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B-10: Introduction to the History of Bookbinding
27 July–1 August, 2025, Charlottesville, Virginia

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. Very helpful.
2. The readings were largely inaccessible and didn't specify specific articles or chapters, making it pretty much impossible to do the advanced reading in its entirety. The current format is not successful.
3. Yes, they all provided helpful (but not necessary) context
4. A lot were unattainable/not accessible or really expensive to purchase for history of bookbinding but the instructor didn't say we needed to read these which was helpful.
5. I didn't do any of the pre-course readings, there are some on the list that we never referred to though.
6. What I was able to get through of the pre-course readings very helpful. I think it added a lot of context to the lectures and discussions that helped me get the most out of the class.
7. The pre-course reading assignments were useful. Some of them were difficult to source (out of print, hard to locate, etc.), but the instructor did note this and say they were optional.
8. Useful as a bibliography for future reference.
9. Very useful. As an art historian, I appreciated the immersive leap in through textual sources, but I am also thankful that the class was flexible about pre-reading. I couldn't access all suggested texts in advance.
10. The readings were useful. I was able to at least look through most of the books through my university library. I would have appreciated some more guidance about which ones should be the most prioritized. I like having the whole list to be able to reference now.
11. {no response}
12. The readings were optional and I did not have time to read much in advance, so I can't say too much. But the references that KLH passed around during class were good to know about—it is helpful to see the books paired with the content we covered on a given day/unit.
13. We did not have any required pre-course readings, only suggestions, which was nice as there was no need to balance it with my daily work. It would be helpful to get a notification about the publication of the reading list even if it isn't required.
14. Yes, in general, they were very useful. I think there was some inherent difficulty (and acknowledged difficulty) in accessing some of the texts, hence all of them being optional. I didn't feel that the readings I didn't do caused me to be unprepared for the course, and I liked having a list of suggestions that I could pursue at my own discretion helpful. It might be useful, especially for students with more limited experience, if there was a suggested "first" or "foundational" text listed in the optional readings, but I certainly wouldn't like to see anything removed, and I'm not sure that text even exists in the first place.
15. Yes.

16. Pre-course reading materials were interesting and helpful and I appreciated that they were suggested as background rather than required— that said, I think they will be even better (for my learning style) as follow up reading, and I have an after-action plan to revisit or read for the first time most if not all of the list.

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. Definitely useful and it will continue to be useful.
2. Everything taught and distributed during class was highly successful, informative, and helpful. The material will be highly useful for me after the course.
3. Yes, I plan to revisit the materials and notes.
4. Yes very useful.
5. The content was useful for me but I would have liked less medieval binding content and more content from the 17th to the 19th centuries.
6. {no response}
7. Good course materials. It would have been helpful to have had notes/slides distributed.
8. {no response}
9. The class workshops were amazing! I am a visual and tactile learner, so to stitch bindings and execute gold leaf were truly empowering lessons.
10. The presentations were very useful, I'm sure I'll reference my notes frequently.
11. Yes, the teaching materials and aids were appropriate to the course content and scope.
12. There was no workbook, but it might be nice to have a list of some of the reference work links in advance so that students can follow along when they come up in class.
13. The teaching materials for the course largely involved practical assignments allowing us to take part in various aspects of bookbinding (e.g. folding, stitching, tooling.) They were often challenging but very enjoyable—I felt very accomplished after completing them and I'm sure my classmates did as well.
14. No workbook; I found the teaching materials extremely useful and likely useful after the course for later identification questions.
15. I loved the practical experience, learning how to stitch together signatures and use tools. That was always my favorite part.
16. Examples in slides and in-person illustrated the points very well.

3) *Which aspects of the course were most intriguing and relevant for you as an individual? Did you walk away with any new insights, ideas, or project plans?*

1. It was all great and I definitely have some ideas.
2. The breadth was the most helpful and relevant, a great span of information for an introductory course. I will leave with a better understanding of key binders throughout history, and more focused research criteria.

3. I particularly enjoyed how the lectures were balanced with museum examples and practical application exercises.
4. Enjoyed the tactile aspects of this course, especially the skins and leather. Also enjoyed the more elaborate sewing, more than the pamphlet stitch. But I also really liked the forward of going by centuries then by geographical areas, then had a museum afterwards.
5. I really appreciated seeing the different binding styles throughout the centuries of book publishing.
6. Getting a better understanding of the timeline of fine bindings and specifically decoration was the most helpful for me. I am walking away with a list of book structure models I would like to make.
7. The lectures were excellent —the instructor is extremely knowledgeable. I obtained ideas for teaching my own students.
8. {no response}
9. As a 17th century specialist, the lectures on 16th-18th centuries were most useful. I have a much stronger sense of the evolution of styles and trends, and will approach assumptions of textual references in binding with more caution in the future
10. It was all helpful for the work I do, especially the hand press era. The practical demonstrations of sewing and tooling were especially useful to understanding the work and structures of bindings, and not something I could have figured out or seen on my own. I plan to do more bookbinding in the future.
11. The newly acquired visual literacy I have with respect to identifying features of bindings will enable me to visualize and interpret our collection in a very different light that I might have just a week prior (before attending my course).
12. This class was very enlightening for me, as I had only a very broad and rough idea of the evolution of books during the handpress era. I really liked how KLH broke the lectures down by century and region/country and then paired the lectures with museums and other hands-on activities. The mix was really great.
13. My instructional sessions are very focused on the material aspects of book production, from the difficulty (or not) of sourcing materials to the physical labor performed by those involved in the process. Attempting some of this work myself helped give me a better sense of a side of book production that I haven't experienced as much.
14. I think the most useful aspects of the course were a) the identification practices and time spent with leather ID and description, and b) the information on rebindings of earlier texts. I found the description practice especially relevant and useful, especially since that's a harder skill to develop without a guide. I also did come away with new insights about bindings especially related to later editions and fine bindings of medieval texts, which is exciting.
15. I feel empowered to talk with authority about bindings of varying degrees of quality and materials. Before the course, I wouldn't have been able to distinguish a goatskin binding from a sheepskin, but now I can! There's so much more I could mention. I wish there was more content about other regions and continents (South America?) and more info about how bookbinding practices changed with the European migrations. On the other hand, I recognize this is a survey course, so of course there will be greater breadth over depth.
16. For my personal bookbinding projects, the materials we viewed and their background provided a wealth of inspiration. Professionally, they gave me many

ideas for new ways to evaluate my institution's collections, and I will need follow-up time to turn these into actionable plans.

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 did learn what I hoped to learn. The course was just what I hoped it would be.
2. Yes!
3. Yes, fantastic course.
4. Yes absolutely, thank you!
5. It was made clear but I do wish we could have discussed trade bindings from 1650-1850.
6. Absolutely, yes. KLH was an amazing instructor.
7. Yes.
8. {no response}
9. I jumped into this class looking for a survey understanding of the progression of the craft, and I think I received that in abundance.
10. Yes, the course covered what I expected and hoped. It was a useful overview and now I feel better prepared to deep dive on particular aspects on my own.
11. Yes, absolutely.
12. Yes! I learned soooo much and I am excited to continue building on the overview that KLH imparted.
13. Yes! I learned a great deal about the history and processes of bookbinding.
14. Yes and yes.
15. Yes. See above comments for gaps in the content.
16. Yes, absolutely, and more. I was not expecting as much hands-on work and I was pleasantly surprised.

5) *How do you plan to use the skills and knowledge acquired during your time here?*

1. In my job as a Special Collections Librarian for Education and Outreach.
2. I plan to use them to hone my research and understanding of bookbinding as a craft.
3. To be able to better identify the bindings I work with daily and to provide context on the works as a whole.
4. In my cataloging work and occasional instructional sessions with students.
5. In my cataloging!
6. {no response}
7. I plan to use the knowledge in both my research and my teaching (undergraduate).
8. {no response}
9. I plan to teach with this material! I plan to preserve my class exercise projects to show future students. I want to build bookbinding into my history of art surveys.
10. I will be able to more accurately identify and describe bookbindings when I am cataloging books at work, which includes books from all eras in Europe and North America.

11. I look forward to engaging with our collection in ways I would not have been able to previously, and to share my newfound knowledge with my colleagues at my home institution.
12. I will use the skills at work to help describe books in our collections, to be able to speak more knowledgeably about books, and in my own craft.
13. I intend to carry out a survey of manuscript binding materials in my library's rare print book collection, and understanding binding techniques will make that more feasible. I also plan to take inspiration from some of the practical activities for a class I am designing that involves production of a miniature manuscript as a way of understanding how information and knowledge were perceived and transmitted in medieval Europe.
14. Hopefully, I'll use these skills at work and share them with my colleagues, and I also hope to use this knowledge more broadly as I carry on in academia.
15. Special Collections and my dissertation about Christoph Saur. I can now speak with a relatively decent degree of authority about his bindings in a larger historical context, which I couldn't before! I feel ready to tackle the archives.
16. Both in my personal bookbinding projects and in finding new ways to analyze, present, and describe my institution's collections.

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

1. Special collections librarians would definitely benefit!
2. Anyone new to the rare book world! Students, beginning career employees, etc.
3. Anyone new to library work, early career, or anyone interested in bookbinding.
4. Special collections librarians and rare book catalogers.
5. I think this course is best suited to high end dealers or institutional librarians or art historians.
6. Bookbinding students and special collections librarians/catalogers.
7. {no response}
8. {no response}
9. Historians, art historians, book dealers, professionals and students considering a career in rare books.
10. Any librarians or booksellers working in special collections.
11. Any individual working and interacting with rare books and special collections.
12. I highly recommend this class to anyone (except perhaps not vegans) who want to learn about the physical aspects of bookbinding in all its forms —art, art history, design, practice, description, etc.
13. Librarians, book historians, art historians.
14. On first guess I would think special collections librarians and catalogers; however, it seems as if booksellers concerned with fine bindings would benefit, and as someone in neither of those categories, but who wanted a general understanding of the topic, I benefited a great deal, too.
15. Those with limited historical knowledge about bookbindings, but already have a general understanding about the history of the book. Some prior knowledge of terminology is helpful. I did a comps field in "history of the book," and I used to work at Special Collections, so I felt right at home.
16. Anyone with an interest in bookbinding and anyone who works at an institution that teaches the history of the book, whether to public or academic audiences.

7) *If applicable, what were the most original, powerful, or otherwise noteworthy educational moments in the course? Were there any "aha!" moments you'd like to share?*

1. {no response}
2. {no response}
3. {no response}
4. Textile portions — animal skins and leather, both feeling and seeing videos of the process of making them.
5. It was nice to get practice identifying different animal skins!
6. {no response}
7. Being able to view/examine bindings/books was essential — being able to handle the books was an extremely useful way to understand design, history, and structure of bookbinding.
8. {no response}
9. The gilding truly was a highlight for me, as was the chance to see lots of examples in person in our museum visits. The ability to hold examples really stuck with me, helped me finally grasp different binding materials.
10. Seeing connections in bindings from different places and time periods. Seeing books in person. Seeing practical demonstrations and doing them ourselves.
11. When I began to make connections between theory and practice in the museum sessions that followed our taught component of the course.
12. Seeing the difference of how bindings developed in Germany was something I hadn't know about previously. I also very much enjoyed the hands-on aspects: binding, tooling, gold tooling, etc.
13. I think communally discovering how difficult and frustrating the bookbinding process can be was very memorable and undoubtedly granted us all some perspective on the lives of the people whose work we studied — I know it did for me.
14. There's nothing in particular I can think of now, though there were many such moments over the course of the week — especially in learning about forgeries, onlay techniques, and the like. Seeing the binding structures was also very useful, as well as learning more about regional differences in early bindings.
15. Beveled edges! In all seriousness, I liked the typically "German" characteristics of bookbinding, which I didn't realize were specific to the German-speaking lands— things like the persistence of traditional methods and materials, use of wooden boards, and the widespread use of pigskin.
16. The general progression of styles was made very clear by the materials displayed in person and on slides. The hands-on work was useful even to someone with some experience in binding.

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

1. I would love to get all the slides at the end.
2. The practice binding could be a more simple structure, or more prepped on behalf of the students.
3. No.

4. I would suggest bigger seminar rooms with more chairs for the museums. It would be more beneficial to be eye level with the books. It was totally fine as is but just a potential suggestion!
 5. Some of the lectures were quite rushed, the pacing could be more even. I also would have rather worked on identifying different bindings, more quizzes, rather than the sewing demonstration. That was not applicable at all to what I do.
 6. Allow water in the classrooms when rare materials are not present. It is extremely hard to stay hydrated throughout the day, especially in the summer.
 7. Perhaps sending slides ahead of time or making them available at the end of each class session.
 8. {no response}
 9. No, not really.
 10. Some more prepared instructions/illustrations for the sewing would be helpful, mostly for time.
 11. n/a
 12. I would have liked to have a museum visit in which earlier bindings were displayed alongside later emulators.
 13. {no response}
 14. Perhaps more time on describing bindings, though of course time is always a bit scarce, and I can't think of anything that could be cut to accommodate for it.
 15. Touching more on regional differences in the US, and showing more South American bindings as they departed or continued the traditions of the Iberian powers.
 16. I cannot think of any. Longer? But that's impractical.
- 9) *Do you feel that you got your money's worth? How likely are you to recommend this course to others? On a 1-10 scale, 1 would indicate that you disagree that you got your money's worth, 5 would indicate a neutral response, and 10 would indicate that you agree that you got your money's worth.*

1. 10
2. 10
3. 9
4. 10
5. 8
6. 10
7. 10
8. 8
9. 10
10. 9
11. 10
12. {no response}
13. 10
14. 10
15. 10
16. 10

10) *If your course made any (virtual) field trips outside of the classroom or had guest speakers, do you feel that they enhanced the course experience?*

1. {no response}
2. {no response}
3. Yes.
4. Yes!
5. Amanda was incredible, her binding should have been done over three days I think.
6. {no response}
7. {no response}
8. {no response}
9. I heard such great things about the evening events. I plan to watch them virtually later.
10. The visit to SC was great, very useful to see the books we discussed.
11. Yes.
12. Absolutely!
13. {no response}
14. {no response}
15. {no response}
16. Yes, visiting SC was very helpful.

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

1. {no response}
2. Not at this time.
3. Please take this course, it is a wonderful experience.
4. {no response}
5. Don't be afraid to ask questions! There's lots of terminology used in the course.
6. {no response}
7. Just be open and ask lots of questions!
8. {no response}
9. I appreciated the lecture mornings, interactive afternoons. Please continue with that format.
10. {no response}
11. None.
12. This class is wonderful and doesn't require a lot of prior expertise, just a willingness to learn. Take it! I highly recommend it!
13. {no response}
14. I would definitely come in with a few books in mind to describe and learn more about, and perhaps bring them to Charlottesville — it was incredibly useful for me to have a project or two during the course of the class, since it gave me things to focus on other than "so many bindings, OMG."
15. Familiarize yourself with the terminology beforehand.
16. Highly recommended.

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

1. {no response}
2. Joyful.
3. Awl is well.
4. A very educational, safe atmosphere full of kind and patient peers and faculty.
5. A wonderful way to engage with book history!
6. {no response}
7. Pineapple Express.
8. Rare Book School is the water in the miracle ocean of the human body.
9. RBS offers a remarkable opportunity to meet a broad range of professionals, with different specializations, with whom you can collaboratively explore the history of the book. It has truly been an insightful experience.
10. {no response}
11. For the time invested, the knowledge I have acquired during the past five days has the potential to continue to inform my engagement with rare books and special collections for years to come. I cannot recommend this course highly enough.
12. Intellectually invigorating and inspiring!
13. Bookbinders were drunks/But I can't blame them too much/They had a hard job
14. Awl a very wonderful time!
15. I came, I touched, I saw, I bound.
16. Absolutely worthwhile for anyone with an interest in the history of the book.