

Deborah J. Leslie & Amy Tims  
L-30: Rare Book Cataloging  
1–6 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 mostly useful and thought-provoking.
2. Yes, they were useful. Although I do wish more were marked as “optional” since we learned so much in class and didn't really discuss the readings much.
3. The pre-course reading assignments were very helpful and gave me a good foundation in the hand-press period and cataloging rules to get started.
4. Pre-course information was helpful.
5. All assignments were useful and appropriate. I had read some of them before, but it was good to read them again with a new perspective. No changes recommended.
6. The readings were very useful. They filled in knowledge gaps and prepared me for what was going to come in the instruction. A basic guide to bindings might be helpful for those unused to binding terms.
7. The readings helped prepare me for class in a very general way. I truly needed to have lectures and exercises in class for the information to make sense.
8. All of the readings were useful. At first, there felt like a lot, but I truly appreciated them. It allowed me to arrive to class on the first day with critical baseline understanding of certain fundamentals; some of which were imperative to deeper understanding, but not covered in class. The readings were essential.
9. Yes. I would have enjoyed more time to talk about Sarah Werner's work. She also has most of her scholarship available for free on her website, which may be useful for students who can't find the book or prefer that modality.
10. Yes, make the time to read as many pre-course reading assignments as possible, because there will be no time available once the course starts.
11. Yes, the reading assignments were useful. Include the simplified book discussing signatures and more materials discussing Latin basics.

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 and teaching materials were very useful during class. I anticipate revisiting them, especially at the beginning stages of working with rare books in my workplace.
2. Yes, it was useful and I will use it as a reference resource moving forward.
3. The workbook is amazing—DJL compiled a really great resource that I will use for years to come.
4. The course workbook is an invaluable resource that I will regularly use.
5. Great workbook. The slides and examples are ones that I will refer to constantly for years to come. No changes recommended.

6. Yes, the workbook was very useful. It will be at my desk and used for years to come.
7. The workbook was thorough and full of valuable information. Some of the slide handouts were hard to read because there was too much information on each one in a small font.
8. The course workbook binder provided by the instructors was a game changer. The binder will follow me and be useful in my work for many years to come.
9. Yes, absolutely. The slide images could be bigger (larger font size or smaller margins to accommodate larger text). Very helpful to have the shared folder with the workbook preview—I followed along throughout the course.
10. Yes, DJL and Amy Tims provided a workbook for the class in a two-inch binder, to which we kept adding material during the week. Make room for it in your suitcase before coming and get some walking shoes too.
11. It would be nice to go through the Toolkit (Tab 13) on the first day at the beginning of class to identify the practicum assignment instructions and other helpful resources to utilize during the course.

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. {no response}
2. Everything I learned will help me in my job moving forward.
3. {no response}
4. I plan on using this information in my work. I also meant colleagues that I will keep in touch with. This course will benefit me in my career growth.
5. Practicums were most useful. While we can talk about examples in the abstract, actually working on a couple of items proved invaluable. And they pulled together all of the individual aspects that were addressed throughout the course.
6. Everything. It both refreshed knowledge that I don't use often, but also informed decisions for the future. I want to reassess some of my more complicated past cataloging decisions, and hopefully create policies for my institution to use going forward.
7. As my institution has never applied RBMS(B) standards to cataloging our special collections, I plan to meet with our curators to establish a policy for items that should receive this treatment.
8. There was nothing insignificant or off topic in my course. Everything was on point.
9. Physical format and edition/impression/issue/state. I have a running list of ideas to bring back home—new ways to address the stubborn records waiting on my shelf back home, and to improve our practice moving forward.
10. {no response}
11. Gaining an understanding of AACR2 relationship to the current cataloging standards and practices was enlightening. I have a better understanding of why things are done the way they're done in cataloging and will be able to confidently apply aspects of the learned techniques to my workflow in the future. It would be helpful to provide access to the AACR2 manual for future catalogers to reference while working for such elements as terminology capitalization, &c.

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. Absolutely they did. While I don't believe it's possible to really walk away from a one-week course as an "expert," I feel equipped with a lot of new knowledge, and armed with the ability to learn (or re-learn) for myself what I need to know to tackle situations as they arise.
2. Yes.
3. Yes. I felt quite intimidated by format and signatures coming into the course, as well as how to formulate proper note fields with the proper wording. I feel much more confident in my ability to perform these tasks now.
4. Yes.
5. Yes. But this needs to be seen as just the beginning. The skills learned here will need to be applied over and over before I can feel confident in what I am doing. But the information was exactly what I was hoping for.
6. I definitely learned what I wanted to, and more. I knew I had a lot to learn, and there was only time to brush the surface on some things!
7. Yes, but this is just the beginning. I need time to re-read, work on the exercises, and assimilate these practices into my work to gain confidence that I know what I'm doing (or at least know where to look it up).
8. YES. Both instructors were wildly helpful, competent, and great at explaining difficult or precise information. I did learn what I'd hoped I learn.
9. Yes—and more. I came expecting to learn about technical cataloging, but feel I have a more holistic understanding of the early modern book trade and the development of publishing, description, and bookmaking through time.
10. Yes, I learn a lot more than I was expecting to learn. Amy Tims and DJL made very good use of the time and planned the material to cover accordingly.
11. Yes. I did learn what I hoped and more!

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

1. I have a sizeable donation of rare materials to catalog, as well as a rare book room full of books that need to be re-visited—these skills will be invaluable for tackling all of that!
2. I will catalog rare books with much more confidence moving forward.
3. I hope to be able to explain some of this new knowledge to my coworkers, so that we can improve our rare materials cataloging as a team.
4. Plan on using it in the catalog, the rare book waiting on my to-be-processed shelf.
5. I now want to go back to my home institution and attack the backlog of rare book cataloging that waits for me there.
6. It really helped to learn not only the basic cataloging differences for RDA and DCRM(B), but also institutional choices. I hope to return to my institution and discuss more with my colleagues and decide how I can best use this information for all our benefits.
7. As I don't catalog many rare items anymore, I will pass this information on to our special collections metadata librarian and hopefully inspire her to attend this course in the future.

8. I will be directly using the skills learned from this class in my job, on a daily basis. It's also important to learn that I cannot learn everything in one week, and that learning will continue throughout my years of cataloging. The instructors not only helped in the skills themselves, but also provided tools, skills and professional avenues to continue honing cataloging skills after the class.
9. {no response}
10. {no response}
11. Apply to my future practice as a cataloger.

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

1. Someone with a moderate grounding in cataloging in general, who has at least looked at/attempted to investigate rare/older materials and thus has at least a vague familiarity with what they're looking at.
2. Anyone working in cataloging/metadata with any kind of emphasis on rare books—either as a student, assistant, or fully 'professional' librarian.
3. {no response}
4. MLIS students, workers, and librarians in the field.
5. Any librarian who might need to catalog rare books.
6. Catalogers who work with pre-1850 (or so) materials, at any stage of their career. I feel it's invaluable and can truly help a greater understanding of those monographs.
7. Catalogers who work with special collections materials.
8. Rare book catalogers, or catalogers interested in rare book cataloging.
9. This class will be helpful to a spectrum of librarians with a firm background in MARC cataloging, but would benefit from expert guidance to learn to navigate DCRM(B) and incorporate the standard into their work. Also an excellent resource for folks who may not have much experience with books from the hand-press period and would like to expand the scope of their work and knowledge to incorporate early modern material history. I appreciate the patience with which each student and instructor listened to one another's questions and tribulations.
10. Experienced catalogers.
11. Catalogers and metadata technicians.

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. {no response}
3. {no response}
4. {no response}
5. Almost too many to share. Perhaps the access to invaluable web resources that can be used by a rare book cataloger.
6. Learning how to transcribe accurately was so beneficial. I see such differences in OCLC records, and will more confidently catalog titles and names. Learning about the 23-letter alphabet and how to use and read it is going to be very helpful.
7. Deciphering book signatures wasn't as complicated as I had feared!

8. There was a moment where I stopped being as nervous to speak or ask questions in class. It came with the developing camaraderie of the students and instructors, and the realization that mistakes and different interpretations are a part of cataloging.
9. {no response}
10. {no response}
11. {no response}

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

1. {no response}
2. I didn't like the first few days of the course when we were called upon to answer questions. Going around in a circle was a bit more predictable so you could prepare to answer, but it felt like the instructors were waiting for a "gotcha" moment in front of the whole class and it was very embarrassing. Everyone in the class was lovely but it was hard having everyone stare while you try to figure out your answer. Especially for catalogers—I felt like fields we deal with every day were nitpicked when in reality we're just not used to dictating every single space and field out loud. I would have done better with written exercises at least until I got my bearings.
3. {no response}
4. {no response}
5. No.
6. The instructors could definitely use a larger desk. I always felt pressed for time, but my time was used well.
7. I would have preferred more time to work on my practicum, whether that means more after-hours sessions or shorter group exercise sessions during class.
8. {no response}
9. {no response}
10. Yes, RBS could provide cataloging supplies (magnifier, weighted snake/string, support cushions, measuring tape) for the students to keep and take home.
11. More after-hours access. Change the digital background of the slides to a more eye-friendly color or leave white—the blue was hard to get used to. Provide more images within the slides for reference to the content being learned.

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. 10
5. 10
6. 10
7. 10
8. 10

9. 10
10. 9
11. 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! Our field trip was very interesting, and helped illuminate the importance of diligent, thorough cataloging practices—and the need for attention to detail.
2. Yes, we had a trip to SC that was great.
3. Yes - I really enjoyed our field trip to SC. The demonstration there really helped me understand the differences between “edition” and “issue.”
4. Yes, interesting hands-on field trip. I didn't like the photographer taking photos throughout the whole 90 minutes.
5. Field trip to SC was useful, though some aspects could be changed to make it more effective.
6. Yes, we often encounter books with hard to determine similarities, so physically seeing differences in edition, impressions, issue, and state was very helpful.
7. Yes
8. We went to SC to look at some rare books that were not our practicum books. We engaged in projects useful to understanding the nuance of book history. It was also wonderful to see the beautiful special collections library.
9. Yes. I think the Babbett exercise needed more scaffolding. Our group fell into a strange rut and got stuck...perhaps fewer books or a suggested process would be helpful.
10. Yes. I enjoyed the field trip next door, it was a great hands-on experience.
11. Yes.

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

1. {no response}
2. {no response}
3. {no response}
4. {no response}
5. This course was a lot of work, and a lot of fun. I am a better librarian for having taken it.
6. It can be overwhelming to learn so much at one time, but the instructors and classmates will help form a community to get you through during class, and in the future. If you're looking for that community, I'd highly recommend.
7. Bring comfortable shoes! The campus is spread out, and there was way more walking than I anticipated.
8. The Rare Book Cataloging class is an intense week of instruction with not much time for diversion. However, every minute of instruction and practicum is vital and useful, and your instructors and fellow students are there to support you all the way. Every minute is worth it, and outcomes are immeasurable. I would 100% recommend this class for those who will be or are cataloging rare books.
9. {no response}

10. Bring walking shoes.

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

1. It's been a great time, I've learned a lot and met a bunch of great people!
2. It was a unique experience—I was forced to socialize more than ever, and I know that alone was good for me. Learning alongside like-minded people made the class itself even more enjoyable, and I think I have created a network of colleagues and friends that I can rely on in the future.
3. {no response}
4. {no response}
5. I'm nearing the end of my career, and I just wish that I had embarked on this path with RBS long ago.
6. RBS is a valuable learning and community building experience.
7. DJL and Amy Tims were knowledgeable, patient, and compassionate instructors who never made me feel as if the fraud police were about to burst into the classroom and arrest me!
8. {no response}
9. Thank you. I feel a much more confident cataloger and, perhaps best of all, I feel confident that it is okay (perhaps inevitable) to make mistakes, to ask for help, and to loop back around when the “aha!” moment hits me.
10. Fantastic, enlightening and unforgettable!
11. {no response}