

Joel Silver
L-25v Reference Sources for Researching Rare Books
26 June – 1 July ONLINE ONLY

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. N/A
2. Yes, I appreciate the level setting they provided, especially as this was a new-to-me topic.
3. Yes.
4. {no response}
5. The pre-course readings were very useful.
6. Yes
7. I didn't get a chance to look at the readings ahead of time. Having looked at them now, they're useful to have but not reading them in advance didn't negatively impact my experience.
8. I especially enjoyed the Krause video.
9. Yes, useful and interesting. I read some very long time ago, so this provided a good opportunity to read them again.
10. Useful, but would like to have seen more about how the course was actually structured. Day one could have been repeated (in an abbreviated manner) part way through the course.
11. Pre-course readings were fairly brief and a good intro to what was discussed in the course. I don't think a huge amount of pre-course reading would be helpful; this course gave me enough "post-course" reading to keep busy for a long while.
12. H.P. Krauss's video was an excellent introduction to the course and Joel's article was also helpful to realize the importance of bibliography.
13. Extremely useful.
14. Yes, the reading assignments were a good introduction to the taught materials. No.
15. Yes, they were useful
16. The pre-course reading assignments were very helpful in preparing me for the course, especially as someone fairly new to the area of rare books.
17. Yes, I really appreciated the pre-course readings and videos.
18. Yes
19. Yes.
20. {no response}
21. Yes
22. I was familiar with many of these concepts already, but it was helpful to read these as a refresher for the course.
23. Very useful.
24. Yes, these helped give an overview of some of the concepts, so that they did not need to be

explained during the sessions—it kind of leveled the playing field and made it easier to absorb the information given in the lectures. They were also all enjoyable and useful.

25. Extremely useful. In fact, I purchased some of the books for our personal reference library.

26. No

27. I thought the pre-course reading assignments were very helpful.

28. {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 do feel like the content was appropriate and useful, especially as someone new to this field.

This is a great starting point for me personally and professionally and I will continue to use these resources. I, however, am in a unique position where the museum I work at has a specialized topic of focus so not all materials covered were applicable to me however I understand that for others this information is better suited.

2. I think it will be a great resource and plan to keep a printed copy in my office at all times.

3. Yes, relevant and useful.

4. The page numbers strangely did not match up on Google Docs with the ones printed on the pages, but this wasn't a huge hindrance. Also, students accidentally made multiple copies of the materials within the google drive; perhaps changing the documents to "view only" for students would be helpful.

5. The context was extremely useful, and I hope to be using it for years to come. One thing that I'm not sure if would be possible, due to copyright &c., but we didn't touch on databases as much as I'd like, and as some are behind paywalls, and we were on limited time, might it be possible to have screen-captured videos made from one or two as demonstrations of how they function?

6. They were good but PLEASE screenshare during the class it was really hard to follow along.

7. The teaching materials were very useful and I'll definitely be keeping them as a reference source for the future. They also made following along with the lectures much easier.

8. Yes—perhaps add extra space in the workbook to add my own notes. Maybe a table of contents so you can quickly refer back to a particular field of reference. The workbook will be an invaluable resource to have on hand in future research of rare books.

9. Very useful and comprehensive. I will be consulting the workbook for many years!

10. An index to the General Reference sources would be convenient.

11. Course workbook is extremely useful and I will be using it for years.

12. Workbook I. with listing of bibliography was very well composed.

13. It would be better if the workbook could have some introductions and highlights. Yes. Yes.

14. I found the workbooks extremely useful. Their content in combination was an excellent way to give a good idea about the sources and the way to utilize them. I expect them to be useful for a long time afterwards.

15. It was very useful to me, and I will continue to review much of it.

16. The course teaching materials were very thorough and provided an excellent foundation of knowledge for further study.
17. The resource guide and workbook were a fantastic resource for the course that I will continue to use regularly in my work. I really appreciate the time and effort and expertise that has gone into this.
18. The course workbooks were very useful, and will provide an excellent reference list for researching rare books in the future.
19. I found the materials very helpful and Joel's explanation of resources immensely enriching. I would love for him to expand on the set of questions he provided near the end of the course on the kinds of questions that can be answered with sources to which he introduced us. A longer set of questions and as part of the workbook would be welcome.
20. {no response}
21. It was good content
22. Very helpful indeed. I am so glad that I printed the workbook; it would have been a nightmare to try to refer to a PDF online while Joel was speaking. I also utilized the print workbook to take lots of notes! I definitely plan to refer to the workbook in the future.
23. I wasn't sure what the teaching materials were meant to convey when I first accessed them, but all became clear once class started. They are going to be enormously helpful as a reference resource moving forward.
24. Yes, the workbooks were very useful—and it was great to have that information both online and with the ability to print it out. I think it worked well for the professor not to have to switch back and forth with screens—and we could all see what we needed to and in our own way.
25. Joel Silver put together an EXTREMELY USEFUL set of workbooks. I took copious notes in the Microsoft Word-based Workbook I during the three 90-minute sessions each day (in purple italic, so that I could tell his annotations from mine) and was also able to toggle back-and-forth on half my screen between Word & Workbook II-1/II-2 while watching Joel talk and show us the physical book on Zoom on the left-hand side of my screen.
26. They were hard to follow. We were asked to move from one lengthy Word document to another. There was not a key and it was clumsy.
27. I thought the material was very useful and I will continue to use them after the course.
28. {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 certainly walked away thinking of ways to utilize these tools to research the current collection as well as possible opportunities for networking. I definitely reached out to my colleague multiple times through this course asking if they were aware of certain resources and have since added to our shopping list for needed materials!
2. My biggest takeaway is the reminder we can and should use sources outside of Google. It seems basic, but sometimes you just need to be told those types of things.

3. I walked away with sources to use right away in my PhD thesis
4. I think I am a better cataloger due to this course. Definitely some "aha" moments when learning about names I see cited in my coworker's descriptions.
5. Eventually, in my copious free time, I'd like to turn Joel's bibliography into a (private) Zotero database, with links to all of the titles that are now available open access, and add tags for things that they're useful on. I'm hoping that I can then add to it as I go through some of the resources and discover bibliographies and other resources in my own research fields.
6. Lots of good resources—wish there were more for non-European bibliography.
7. I definitely plan on looking more into maps and travel logs, which I hadn't thought too much about before. The course also really emphasized the ways in which certain books and collections were elevated (both in monetary value and cultural value) by happenstance. Circumstance dictated so much of how books were valued and sold, which I knew to some degree but hadn't fully appreciated until I took this course.
8. The wide range of sources discussed act as great launching points for my own specific research and tangential rabbit hole paths for curiosity's sake.
9. I've been wanting to build a list of core reference sources for my team as the curators expanded some of their collection areas so the workbook will provide me the necessary guidance to select the right sources.
10. Yes, I was not aware of some of the reference sources that I expect will be very useful.
11. It will greatly assist me in creating more accurate and informative book catalog descriptions. I finally have a good answer to how to find a bibliography for a subject I am unfamiliar with. It makes me want to update some of my old descriptions.
12. It gave me a new orientation in researching books and helped me to dig deeper in searching my interesting field. Absolutely inspiring course and will go on with study in RBS.
13. I am engaged in a project at The Museum of Guangdong Literature. This course improves my skills on how to describe a rare book (which elements should be included). Yes, especially from the questions raised by participants.
14. I plan to use my new knowledge to better research and plan my everyday work as well as bigger projects. The course helped clarify some previous knowledge and better shape two ideas for future projects.
15. I will need more time to think about this.
16. I've walked away from the course with a much better understanding of the vast amounts of reference sources available for researching rare books. Some of the resources will be helpful in building my personal book collection while others will be instrumental in helping researchers find the resources they need.
17. The resources for this kind of work are really overwhelming, this course has helped me feel more confident about being able to find relevant resources, and know that it's ok to not know everything, just to keep growing my knowledge in this area. I feel like I have a really good foundation now, and I can keep moving forward.
18. My newfound knowledge of reference sources will allow me to research rare books in our collection for teaching and description purposes, and will assist me in selecting books for

acquisition.

19. I want to immediately be sure that I have access to most of the reference sources in my Rare Book room. I am also going to incorporate this information into my teaching and collecting practices. I had assumed I would use these materials in teaching and in research, but it had not occurred to me that some materials, like older price lists, could provide provenance information. That was an "aha!" moment.
20. {no response}
21. I plan to incorporate this course in my research project creating updated bibliographic entries for rare books.
22. Very glad to know of more online references that I can use to assist in my research.
23. Lots of books I want to read now, especially the introductory essays that Mr. Silver pointed out. And several project ideas occurred to me. I am looking forward to seeing which of the resources we went over my institution has.
24. I will be leading a team in cataloging a newly acquired collection of rare books from a bookseller over the next couple of years. These resources will enable us to research the more obscure materials and also to understand copy specific information about our copies to better understand their value, but also to create better catalog records that will allow them to be used more effectively in the future by students and researchers.
25. I still have to digest much of the material and will keep my L-25v class materials intact. / I also plan to distill a shorter MS Word Workbook I document of my most often-used resources, segregated and color coded based on whether they're in HARD COPY in my Reference library, DOWNLOADED into the Reference folder on my computer, or available as a SEARCHABLE LINK on the web. / I know the reference sources for my own particular subject matter fairly well. I did NOT know many of the general reference sources and guides, the biographical dictionaries (other than the ODNB and Google searches) or the specialized sources for other areas of the rare book trade. These reference sources are a gold mine! I will be using these resources for years to come.
26. I will need to print out and review the materials.
27. I will make suggestions to my institution on resources for the library to purchase. I do not think I had any "aha! moments" but rather appreciation for the task of researching books.
28. {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 and more.
2. Yes!
3. yes
4. Yes, I was given the information that was stated in the course description. I wished I had taken a course on the act of description itself beforehand, but this was of no fault to the professor or the course itself.
5. Yes!

6. Yes!
7. Yes, the instructor was phenomenal! Such a rich course!
8. Yes, Mr. Silver's explanation for each source provided useful context and his stories about the collectors and bibliographers made them more memorable.
9. Yes!
10. Instructor was excellent!
11. I feel much more confident in locating proper sources as well as what a lot of the commonly cited sources are (e.g., Sabin, Camp & Wagner). Just knowing what sources these refer to when they are cited in dealer's descriptions and auction catalogues will save me time and headaches.
12. Absolutely. I got much more from the course than what I have expected.
13. Yes. Yes.
14. Yes, I learned what I had hoped to learn and more.
15. Yes
16. Yes, I believe the instructor went above and beyond in fulfilling the course description! I learned more than I had hoped.
17. Yes, I learned exactly what I expected, and with much more detail than I had expected, it exceeded my expectations.
18. Yes, Joel provided a wealth of knowledge and expertise regarding rare book reference sources. It gave me a great overview of the types of reference sources available in various fields, and gave me just the introduction to the subject that I was hoping for.
19. Yes. Joel is incredibly knowledgeable. I only wish I had had more time with him.
20. {no response}
21. Yes, the instructor was very good and I learned quite a bit about the subject.
22. {no response}
23. Yes. I wish that I had been able to take this course in library school rather than the one I did take, which was totally lame.
24. Yes—I learned even more than I expected. And in such a way that I can easily re-access / find the information in the future.
25. Absolutely. Joel Silver is a generous, patient, and talented teacher. He clearly is interested in vesting future generations with knowledge and skills and I so appreciate his being willing to spend dozens of hours of his precious time imparting some portion of the knowledge that he has gained over the decades of his career.
26. No
27. I did learn more information on researching books and reference resources. I felt my education in this area was weak and I really learned a lot from this course. I feel that I will be taking this course again in the future (so I am up to date on resources).
28. {no response}

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

1. The instructor was extremely knowledgeable and knew exactly how much time it would take to cover each section. If I'm being nitpicky I would just suggest providing more of a

breakdown in schedule regarding what topics will be covered at what times/days. This way for students like myself who may not have a need for such a wide variety of topics, we can flex our schedule on those days if need be.

2. I think the reference questions we were given were really helpful. I appreciate there wasn't any "on-the-spot" aspect, but if we had a little homework like that every night, it would have been helpful to me as a hands-on learner.
3. {no response}
4. I would have liked to hear more from my classmates, but Joel gave them opportunities so perhaps more structured time for students to talk about how they use sources in their field. I don't know if there is time for this, though.
5. Possibly if there were a way to get photos of the exteriors added (maybe with something for scale). I was often flipping between multiple screens and so couldn't always see the cover when Joel held it up, and even with a computer camera it's not always possible to get the full idea of the size of a book.
6. {no response}
7. Given the volume of information, I do think having access to the recordings to review names and details that were missed would be helpful. It was a lot of information and sometimes I was enjoying the stories behind the bibliographies and reference materials so much that I didn't take notes.
8. Maybe more examples or cases with mentioned references appropriately cited.
9. No.
10. {no response}
11. The nature of this course seems to be that there will be some specialties that are under-represented no matter how long the course is, and I do not really suggest removing anything. Having said that, I would have appreciated descriptions of some more sources in the fields of the occult, geology, hunting, and fishing.
12. I missed the practical parts of the course however I know online seminars are not suitable for practicing.
13. Extend the course length.
14. {no response}
15. It would be helpful to be able to view recorded sessions later as well.
16. N/A
17. The resource guide and workbook are fantastic tools, but Joel's knowledge is so vast and condensed, it would have been nice to have access to the lectures for at least a short time after the course, just so I could go back and fill in gaps that I missed.
18. I think the course was effectively taught. It would have been nice to have a little longer (Joel mentioned that the in-person version of the course is 30 rather than 22 hours) to explore some of the areas covered in greater detail, and it was tiring going through so many reference sources in such a short period of time. Joel did an excellent job of explaining each source's scope, merits, and limitations, and I now feel able to conduct rare books research, or at least make a start.

19. I think a little more information on the ways to use the resources, as stated above, would help. The resources are amazing, but learning about so many at one time diffuses one's ability to figure out how to use them. If I were not such a newbie to the field, this might have mattered less.
20. {no response}
21. No
22. As much as I enjoyed Joel's lectures, it would have been nice to interact more with other members of the class. Not sure how that could be accomplished with the Zoom format. I also suspect there would have been a different energy had we all been together in a classroom—I am sure that Joel's enthusiasm would have sparked additional comments.
23. I did find myself suffering from Zoom Spine toward the end of the week, but that is more a function of my age and my chair than the course. Taking it in 90-minute chunks with significant breaks in between was a good way to handle it.
24. I can't think of any. It went smoothly, and it was a great experience
25. Even knowing that Rare Book School's preferred format is an in-person, 12-student immersive experience, I believe that Resources for Researching Rare Books is well-taught in the Zoom format to a much larger audience. I was intrigued that Joel Silver introduced a number of "typical reference questions" on the penultimate day before class ended. These really helped me to search for exactly how I would find the answers from the resources Joel had introduced. Perhaps 2-3 questions introduced at the end of each day's lecture would cause students to better reflect what they had learned that day and go back into Workbooks I and II to see whether they had absorbed the day's materials. (This is in no way a criticism; rather, just a reflection of how good those questions asked at the end of Thursday's session were.)
26. It was dry and boring. The professor read from his annotated bibliography.
27. I think making a slide of the workbook/page extracts would have been nice and include photos of the books. Jumping from the lecture/zoom meeting to the workbook to my notes was sometimes difficult when trying to type my notes (I was on a small laptop and not everyone has access to a computer with a large screen or multiple screens). While Joel Silver is speaking the teaching assistant/monitor can click to move the slides forward.
28. {no response}

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

1. I think Librarians who come in contact with a wider range of topics, book dealers or catalogers would find this course most useful.
2. Someone with a varied special collection library.
3. {no response}
4. I think too many fields and positions could benefit from this course to list, but I know antiquarian booksellers, most definitely.
5. {no response}
6. {no response}
7. Anyone working closely with books, history, or archives would benefit immensely from this

course.

8. Librarians, historians, or anyone with a passion for research and book culture.
9. Catalogers, curators, collectors, bibliographers, and especially managers who are managing a team working to cover a wide-range of collection areas.
10. As a book collector, I would recommend it to all other book collectors
11. Anyone who works with cataloging and identifying books. Rare book dealers, special collections librarians, auctioneers.
12. Librarian, dealer, collectors.
13. Librarians.
14. I feel that the course would benefit a very wide range of people, from scholars to librarians to professionals to collectors.
15. Rare books librarians and archivists
16. This course would be beneficial for a variety of individuals including book collectors, booksellers, librarians, archivists, and others in related fields.
17. Any librarian or researcher that works with the history of the book for sure.
18. Librarians, booksellers, collectors, archivists (like myself) and others who find themselves working with rare books. This was great for a novice such as myself, but would still be very useful for a more experienced practitioner due the range of sources coverage and the depth of Joel's knowledge.
19. Anyone involved in Rare Books and Special Collections can be helped. As a librarian who wants to expand the use of the collection, I think this is especially useful bc it opens up whole new fields of teaching and research to others.
20. {no response}
21. People who have often been shut out [of] the conversation on rare books.
22. Reference librarians.
23. Public services librarians, special collections librarians, booksellers, book collectors. It's a strong course and I think everyone might benefit from it.
24. It was taught in such a way that it could equally benefit:

* Librarians

- needing to Catalog Rare books, and find out more so as to create better records
- doing Collection Development and find Rare books that fit their collection needs
- needing to use / discover Rare books in their collection for teaching

* Collectors—researching what they have or what they want to acquire

* Dealers—researching what they are offering for sale to match with buyers or to create better catalog copy—or to compare what others are selling

* Scholars—in subject areas that researching rare books, history that may be revealed by rare books, book history, &c.

Because the focus was on what each reference book could do—it wasn't like anything was really irrelevant to any one group or another.

25. Anyone needing/wishing to research rare books, from librarians to cataloguers to book dealers to collectors. If you're serious about knowing what you have and the context into which it fits,

then this course is for you.

26. Unsure
27. Reference librarians, booksellers, archivists, catalogers, library students and book lovers.
28. {no response}

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

1. Yes.
2. Yes.
3. The course is very expensive, and {text input error} justify even with excellent content. I would not be able to participate in RBS if I didn't have funding that included this.
4. Yes, although I wish the tuition was more affordable for me.
5. Yes.
6. Yes!
7. Yes, definitely!
8. Yes.
9. Yes.
10. Yes
11. Yes
12. No doubt.
13. Yes.
14. Definitely! I feel that I got even more than I expected out of it.
15. Yes
16. Yes.
17. ABSOLUTELY!!!
18. Certainly.
19. ABSOLUTELY! and then some.
20. {no response}
21. Yes
22. Yes.
23. Absolutely.
24. Yes, definitely
25. ABSOLUTELY! 100%+.
26. Not sure
27. I believe the course was money well spent. I only wished this particular course allowed students to keep recordings because there was so much information presented. I took notes but I could not capture everything. I wish it included the lecture recordings to review afterwards as it was hard to digest everything all at once.
28. {no response}

8) *How likely are you to recommend this course to others?*

1. 10

2. 8
3. 7
4. 8
5. 9
6. 7
7. 10
8. 9
9. 10
10. 10
11. 9
12. 10
13. 9
14. 10
15. 7
16. 10
17. 10
18. 9
19. 10
20. 10
21. 9
22. 9
23. 10
24. 10
25. 10
26. 3
27. 9
28. {no response}

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

1. N/A
2. N/A
3. {no response}
4. {no response}
5. {no response}
6. {no response}
7. Not applicable to this course.
8. N/A
9. N/A
10. N/A
11. N/A
12. Yes

13. It would be better!
14. {no response}
15. N/A
16. N/A
17. {no response}
18. N/A
19. Does not apply.
20. {no response}
21. YES
22. N/A
23. N/A
24. We did not have any—though the stories that Joel Silver could tell about the writers and users of the reference works were like little field trips with time travel.
25. N/A
26. N/A
27. N/A
28. {no response}

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

1. N/A
2. Be prepared to take notes and make sure to do the readings.
3. {no response}
4. {no response}
5. It's hard to believe that the titles we went over were just the tip of the iceberg, and not an exhaustive list!
6. Please screenshare!
7. None in particular.
8. {no response}
9. This is an essential course for anyone in the special collections or rare book field.
10. {no response}
11. There are not many people with Joel Silver's knowledge and passion for bibliographies; if you have any interest in rare books and reference materials I would recommend taking this course from him.
12. {no response}
13. Please keep the virtual courses.
14. Just do it! It's a very informative, well-thought out and well taught course that makes a seemingly dry subject really interesting.
15. No
16. Be sure to read the pre-course materials and don't be afraid to ask questions!
17. Take really good notes, there's a lot of significant information that will come at you, beyond

the resources.

18. {no response}
19. {no response}
20. {no response}
21. Plan ahead to be comfortable, make a space, and pre-read the material sent to you.
22. {no response}
23. I wish I could have taken it in person, but that was not in the cards for me this year. Perhaps in the future it will be offered in person?
24. {no response}
25. Take notes on Workbook I (in Microsoft Word) as this is the only "brain dump" from an expert that you're likely to get in your career. I will likely use Joel Silver's material for the rest of my life. So grateful!
26. No
27. Again, I wish the students could keep the recordings of the lectures. This course had a lot of information and it was not dependent on showing books or material like other RBS courses.
28. {no response}

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

1. Completely eye opening and helpful!
2. My brain is now full / It will take time to process / Thanks Joel, it was great!
3. The courses are brilliant but it is cost-prohibitive, which seems part of UVA's elitism.
4. {no response}
5. {no response}
6. Thank u!
7. It was phenomenal!
8. The course was an extensive look at the tip of the research iceberg, and the instructor provided plenty of avenues to reel in a wealth of reliable sources.
9. Amazing, enriching, gratifying, and exhausting at the same time.
10. Do it!
11. Bibliographical overload.
12. Now I have a clue how many things I do not know, but at least I know where to start searching.
13. A very inspiring and encouraging community.
14. It was a remarkable experience that helped me rediscover my passion for rare books.
15. A lot of new information
16. "You'll never know everything about anything, especially something you love." — Julia Child / And if you love rare books, this course provides a wealth of knowledge and helps you learn a little bit more.
17. When you seek to find / Resources for book research / Joel is the Guru
18. Rare books on my desk, / But where to research them all? / Joel's sources abound.

19. Encyclopedia / More informed than Joel Silver? / Does seem unlikely.
20. {no response}
21. Books are the best!
22. I'm thrilled to have been able to participate in RBS this year and further enhance my knowledge. Looking forward to more opportunities in the future!
23. Excellent!
24. Useful & Delightful Fun
25. RBS, although the initials don't work, stands for Generous, Kind, and Giving. Thank you for capturing and teaching important historical knowledge so that we, in turn, can pass it on to future scholars, collectors and people involved in the rare book trade.
26. It was long and monotonous. I am hoping the printed material will be helpful in the future.
27. This class is a necessary class for any librarian or bookseller to keep up to date on using reference and research resources.
28. {no response}