

Erin C. Blake
I-10 The History of Printed Book Illustration in the West
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. Yes—although I'll admit I didn't get to them all. I preferred the ones that focused on major changes and themes over the ones that tended to list, this guy did this in that book specifically, &c.
2. Yes.
3. Yes. I will be able to use them in my work with prints and discussing print/illustration history with the community.
4. {private response}
5. The reading assignments were great, particularly the ones that covered techniques.
6. The pre-course readings were extremely helpful in building a foundation for the course.
7. Yes, very helpful. The primary text, Hartham, for this course was difficult to read as descriptions of illustrations did not pair well with reproductions in book, but provided a good foundation for the course.
8. The most useful reading was Ivins in my opinion given the close look and analysis for techniques. Otherwise I didn't find the readings that useful. I thought Hartham was overkill and redundant. Griffiths was equally informative.
9. I definitely found them useful, but not entirely necessary for understanding course content (they didn't hurt, though!).

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. Generally useful, yes, although I don't think I'll have much use for the citations of PowerPoint slides without images. Maybe a few "quick tips" for each technique/style would be useful in the future.
2. Really nice to have such a well-organized list of the books we were seeing. Would have helped perhaps to have a short text to read for the following class.
3. Yes, very useful.
4. The workbook provided useful bibliographical information for the works we discussed. Maybe it would have been useful to have a sheet with tips on how to identify illustration techniques and the time periods these were used in.
5. Absolutely! I particularly look forward to studying and using the exit reading list.
6. All teaching materials were crucial to the success and enjoyment of the course, especially when

our course revolved around printed images; being able to handle and look closely at images every day was very useful.

7. It was super helpful to have lists of books that were going to be discussed each day. I also appreciated the list of artists/woodcutter/engraver/&c. abbreviations used to sign prints as a handy guide to reference when looking at illustrations. Exit reading list is very useful.
8. Loved the course workbook. Really helpful to take notes and great for looking back at illustrations to study after RBS.
9. The workbook was great for book citations and following the daily schedule/course plan.

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 definitely appreciate illustrations more and will be taking a closer look when I come across them (and call out anyone who says an illustrator isn't an artist!). I hope this will help me better describe illustrations when cataloging social media, in exhibits, &c.
2. I feel I have a much better "panoramic" idea of the changes and continuities of illustrated books in the West—exactly what I needed. Many "aha!" moments. :)
3. I will use the information gained to help classify or categorize our print/book image collection. I will use the historical materials for discussing book illustration history with our docents and community. I would like to highlight children's books and the evolution of images in our from home collection.
4. I plan to use this information in my dissertation research. The course exposed me to a lot of later illustrated editions of early modern texts which I'm excited to research more.
5. I definitely have a greater appreciation for the books in my institution's collection. Details I would glance over or whose significance I didn't understand now appear as important trends in historical book culture, and I look forward to communicating this to my library users and may even embark on my own research project.
6. I learned more in this week-long class about printmaking technology and history than I have in many doctoral-level art history classes. The knowledge I gained from this class will be crucial to my dissertation and teaching.
7. I will (and already have) started to apply knowledge gained in this course to a research project. As the course has made me more competent in understanding visual references, I plan to incorporate more visual primary sources into my teaching.
8. I plan to use the knowledge learned in this course in my personal collecting. No "aha!" moments per se but was pleasantly surprised. I think a lot of my former writings can be expanded on with this info.
9. This course provided me with a great overview of illustration history that will help undergird my own studies.

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. Generally, yes, and then some! I didn't realize I would learn so much about different styles of

illustration (beyond technique) and I'm glad I did. We did go through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries quite quickly, which was challenging because there's so much development and many processes look like each other.

2. The instructor was great, I've learned a lot this week!
3. I was very thankful for the identification portions. Even though there is the "Book Illustration Processes to 1900" course which focuses on technical identification, I greatly appreciate EB explaining the basics to us.
4. EB was a great source of knowledge about artists and techniques. I would be interested to see if she could develop a more explicit theoretical framework for the course, building off her concept of "illustration." Even ideas students disagree with could promote meaningful discussions.
5. Yes. This course delivered what it promised in an engaging way.
6. Yes—I learned much more than expected and look forward to reviewing everything to solidify this knowledge!
7. Absolutely! I understand the history of book illustration processes better.
8. Yes. I think I thought that there would be deeper discussions surrounding printmaking from a technical standpoint but I guess I'll have to try and take Terry Belanger's class, "Book Illustration Processes to 1900."
9. I did! EB was great at tracing the chronological scope of the development of printed illustrations. She also has a very down-to-earth teaching style that makes everyone feel heard and included.

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

1. I would have liked to spend a little more time on photographic-based processes, and get an intro to ink jet printing. It would also be good to see a version of this course that focused on non-European illustration.
2. {private response} I know there isn't enough time, but references to development in other parts of the world/artists would be great, even if just one artist per day.
3. No, the course was amazing.
4. Looking at more examples from the Latin American world at the end, and even beyond U.S.A./England/France in the last couple of days (Germany, Scandinavia, Italy, &c). Making more explicit how the "West" is in dialogue with, {illegible}, while attempting to separate itself from the "non-West."
5. I'm not sure how feasible it would be to do this, but perhaps next to the citations of works reviewed in the workbook, add a category for print technique(s). (Although I realize this is not primarily a technique class). :)
6. More visual aids/demonstrations of printing techniques would be helpful, but I also recognize there is a printmaking techniques course at RBS.
7. My only suggestion relates to the primary text for the course. I struggled with this as it was difficult to find images that Hartham discusses. If the book were republished it would be helpful for illustrations in text to be numbered or made available on a website.

8. Less examples of illustrators.
9. Especially in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, there's somewhat of an Anglophone bias to the choices of illustrators—would have loved to see a bit more variety.

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

1. Anyone with an interest in learning the history/context/techniques of Western printed illustration (it's well described!), especially if you work with, study, or collect these materials.
2. Anyone with an interest in illustrated books.
3. Museum collection managers.
4. Scholars of literature, art historians, librarians, any lover of things artistic and bookish.
5. Who wouldn't? But seriously, a great course for humanities scholars and special collections professionals of all types.
6. A wide range of students, academics, and professionals in all fields relating to book history—art historians, literary specialists, collectors, librarians, &c. The material covers several centuries and would be useful to specialists in any time period, c. 1400 to today.
7. Librarians who teach with primary sources, book historians, art historians.
8. People with limited knowledge of printmaking who are looking to learn more about the maker than the process.
9. A student who is interested in illustration but has only taken conventional art history (or no art history at all!). Considering illustration is often not taken very seriously by mainstream academia and the art world, that's probably most people.

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

1. Yes! And yes! It was accessible for someone without an art history background but the art history people didn't seem bored either. It's kind of a mix of art history, book history, and technique whereas Terry Belanger's class is (allegedly) just technique.
2. Yes, definitely.
3. Absolutely.
4. Yes, I would overall recommend this course as an introduction of book illustration from 1450 to the present day.
5. Absolutely!
6. Yes, and yes! I would recommend this course to friends and colleagues, and, should I become a professor in the future, I would recommend this class (and all programs offered by RBS) to my students.
7. Yes and yes!!!
8. Yes.
9. I do! I would definitely recommend this course.

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

1. We went to the SC twice. It was really great and the librarian was very nice. It was a little tiring because we were standing crowded around tables of books for 90 minutes straight.

2. Yes!
3. Yes: really enjoyed our visits to SC.
4. I enjoyed the trips to SC. {private response}
5. Yes! It was wonderful to visit SC. Such a cool library—I wish I had gotten a tour.
6. We visited SC two times. It was fantastic to see the range of the collection, and to engage with materials in person, especially after the lack of access to artworks, archives, and museums throughout COVID.
7. Time spent in SC was very worthwhile.
8. Yes, looking at examples in SC really helped in providing additional examples of techniques/artists from class.
9. The trips to SC were lovely—I enjoyed seeing many of the most famous texts discussed in person.

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

1. It's a great course and EB is a fabulous teacher. I'm sad I won't see her on a regular basis anymore, because she has so much knowledge and is a delight to be around. The week is very intense and mentally/physically exhausting, so pace yourself.
2. {no response}
3. EB is an amazing instructor. Do not be afraid to ask questions.
4. The course is most useful for being exposed to a wide variety of illustrators and illustrated editions while at the same time learning about the techniques they used to illustrate. And you get to see a lot of cool books, from the fifteenth to twentieth centuries.
5. Not at this time, but thank you for a great experience!
6. EB is an incredibly kind, knowledgeable, and good-humored scholar. I highly recommend her course.
7. EB is a marvel! She combines in depth knowledge of the book illustration field with a generosity of spirit towards the different perspectives and personalities of her students. She exceeded my expectations in all aspects of this course.
8. This course does not go into techniques in detail, if you are looking for that course take I-20, "Book Illustration Processes to 1900."
9. Bring a cardigan or sweatshirt! The classroom gets chilly.

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

1. Learned so much and met great people! I hope I can return for another class!
2. {no response}
3. Wonderful course for delving into the history of illustration. I appreciate how EB encouraged dialogue as well as student contributions of how something discussed related to their collection/research.
4. "It is wrong to think / "a picture, a thousand words" / what is the exchange?"

5. Faith in books (and humanity) restored during these turbulent times in which we live.
6. The most fun I've had learning and connecting with new colleagues—now friends—in a long time.
7. Brava!!!
8. {no response}
9. A semester's worth of information in a week—overwhelming, but also transformative.