

Eric Holzenberg  
H-40: The Printed Book in the West since 1800  
8-13 June, 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. The readings were useful. I had read them in the past, so only skimmed as a refresher in advance of the class.
2. {private response}
3. Gaskell's *Intro to Bibliography* was particularly useful due to his in-depth overview of the machine-press period, thought it might be even more useful paired with, say, Broadview's *Reader in Book History*, as this text (with its glossary) might prove a helpful resource to those not as familiar with Gaskell's technical terminology, especially if the course is designed for those who don't have formal training in book history.
4. The three required readings all covered the same material with much of the same information. While at times this was useful, by the third book I felt like I wasn't really getting anything useful. The recommended reading was really wonderful, but I wish we had covered more of the material in class.
5. I loved the readings and they definitely helped prepare me and revealed a lot I didn't know. I especially liked Rota's book.
6. Yes, but a little repetitive
7. Helpful and I will continue to refer to them in my own work.
8. The pre-reading was helpful, especially the narrative overview in *Apart from the Text*.
9. I found the reading assignments useful. I can't think of anything I would add in terms of the readings. It might be useful to suggest some appropriate online videos.
10. I found the readings helpful, especially Gaskell.

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 workbook has useful content, but I am more likely to review the reading material and slides from the course.
2. {private response}
3. The course workbook was a valuable resource to me, particularly due to the diagrams of printing presses, illustration processes, &c. These help me visualize and understand how all the processes discussed in the course actually function/play out in the world.
4. Some of the diagrams were really helpful to see up close, but otherwise the workbook wasn't that useful.
5. Yes, please retain it. I will be keeping mine and using it as a reference guide.
6. Course workbook was great. Will use as reference in future.
7. Useful and thorough without being overwhelming.

8. The course workbook is a nice reference and refresher on techniques and technologies of printing.
9. I plan to keep the workbook because I believe it will be useful in the future.
10. I always appreciate the workbook. I take notes in it and often refer to them during my work.

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 was intrigued by the rapid bursts of advancement in technologies and how those technologies were shaped by a desire to hang on to the familiar.
2. {private response}
3. I found the course content on the nineteenth century very helpful—it's given me some ideas on how I might teach book history from this period to my future students.
4. This class gave me a much clearer picture of the developments in printing processes and practices in the nineteenth century.
5. The analyses of various printing processes were very useful and eye-opening. They helped me understand terms I've been hearing for a long time.
6. Just the broad overview and deep dives into specific topics. Enjoyed the Victorian era novels.
7. All aspects were relevant to my work as an antiquarian bookseller and will help me to better assist and educate my customers.
8. The details of papermaking (laid versus wove, surfaces for different illustration media) printing tech, especially stereotyping, not just for reprints but for use on a high-speed press, HOW EARLY photomechanical techniques entered printing. Learning the TYPES of illustration processes—relief, intaglio, or planographic—was great.
9. I learned so much about the explosion in book-making technology, economics and reading trends that it is impossible for me to name specific items.
10. This was my first formal book history course, so it was very helpful. I look forward to working with the rare books at my institution.

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. For the most part yes. I learned what I wanted to learn at the outset of the class, but now that I have learned a little, there's so much more I want to learn. Now I want to know more about how books were marketed and sold, more about reading habits, more about how publishers worked with authors...
2. {private response}
3. Yes. The course was an in-depth, detailed look at printing history over the past two hundred years. I've come away with a lot more technical knowledge about this period.
4. Yes, but I wish we had more reading about twentieth-century printing and practices.
5. Yes, with even more illustrations than I was expecting. With more time, I would have liked more on nineteenth–twentieth century print culture and how new

technologies affected pricing, distribution, and readership (with maybe more examples of things discussed by Rota).

6. Yes.
7. Yes!
8. I learned what I hoped about books as objects and extra info about the Books in Parts phenomenon was helpful.
9. I got everything I hoped for and more from the course. The classroom exercises were a great way to check that I understood and could apply what I learned.
10. Yes. My instructor was extremely knowledgeable.

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

1. Definitely improved my connoisseurship skills which will be useful as I consider acquisitions for the collection.
2. {private response}
3. I will definitely draw on what I learned in this course when I teach book history. It will also likely serve as a technical, historical foundation for me as I form my comps lists and then later as I write my dissertation.
4. I will use this information in teaching some upcoming classes.
5. In discussing book history with students. Improving my own sensibilities as a collector.
6. Mainly in special collections teaching with rare books.
7. To improve professionally in my work and better navigate the antiquarian book world, as well as to better prepare myself for future career opportunities. I am now much more capable of ensuring that my customers get the most out of their visit to our store.
8. I will use them at work with researchers and new colleges as part of their library work or research.
9. I think I will be able to examine the materials in my collection more critically and be able to better describe the materials.
10. I plan to use what I learned to more robustly describe the rare books at my institution.

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

1. People who are relatively new to the history of printing.
2. {private response}
3. People new to book history, or those interested in how books are made.
4. People who are brand new to the subject matter.
5. Teachers, collectors, historians.
6. Anyone with professional interest but without formal training on the subject.
7. Whom RBS already attracts!
8. New special collections librarians, archivists working with nineteenth-century materials, students of British/American literature and history.
9. Anyone using materials printed after 1800 would benefit. However, to understand the changes in the period, the instructor set the stage for us by reviewing printing technology from the period before 1800.
10. Anyone who works/collects rare books dated after 1799.

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. I found the hands-on exercises most illuminating.
2. {private response}
3. The videos were very helpful for understanding the development of printing over time.
4. Most of what we covered in the first few days and all of our SC visits.
5. I think I finally understand what "half tone" means—and how those images are made.
6. The books, demo materials, lithographs, stereotype plates, and videos all helped a lot.
7. Hugely improved my understanding of terminology I encounter in my work on a daily basis.
8. The eclipse comparison for why/how the photographic veil turns a photo into a printable half tone.
9. There were several but the two things I liked most were the many items that we were able to examine in class. It was very well organized. While I did the readings, seeing it for myself, handling the items and having the instructor walk us through things helped to clarify things for me.
10. {no response}

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

1. More handling of materials. It's great to see things in Special Collections, but examining less precious copies up close is so valuable.
2. {private response}
3. I wish the course had a bit more of a hands-on approach with more discussion. While it is history-focused, and while there are a few group or partner exercises incorporated, I wish I had gotten more time to put what I was learning into practice and talk more with my classmates about our shared readings.
4. For SC, arranging the tables in a "U" shape with the instructor in the center would make it much easier to see. Also more opportunities to sit with objects from SC.
5. No. I think EH is a fun and dynamic instructor who is smart to play to his strengths.
6. Organization could be tighter—I think EH knows this already. At times, more drawing back. I wouldn't mind if to start each day we did an activity related to the previous day's material, to refresh as we go.
7. I loved it just as it was.
8. A more detailed (session by session) breakdown of what content to expect in each session, not just morning and afternoon. More prep or session assistants to cut down on "do we have an example of X" time.
9. {no response}
10. I would prefer shorter lunches (maybe one hour?) so we could incorporate more class time.

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. 9
2. 10
3. 7
4. 7
5. 10
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. Loved Barbara's talk.
2. {private response}
3. Yes, BEH gave an excellent talk on RBS's Jane Eyre collection.
4. Our guest speaker was good, but I wish we had more time to spend with the collection.
5. BEH's presentation on Jane Eyre connected well with the themes of our course. I'd have liked to have heard more about CB's printing history in England and the Americas during the last century.
6. Jane Eyre talk was good.
7. {no response}
8. The SC sessions featured amazing items but I wish we could have had each item on a smaller table while Eric taught from it so everyone could see better.
9. We didn't take any field trips but we spent quite a bit of time looking at books in SC. That, combined with the tons of materials that we were allowed to handle, made this course especially valuable.
10. I am happy we had guest speakers and trips to SC That hands-on time really helps solidify the lectures.

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

1. This is not for the student, but for the instructor: I wonder if it would be useful to share some of the technical videos ahead of time. They were useful in conjunction with the readings.
2. {private response}
3. Bring a sweater! While Virginia is warm, the RBS classrooms can be a bit cool.
4. {no response}
5. This is a great course to learn how all kinds of books have been made for the last 200 years.

6. Someone who comes in totally blind, without any experience in rare books, might be confused.
7. {no response}
8. DRAW YOURSELF A TIMELINE BASED ON THE PRE-READING.
9. Do it!
10. Sit back and take it in.

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

1. Best nerd camp ever.
2. {private response}
3. A good beginning for those interested in nineteenth-and-twentieth-century printing technologies.
4. A good time.
5. Dulce et utile!
6. Compelling overview of all things related to the printed book from 1800 up to the present!
7. I am hugely grateful that such programs exist, as well as the wonderful people who make them what they are. Enriching, inspiring, enlightening.
8. So many cool nerds/Infinite printed beauty/My brain is too full
9. I'll be back!
10. A knowledge whirlwind!