

Michael Winship
H-50: The American Book in the Industrial Era, 1820–1940
24 – 29 July 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. Yes!
2. Readings were appropriate in content and length.
3. Yes–no.
4. The readings were helpful, but there was nothing discussed in them that wasn't covered in class—I feel I could have not done the readings and it wouldn't have made a difference.
5. They were useful background and I will refer to them in the future but I did not need to read the material. It wasn't referenced in the course.
6. Yes. The reading suggestions were exciting and informative.
7. I found them useful.
8. Yes, the chapters from the "History of the Book in America" were good preparation for the course.
9. I found vol.3 more useful than vol.4.

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. Yes, the bibliography and videos are super helpful. I can see myself frequently referring to them in the future as I continue developing as a scholar and teacher.
2. The MW bibliography for the course is very comprehensive and will be helpful. The video list is also a winner.
3. Content was appropriate and very useful. I will make use of the materials in my future research and teaching.
4. The only thing we received was a bibliography which I believe will be helpful.
5. Having online resources was far better than a printed workbook—they could be updated and is was easier to consult.
6. Workbooks are for kindergarten—we did not have one.
7. The teaching material distributed was fairly limited (which was kind of nice), but what we had was helpful, especially for future reference.
8. Imposition handouts were helpful too.
9. I'm looking forward to exploring the video list.

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 plan to build on the knowledge acquired at RBS as I prepare to work on my dissertation. This class helped spark a lot of different ideas on the directions in which my dissertation could go, and it also led to some cool "aha!" moments for side projects and for future courses.
2. The course helped me to place nineteenth-century books in the proper context—in relation to other publications (magazines and newspapers) and to other cultural works.
3. Yes, I had a couple of "aha!" moments particularly in terms of knowledge gained about publishing practices—and publisher archives.
4. No, not at all. Only left with more questions that I am unsure how to answer.
5. I will use this in a paper or early modernist distribution. Understanding production processes and market structures gave me a better knowledge of how certain books happened in the way they did.
6. I certainly have a good list of books I want to read.
7. Yes! There were several moments that gave very helpful insights for future research.
8. Yes, the course has given me new ideas for how to teach with nineteenth-century American books, especially Walt Whitman.
9. I'm excited to think about what further teaching tools I could add to our collection. I'm also excited to dive into our collections and look for examples of what we explored in class.

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 was hoping to gain a general understanding about American book culture from 1820 to 1940. This course more than provided that knowledge for 1820-1900 but not so much for past 1900. MW did a great job of explaining publishing techniques in simple-to-understand terms, and we had a great discussion about copyright practices.
2. The instructor was very knowledgeable about nineteenth-century literary publishing and industrialization. The romp through "Uncle Tom's Cabin" was fully engaging.
3. Yes, and yes!
4. No. I don't think we learned more than could have been learned in the readings.
5. It was very focused on 1840 - 1900 and I hoped to get more about 1900 - 1940.
6. I know how to examine a book with much more understanding.
7. The first few days weren't as advanced as I expected, but the last few made up for it.
8. The instructor is incredibly knowledgeable, basically an institution in the field. I have a much better sense of how the American book trade differs from the British trade in the nineteenth century.
9. Yes.

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

1. I wanted more interactive discussions with my peers, more hands-on activities in the classroom, and more opportunities to handle and observe the books produced in that period. I confess that while some of the instructor's lectures were engaging, others were not, and I wish

that the instructor had also been more cognizant of time.

2. Move coverage of nonliterary publishing examples (e.g. music, government, and religious publishing).
3. I would have liked to have worked a little more with archives/manuscripts. Perhaps RBS could invest in such material?
4. The professor could have developed even the most rudimentary of outlines. There was no structure at all. Also, we barely touched any books!
5. Much of the course was long lectures and this was hard to follow/concentrate on after a time. Breaking it up with practical exercises may have helped.
6. It would not be possible to improve MW. More help with organizing the instructional material would be useful to him.
7. It would have been nice to handle more books/see more examples in class.
8. I would've liked more hands-on time with some of the books. The lectures were good, but the course is very lecture heavy.
9. I think having our hands-on session after lunch would help break up the lectures more and lead to perhaps better end of the day engagement.

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

1. Students who are not very familiar with nineteenth-century American books.
2. Bibliographers, archivists, and librarians. Ph.D. students and scholars.
3. Scholars and teachers of American literature.
4. People who had never seen or touched a nineteenth-century American book before.
5. Most people interested in the period would benefit—I think Ph.D./M.A. students especially.
6. {no response}
7. Americanists with limited foundations in bibliography/book history.
8. Doctoral students and faculty in American literature. Curators in American history/literature.
9. As a librarian, I found it useful to cement and grow my printing knowledge for this era.

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

1. Yes (though see Q5) and I don't know.
2. Yes, and yes I would recommend this course to others, including those who are new to the study of book history.
3. Yes, I got my money's worth!
4. No. If I knew what this class was really about I would have used my scholarship for a different one.
5. It is hard to know because I was here on a scholarship.
6. Indeed! Forsooth!
7. Yes.
8. Yes, it's expensive, but worth it!
9. Yes and yes.

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

1. Yes; I appreciated both visits to SC. {private response}
2. Yes, both of the trips to UVA SC were useful to see Whitman and Cather's works in multiple editions and issues.
3. Yes, the trips to SC allowed me to understand more fully how to look at a rare book and a first edition.
4. The two trips to SC were informative, but only the second one was well organized.
5. The visits to SC were useful but took a long time. There could have been more practical activities.
6. The visits to SC were invaluable!
7. Yes, but the first SC visit was a bit too long—a session of context in advance and then a single period spent in SC would have maybe have been paced better.
8. Visits to SC enhanced the lectures. I would've liked more time to view some of these materials.
9. Yes, if possible and not a burden, it would have been nice to browse the books after MA showed them to us.

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

1. {private response}
2. MW is a delightful raconteur and presents the material in an accessible way. I would take another course by MW.
3. Come with a project idea rather than just take the course for general knowledge.
4. If you already have a general understanding of the book in America don't take this class.
5. {no response}
6. {no response}
7. I think it helped to have a specific project/question in mind—the course is pretty broad, but having something specific in mind helps focus it.
8. Great experience. Get your application in early!
9. I wish I had a better knowledge of American literature, but that was not a barrier to my understanding of the course material.

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

1. Highs and lows, but overall worth it.
2. Read / Books / Synthesize
3. Informative and rich.
4. I think I learned something this week, but I'm not 100% sure that I needed to put in the time and energy to come to UVA to do it. Disappointing second RBS class.
5. I can just about remember / What a haiku is. / Where is the bar?
6. This was a very valuable experience.
7. New technologies tend to supplement, not replace.

8. Really cool, especially in SC.
9. An intense, but enjoyable week.