

Erin C. Blake
I-10: The History of Printed Book Illustration in the West
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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. Yes, provided technical background and a historical survey with differences from what EB covered.
2. I found the reading I did do to be useful and the ones that I did not have time to complete were not essential to my enjoyment and learning in the course, though it would have been helpful.
3. The pre-course reading assignments were very informative and helped lay the groundwork for the course. I might suggest narrowing down the list a little, as it's a lot of material to try to absorb.
4. Very useful, and the amount was just right. Maybe some suggestions on particular periods/techniques from the exit reading list could be shared before the class as optional materials.
5. The pre-course reading assignments gave an excellent background so that we were all arriving for the course with some basics and some language in common. It was a fair amount of reading, but skimming some of the denser readings was adequate. I'm also happy to be familiar with the assigned titles as I know I'll refer back to them in the future.
6. I thought the chapter in *The History of the Book* didn't really add anything. I really liked "How Prints Look."
7. They were useful and it was helpful to know that completing the pre-course readings wasn't imperative. That relaxed me a bit as I found the content sometimes hard to digest without seeing the physical materials in front of me. But it was helpful to get a sense of things before diving in and I'll be referring to the readings quite a bit more now that I've completed the class.
8. All of the pre-course reading suggestions were really useful as there are so very many books on this subject to choose from. I'm not a library/book trade professional so it was good to have optimal selections based upon the expertise/experience of our class instructor.
9. The readings helped to provide a foundation for the week's lectures and materials. I definitely felt a more confident understanding of the material having them beneath my feet.
10. Yes, absolutely. There was a manageable amount of reading, and the readings were well-targeted to the course content. As EB acknowledged, Harthan is the best history of book illustration available, despite its age. Perhaps a few more articles could update the scholarly information on book illustration for the course? However, I understand this is a huge topic and it may be difficult to select journal articles.
11. Yes, for this course the reading choices were very appropriate. I wish that I would have received EB's further reading bibliography ahead of time. It would have kept me from adding on things in scope—but my fault!

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. Course book was very useful in class and as a reference regarding books seen in class and in SC.
2. Loved the workbook! One central place for my notes.
3. Very useful and I will be hanging onto it for reference in the future.
4. Appropriate and useful, and not overwhelming. I suppose lists for the biblioramas could be part of the workbook, too.
5. The course workbook is very detailed and thorough. I imagine that I will refer back to it several times in the future.
6. Yes, it's always great to get the further reading lists!
7. So helpful! The workbook was organized and accurate and comprehensive and I can't wait to go back to my home institution to see what we have of the titles we looked at in class. I wish there was a little more space for notes but that's only because I take so many—no fault of the workbook. I used an additional notebook in class when needed.
8. The workbook was absolutely first class—was used continually throughout the course and it will also be a very useful reference for future use.
9. The workbook will be an important reference as I process the material post-class.
10. The course workbook was well-organized and contained a lot of good information that I am sure to reference later in my research. As for the teaching materials, EB and Benjamin brought out a great deal of material that was not too overwhelming, but also helped to "illustrate" (!) course topics. My criticism here is that some of the mylar packets themselves could be better labeled with the printmaking techniques that were used and other salient information, aside from the packets that engage students in a guessing game as to the technique/main topic. While this is not a print-identification course, at times it was frustrating to not be entirely clear on which techniques were which. This is no fault of EB's lecturing—at times it is just difficult to keep everything straight.
11. Yes! The lists for taking notes was especially helpful during the biblioramas.

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. Getting to examine so many items in class.
2. I have a new understanding and appreciation for book illustration now, and it's made me notice illustration in a different way.
3. Getting a broader, organized history that I did not previously have. I think it will give me some additional tools for future exhibits and other kinds of outreach.
4. I appreciated all the things we got to look at, and while the amount of visual information was at times overwhelming, I think it was necessary to start seeing patterns and distinctive features.
5. I loved learning new information and hearing anecdotes about authors and artists whom I encounter frequently in my work. As someone who doesn't have an art history background, the chronological arrangement of the course combined with the familiarizing us with the work of "big name" illustrators was an excellent approach. I am walking away with more confidence in how I will talk about book illustration and illustrators going forward.
6. {no response}

7. One of the most valuable parts of class for me is being able to look at illustrations and “read” them in a way I wasn’t able to before, or with more confidence than I had previously. It also gave me newfound appreciation of medium rare collections that are often overlooked.
 8. I really enjoyed this thorough overview of the subject both in terms of the history of evolving techniques and their artists and especially the ability to view so many examples contained in the innumerable illustration packets and the bibliorama sessions.
 9. Having one-on-one engagement with the books was incredibly enriching, particularly combined with the lecture material. The insights on technique, process, and aesthetics provided ideas for both personal and professional projects going forward.
 10. I found Wednesday's sessions especially helpful since I am specializing in the Eighteenth and early Nineteenth centuries, though truly all of the course content helped me to understand the broad scope of book illustration/place my area of focus in context. I am newly interested in the divisions of labor and the economics of printmaking, especially for draftsmen/women in the process of book illustration.
 11. The hands-on experience with such a broad range of materials. Looking at objects/packets during the lectures broke it up well.
- 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, very useful as a survey of techniques and artists.
 2. Yes!
 3. Excellent as a survey course—I did wish for more discussion of technique but that was not something that was promised in the description.
 4. Yes, absolutely.
 5. Yes! The course covered a tremendous amount of material in a short time.
 6. I was hoping to gain more experience looking at illustrations from the Nineteenthth century onward, as well as aquatint, lithography, and wood engraving, and I am definitely more confident in identifying and understanding those techniques and why they were used.
 7. Most definitely. EB is a wonderful and generous instructor and so incredibly knowledgeable and warm. I have learned so much and it’s been a gift to spend a week immersed in the rich collections alongside EB’s knowledge.
 8. Instruction was absolutely first-class. It’s probably the best course I’ve taken at RBS. It exceeded expectations for sure. I’ve learned so much.
 9. EB’s understanding of the techniques and processes of illustration were thorough and vast. I walked in eager to learn about the technical procedures for illustration printing, and this was achieved a thousand-fold!
 10. Yes, I feel that I have a more solid foundation in book illustration, and recognize the major figures, techniques, centers of production, &c. I also gained a lot of side benefit from discussions with EB and the library professionals in class about navigating collections, which was unexpected, but quite welcome.
 11. Yes, but I was hoping for more history/information about individual publishers—but I am not willing to suggest removing any extant to fit it in. Seeing the objects is the most important part.

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

1. Teaching and exhibits.
2. For better instruction sessions, as well as more informed collection development.
3. To make better use of our related collections, especially in exhibit curation and hopefully in classroom sessions.
4. Even though it was not the focus of the class, I'll be able to use my new knowledge of printing techniques in cataloging and research, and I've gained greater insight about the influences some of my favorite artists were subjected to.
5. The knowledge acquired during this class will be very useful in both reference and instruction work, especially working with researchers who have a background or interest in illustration, design, and/or art history.
6. It will help me in my library job working with our collections—identifying techniques and styles and putting them into a greater print illustration context for users and for curating exhibits.
7. With instruction, perhaps writing projects. Just deeper appreciation of my home institution's holdings!
8. In terms of book collecting, it has inspired me to look a lot closer at identifying book illustration processes and which artist signatures to look for (and where) within images. The clue to identifying processes is to first eliminate what they are not.
9. Highlighting the background of materials in special collections, and in personal printmaking projects.
10. {private response}
11. Researching new acquisitions; studying more closely collections that I curate, teaching this material to students and staff.

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

1. Librarians with similar material and teaching faculty with an interest in the subject.
2. Anyone with an interest in how books are presented to readers, processes for book illustration, and illustration trends.
3. Students with some basic knowledge of the history of the book who desire to start getting more into specific facets of that history.
4. This is a really broad overview, so really anyone interested in Western illustration.
5. This course is excellent for anyone who wants an overview of the history of book illustration in Europe and the Americas, combined with some art history and history of the book. Especially recommended for anyone who works closely with illustrated books, either through cataloging, curation, research, or teaching.
6. This is definitely an introductory survey course, so those who are quite familiar with print illustration techniques may find they know some of the material. Though the breadth of items shown is noteworthy.
7. Anyone who works in libraries who would like to know more about illustration. While processes aren't the main focus, you learn enough to build some awareness.
8. Obviously professional librarians and rare book trade staff—but also collectors and those with a general interest in fine books.
9. Library professionals working with illustrated or art-based materials. Professional artists and art educators.

10. Though the vast majority of my classmates were library professionals, I would highly recommend this RBS course to more graduate students, particularly in my discipline of art history. As was my experience, the course touched on such a long chronology that most Ph.D. students studying European-American art would benefit from some aspect of the course, as well as situate their area of specialization within a broader context. I have and will encourage my colleagues in the field to apply in the future. I'm not sure if graduate students would benefit "the most," but more should certainly apply.

11. Library administrators who do not handle or deal with visual material; early career librarians for exposure to materials. Artists!

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. Looking at materials in the bibliorama and in SC was a genuine treat.
3. {no response}
4. Again, they mostly had to do with different techniques we got to see and study. It was amazing to see woodblocks and copperplates and understand in a very physical way how things were made and why.
5. It was fantastic to see multiple examples of different printing techniques and have opportunities for hands-on learning and self-guided exploration.
6. {no response}
7. {no response}
8. {no response}
9. The techniques for process line art and stereotypes explained. The sheer size and scope of many of the books.
10. I was thrilled to see the fascinating Bernard Picart volume, and to see so many examples that brought home the difference between various printmaking techniques as well as which ones were most beneficial for book illustration (or not! For example, it was interesting to learn that mezzotint was rarely used in book illustration for practical reasons). It was also quite interesting to learn how concepts of artist, illustrator, printmaker, publisher, &c. changed over the centuries due to changing social/cultural/economic conditions.
11. Some artists biographies. Connections between artists, authors, and publishers. Seeing varied editions. Random things learned and discussed with our diverse group in the class.

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

1. Not really .
2. I loved it just as it was.
3. I think the SC visits didn't quite work, due to the group's size and handling restrictions. Especially in looking at the smaller books, it was difficult to get more than a passing encounter with the material.
4. {no response}
5. {no response}
6. It would be great to have some class-wide discussion.
7. I can't think of any.

8. No, it was all excellent—our instructor was great and obviously put a tremendous amount of effort into the course beforehand and throughout. She was tireless.
9. {no response}
10. {private response}
11. 9 a.m. start—I would prefer to stay later!

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. 7
4. 10
5. 10
6. 8
7. 10
8. 10
9. 10
10. 10
11. 9

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. Visits to SC were good for seeing additional items too valuable to be in the classroom.
2. SC visits were such a huge highlight. Seeing William Blake and the Kelmscott Chaucer were amazing.
3. {private response}
4. Absolutely. It was amazing to handle books in the classroom, but to see ones that were not available in SC was great.
5. Yes, the trips to UVA's SC were excellent and it was both useful and exciting to see in-person examples of titles and illustrators whom we had discussed in class.
6. It's nice to see the items in UVA's SC but it always boggles my mind that we, as professionals, are not allowed to handle books. I would love to see some stations set up so students could see books close up, whether or not they are allowed to flip pages. Twelve people huddled around a book is tough to get much out of.
7. Yes, to SC. Very helpful to see more titles in person.
8. SC sessions were excellent.
9. {no response}
10. The SC trips were a great enhancement to the course experience, and objects were well-chosen. However, as a criticism (and I'm not sure if this can be helped), it was a bit frustrating at times to have so many students attempting to look at one object, especially the smaller ones. I do not have a solution, aside from perhaps a more organized viewing "line," or similar.
11. Yes. Visiting UVA SC was a nice change of venue with great collections.

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

1. {no response}
2. Take it! Do the reading if you can, but don't stress if you can't do it all. EB is a wonderful and knowledgeable instructor.
3. {no response}
4. {no response}
5. {no response}
6. {no response}
7. {no response}
8. Just do it—you'll learn much and have a great time :)
9. {no response}
10. It would certainly be helpful to familiarize oneself with the major techniques and timelines of book illustration before going in, which is to say that the readings were a great benefit in this regard! Also, to come into the course with a clear objective of what one wants to learn so objects and lectures are approached with this individual frame of mind.
11. More scholarships. Advice on insisting on support of courses or certificates upon being hired for a job. Anyone with oversight over visual art collections should 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. Intellectually stimulating
2. Intensely satisfying and I'm so grateful for the opportunity to take the course.
3. Worth it!
4. Make sure you have good reading glasses! You'll be looking at small things a lot.
5. A deluge of books.
6. {no response}
7. All killer, no filler.
8. Intensive learning, meeting great people and having fun too.
9. A journey worth taking!
10. EB was a fantastic instructor, and her command of such a large topic into one course was truly impressive—RBS as an institution also makes it possible to learn in many different ways: from the instructor, from materials, and from classmates.
11. Terry Belanger said to a past class that if you donate money to RBS, you have a better chance of getting into a preferred class. I am happy to donate either way... but many who cannot should not have that threat looming... geez!