

David Pearson
C-90: Provenance: Tracing Owners & Collections
4-9 June, Charlottesville, Virginia

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. The reading assignments for this course are strictly optional—I would even go so far as to recommend that you don't do them OR do them in lieu of the course because the course is strictly foundational material.
2. {private response}
3. Excellent readings and reference works.
4. I did not do all of the readings, but it was useful to have the list and to understand the type of knowledge expected of students when participating in this class.
5. There were no real pre-course readings. I did purchase some of the advanced reading texts, but they were not needed for class.
6. Yes, though they were a bit obscure and I was not able to get all of them before RBS started.
7. Yes—I should have read them more thoroughly.
8. The readings were excellent, appropriate, and good resources for me even after the class is over.
9. I did not complete the pre-reading, but did not feel left behind and the instructor made it clear after the fact that this was not a problem.
10. {private response}
11. DP's revised edition is excellent. I strongly advise reading it before the course. Other readings play a supporting role.
12. DP's book was useful, the others less so.

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. The workbook's content was useful and will be a helpful take-home resource.
2. The course workbook is a great resource, and I'll keep it on hand for reference.
3. All the materials we received were useful and I see myself referring to them in the future.
4. The course book was great and all the handouts were useful. I can definitely see myself referring to the workbook in the future, even if my work in terms of description of rare

books is limited.

5. Excellent workbook. It will absolutely be useful to me in the future and I plan to keep it on my reference shelf and make copies for colleagues.
6. The workbook is really great. One of the best/most useful course handouts I've ever used.
7. Excellent, useful, appropriate and will continue to be so. Won't be able to blazon items without them.
8. The course handbook is very good—I appreciate all the work DP put into it, and I am grateful for the bibliographies he included.
9. I think all the materials were helpful and will serve as useful reference material going forward.
10. I loved the course workbook and found all additional material appropriate and useful. I will continue to use it in the future.
11. Good course workbook, especially for the illustrations. The workbook contents were invaluable for use in the exercises.
12. The workbook was helpful and the exercises engaging.

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. The in-class exercises were helpful, the lectures less so. I walked away with ideas and project plans because of the conversations I had with my classmates and the guest lecture, not so much because of the class.
2. The paleography and heraldry workshops were very thorough and quite fun!
3. Heraldry! There should be a course taught on this subject.
4. I think in general the idea that provenance is a process, that research needs to be conducted and that in most cases, you will be working on 75-90% certainty that you arrived at the right information or answer.
5. It just really helped me with some nitty gritty education I had never received before. Learning some basics of paleography, heraldry, bookplates, bindings, &c., will help me every day in my work, and gives me a new appreciation for books in my library's collection.
6. The heraldry unit was very useful, as was the bookplates discussion. Great to have a list of key reference sources for all sorts of provenance research.
7. Project plans: look at a lot of books with newly sharpened eyes.
8. The lectures were very good. DP knows his field very well. The paleography and bookplate portions will be particularly useful to me in my own work.
9. I was most intrigued by the discussion on cataloging and the sessions on heraldry and binding and am aflame with interest in incorporating the former into my skill set, and the latter two into my personal interests.
10. The paleography and heraldry were the most intriguing. I plan to apply it to my

research.

11. Heraldry, paleography. Came away with an idea for doing some comparative provenance research.
12. Heraldry was fun but paleography perhaps more relevant.

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. For the most part.
2. {no response}
3. Very much so! DP was very insightful and the course was comprehensive with practical exercises.
4. Yes. I took this course in order to assist the UCLA library in its drafting of a Provenance Policy. While the focus of this class was on fourteenth- to eighteenth-century books, it has given me an idea of how to include practical information on the policy in regards to how to go about conducting provenance related research.
5. Yes! DP was a fabulous instructor. He was always happy to answer our questions in an in-depth way, and wasn't afraid to admit when he just didn't know the answer. Extremely knowledgeable and unpretentious.
6. Yes. Yes, and more.
7. Yes/yes. Genuine skills. Not to mention good theory.
8. Absolutely—the class goes above and beyond what I even expected. While I realized we might learn the generalities of bookplate and heraldry study, I had no idea we would actually be skilled at interpretation of bookplates, styles, and coats of arms. I learned more than I expected.
9. I believe that my goals in the course (familiarity with book owner identification and usage patterns) were met. I would have liked to see more on tracing the make of book (tracing printers, binders, &c.) but I realize that this was outside the scope of the course.
10. Yes, yes.
11. Yes! I wanted an introduction to provenance and am satisfied that I received it.
12. Yes.

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

1. At work (researching book provenance).
2. {no response}
3. I plan to use the knowledge I obtained here in my research and work.
4. I plan to use it to help shape the creation of UCLA's Provenance Policy and personally, whenever I work with rare books in our collection and in the backlog.

5. I plan to use it to better understand and interpret my library's collections.
6. I expect it will be useful on an almost daily basis at my job.
7. In continuing curation and expansion of my collection. In bibliographical talk.
8. This class relates directly to my job cataloging and bibliographical description.
9. By improving my ability to research the background of books that I either own or hope to work with.
10. I plan to use them in my research.
11. Future research.
12. {private response}

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

1. Beginners.
2. Professionals new to the fields of book history and bibliography will find this course very informative.
3. Everyone working with rare books.
4. Anyone interested in provenance research.
5. Rare book librarians who like to tell stories, rare book dealers and collectors, really anyone interested in book history and how books have been used throughout time.
6. Rare book librarians and curators, book collectors, sellers, and appraisers.
7. Anyone who engages with books.
8. Catalogers, curators, collectors.
9. Cataloguers, rare book collectors, rare book librarians, Anglophiles, fans of the history of book collecting.
10. Anyone with a serious interest in researching books as material culture.
11. Professional librarians and advanced collections.
12. Ph.D. students, beginners to bibliography, collectors.

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 heraldry unit was excellent and challenging.
2. {no response}
3. The heraldry exercises.
4. I think it was most useful to listen to and participate in discussions with both the instructor and other students.
5. No real "aha!" moment, but I did have too much fun learning about heraldry!
6. The periodization of bookplates is probably the most useful new thing I learned. I also learned some things about paleography I didn't know before.
7. The simple recognition that all evidence needs to be considered together. Respect for ambiguity and lack of evidence as valuable in themselves.

8. Learning to read sixteenth- to eighteenth-century handwriting a little better; understanding British vernacular that helps decipher inscriptions.
9. The heraldry and book plates moments were wonderful and I adored them.
10. The heraldry section of the course was incredibly helpful.
11. "Aha's!": The sheer difficulty of conclusive provenance research. We see through a glass darkly.
12. {no response}

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

1. More in-class exercises.
2. {private response}
3. {private response}
4. While I do not think it would be easy to expand the scope of what we look at, it would be nice to see rare books from outside of Europe, if only to compare briefly or to be aware of the different types of approaches you would need to do provenance research for them.
5. Non-Western content would be nice, but that could be its own class.
6. I doubt it.
7. {no response}
8. I really doubt it. I have faith that DP knows best and his class was efficient and packed full every day.
9. I think the professor sometimes front-loaded a lot of information at once, which made it hard to follow at times, but I know they have to cover a lot in a very short time. Still, I wonder if a deeper dive into some elements, especially evidence of "book use" would be helpful.
10. I found this course to be perfect. Maybe more time on heraldry, and more expansion into the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.
11. No.
12. {no response}

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

6. 10
7. 10
8. 10
9. 9
10. 10
11. 10
12. 7

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. The trip to SC did not enhance my course experience because we were not permitted to handle the books. The guest speaker (Leah Price) was the best part of my visit to RBS.
2. {no response}
3. Yes, the field trip to SC complemented the course well.
4. N/A
5. Yes.
6. N/A
7. Yes. {private response}
8. Went to SC—saw some very interesting items, SC staff were helpful and accommodating.
9. The SC visit was good, if very limited in interaction.
10. The trip to SC enhanced the course experience.
11. {no response}
12. N/A

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

1. {no response}
2. {no response}
3. Highly recommended!
4. Ask lots of questions!
5. It's a lot of fun! Take advantage of DP's immense knowledge—he is incredibly kind and happy to help.
6. What you learn is more broadly useful than just provenance research.
7. {no response}
8. Don't hesitate! You only get so many opportunities to learn from true masters like DP.
9. Shower DP with gifts and gratitude because he is a gem and a marvel and deserves only the best. Also, get extra sleep because his voice is soothing.
10. Come into this course with a practical application of the material already in mind.

11. {no response}
12. It's an introduction to the area, so great if you want to learn the basics/foundations.

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

1. Great place to make connections and friends.
2. {no response}
3. A book nerd's paradise.
4. It was fun to be immersed in all the nerdy stuff for a week.
5. Lovely old books, but / The people who owned them, gone / Like tears in the rain.
6. {no response}
7. A multi-generational feast of observation and discourse.
8. Bob's your uncle!! :)
9. Tiring and busy but rewarding.
10. It was the most gratifying intense class on books I could ever conceive of.
11. DP is a genuine pleasure to learn from.
12. {no response}