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H-10: Histories of the Book, 200–2000  
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## **Narrative Course Evaluations**

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 do think it is unfair to require the purchase of pre-course material when the course costs so much already.
2. Yes. There were a lot of them, so I didn't get through all of them. But I intend to go back home and read them.
3. I was only able to read three of the five mandatory readings. I found them incredibly useful. I did not get to Chappell and found Eisenstein too dense to get through.
4. The pre-course readings were very helpful to frame our discussions.
5. The readings provided a good general background to the topics covered in the course. Since some readings were quite old, I only wondered if there might be more recent, up-to-date publications.
6. The pre-course readings were a great way to get an overview of the material to be covered in the course.
7. The pre-course reading was useful and was gone over in class.
8. All of the readings were great. Although much of the content was also covered in class for me this really helped me remember it. Also, I'll be able to revisit the readings.
9. The pre-course reading assignments were very helpful in class. "Histories of the Book, 200-2000" covers a large expanse of time and the course reading gave me a nice foundation of knowledge for the class to build off of.
10. {no response}
11. The reading list had very helpful materials which put into context the course lectures, discussions, and activities. However, it was a bit too long and thus difficult to complete between the time of acceptance to the course start. Audiovisual aids would be useful additions to the reading list.

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 materials were very helpful. The items shown in class were incredibly interesting and helped to break up the class
2. I loved the workbook. I am looking forward to some other items that the instructors

will put in them, too.

3. {no response}
4. Our course workbook is a Google Drive folder and it is a great way to transmit and keep materials for our course. I am sure I will be referring to it often.
5. I think this question refers to documents in the course Google Drive folder. We didn't use these directly in the course but I think they will be helpful to refer back to in future.
6. We received copies of printing impositions in folio, quarto, and octavo that were SO helpful. I plan to purchase some to use in my teaching.
7. The teaching materials distributed during class were useful. {private response}
8. Yes.
9. My classmates and I were very vocal about how helpful the teaching materials and visual aids were during class. I plan on using the materials in the future to instruct my coworkers and as a quick reference for myself.
10. {no response}
11. They were useful during the course and will be beyond 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. The show and tells.
2. Yes, lots! Lectures series, digitizations projects, writing/research projects, teaching ideas, &c.
3. I learned so much. I have a much greater appreciation for the history of books as objects, printing techniques, and how to identify the different stages of printing history. I think that I have a greater understanding for how to better manage our rare book collections. It also is a great introduction which gives me a lot of resources to search out more.
4. While addressing 2000 years of book history in one week is ambitious, it was really fantastic to spend dedicated time immersed in the topic. We started with the Gutenberg Bible and ended with the Riot grrrl archives. Our instructors did a great job of contextualizing each object we examined and connecting it to the various social and political developments of the time. The course gave me some new material and interesting ideas for approaching the special collections workshops I teach in my own institution.
5. The course was most helpful in clarifying many, many things that my work has touched on but which I have never completely understood. I'm thinking particularly of the course coverage on material aspects of how books were created, for example: explanations of imposition, how gatherings were created, different printing technologies, &c.
6. Getting to see examples of the materials and methods being discussed was very helpful

to my professional work. I have new ideas for how to organize some of the instruction sessions I teach and also ideas for new materials to include. I am excited to walk through stacks at my institution now that I have a better idea of what to look for.

7. I really enjoyed the historical context given to the materials we were able to view. Advancements in papermaking and printing do not happen in a vacuum. This course really helps students situate the history of books and printing in a world undergoing massive shifts over the course of several thousand years.
8. I gained so many insights—from a broader understanding of the spread of print to small things like one of the instructors mentioned that they can only locate 30 percent of watermarks in Briquet. Getting to see examples of the books discussed was wonderful and really brought these histories to life for me.
9. The carts of rare books that we were able to investigate were exciting. I am a visual learner and being able to enjoy a lecture while actively looking at the objects was very helpful. The instructors created a visual timeline for us that helped connect all of the early course reading we did with the information we were learning in class. I feel encouraged and ready to pursue an education in Library Sciences. This class made me see books in a new way and expanded my love for them in a way I didn't know was possible.
10. {no response}
11. It was inherently intriguing to see the actual materials within the context of the history and theories being discussed. I look forward to interacting with our own collections with a new eye to the contexts in which they were created and dispersed.

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, it was exactly like it was described.
2. Absolutely.
3. Yes.
4. Both of our instructors were extremely knowledgeable and their specific areas of focus really complemented one another. Moreover, their enthusiasm and love for the material made the class extra engaging. I came into the class feeling like I had a fairly strong background in book history and this class not only put what I knew into a more cohesive context, but taught me so much more. It definitely rekindled my desire to dig deeper into the subject matter.
5. Yes! I hoped for an understanding of book history across a broad range of time periods as well as understanding of key terms and concepts in the field. The course absolutely provided this foundation!
6. This course was exactly what I was looking for in terms of a detailed overview of the history of the book. I now have a better understanding of the progression of printing methods and book production.

7. Yes.
8. Yes, the instructors were really great. They covered 2000 years of the histories of the book in a week—with excellent lectures and amazing examples, while making space for questions.
9. CP and MI were fantastic. The wealth of knowledge between the two of them is immeasurable. They were ready with answers for every question and were able to pivot and adapt to any train of thought. Every question was answered in a thoughtful and informative way.
10. {no response}
11. Yes.

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

1. It helped me acquire more context with rare books.
2. I will be incorporating aspects of book history into the courses I teach. I also hope to develop a full-blown course dealing with book history. I also have a couple of research ideas I want to pursue.
3. This will help me to better manage our rare book collection, as well as talk more fluently with our conservation center staff.
4. I will use what I learned to better understand and teach from the special collections at my own institution.
5. The course will most immediately inform my day-to-day work in terms of basic background in what to look for when examining a particular book and what terms to use.
6. I will be applying my new skills to reorganizing some of the instruction sessions I lead, developing materials for asynchronous instruction and reference for my institution, and making recommendations for new acquisitions.
7. I hope to use the skills and knowledge I learned to inform decisions about the maintenance and accessibility of our collections.
8. This will help me in my daily work in numerous ways. I feel that I'm more able to place a work within its historical context, which will help me determine its care, significance, and how to best share the resource.
9. As a bookseller, I plan to use what I have learned in this class to teach my employees some important foundational knowledge. The information I give them will provide a uniform understanding of the books that we are selling and a confidence in their work. Consistency is key and sharing a pool of information with my coworkers will create a strong trust.
10. {no response}
11. What I acquired here will inform my day-to-day interactions with our materials in that I will have a better understanding of the cultural, technical, and personal aspects of book production and consumption.

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

1. All librarians working in special collections.
2. Teachers/professors and librarians.
3. Those wanting a good grounding in rare book formats and book history.
4. Anyone. I really think a course like this should be required for all M.L.I.S. degrees. It's a great way to get started with RBS and I look forward to taking more specialized courses in the future.
5. I think the course is most useful to anyone working with a broad range of collections and/or variety of work with their collections, for whom coverage of a lot of different topics would be more helpful than other RBS courses which can be very narrow in scope.
6. Anyone who has an interest in the evolution of the book as a historical object.
7. Archives and library students who get little to no training on rare books in their programs; instructors who have to answer questions about the books they are using during instruction sessions; staff who come into special collections with non-library backgrounds.
8. Anyone working in acquisitions, collection care, cataloging or outreach would benefit.
9. Any book lover would benefit from this class. It seemed to be a popular consensus in the class that most of the people taking the class were trying to fill a hole left by their earlier education. This class is a great foundation builder as well as a gateway to more specific interests. I believe that "Histories of the Book, 200 to 2000" would benefit anyone trying to find their niche in the book world. I know that I discovered a lot about myself and my interests by taking this class.
10. {no response}
11. My colleagues and those patrons who I provide reference to.

7) *If applicable, what were the most powerful, or otherwise noteworthy educational moments in the course? Were there any "aha!" moments you'd like to share?*

1. {no response}
2. Making connections between the books I have studied, collected, and written about and how they fit into their specific moment in book history. Putting all these things in context was so useful.
3. Demonstrating books as examples were the most powerful moments of the course (and also the most fun). The books themselves are really valuable examples which help to illustrate points in ways that a lecture and discussion cannot. MI and CP brought out such a huge variety of books that it kept everyone extremely engaged and interested, even while we were receiving a tremendous amount of information. I also appreciate that they brought out books specific to our interests to better engage our curiosity.

4. The whole class was a series of "aha!" moments! The opportunity to closely examine materials that included Medieval manuscripts, scientific incunabula, examples of Colonial printed money, a Victorian commonplace book, Diderot's dictionary, nineteenth-century bindings, and late-twentieth century zines, as examples of the evidence of human activity at a specific place in time was very powerful.
5. There were many moments during the portions of class we spent looking at examples from NYPL and NYU collections when the instructors pointed out and explained a feature (of the text, plates, paper, binding) that I had seen before but never really knew what I was looking at.
6. Getting to explore some of the spectacular items in the NYPL collection was amazing! Being able to see concrete examples of what we were discussing in class really solidified the ideas and techniques for me.
7. {no response}
8. I had several "aha!" moments—the exercises where we folded sheets to make folio, quarto and octavos was so much more helpful than reading about it. Seeing examples of the different print methods—woodblock versus etchings—was something that came up several times and was also really helpful. I also felt like it was a once in a lifetime experience getting to have access to so many amazing special collections from NYPL and NYU. Unexpectedly, this course was also just really a bit of a reset. I came back to my role excited about everything that I learned and all the many resources that I need to read or integrate into my work.
9. As stated before, the treasure trove of books that we were presented with was always a treat. From the unassuming ephemera to the audacious manuscripts, each piece shown to us received "oos and ahhs" from the class. Physically seeing the books we were learning about gave us a richer understanding of the book as an object, not just a vehicle of information.
10. {no response}
11. {no response}

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

1. No.
2. I loved the way our instructors taught and the books they showed us—they were so generous in opening up the collections to us—loved that! But I would have liked to be able to handle some of the books instead of viewing them whilst crowding around 14 other people. Or perhaps we have a workshop session—recognizing that institutions have different rules about what gets handled—with books in front of us, to help illustrate certain points related to book history in a literal "hands-on" way.
3. I wish that the "meeting" time for NYPL had been 10–15 minutes earlier. Having to be escorted up, then settle down while MI retrieved the books for demonstration meant that we were always starting class 15–20 minutes late, and I feel like we lost some

valuable learning time in that. Also, having to take the subway for the NYPL trip and Grolier Club could have been better coordinated. The single metro card just didn't work, so many of us had to use our own. It was a little chaotic.

4. {no response}
5. {no response}
6. It was great!
7. {no response}
8. {no response}
9. {no response}
10. {no response}
11. Nope.

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. 10
6. 10
7. 10
8. 10
9. 10
10. {no response}
11. 10

10) *If your course made any (virtual) field trips outside of the classroom or had guest speakers, do you feel that they enhance the course experience?*

1. Yes, it was definitely great to be at NYPL but also to go to NYU.
2. Yes.
3. We had a really great guest speaker who helped to demonstrate book format. His lecture and hands-on demonstration on folios, quartos, octavos, &c. was extremely helpful towards visualizing and understanding book format.
4. We spent the week at NYPL, which was fantastic. We took one field trip to NYU's special collections, which was also great.
5. Yes, the course had one guest speaker who also led a hands-on activity that was extremely helpful in giving us a better understanding of that topic.

6. Yes, the guest speaker we had, Kyle Triplett, was extremely knowledgeable and did an excellent job of explaining some of the technical aspects of printing.
7. Yes. We went to see a talk at the Grolier Club and it was incredibly useful to see practical applications of the things we'd been talking about in class.
8. Yes, our guest speaker, Kyle Triplett, was a great addition.
9. Yes! Hearing the guest speaker, Kyle Triplett, made me want to take even more RBS classes and visiting NYU to look at their collections opened up a new pool of material to us.
10. {no response}
11. Yes, excellent to see how another institution provides instruction and organizes their spaces.

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

1. {no response}
2. No.
3. The first day is very repetitive of the readings, but valuable in that the reinforcement of the information was really helpful to me (and to laying the groundwork for the rest of the week). I just wish that we'd had more time, as everything was very compressed (which it always is in a survey course).
4. It's really helpful to do the reading in advance.
5. The week goes by very fast! Coming prepared with a plan for organizing your notes and thoughts throughout the week might be helpful.
6. It was great, do it!
7. {no response}
8. I took this course to get a good foundation before taking other classes at RBS. Since I've never taken a book history class this was a really good choice for me.
9. My advice is take it! I had an incredible time and I'm excited to look into what other classes RBS has to offer. The required reading for the course is interesting and important. Do yourself a favor and read it. It wasn't a chore, but rather an extreme delight.
10. {no response}
11. Soak it in.

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

1. {no response}
2. {no response}
3. {no response}

4. Thank you for a wonderful week of learning!
5. {no response}
6. This RBS course was excellent and I cannot wait to take more courses in the future.
7. It was really great. / EXHAUSTING. / But great.
8. Amazing!! Wonderful once in a lifetime experience.
9. RBS has been an eye opening and heartwarming experience. My love for books has been refreshed and my eagerness to continue learning has peaked. I feel like I'm ready to take on a new phase of my career.
10. {no response}
11. Grateful.