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H-10: Histories of the Book, 200–2000
14–19 July, 2024, New York City, New York

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, the pre-course reading assignments were very useful, and the instructors did an excellent job of drawing out some of the themes and key concepts, events, and figures from the readings in their lectures.
2. Very useful! The recommended and required reading were so appropriate and helpful in the class and will continue to be for future work.
3. They were useful! It wasn't particularly necessary for this class (did not reference during the class), so I maybe would suggest changing the language from REQUIRED to highly suggested! Or perhaps require just one or two readings. Also, when I first signed up there was an old reading list posted and unfortunately started reading those before realizing a week before that the reading list had changed. So perhaps learning about changes would have been useful.
4. The readings were comprehensive and very useful.
5. The reading list was a little confusing because it seemed to change as new copies of the list were revealed. It would have been nice to have a suggested order for reading the books because I started with the descriptive bibliography one and it was not easy to understand coming from almost zero knowledge of the topic.
6. The readings were more than helpful but we had two different reading lists. I started working on the first reading list and then it changed. The second reading list came almost too close to the start of class (it's a lot of pre-reading). Please make sure to update the website with the most recent information and give students more time to prepare for class. Reading the materials before class is crucial.
7. Yes, the pre-course readings were useful.
8. Yes, the readings grounded our discussions and exposed us to “the canon” of book history. I do think that there was a lot of reading, especially given how much of the content was covered on the first day anyway, and was surprised to hear one of the instructors say “did we assign you — ?”
9. The pre-course readings were helpful but repetitive. I understand that we were being introduced to certain key texts, but too many covered the same ground. I would also have preferred for the instructors to have communicated any particular areas of focus going into the reading. There were so many names, dates, and places that it was hard to know what was most salient to the course.
10. The pre-course reading was very useful and prepare you well for the course, although there was some repetition of content. If I were to add anything, it would be readings on manuscript production pre-printing and on printing in the Americas. Also, links to videos of some of the processes/technologies (e.g., linotype) would be helpful.
11. I found the reading helpful. I am not sure of how to improve upon it.
12. The readings were extremely useful. I read them all and I think they were great uses of time and study.

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. We didn't use a workbook.
2. Very appropriate and I am looking forward to the full course folder as I know I will be using it close to daily.
3. I appreciate the long reading list/bibliography for the future. I noticed that the two schedule materials slightly differed in terms of evening options and timing, so I occasionally had to flip between the two.
4. The paper folding exercise was very illustrative of a practice I had never quite grasped.
5. I haven't been able to look at the course materials yet but plan on doing so once I get home.
6. We did not have a course workbook (other than the reading list).
7. {private response}
8. The teaching materials were excellent, and I plan to return to them in the future.
9. It was fine.
10. The content, especially the bibliographies, is extremely useful. I plan to refer to them often going forward.
11. I did not use it much.
12. The book publishing handouts were great.

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. This course helped to contextualize a number of terms and book production practices by explaining their evolution over time. I feel like this class has given me a baseline for exploring other aspects of book history in more depth. Very useful! I also enjoyed the course's focus on technology and cross-cultural/international transmission of practices.
2. The entire course was incredibly informational and each aspect of it will help in my daily work when cataloging rare materials.
3. Working with the materials was wonderful and the emphasis on the importance of vernacular book history was important to my theory. I certainly have ideas for visual analysis activities and working with Nineteenth-century bindings. I would also like to create a library guide for some of the skills we reviewed.
4. The pre-modern portions of the class were highly interesting, and I plan to collect some (much more contemporary) books to build my own collection.
5. I was very interested in the hand press printing period and how medieval manuscripts affected how print books were made. I'm excited to look at the books at work with new eyes.
6. I absolutely came away with new insights and ideas based on what I learned in the class. This course gave me new ways of thinking about the materials in our stacks and how to understand their context.
7. To gain a better understanding of the book as a physical object; explanation of context helped to give a look into how books were used during different eras.
8. The entire course was excellent, especially the time we had seeing in the collections what we had just learned about in the lectures and discussions.

9. The ability to evaluate older books for their construction or other non-content clues was very interesting and something I will be applying in my future work.
 10. I really appreciated how MI and CP encouraged us to apply the concepts we were learning to the collections at our home institutions. The course gave me several ideas of how I could apply book history topics at my library.
 11. I have a much clearer picture of how books have been constructed historically—especially as it relates to paper.
 12. SO MANY. The lectures mixed with the interaction with the items we studied was extremely helpful and gave me so many ideas for items to use in library exhibitions and classes/groups.
- 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 instructors were excellent. Their knowledge came out in their lectures and their use of (very impressive and well-chosen) examples of books, but even more so in their answers to questions. They were receptive to questions and never failed to provide in-depth answers.
 2. YES. I learned more than I could have imagined, and I am looking forward to using it in my daily work.
 3. Yes! It was a perfect survey with some detail.
 4. Absolutely, and more.
 5. I learned a lot and am looking forward to digging into the recommended reading list. I came in without any specific expectations besides learning more about rare books, which I did definitely learned about.
 6. Yes, and more. The course description is accurate. I do think that it would be more appropriate for the course to be titled "Histories of Printed Materials." Books are obviously key but all the other materials that come off the presses are just as important in understanding the history of the technologies, materials, creators, businesses, and audiences.
 7. Yes!
 8. Yes, I learned so much in this one week. I really feel like I have a handle on the histories of books now. I also picked up a lot of new vocabulary and skills.
 9. I think I got a good introduction to the history of the book, so I would consider the course a success.
 10. Absolutely. I took copious notes, which I plan to refer back to a lot. I hope to take more RBS courses in the future.
 11. Yes.
 12. I learned so incredibly much!
- 5) *How do you plan to use the skills and knowledge acquired during your time here?*
1. The knowledge gained in this class will help me oversee the development of a rare book librarianship specialization in our college curriculum.
 2. In my cataloging, which is my main responsibility at my institutions.
 3. Working with students, classes, and patrons.
 4. I plan to provide much more thorough description of the books I work with on a daily basis.

5. I want to look at some of our collections that came from one collector or a family and see how they were using the books. Besides skills for work, I'm interested in learning more about non-Latin types and printing in languages besides European languages in my free time.
6. {no response}
7. {private response}
8. In my scholarly research, teaching, and as a foundation for taking further RBS courses.
9. The ability to evaluate older books for their construction or other non-content clues was very interesting and something I will be applying in my future work.
10. The skills and knowledge will help me better engage with the rare, and not so rare, book collections I work with daily. I will be able to have more informed discussions with researchers who use our collections, and I hope to integrate some of the concepts into collection tours, exhibits, &c.
11. While talking about the history of the book at my institution.
12. To help patrons, create library exhibitions, conduct classes, and provide the best research and instruction help to all library patrons and museum staff, docents, and volunteers concerning our collections and the history of our materials.

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

1. Trained librarians in most areas of specialization, but especially those looking to move into rare book librarianship or SC. Any student of material culture interested in the history of books, literacy, collecting, &c.
2. Anyone who works in or with SC, as it is incredibly valuable information to have for both teaching and everyday tasks.
3. Anyone with an interest in book history, but specifically people who teach book history.
4. Anyone who works with books.
5. Someone who works with books, especially in a SC setting, and wants to learn more about them. I think people who use books and other printed materials to teach would also benefit a lot.
6. This is an introductory course so it can benefit a very wide audience.
7. I think anyone with an interest in the histories of books would enjoy this course.
8. Anyone interested in gaining a comprehensive introduction to the histories of books. As an academic librarian, I can highly recommend it to librarians hoping to teach and research in this area.
9. Anyone looking to get a basic understanding of the creation and use of the book in human society.
10. Anyone looking for a foundational course on Western book history. I really appreciated the cohesive structure of the lectures, which assumed little prior knowledge. Although I was familiar with some of the concepts already, others were completely new.
11. {no response}
12. The patrons of my library, fellow museum and library staff members, and me.

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. I had so many moments where I felt excited to put what I learned into my daily work. I can't pick just one moment.
3. Learning about the Declaration of Independence broadsides; learning about scrolls; too much to even count!
4. I could not believe that publishers did not bind the books they released until fairly recently!
5. Getting to see materials in person was really great. My biggest "aha!" moment was probably realizing that the paper is pressed down onto the type, not the type onto the paper (like a stamp), in a hand-printing press.
6. {no response}
7. {no response}
8. Every other moment in the course was an "aha!" moment, especially when we were guided through the collection items.
9. Seeing works like the Gutenberg Bible and other rare volumes was incredible. To be up close to so many significant historical works was truly amazing.
10. I loved the introduction to printing in the Americas. Thinking about printing in the Caribbean was completely new to me, and I'm excited to see if there are any connections to Caribbean printing at my home institution.
11. {no response}
12. {no response}

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

1. Not that I can see.
2. {no response}
3. I wish we could touch the material more, but honestly, I loved every moment!
4. {no response}
5. I know there was a lot of material to get through and this was more like a survey course than a seminar, but I would have liked to have had some more in-depth discussions about certain topics.
6. {no response}
7. {private response}
8. It is totally understandable that only the instructors should handle collection items, but I did feel like we sometimes went through examining a book rather quickly and it wasn't always easy to have the opportunity to see what the instructors were hoping to show us when we were huddled in a group. Maybe just doing a last call before putting the item away (i.e., "did everyone have a chance to see this?"), at least for the more monumental books.
9. More hands-on with the books. I understand liability issues, but holding the book is critical to the experience, and there were plenty we should have been able to touch. Also, I would have liked the course to have more interactive sessions where we discussed what we learned—some of the lectures could be tightened up to allow for this. So much talking at us made it difficult for the class to maintain the same level of focus, and more interaction would have helped that.
10. Minor quibble which probably can't be resolved, but I wish we were allowed water during lectures!
11. {no response}

12. {no response}

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. 10
4. 10
5. 10
6. 9
7. 8
8. 10
9. {no response}
10. 10
11. 9
12. 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. Kyle Triplett was an excellent guest lecturer, and seeing rare materials from NYPL and NYU was a real treat.
2. {no response}
3. Yes!
4. {no response}
5. Yes.
6. We visited SC at NYU (great to see a very different collection than the materials at NYPL). And we had one guest speaker who led the only hands-on practice so that was a nice change of routine from the regular lectures. The instructors have to cover A LOT of materials, so additional field trips might not fit.
7. Yes, I think going to NYU enhanced the course experience.
8. Yes, I loved the brief introduction to format. It inspired and emboldened me to take DesBib in the future.
9. Yes.
10. Kyle Triplett was fantastic—and made me less intimidated of possibly taking a bibliographical description course in the future!
11. {no response}
12. {no response}

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

1. No.
2. You will love it!
3. {no response}
4. I do not.

5. If you are going in the middle of summer, be prepared for it to be hot and for it to tire you out. The area around and inside NYPL is busy and you will be amongst the public and potentially large crowds, so it would be good to mentally prepare for that too, if crowds bother you.
6. {no response}
7. {no response}
8. You won't regret! Just take it. It is worth every minute and dollar. Being in residence at NYPL for a week was a very special opportunity.
9. Skim most of the readings for their general conclusions and don't sweat the technical details. Prepare for a lot of information via lectures.
10. Do it! But wear comfortable shoes.
11. {no response}
12. {no response}

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. Amazing, amazing, and amazing!
3. Enlightening and provoking
4. More illuminating than any manuscript.
5. Learned a lot!
6. {no response}
7. Enriching and educational.
8. A transformative experience led by two brilliant, personable, and funny instructors.
9. Fierce experience/history of books and print/thunder through my veins.
10. A cornucopia of book history, with copious coffee and cookies on the side.
11. {no response}
12. I experienced the rich and multi-faceted physical, economic, artistic, and cultural history of the book throughout history, which I will use and remember for years to come.