

Heather Wolfe
M-70: The Handwriting & Culture of Early Modern English Manuscripts
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. Yes, I will definitely be referencing back to the list if it is not already available to our class in another location.
 2. {no response}
 3. The readings were useful and I now have wonderful reference material that I plan to share with my classmates.
 4. Very useful. Some of the tutorial images were challenging to read since they were older images that didn't allow for zooming, but the tutorials were still useful to reference for their contextual information.
 5. The pre-reading was wide and varied, and I appreciated that there were a lot of options that did not require purchasing or chasing down a book in a library.
 6. Yes, it might be useful to add an online tutorial for DROMIO.
 7. Yes, very useful to have resources to study in advance.
 8. Yes! They were very practical and provided some useful background information.
 9. Yes, very helpful, especially the readings written by Kathryn James.
 10. Yes, useful. Nothing to add.
 11. Yes, the materials provided a helpful introduction to the subject.
 12. They were very useful to prepare for the course and refer to throughout as well.
 13. An indication of if the book was required or not would have been helpful. It's big, and some people brought it with them. (The remainder were online and thus not in question.)
- 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. {no response}
 2. The course workbook was so helpful! Any time that I was struggling with a manuscript, I would return to it. I can see myself using the workbook to parse through archival materials in the future.
 3. The alphabet book condenses materials from other texts and resources that are challenging to find. It is an invaluable resource.
 4. The content was incredibly useful and the workbook is an evergreen resource that I will continually reference. The materials were available both online and in physical form which I appreciate.
 5. The workbook was incredibly useful in the class and will be useful after I leave RBS. I can't thank HW enough for putting together such a valuable resource that I can take with me to future archival work. The level of detail between alphabets, early modern sources, and secondary sources for further research is astounding.
 6. This was and will continue to be my archival research BIBLE.

7. HW was a wealth of sources and information. I will be digesting for weeks and months to come.
8. FANTASTIC. This will be a great resource to consult after the course ends. I am happy to have other resources (like the list of reference sources as well).
9. An invaluable resource! It will be my guide for paleography after this.
10. Excellent. Yes. I hope so/expect so.}
11. I will definitely use the course workbook beyond this course—we were provided with many relevant and useful handouts.
12. The coursebook was very helpful for class content and I used it several times a day. I will continue to use it after in my own paleographical endeavors.
13. Extremely useful—I expect I will use it in the future.

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. I liked the practice with transcribing manuscripts. The course gave me some ideas for places where I might take my research.
3. While paleography and historical research is not consistently part of profession, I feel more confident interpreting/ understanding artifacts that come across my bench. This is my first rigorous paleography course and I learned so much.
4. All of them! I walked away with many new insights and resources.
5. The immersive and practical activities of the course were the best part for me personally. I was familiar with much of the background information but still learned a lot from the contextual lessons. However, working with the materials, the practical transcriptions, practice with quill and ink, and other active parts of the course helped me get a better sense of the physicality of manuscript culture and paleography. Forming the letters of secretary hand myself has helped me massively in understanding how to read it by following the strokes.
6. As an early modern researcher and early career scholar, each part of this course was extremely relevant to my own skills and my future projects (the first being my dissertation). I come away from this week much more confident and excited to begin my own archival research!
7. The insights into the culture of writing in early modern England were perhaps most irreplaceable, though I loved the handwriting itself too.
8. I really appreciated having multiple opportunities to practice what we learned (in groups and individually!). I will certainly use what we learned to provide better public service for patrons interested in my library's early modern/colonial resources.
9. Transcription and metadata-> XML encoded transcription for our library holdings.
10. Transcription practice and norms.
11. I enjoyed all our transcription related activities.
12. I am walking away from this course with a much stronger notion of my future projects—I hope to transcribe more manuscripts, attend practical paleography sessions this fall, and invest in a quill.
13. Entire course will be relevant to my work.

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, HW is great! She is so knowledgeable and helpful as we worked on individual and group exercises.
2. Yes, the course helped me learn a lot about paleography and the different kinds of manuscripts that exist in early modern England.
3. HW was lovely and patient, the exercises were fun and useful.
4. Yes! I learned more than I anticipated.
5. I learned everything I was hoping to learn and more. HW had a great answer for every question and is knowledgeable about this subject area!
6. YES.
7. Yes, a difficult balance to strike in five days!
8. Yes! I learned what I had hoped to learn and more.
9. Yes absolutely, more than I could have possibly hoped for.
10. Yes, and yes.
11. Yes, I enjoyed that HW taught us about such a wide variety of manuscripts and exposed us to so many materials.
12. Yes—everything was addressed and I learned a great deal and improved my skills plenty.
13. Yes! Though I wish we had more practice time with transcriptions. Maybe not as intense as DesBib, but homework would have been ok on a night or two.

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

1. I will definitely be using the paleographical skills that I gained in my archival research and dissertation writing.
2. I plan on using these skills to conduct research in a few different archives.
3. I plan to participate in the paleography meet ups next semester! I will be working in library/ archive settings once I graduate, and I think this is a good skill to have.
4. I plan to use the skills acquired here in my studies as I work toward an M.L.I.S. degree as a librarian at a research institution, museum, or archive.
5. I plan to take them to several archives and work on my dissertation using more primary sources. This was a much-needed refresher of my skills that will help me work efficiently on finishing my dissertation and various research fellowships. From there, I hope to incorporate this into teaching once I get on the job market.
6. In my most immediate future research and throughout my career!
7. Developing knowledge of archives and all production practices, practical reading and teaching others.
8. We have materials written in secretary and italic hands in my library's collections. Now, I can assist with providing more detailed description for the materials and provide assistance to patrons who want to use the materials but cannot read the script.
9. Cataloging, curatorship, and further research into early modern manuscripts.
10. As I pursue my research.
11. Perhaps in future research.
12. I will use them to the projects mentioned in the previous questions.
13. I will use them to describe manuscripts I encounter at work—both written and oral descriptions.

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

1. I think anyone who works with early modern English manuscripts would benefit from the course, even if they have done previous paleographical work. The information in this class helped clarify several of the questions I had when working on past projects.
2. I think that any English literature or history Ph.D. student would get a lot out of the course.
3. Anyone who works with early English material, and I think you gain a better understanding of other scripts.
4. Grad students, researchers, historians, librarians, and archivists in relevant institutions
5. Graduate students working in archives for the first time or who are working with manuscripts especially would benefit from this course. Early modern paleography is so unique, and something like this course would be so valuable so there is less of a learning curve working with physical materials.
6. Anyone interested in learning paleography, whether they are academics in the field of early modern studies or just interested beginners.
7. Early modernists and librarians, archivists, curators.
8. Librarians, grad students, cataloguers.
9. Anyone interested! Particularly early career researchers and special collections librarians.
10. {no response}
11. Anyone with any level of interest in manuscript culture.
12. Really anyone but especially English, History, and Library Science students' with an interest in the early modern period.
13. Anyone who encountered early modern manuscripts and needs to decipher them!

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. We learned so much about the historical context of the documents we worked with. I also enjoyed the discussion on the material aspects of artifacts.
4. HW's introduction to the alphabet and coaching through manuscripts was incredibly helpful! Those first several hours of the course taught me more than the hours I had put in attempting to learn online through tutorials. The rest of the week new content and topics were introduced yet we continually reinforced and built up the initial skills we learned. The instructional design of the course was incredibly engaging.
5. The first time I successfully formed a secretary hand word by following the strokes in a manuscript was a major flashbulb moment for me!
6. Each time I felt like I unlocked a new hand felt like an "aha!" moment! I also discovered a useful letter about the person I am researching in the Folger database.

7. {no response}
8. Can I say everything? The numbers day was super helpful.
9. {no response}
10. {no response}
11. I loved learning to write with a quill!
12. {no response}
13. N/A

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

1. {no response}
2. {private response}
3. No.
4. n/a
5. None.
6. More kinetic movement if possible; possibly more reflection exercises, and exercises in which we are provided the correct answers? It was great!
7. {no response}
8. The only thing I would have liked more was having more time to work with our individual manuscripts at the end of the week. Perhaps selecting the items on Wednesday could help?
9. None.
10. It was very good and HW is a skilled and practiced teacher. I wouldn't suggest any changes.
11. {private response}
12. Not that I can think of!
13. As mentioned above, perhaps some lab time? Or homework/more time to practice?

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. 9
6. 8
7. 10
8. 10
9. 10
10. 10
11. 10
12. 9
13. 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. {no response}
2. Yes, it was great to visit SC.
3. N/A
4. Yes, the visit to SC helped us continue to apply the paleography skills we were learning
5. Seeing manuscripts in the SC was a great introduction to their holdings and a great opportunity to work with those materials!
6. n/a
7. SC was so thoughtfully prepared for us.
8. Yes! Loved visiting SC.
9. N/A
10. We made a brief field trip to SC and it was very useful and interesting.
11. Yes—our visit to SC was very informative.
12. Yes— the SC trip worked perfectly with course content.
13. Small visit was fun, but less helpful for me—but that might be because I have seen and worked with pretty much all of the types of manuscripts that were out for class.

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. Take this course! It's definitely foundational and a good introduction to secretary hand!
4. {no response}
5. Be patient with yourself and others, don't rush, and be ready to absorb a lot of fantastic information!
6. n/a
7. Write everything down! Advance prep is very useful but not essential.
8. Take this course if it is at *all* relevant. It's well worth your time.
9. If you're considering it, definitely go for it, a brilliant week and so valuable for my work.
10. Do it.
11. Sign up!
12. I will stay at a different place/have different accommodations next time around.
13. It's at times challenging, but you will learn so much!
- 14.

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. {no response}
3. It was an invaluable experience.

4. {no response}
5. HW and her fellow faculty are fantastic experts in their fields, and I feel lucky to have spent so much time with them and this community. I feel my knowledge base has expanded so much in just a week!
6. {no response}
7. HW's expertise is such a gift!
8. Pleasantly overwhelmed by information.
9. Exceptional!
10. Great stuff, very well taught.
11. Lots of learning, lovely people.
12. I will be back.
13. See answer above.