

Martin Antonetti
H-30: The Printed Book in the West to 1800
7–12 July, 2024, 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. I didn't find them particularly useful, but I know that's because I had already learned most of that information from my readings for last year's class. *ABC for Book Collectors* (John Carter) is a really useful book to have, though. I didn't find the Warren Chappell book (*A Short History of the Printed Word*) especially engaging or helpful.
2. They are a useful reference and much appreciated.
3. Yes! Loved the *ABC for Book Collectors* & Warren Chappell.
4. Required readings were very useful! I enjoyed them. I did not read the suggested readings.
5. Yes, both the main books and the two suggested additional readings were very useful.
6. Most definitely! I highly recommend to future students of the course to read the material in advance. We all came in as a cohort with the same basic knowledge at the start of the class and I truly found that helpful when navigating through MA's lectures. MA is a sensational speaker and pedagogue but the reading is so immersed in what we covered throughout this week that I think taking the time to read in advance made the class even better.
7. Yes, the readings were useful and will continue to be good references for me.
8. *A Short History of the Printed Word*—lots of useful information, but hard to read.
9. They were helpful, but not necessary. I think they would be better described as helpful suggestions.
10. I thought both were a thorough introduction and prepared me well for class.

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. The course workbook, which mostly provided names and references, was helpful. The format handouts were also great.
2. It was helpful scaffolding for the lectures.
3. {no response}
4. Very useful. I liked the folio/quarto, &c., folding demonstrations.
5. The workbook was useful, though it did not always have everything in the slides (which we were told ahead of time). Because the slides were well labeled and/or explained, this was never an issue. I do plan to use it when looking back over my notes.
6. Absolutely! MA's book with the spelling names, dates, and references to take notes with while he talks is most helpful. The folio, quarto, octavo, and duodecimo folding is always such a great tool to understand imposition and have a tactile connection with the work. I would have liked to maybe gain a copy of the PowerPoint from the lectures so I would have the images to access permanently, but generally speaking it was an excellent bout of teaching materials.

7. The course book was very helpful for names/citations and dates and the handouts for book format/folding and samples we printed will be great teaching aids.
8. The course workbook will be useful for reference and was good for knowing how to spell names. All the paper to practice folding octavos, &c., was useful, but took a while. Being one who gets things quickly, that part was slow.
9. Definitely. I really appreciated (especially) the hands-on lessons.
10. I'm so glad we got copies of the folio/quarto/octavo folding! I can take mine back to my institution.

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 information on illustrations and bookbinding useful and it was new to me. The SC visits were always engaging and interesting. The bookbinding demonstration (with the two women—Jill and Amy—who modeled some of the basics of bookbinding for us) was fantastic. I also appreciated the printing press session. The general/broad overview that the class provided of everything helped give me a stronger basis to develop an undergraduate book history course for my institution.
2. I appreciate the mix of lecture (and CLOSE reading of bibliographical principles), SC and RBS collection examples, and hands-on experiential learning activities.
3. Wonderful lecture content on early modern political and social thought.
4. After this course, I feel inspired to share my newfound knowledge of early European books with everyone around me. I was also inspired from talking with my classmates and thinking about what kind of programs could be applied or installed at my institution.
5. The most intriguing aspects were about book production. While topics like the type matrix and print shop were covered in some of the advance reading, seeing them in action was very useful. Having a real-life demonstration clarified a lot of questions I had about the process of making a book. Most relevant for me was the focus on paratext, and how readers and publishers interact with texts.
6. I loved the bookbinding session we had but what was most impactful was MA's lectures. I could listen to him speak about textual transmission and book history all day long. The saddest part is RBS ending because the book history context provided by MA is truly next level.
7. The history of fonts and bindings were fantastic, as well as bibliographical conventions. Hands-on sessions were incredibly useful, and I'm glad the instructor let us collaborate on describing and questioning the book as an object.
8. I loved seeing the old books. And watching our instructor as he studied them and taught from them in real time was amazing. I came away with many things to look up and research further.
9. MA's passion for what he taught us made me passionate and excited to learn. The bookbinding demonstration and the lectures especially stood out to me.
10. I loved the SC visits—so informative! I thought it was a good mixture of book examination, lecture, and demonstrations. Kept things interesting each day that we learned so many ways.

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. Largely, yes. We did move slowly through some of the lectures/sessions, which meant that some other ones got shortchanged a bit.
2. Yes, absolutely.
3. Above and beyond.
4. I got what I was expecting to learn and what I needed to learn, which was formal and precise language for describing and understanding the rare books I encounter often in the library. I found the SC sessions to be helpful, since we got to observe a variety of books and apply our knowledge from previous class sessions in real time. I liked that we could learn so much during these sessions under MA's guidance.
5. Absolutely. I feel like I have a much better appreciation and understanding of books from this period.
6. More than what was promised! MA welcomed the class to talk and grow even beyond the lectures. This cohort was amazing and jumped in to add knowledge when they were asked to join in the conversation. Several students who have been to RBS before really helped the learning in addition to the course material. This cohort was something special for sure. MA delivered on his promises ten-fold, and I learned so much from the students around me as well.
7. Yes. I learned far more than I expected.
8. My goal was to gain familiarity with the words, the people, the thoughts, the objects. And that goal was satisfied. Our instructor was great. He has such a wealth of knowledge. We did not get through all the intended material, but every moment of class was profitable. And we covered plenty including stuff not exactly listed, but entirely relevant.
9. I got so much more than I even expected to get out of this course. I am so excited to apply my new knowledge, and hopefully come back to RBS.
10. Yes—and more! I'm so excited about everything I've learned and can take back to my institution.

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

1. The primary use will be in helping me deliver an undergraduate book history class (“From scrolls to screens”) for my institution. But some of what I learned about binding and illustration will also be useful for my own research.
2. I will use them to evaluate the rare book collection I curate and to apply to my teaching.
3. Teaching and instruction for special collections.
4. I have a better understanding of the materials I am working on as a part-time paper conservator. I will be able to describe them to others more efficiently and precisely, and understand the nature of the objects better myself, informing the choices I make in practice. I will also be able to compare and contrast European and Asian printed materials (which I have experience studying already), which will be very helpful for the lecture I will be giving at the Clark Symposium on international printing practices this fall.
5. I am involved with a rare book museum near me, and I hope to share with visitors to the museum and students the appreciation and knowledge of book production I now have.
6. I am writing on textual transmission in the early modern era for my dissertation, and so much of what we covered in this course helped guide ideas as I formulate my

chapters and gave me resources for further study. RBS is a goldmine of a program for any Ph.D. student writing on book history, and “The Printed Book in the West to 1800” is a gem of a course.

7. I will pass on certain facts to fellow workers and continue pursuing personal book history interests in a more informed manner.
8. I am headed off to school in the fall and this will all be useful.
9. Book collecting.
10. With student workers and book history classes that visit my special collections and archives. I feel so energized to dig into my work collection and apply what I've learned.

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

1. The class is marketed as a beginner class, and I think that's correct. While I learned a lot over the course of the week and enjoyed it all, having taken one RBS class before made some of this material repetitive. I do consider myself a beginner, but this might be best for first-time RBS students (though the range of knowledge/level among the students in our class was really nice).
2. People who do not have a background in the hand press era, or one that is limited. I'd taken a broader history of the book course before, but I appreciated the deeper dive—and different perspective—that this class offered. I have a lot to take away from this week.
3. Laypersons, curious librarians, folks looking for a good beginner introduction to early print technology and culture.
4. This course is great for undergraduate students like myself, or anyone with an already firm interest in books but a lacking educational foundation in books to back it up. Advanced students or professionals in fields that are highly related to books but not exactly in it would also benefit a lot (e.g., archivists, general reference librarians who are often brought into courses with rare books, graduate students in literature or history).
5. This course would work well for learners on a variety of levels, from undergraduates to those already working with rare books. While presented as a course for beginners, anyone can still gain new knowledge through this course.
6. I think folks who research book history in a time period specialization that falls within the era listed will find this most helpful. MA really covers the promised time period so folks will really gain in-depth understanding. I also think book history and textual studies educators would find this class very helpful.
7. Honestly, anyone, but especially those with not a lot of formal history of the book training.
8. It is a general class and covers a bit of everything—actually looking at the old books, learning about how to set type, studying the history of books, and everything else. It is a good mix of “hands-on” demonstrations and lecture. So, good for anyone who wants an overview, but an overview with depth.
9. This is a perfect course for anyone even remotely interested in the history of books.
10. So many people! People starting in the field to those who want some formal instruction.

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. The bookbinding workshop gave me a lot of “aha!” moments. The lecture on “life in the printing shop” also gave me a much better sense of the mechanics of the trade.
2. The bookbinding demonstration in particular was enormously helpful—I understand that process in a way I did not before. The careful consideration of typefaces and their evolution from manuscript was illuminating and very appreciated.
3. No big “aha!” moment, but many instances of learned anecdotes that illuminated the books the class examined together.
4. The biggest “aha!” for me was seeing the size of a sheet of paper and learning why it can only be so big. While I was already familiar with book formats, learning this piece of information provided added depth to that part of book analysis.
5. To me, this course embodies the heart of what RBS is. MA makes this course so eloquent and collaborative. So much of the course was thriving because of the welcoming environment, which allowed people to share their own experiences in other RBS classes and examples at their own institutions. MA's grace in teaching this was remarkable.
6. Giving descriptions to type or bindings I've seen before but never knew terminology or context for was my happiest takeaway.
7. Our teacher could read Latin upside down in a Gothic font. He knows his stuff! I love learning from people like that.
8. Thinking about what books mean and what they mean beyond that, and beyond that.
9. The printing demonstration really added dimension to our lectures. (Aha!)
10. Most books were sold with a cheap cover! Aha! Just looking at and examining book features was incredibly helpful to my learning.

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

1. Making sure to achieve balance (too much time on typography; didn't spend much time on anything involving the regulation of the trade, copyright/licensing/censorship). The class also leaned more heavily toward the earlier parts of the period (not much on the Eighteenth century). I also really think we should be able to touch the books during the SC sessions; sometimes we're talking about the feel of paper or binding, and we can't actually experience it.
2. {no response}
3. {no response}
4. {no response}
5. No.
6. I think that there were some folks that felt rushed in taking pictures of the SC materials so it would have been nice for that demonstration to have been a bit longer; honestly I wish this course would never end—I realize it is a lot to cover in a short period of time.
7. Only being able to handle some of the SC books ourselves—but I guess we'll have to come back individually.
8. More time for class!
9. Maybe going to SC instead of them coming here? For variety?
10. {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. 8
2. 10
3. 10
4. 9
5. 10
6. 10
7. 10
8. 8
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. 100%: the bookbinding demonstration and the typesetting/printing demonstrations were some of my favorite parts of the class.
2. All of our extracurricular trips were terrific. I'd have loved more time typesetting, but realize that there isn't enough room in the schedule.
3. The Folger?
4. Yes! I loved the printing demonstration (guest) and bookbinding demonstration (guest). They were one of the most fun moments in the class.
5. Yes, the guest speakers were obviously knowledgeable and were able to share their expertise in compelling ways. The demonstrations they provided made it much easier to grasp concepts covered in this course.
6. The bookbinding session and printing discussion with the press were great additions to the course! I definitely would keep those in for future years because they truly enhanced the discussions being had by all in this program.
7. {no response}
8. No field trips. Typesetting and printing demonstrations were good, though I would have been glad to actually set the type, but I can understand that there would not have been time for that. The bookbinding demonstration was good, but a bit less interesting to me.
9. The demonstrations were amazing.
10. Printing demonstrations were great for helping clarify my understanding.

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

1. I would just encourage them to think seriously about what their knowledge level is. I'd 100% recommend this for true beginners. If you have some experience, I think you'll still get a lot out of it, but I might recommend a more specialized class.
2. {no response}
3. {no response}

4. {no response}
5. For me, the biggest key to this course is asking questions and hearing others' thoughts. It opened up many avenues of discussion that might not have been addressed otherwise. The discussion and investigation of books was a large part of what made this course so enjoyable.
6. Definitely read the course material in advance, I read it all and it honestly helps. Also, come in excited to learn. You will soak up so much information in this course and being ready and excited to take part each day is great.
7. {no response}
8. MA is an honor to learn from.
9. Even if you think you don't know what you're doing, you have a space here. Take this course for the sake of learning, you won't regret it!
10. Watch the documentary (*The Machine That Made Us* (2008) dir. Patrick McGrady) that Stephen Fry narrates about the Gutenberg press and creation of metal type. If you're on the fence about applying for the course, go ahead and do it—you won't regret it.

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

1. Thank you! RBS is so well run, the faculty are great, and fellow students make the experience wonderful. I appreciate the additional programming, the interactive/hands-on elements, the generous breaks (and food), and the overall community.
2. {no response}
3. A fabulous book nerd-out!
4. Inspiration!
5. A great way to learn about books and meet like-minded individuals.
6. RBS is truly a haven for educative growth in book history, textual studies, archives, and manuscript culture. This program is the epitome of what it means to serve as a pedagogical home for the comprehension of textual studies. Any moment here at the RBS is time well spent.
7. {no response}
8. While I may not have made use of all the opportunities to network, I learned a lot and am so grateful to have been here. I love to learn from the greats in the field.
9. Thank you, MA!
10. Can I please come back next year?