

Deborah J. Leslie
L-35: Advanced Rare Book Cataloging Workshop
22–27 September 2019

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-course reading assignments were essential and useful, especially the DCRMB, of course.
 2. Yes, I found Sarah Werner's book and The Collation blog particularly useful. I think that Werner's book summed up some of the other readings in a way that was easier to understand. I also consulted DJL's binder of notes from the previous class, which is a solid reference for cataloging rare books.
 3. Yes. Some of them may seem repetitive, but the course involves aspects of cataloging that many of us do not work with daily, so reinforcement in multiple sources is a good thing.
 4. Yes.
 5. Overall, I found the reading and video assignments helpful in refreshing my memory before coming into the class. DJL providing copies of the lecture slides from L-30 was great for getting my brain prepared, as well as for referring back to during our class.
 6. N/A

- 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 found the course workbook and teaching materials useful, and I have already referred to these materials in my regular work since finishing the class. I anticipate going back to these materials regularly. Especially useful to me is the checklist for use during cataloging. It's such a simple concept, but it has done so much to improve my cataloging process and results.
 2. I thought the binder of notes was a great resource. I reference it at work regularly. I think the examples from the practicum are particularly helpful. Sometimes I need ideas for how to phrase something concisely, and there are many good examples in the course materials!
 3. The course workbook is well laid out, with refresher material from L-30 and sample records that I will refer to often when cataloging rare books. I used it to record things we learned in class, and it will continue to be a useful resource.
 4. It is very useful—I still use it after the class.
 5. I really appreciated having the workbook as well as the L-30 lecture slides available for reference. They were incredibly useful when I wanted to double-check a point or rule, and I'm sure they'll remain so in my future work.
 6. Yes.

- 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 use the skills and knowledge I acquired regularly in my work. My "aha" moment occurred after using DJL's cataloging checklist. I had always thought of the bibliographic record itself as a form of checklist, but her method is much more cohesive. It saves time, energy, and prevents anxiety. Catalogers are frequently exhorted to not agonize over cataloging decisions. This method helps tremendously in that regard.
 2. The Advanced Rare Book Cataloging Workshop and the previous course provide a solid foundation for building skills independently, because you learn about many helpful resources to consult and learn from after the class. This course teaches you to develop the ability to look critically at different aspects of the physical book to understand its key features, and it teaches you how to communicate that information clearly and concisely in a record.
 3. I plan to use new skills and knowledge to improve my rare book AND general cataloging. As for "aha!" moments, there wasn't anything specific, but I was pleased that I gained a better understanding of some things I learned in L-30. I have also realized that setting aside regular time for reading and studying reference sources (e.g., Gaskell) will be helpful in improving skills and understanding.
 4. Keep cataloging.
 5. We have an upcoming project that involves working with our catalogued, pre-1600 materials to enhance their records, including adding format information and signature statements. Now that I've refreshed my understanding of collation and had more chances to practice it in the course, I feel more prepared (and even excited!) to take on this project.
 6. This class solidified and provided practice in the skills learned in L-30, and it was useful to discuss solutions with class colleagues.
- 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, I learned what I had hoped to learn and more. Best of all was the opportunity to work with expert catalogers, see a wide variety of situations and problems that arise when cataloging rare materials, and learn how other catalogers think about and resolve these problems.
 2. Yes, I hoped that this class would build on skills learned in the previous class. The structure of the class allows for students at varying levels to benefit from the instruction by being challenged and working cooperatively with other students.
 3. Yes. It's not possible to absorb everything in a week, but I have the tools to work with.
 4. Yes—instructor was very good. Knowledgeable and funny.
 5. Yes. DJL is a good teacher who is always willing to answer questions and explain the finer points, and she was happy to discuss topics that weren't officially on the course schedule but that we were curious about.
 6. Yes.
- 5) *Are there other ways in which the course could have been improved?*
1. It would have been helpful to have time to discuss items that students bring from work, but not essential.
 2. I think it would have been helpful to have some transcription exercises before the class, but I thought the class was approachable, but challenging enough to make it interesting and build on existing skills.

3. Can't think of anything.
 4. {no response}
 5. On the last couple of days we tried having our discussion for the topic of the day right after lunch—I think that worked a little better than having it at the end of the day, so I might recommend trying that as the standard for the next installment of the course.
 6. A more even flow to the days would have been helpful.
- 6) *Who might benefit the most from taking this RBS course?*
1. This course would be most useful for catalogers who work with rare materials.
 2. This class requires some technical knowledge. I think that someone who is a rare books cataloger would benefit most from this course. All of the students cataloged rare books in some capacity.
 3. Anyone who catalogs rare books or other materials and is interested in doing it well.
 4. Catalogers interested in improving their skills.
 5. I think catalogers who have a good grounding in rare books and want to firm up their skills and understand what to do when faced with more troublesome issues in terms of signatures and collation, transcription, &c., would find it very worthwhile.
 6. {no response}
- 7) *Do you feel that you got your money's worth? Would you recommend the course to others?*
1. Yes, I definitely got my money's worth, and I would recommend the course without reservation to others.
 2. Yes, the instruction was well-planned and provided a challenge for all levels. It is such a privilege to take a workshop with DJL because of her knowledge and passion when it comes to rare book cataloging.
 3. Yes, definitely, to both.
 4. Yes and yes.
 5. Absolutely! I think it was money and time very well spent.
 6. Yes.
- 8) *If your course made any trips outside of the classroom, do you feel that they were time well spent?*
1. Yes, we took a brief and interesting tour of the Folger Library.
 2. There were no formal field trips planned for this class, but I did enjoy the tour of the cataloging offices and the various social outings to restaurants and for drinks after class. These experiences definitely help the class to bond as a whole and make the time in class more enjoyable.
 3. No trips.
 4. N/A
 5. We didn't have any official trips, but I did appreciate having multiple opportunities to socialize with my classmates and instructor during the week.
 6. {no response}
- 9) *Do you have any additional thoughts or advice for anyone considering taking this course in a future year?*

1. Yes. Be sure you know how to do basic cataloging procedures in OCLC's Connexion.
2. I think you will definitely get more out of the class if you go over the reading list more than once before the course begins. It takes a lot of time to absorb all of the information in a meaningful way.
3. Do as much of the preliminary reading as you can (it really does help), and do not be afraid that everyone will know more than you. In reality, there are few people who have the opportunity to work with this category of rare books on a consistent basis. Everyone had their own set of skills and experience, and we all shared and helped each other.
4. {no response}
5. If you have any particular rare books cataloging issues you've been wrestling with at your institution, definitely bring them up in class to discuss!
6. {no response}

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

1. The class was a valuable experience that has already made a positive impact on my work.
2. Book cataloging
is a patient art to learn
details tell stories.
3. A perfect opportunity to completely geek out, with hours of talk about rare books, cataloging, and the future of cataloging and metadata!
4. Really enjoyed the "workshop" format and focus on practical application and knowledge.
5. Challenging in the best ways.
6. Many books cataloged
Exhaustion sets in, mush brain
Oh, we are so sleek.

Student Data

Number of respondents: 6 (of 6)

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

My institution/employer gave me professional leave time: 6 (100%)

Who paid your RBS tuition costs?

My institution/employer paid 100%: 6 (100%)

Who paid your RBS housing expenses?

My institution/employer paid 100%: 2 (33.33%)

My institution/employer paid part; I paid the rest: 1 (16.67%)

I stayed with friends/family, or stayed in my own home and commuted: 3 (50%)

Who paid your RBS travel expenses?

My institution/employer paid 100%: 5 (83.33%)

I live locally, and had no travel expenses: 1 (16.67%)

*Which of the following **best** describes your current occupation?*

Library disciplines:

Cataloger/metadata librarian: 6 (100%)