

Karen Limper-Herz
B-10: Introduction to the History of Bookbinding
31 July – 5 August in Charlottesville, VA

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 pre-readings seemed helpful. Though I did not complete all of the suggested reading.
2. {no response}
3. {private response}
4. {private response}
5. {private response}
6. {private response}
7. The readings I was able to get to before the course were helpful, some of the other readings I skimmed, but I can see how they will be much more useful now that the course has provided a base of knowledge.
8. The pre-course reading materials were very useful preparation for the course and will serve as an excellent bibliography on the subject going forward.
9. {no response}
10. Yes, I read through two of the books on the bibliography and that helped me immensely with the terminology used in class.
11. The readings for the course were excellent. I have already acquired several of them for my personal reference collection and hope to acquire more, availability and finances permitting.
12. {no response}

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. I would have liked to have a workbook or a handout with binding terms (especially the French ones).
2. Very little was distributed but it was useful.
3. {private response}
4. {private response} KLH was lovely and I appreciated her well-illustrated lectures.
5. {private response}
6. Yes, the reference list in particular will be useful for future bindings I encounter. It's a well-rounded guide for research and reference.
7. The materials distributed during class were appropriate and will certainly continue to be of use.
8. There was not a course workbook but the names of online resources (and URLs) were

provided for consultation outside of class. The list will undoubtedly be useful after the course.

9. I thought the PowerPoint slides were great and visual. They were appropriate and useful for the course.
10. There was no workbook per se, only a few checklist handouts. All content was appropriate and the checklist for description will be very useful in the days to come.
11. There was no course workbook, though there were handouts on describing bindings and a bibliography distributed afterwards. Both will prove useful; I've transcribed the handout along with my personal notes from the course and plan to use it to structure future descriptions of bindings.
12. {no response}

3) *How do you plan to use the skills and knowledge acquired during your RBS course? Did you walk away with any "aha!" moments, new ideas, or project plans?*

1. I can now much more confidently recognize bindings and can't wait to spend more time with the bindings at my own institution.
2. I can apply what I learned to my job.
3. I am very excited to use my new knowledge of the history of bookbinding in my novel about the nineteenth-century rare bookbinding trade. I had so many creative "aha!" moments.
4. {private response}
5. {private response}
6. {private response}
7. I have begun formulating an exhibit for the future. The next of things I was exposed to will be great for talking with our users about our special collections.
8. The course gave me added inspiration to practice and learn more about historical bookbinding techniques, and in addition to applying the knowledge, I will be much more cognizant of binding decoration on both early and modern books. I would like to incorporate the knowledge into my teaching someday.
9. I plan to use the knowledge I learned in the course in my primary course instruction on the use of rare books. Most students look at the content/text of the book but I would like to teach them to look at the book as an artifact in my instruction as well as using their five senses when evaluating primary sources.
10. I had already planned on giving training and presentations to our library staff. Many of the junior staff are new to rare book cataloging and it will be great to feel while training them that I have had the intensive education needed to do so properly.
11. I intend to identify examples of particular binding styles discussed in the class to improve the cataloging metadata for materials in our collection. I have also started to incorporate elements of the class into my teaching, especially the conservative tendencies of German binders. We do not have many examples of medieval bindings in our collection, but we *do* have many early modern German bindings that can be used as examples of what some medieval bindings would have looked like. I'm similarly using some limp vellum bindings on nineteenth-century books as a way to show what the medieval bindings might have looked like when they were newer.

Finally, the binding demonstration has rekindled my personal interest in hobby bookbinding and I am trying out new styles.

12. {no response}

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. Yes, KLH was incredibly knowledgeable and I learned more than I could have hoped!
2. I learned more than I hoped to learn.
3. I totally learned what I hoped to learn. {private response}
4. I think the course content matched the description accurately. It ended up being more interesting than I had expected although I would have preferred learning about the (social) history and doing less description. It would have been really helpful to have keywords on PowerPoint slides - we kept having to ask how to spell things like "tawed" "doublure" &c.
5. {private response}
6. Yes! I now feel confident in my ability to identify, describe, and research bindings for personal research and for my institution.
7. Yes, the instruction was excellent and provided more than I expected.
8. Yes, I feel that the course taught what it promised. I expected more of an emphasis on binding structures and less on decoration, but only so much material can be taught in one week! I am content with the content and very much enjoyed the demos and hands-on activities.
9. Yes, I did learn what I had hoped for and I found the hands-on activities helpful in understanding the content.
10. Yes to both questions.
11. Yes. I think I have a much stronger grasp of the history of (fine) bindings and a clearer understanding of some of the terms I have encountered in the literature.
12. {no response}

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

1. I would have liked to spend slightly less time looking at PowerPoint slides and a bit more handling materials. But we did handle many materials and the afternoon museums: always a complete joy. In general the course was absolutely perfect!
2. Handouts would have been helpful.
3. {private response}
4. {private response}
5. {private response}
6. {private response}
7. A few more hands-on practical exercises would be nice.
8. It would be nice to have even more of the historical binding styles available in person, but then the course would need to be taught at an institution like the British Library, or BnF. The photos and the physical examples we had available were certainly sufficient.
9. I enjoyed the hands-on activities. Maybe a bit more of that in looking at the actual books more

closely as a group to increase participation.

10. The instructor went through a lot of material very quickly. While I believe she did so rightly (I wouldn't want to miss any of it) I think a terminology list would have been helpful. I couldn't always hear properly the terms used, and had to look them up later, but I knew some others were lost/confused.
11. It might be useful to have a session where students examine a set of bindings from the same country but spaced out over several centuries so we could see the evolution of designs (right now, the class mostly groups materials by period and the variations are by country), but that might be less of an "improvement" and more of an alternate way of doing the same work. I thought the class was excellent.
12. {no response}

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

1. Anyone interested in bindings.
2. Special collections librarians, curators, catalogers, anyone with an interest in the history of books.
3. Arts-minded people, catalogers.
4. Booksellers, conservators, and those who work with bound materials regularly, or a scholar studying the specific topic.
5. {private response}
6. Anyone wanting to learn more about how to understand bindings. Learning terminology, description, and binding history across centuries and countries, as well as hands-on work with bindings, built my confidence working and describing.
7. Anyone who works with special collections or is interested in bookbinding.
8. I think that conservators, librarians, book historians, and aspiring bookbinders would benefit most from this course, but anyone with an interest in book structure and design would surely benefit.
9. Catalogers, special collections librarians, archivists, M.L.I.S. students.
10. Catalogers and anyone who writes social media content describing library materials to the public. Metadata staff and anyone who touches or displays our bibliographical records to the public.
11. A librarian or collector who already has a grounding in how books are bound and/or has seen a lot of bindings already even if they lack the terminology for it. {private response}
12. {no response}

7) *Do you feel that you got your money's worth? Would you recommend the course to others?*

1. Yes!! 100% recommend!
2. I would highly recommend this course.
3. Yes, it was excellent value for money as you can't get this expertise anywhere else, and in such compact, intense form.
4. {private response}

5. {private response}
6. Yes and yes! I already have!
7. I would 100% recommend the course.
8. Undoubtedly, and I would recommend this course to anyone interested in the history of the book as a material object and especially those interested in the history of book decoration.
9. Yes, I would recommend this course to others. In fact, I already have to one of my colleagues.
10. Yes, indeed. I would.
11. Absolutely.
12. {no response}

8) *If your course made any trips outside of the classroom, do you feel that they were time well spent?*

1. Yes, SC and the binding demonstration by Amanda Nelson were fantastic and informative.
2. The trip to SC was time well spent.
3. {private response} The time was effectively spent and often flew by.
4. N/A
5. {private response}
6. Visiting SC to view specific books discussed in class earlier in the day was incredibly helpful. Getting hands-on experience with tooling certainly helped me appreciate the detailed work much more and was a fun experience with classmates!
7. The visit to UVA SC was excellent and really solidified a lot of what was being taught.
8. We made a trip to SC, which was time very well spent because we were able to examine binding designs and decorations that we had seen in photos and also trace their development over the centuries. The course was much richer for it.
9. {no response}
10. Yes.
11. Absolutely.
12. {no response}

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

1. You won't regret it.
2. {no response}
3. KLH is a wonderful expert teacher with a wealth of knowledge to impart.
4. Be prepared to look at a lot of bindings and describe them, in addition to getting an overview of the history.
5. {private response}
6. {no response}
7. If it sounds interesting, take the course.
8. I would recommend that someone considering the course do as much of the preparatory reading as possible because several centuries' worth of material is covered and it is a lot of information to absorb in a single week. Nevertheless, I highly recommend it!

9. {no response}
10. Do read at least two of the books on the bibliography beforehand: it truly helped!!
11. If you haven't experimented with bookbinding yourself, maybe skim Jane Greenfield's "ABC of Bookbinding" or another reference work with illustrations of different binding techniques.
12. {no response}

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

1. A week well spent.
2. Great course, excellent instructor. I liked the combination of lecture and hands-on activities.
3. "Gold tooling bindings, / And gauffering fore-edges / I love RBS"
4. You get out of it what you put in.
5. "Continuation and change"
6. "Delightful challenge / Learning with brilliant people / Hope I can come back"
7. RBS is always a joy.
8. The experience was richer than gold.
9. My experience was great. I learned what I wanted from the course and had a welcoming experience.
10. Summer well spent!
11. There's nothing quite so exciting as learning to look at something you thought you knew with newly trained eyes.
12. {no response}