

Narrative Evaluations

- 1) *Do you have any practical suggestions for improvements to RBS's online logistics?*
 1. The instructor had insufficient experience with Zoom and other technologies, which interfered with quality delivery of the course.
 2. It was great.
 3. Logistics were excellent and it was great to have an RBS staff member full time in the course to assist with any technical challenges, URLs, etc.
 4. Zoom is great, but instructors need to know how to use Zoom for it to be effective. The instructor for my course had never taught on Zoom before and often complained about its functionalities instead of trying to figure out how to use it properly.
 5. {no response}
 6. I really appreciated being able to take the class online. Nina did a spectacular job getting links to us, managing the Zoom classroom and generally making the course incredibly easy to follow online. Michael hadn't done a Zoom class before, but he did great and I didn't have any issues with online logistics at all.
 7. I think the logistics were well planned and served their purpose well.
 8. Professor Winship seemed to have some difficulty with the online platforms, so I would suggest some kind of tutorials for faculty.
 9. Having a staff member there for logistics was crucial. We used both Google Drive and Dropbox, the former for working documents and the latter for more permanent things. This was needlessly confusing. One or the other would be best.
 10. I absolutely loved Gathertown! Different screen sizes and variable wifi speeds made it very difficult to read screenshared documents. I know not all document images can be shared due to copyright restrictions, but it would be helpful if instructors chose files which could be shared so I can open the file on my own computer and follow along.

- 2) *How would you describe your encounters with RBS staff?*
 1. Fine.
 2. They have been super friendly and helpful and very knowledgeable.
 3. Excellent!
 4. Positive. They were very helpful. Nina was fantastic.
 5. Nina was always a helpful presence, both to the course participants and the instructor.
 6. Without exception everyone was incredibly kind, patient, generous and knowledgeable.
 7. Excellent. Nina was wonderfully supportive.
 8. Excellent! Everyone, especially Nina as aide, was very helpful.
 9. Helpful.

10. I interacted with Nina Thomas, Neal Curtis, and Donna Sy, all of whom were kind, patient, and enthusiastic! Nina in particular was the administrator for my course, and she was very patient and helpful with my technical issues and did a great job of keeping us organized and on-track. Thank you Nina!

3) *If you attended any of our optional evening events, do you feel that they were a good use of your time? Were there any that were particularly important to your RBS experience?*

1. No, I didn't attend.
2. Yes. The lecture and the evening networking events are wonderful.
3. Unfortunately, due to the remote format, I was not able to attend evening events this year.
4. N/A - didn't attend.
5. {no response}
6. I missed the in-person bookseller's nights and wasn't able to attend some of the lectures, though they looked fascinating and I wish I had been able to do so.
7. I could not attend because of time constraints.
8. I unfortunately did not have time to attend the evening events.
9. Unlike, I imagine, when everyone is in the same place, the evening and weekend events are hard to attend since I have a young kid.
10. I very much appreciated the orientation to adjust to Gathertown.

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

1. {deleted response}
2. Yes they were all useful. I thought that we would talk some more about theoretical implications of bookkeeping like in the Kafka and Zakim articles but I don't think we discussed those super extensively.
3. The pre-course readings were on topic and very useful for background information. If anything, I would recommend assigning more readings.
4. {deleted response}
5. {no response}
6. Yes, I really enjoyed the pre-course assignments. As a librarian, I'm always thinking about literacy, but hadn't really considered additional forms, such as literacy in regard to paperwork, literacy in regard to numbers, literacy in regard to bookkeeping and so on. To see how this information can also be used to tell more holistic stories and histories was really fascinating.
7. The pre-course assignments were exactly what was needed to understand the course. It was clear that they were chosen very carefully.
8. They were useful, however I was only able to read the three online articles as the additional recommended readings are out of print? or else not digitized and expensive/hard to find without institutional access.
9. The optional readings were useful and I'll refer back to them in the future.
10. Yes, I feel that I learned a lot from the advance readings. They were the most useful part of the class. However, telling us to peruse the (expensive) 5-volume

set of /The History of the Book in America/ wasn't especially useful. Recommending at least a particular volume or perhaps specific chapters would have been more useful.

5) *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. {deleted response}
2. They were all useful and detailed, and I think they will come in handy in the future.
3. Both the subjects discussed in the lectures and the guides to the field and additional bibliographical resources will be extremely useful going forward.
4. {deleted response}
5. The financial ledger exercise was accessible to someone (like myself) with no experience in accounting.
6. Yes, we received a number of useful handouts for the class, as well as a copious amount of material for future use/research. I anticipate the research materials will be valuable long after the class. The other students in the class were also very generous with sharing resources, links and research strategies, which were incredibly useful.
7. The teaching materials were excellent. Very thorough and useful. I have already employed some of the information in my research.
8. It was great to see and work with actual documents. The resources Professor Winship put together are also useful, especially for future reference.
9. The materials are and will continue to be useful. Some are materials I had seen before and others are ones I hadn't.
10. I'm not sure I understood the full utility of the accounts posting exercise. I think it would have been interesting to do it together as a group or with Michael Winship. However, Michael didn't really seem to know or understand the answers any more than we did so it was a very frustrating exercise to spend all night posting the accounts just to watch MW think out loud through each account, apparently for the first time, only to come to the wrong conclusion, check the answer key, and realize our accounts were right to begin with. He had no clear or consistent answers for most of our questions about the accounts. The publisher's exercise was fine, but I'm not really sure I needed a \$1,000 RBS course to have a publishing house suggested to me and then report on it myself (as MW said, "without guidance"). I did like hearing others' reports.

6) *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. {deleted response}
2. I think I might use what I learned about researching publishers and their archives in future research work, albeit in a slightly indirect way. It provides useful context for different projects. I became interested in publishing history and the

role of publishers in the literary world through this class, and I hope to investigate the role of publishers in different print genres in an earlier period.

3. The tools and resources acquired during this course will be put to immediate use in research projects (articles and book) and in assisting students in interpreting and using publishers' archives.
 4. {deleted response}
 5. {no response}
 6. I found a number of things that I learned could be incorporated into the classes I teach, as well as inform and expand collection policies at my institution. Reading acquisition and financial records my library amassed during the early 20th century makes a lot more sense and I'm looking forward to being able to tease out those stories from the records.
 7. I believe Professor Winship's class has made a very important impact in the way I approach my research. His enthusiasm and vast knowledge were evident from the beginning. He truly cares about the subject, he knows it better than anyone and he is not afraid to involve his students in practical exercises for a better understanding. His thoroughness opened my eyes to new facets of book history. It also gave me new tools to approach difficult inquiry points. It was great to have the possibility to learn from him.
 8. Learning double-entry bookkeeping in this course will be invaluable for if/when I encounter those entries in records during research, and I learned new places for where to look up information about books I may be researching. I certainly had "aha" moments while figuring the double-entry bookkeeping out, as it was somewhat tricky. As someone who writes currently writes reader's reports for publishers, it was a marvelous surprise to see reader's reports in the archives we looked at and realize that that practice has been such a longstanding part of publishers' operating practices. Otherwise it was just useful to have a sense of the history of the publishers we looked at.
 9. {deleted response}
 10. Not particularly. I asked several specific questions regarding my work and MW mostly suggested I should take his other course to learn about it. I learned many interesting citations from other students in the chat. I did learn some interesting things about the interactions among the various craftspeople in the printing and publishing world. I was, however, looking to learn about revenue, manuscript selection, popularity, and prestige, and didn't really get my questions answered. MW has a tendency to respond to questions he doesn't quite know the answer to by explaining how he thinks they're not important topics. I remain interested in my questions and received excellent recommendations for books on the topic from other students.
- 7) *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. {no response}
 2. Yes. I thought there might be more attention to different periods of American history, which we didn't touch on extensively (mostly looked at publishers'

archives in 19th). It was great to hear about classmates' work and put those into conversation with what we were learning.

3. Yes.
4. {deleted response}
5. I had never before been able to read, let alone understand, publishers' records but in just a few days I find I can make much more sense of them. There's a syntax and system to what seems, at first, incomprehensible and this course certainly made me feel more confident about attempting to decode them.
6. Yes, and then some. Much of what I learned were things I was not aware of before the course, so there is a rich field to explore. I hoped it would expand my understanding of potential resources and it definitely did that. It also broadened my understanding of publishing in general--it's always wonderful to focus on an author's ability or a book that you love, but to understand publishing as a business and how it intersects with the art was really interesting.
7. Yes to all. In fact, I did not expect to learn so much. Professor Winship exceeded my expectations. The fact that he devoted his time to office hours was truly kind and helpful. I could not have asked for more as a student
8. I would say broadly so, yes. I can't say there's anything I was hoping we would cover that we didn't, but it also felt like we only touched the surface in many regards, especially from a historical context perspective (Professor Winship mentioned repeatedly that some of that information was in a different course). There were times when I would get excited about the subject, such as author contracts, for example, and then what we ended up talking about wasn't very insightful--we just read through random examples, which were pretty straightforward. That said, Professor Winship provided ample opportunities for us students to ask questions and steer the course content. Looking back at the course description, I'd say it's extremely accurate.
9. {deleted response}
10. I suppose we did learn about the book trade, a good amount about creation and production, very little about distribution. Reception, which is my main interest, was not addressed although I did ask. We spent a lot of time on double-entry bookkeeping and I did learn some things.

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

1. {deleted response}
2. Perhaps more discussions of implications of bookkeeping practices for literary theory.
3. None that come to mind.
4. {deleted response}
5. The course is more worth doing than not, but I suspect it would have been immeasurably livelier in-person.
6. These courses always go so quickly, but we covered so much that at the end of the week I am not sure I could keep going without a rest. I can't think of any improvements.

7. My only suggestion is, perhaps, a bit of scheduled time for socializing with other students. Gather.town is helpful.
 8. The course was a little disorganized. It didn't seem like Professor Winship was always familiar with the contents of the records he shared, and/or that he knew what he wanted to say about them. He tended to ramble anecdotally, and while interesting, it made it hard to pull out the important information sometimes, and made it feel like we weren't using class time effectively. I think it would have been more helpful for us to walk through creating a few ledger entries together, instead of Professor Winship explaining the theory and then having us try it on our own, because I realized when we got to the answers that I had misunderstood more than I thought, and again that was class time that could have been better spent if we had figured it out in the first place. I think clearer communication about exercises and expectations would also have been helpful. It was extremely frustrating to learn on the first day that we had a substantial amount of homework (bookkeeping exercise and a team research project/presentation), when I had not prepared to commit that time outside of class. (This homework was mentioned in the course description, but I had not looked at that since applying five months ago.) The expectations for this work were vague at the outset (were we supposed to submit responses? Were we giving an oral presentation, or a powerpoint...?) and weren't elaborated on until the last minute.
 9. {deleted response}
 10. I learned far more from Melissa Homestead than from the course. She ought to teach. Michael Winship should not make jokes about the phrase "people of color."
- 9) *Who might benefit the most from taking this RBS course?*
1. {no response}
 2. People interested in American book history and archival research on books, anyone who thinks the topic of publishers might be a helpful or interesting angle into their research, as well as anyone who is interested in this topic generally. Gives a good overview of critical discussion on role and work of publishers in American history (in particular mid/late 19th century).
 3. Professors, graduate students, librarians, and archivist seeking a greater understanding of the publishing trade and records for Book History scholarship.
 4. {no response}
 5. Graduate students who think they can't understand numerical (or non-literary) records.
 6. Anyone that is looking to understand the role bookkeeping and financial concerns affect publishers and consequently their business. Also, people that don't really think the numbers/financial side has anything to do with publishing will be amazed at how untrue that is. It's also just a really interesting class, so perhaps it would be good for anyone that wants to know more about publishing, especially in the 19th century.
 7. In my experience, any researcher looking to improve his or her approach to primary sources.

8. Someone who is actively researching (with) publishers' archives, especially their financial records, and/or someone who is responsible for cataloging/maintaining them--I would almost say, probably not anyone else.
9. {no response}
10. Librarians and collectors, I imagine, who are searching for specific volumes.

10) *Do you feel that you got your money's worth?*

1. {deleted response}
2. yes.
3. Yes, Rare Book School is a steal.
4. {no response}
5. {no response}
6. Certainly, yes.
7. Yes, I do. Most certainly.
8. Yes
9. {no response}
10. I'm sorry, no, I do not. I don't blame RBS, but I'm now skeptical of my previous plan to pursue a Certificate.

11) *On a scale of 1–10 with 10 being most likely, how likely are you to recommend this course to others?*

1. 0
2. 6
3. 10
4. 6
5. 7
6. 10
7. 10
8. 7
9. 1
10. 0

12) *If your course had any virtual field trips or guest speakers, do you feel that they were time well spent?*

1. {no response}
2. n/a
3. Not applicable.
4. {no response}
5. {no response}
6. We didn't have any of those.
7. N/A
8. N/A
9. {no response}
10. I was interested in Gather.town initially but was frustrated at the end of the day and lost energy to participate.

13) *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. Begin researching in advance so that you can bring your project to the professor for guidance.
4. {no response}
5. Michael Winship has an encyclopedic knowledge of the field. He's often broadly digressive, but publishing history is just that complex and interrelated. Ask him questions about your own projects, or bring an archival document to class to get his input.
6. Take a look at the advance readings and look around in the online (or in person if you're able) publisher's archives that you can find. That will likely pique your interest to know more, and also give you many questions to bring to the class.
7. {no response}
8. Professor Winship is clearly an expert in this field and the go-to person if you need to work with this material. This is an extremely practical course.
9. {no response}
10. {no response}

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

1. {no response}
2. I love Gather.town!
3. Excellent, as always!
4. {no response}
5. {no response}
6. A lovely way to spend a week with people who are passionate about books, generous with knowledge and resources while taking a deep dive into 19th century publishing archives and financial records.
7. RBS gives you the tools for stellar research.
8. Surprisingly, no Zoom fatigue.
9. {no response}
10. This was demoralizing, and I wish I had spent my week on my own work. I'm really sorry to leave a negative thought when I know RBS staff is trying their best.

Student Data

Number of Respondents: 10 (of 11)

How did you arrange for time off to attend this course?

1. I am a student or non-year-round employee, with a more flexible schedule.
2. I am self-employed, and can arrange my own schedule.

3. My institution/employer gave me professional leave time.
4. I am a student or non-year-round employee, with a more flexible schedule.
5. I am a student or non-year-round employee, with a more flexible schedule.
6. My institution/employer gave me professional leave time.
7. I am self-employed, and can arrange my own schedule.
8. My situation does not fit any of the options above.
9. My institution/employer gave me professional leave time.
10. I am a student or non-year-round employee, with a more flexible schedule.

Who paid your RBS tuition costs?

1. I paid 100% of my tuition costs myself.
2. My institution/employer paid 100% of my tuition costs.
3. My institution/employer paid 100% of my tuition costs.
4. My institution/employer paid 100% of my tuition costs.
5. I used a scholarship/fellowship to pay/waive all of my tuition expenses.
6. My institution/employer paid 100% of my tuition costs.
7. I paid 100% of my tuition costs myself.
8. My institution/employer paid 100% of my tuition costs.
9. I used a scholarship/fellowship to pay/waive all of my tuition expenses.
10. I used a scholarship/fellowship to pay/waive all of my tuition expenses.

Not including this year, how many RBS courses have you attended?

1. This is my first course.
2. 1
3. 1
4. This is my first course.
5. This is my first course.
6. 3
7. This is my first course.
8. This is my first course.
9. This is my first course.
10. This is my first course.

Which of the following best describes your current occupation?

1. Professional educator: Full professor
2. Student working towards a/an: Ph.D./D.Phil.
3. Library discipline: Special collections librarian
4. Student working towards a/an: Ph.D./D.Phil.
5. Student working towards a/an: Ph.D./D.Phil.
6. Library discipline: Special collections librarian
7. Other Occupations/Vocations: Post-doctoral fellow/researcher/scholar
8. Book Trades: Publisher
9. Library discipline: Special collections librarian
10. Student working towards a/an: Ph.D./D.Phil.