attend those sessions.
9. {no response}

10. {no response}

12) *If you had to sum up your RBS experience with a single sentence, phrase, or a haiku, what would you say?*

1. TP rocks! / His class is eye-opening! / Choc-late chip cookies!
2. After completing an RBS course, I always feel my reason for being in the library field is rejuvenated. These courses give me energy and inspiration. I always feel like this is truly where I belong!
3. Expertise is sound / But the School is expensive / Happy medium?
4. It was terrific!
5. Enjoyable, informative, inspiring!
6. Excellent.
7. A blissful deluge.
8. Not so fugitive / These lovely little bindings. / Publishers be proud.
9. {no response}
10. {no response}