

Kathryn James & Mike Widener  
C-85: Law Books: History & Connoisseurship  
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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. While I didn't read everything beforehand, what I did read was very helpful. I'm grateful for the list because I think I'll be using it as a resource beyond the class.
2. I would have loved reading assignments, but I never received any information about them.
3. Yes, the readings were useful. That said, the amount of suggested reading was a bit daunting.
4. There are some with broken links, like in the Reece sets. There were a lot. I didn't get to all of them, because they're not relevant to my main job. But I do have them to reference now.
5. {private response}
6. They were useful and appropriate to the course.
7. The readings are very good and prep the novice to handle the realia in class. Learning terms of art is very challenging but a necessary part of professional development.
8. I honestly did not read any of those. I did not have time as I signed up for the course only two days before it started.
9. {private response}
10. {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. Yes, I think they were appropriate and useful (and will continue to be!).
2. The workbook provided helpful logistical information and links to resources. I would have liked the class outlines to be more developed and leave space for notes.
3. Yes, the workbook and other materials were very useful, and I will continue to utilize the workbook, in particular.
4. Yes. I think so. I like the resource guide.
5. The workbook was useful. Parts will continue to be useful.
6. Yes, I plan to continue to use the workbook and hand-outs in the course of my work.
7. The workbook is very useful as this course is foundational to my work. The workbook might need revision of entries by the course segments; Session 1, 2, &c.
8. Yes, I think so!
9. {private response}
10. {no response}

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. I found the historical context and lecture-style content on the various areas of materials very helpful. I also thought the exercises and discussions with others were great for generating ideas. I definitely am leaving feeling very inspired.
2. The idea of looking at books as physical objects and what we can learn from their condition was very interesting. I have always viewed books in terms of the written information, so this expanded my viewpoint significantly.
3. The collection development exercise was very rewarding and helped to focus my thinking on a future long-term project idea.
4. I really enjoyed the collections policy exercise, since it helped me focus my somewhat nebulous idea for a special collection into a specific plan I can bring to my director and faculty.
5. Viewing the volumes in person was most valuable. The exercises were perhaps too open ended but the class discussion was usually insightful.
6. The bibliographic description and handling of rare materials associated with the law will always be intriguing and relevant.
7. Yes. It was a once in a lifetime chance to work with MW and the YLS staff. To see the fine and rare editions. The law collection unlocks many questions, on the Arts and Sciences side as well as business and medicine.
8. Working with the actual rare books and manuscripts exceeded my expectations.
9. Individually, the collection development plan assignment was intriguing. Less so for my own work and process, but to hear how other students approached the assignment and the considerations they took considering scope, challenges, and institutional relations.
10. This course teaches the full library/archives/book professional, which is one of its greatest qualities. I learned specific terminology, but I also learned about decision-making in a library setting and met peers in my field. I go back to my institution energized and equipped.

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! The class was extremely informative.
2. I think we got a lot of information and I learned a lot. I wish the sessions on teaching with materials had been more instructional and focused on giving us practical skills to bring to the classroom. At times I felt like I was being shown things not taught things.
3. Yes and yes.
4. Yes, I probably learned even more than I expected to.
5. Yes. Yes.
6. Yes. I had a great experience with this course.
7. A little tasting really whets the appetite to go deeper into LC, local public libraries, and the library science community. I was very surprised at the secrets locked within the rare books.
8. Both MW and KJ were too passionate about their lectures and knowledge. It inspired me to learn more about rare books, French and canon law.
9. {private response}
10. Yes, and more. The historical framework of law books that they provided on the first day of the course set us up well to think about and engage with questions about managing collections later in the week.

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

1. I plan to use this as a bouncing-off point to continue my own learning and focus my work at my own institution.
2. In my own research and scholarship, I think I have many new resources from what I learned. I will also use them as context for teaching legal research.
3. I plan to engage with colleagues and faculty on rare books collection development. This course provided me with the grounding to engage in this in a much more substantive and informed manner.
4. To build my special collection, to assess and evaluate new book purchases, and to monitor our rare book collection.
5. I will build my personal collections.
6. I plan to use these skills and knowledge to make a more informed assessment of the rare book section of our library.
7. The basic skills of cataloging form the basis of collecting. The direct class time with YLS and RBS helps with continuing education.
8. Be more careful when handling rare books at my own library.
9. I plan to use these skills and knowledge to better communicate with and understand those who work in these kinds of collections so that I may better collaborate with them.
10. Improve collection development strategies, develop exhibition plans that are sustainable for staff and engaging for audiences.

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

1. I really think anyone interested in or working in this area would benefit from this course. I found it approachable to a range of previous knowledge and experience.
2. Archivists and Special Collections librarians. School administrators to better appreciate why they should fund libraries.
3. All Special Collections library professionals.
4. Anyone whose job or interest involves rare materials or special collections of a legal nature.
5. Librarians.
6. Law librarians with an interest in Special Collections, or anyone with an interest in rare books themselves.
7. ABA, retired ABA, humanities majors. I think the New Haven classes of RBS can stimulate Connecticut's understanding of the DC environment.
8. Librarians at any level.
9. Anyone who may work with historical legal material.
10. Curators in rare book archives or legal manuscript archives.

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. Some of the biblioramas really made concepts click for me. Using terms and knowledge in that context was very helpful.
2. {no response}

3. Again, the collection development exercise was particularly insightful.
4. Realizing why Blackstone is still such “A Thing.”
5. {no response}
6. As a lifelong learner, I have many such moments.
7. The ledger of an Eighteenth-century attorney is fascinating.
8. Working with the actual books—touching them and learning about printing processes—ink, paper, &c.
9. {no response}
10. The historical framework of law books in the early days of the class really helped me understand my collection. The engagement and discussion around collecting starting on day three was very important for helping me understand this process and get over my own anxiety about my own ability and knowledge.

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

1. I can't think of anything! It was a lot of information to cover, and I think it was done well—rigorous, but not too much so.
2. The schedule was grueling. Trade shorter breaks for a later start time. I would recommend this course to all my colleagues, I felt like it was a wonderful learning experience.
3. Not that I can think of at this moment.
4. {no response}.
5. {no response}
6. I don't believe so.
7. The YLS staff is very gracious.
8. Just perfect.
9. No.
10. By day four, the format of “look at a book and then report to the class” did create a little exhaustion despite our genuine enthusiasm. An instructor-led group exploration of a group of texts might have been better.

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. 9
3. 10
4. {no response}
5. 8
6. 10
7. 10
8. 10
9. 10
10. 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. Yes, I really liked those portions—I felt like I could ask questions I couldn't ask them in other contexts.
2. The field trip could have been better if it included a talk or presentation about the subject matter. The two guest speakers added valuable perspectives.
3. Yes, the trips and guest speakers greatly enhanced the course. The conversation with Madeleine Johnson from Lawbook Exchange was terrific.
4. I think our field trip to the bookseller was good. I was a bit less impressed with the speaker from the Lawbook Exchange; she seemed a little unprepared and casual.
5. Yes.
6. Yes, the field trip offered unique insight to the course.
7. Yes. Mr. Lesser has a great inventory.
8. Local tours during lunch breaks were great!
9. {no response}
10. The field trip to the book dealer mid-week was valuable, and I am glad we did it for the exposure it enabled to that business. But the placement of the trip at the end of the day tired us out. Could that be a mid-day trip?

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

1. Don't worry about reading everything, come in with an open mind, and get plenty of sleep!
2. {no response}
3. Don't be too scared off by the reading list. Just read what you can.
4. Do more reading than I did.
5. Be sure to talk with other participants. Networks are important!
6. It would be dependent on the student's goals, but I would certainly encourage them.
7. Maybe bookbinding in law books.
8. No need to prepare, you'll learn everything you need in the class. Be open minded.
9. If you're already thinking about it—do it. It is well worth it.
10. Take this course!

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

1. Wonderful people, extremely informative and fun, and just a little exhausting.
2. The course satisfied my curiosity (for now) and sparked a few new interests that I am excited to explore.
3. This has been a very educational and rewarding experience and I look forward to using the knowledge gained to better serve my library.
4. Exhausting but rewarding!
5. Stimulating.
6. Bravo!
7. It is a once in a lifetime chance.
8. I left with the sense that I know a lot and a little at the same time.
9. Intellectually stimulating.

10. The shared excitement over learning something new as a group, as I experienced in this class and all RBS classes, is invaluable and energizing.