

Martin Antonetti
H-30: The Printed Book in the West to 1800
9–14 July, Charlottesville, Virginia

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. Both of my pre-course required readings were very helpful and informative and laid the groundwork of the learning that I would do the rest of the week. I would not have been able to keep up without having first read them.
2. The pre-course reading assignments are useful. They make it easier to follow the lectures in class.
3. Yes—they made more sense once I had the first lecture.
4. The Chappell reading was useful but I definitely needed to reread it after course lectures in order to fully grasp the context. The Carter reading is useful as a reference source but I don't know that it is a good preliminary reading. Again, it's most understandable when approached with a specific question or topic in mind.
5. Extremely useful pre-course reading, which I will still refer to in further studies.
6. The history of printing was initially a bit dry, but after taking this course, I plan to read it again with fresh eyes now that I have a better sense of the players and innovations of this time period.
7. They were useful. Additional readings would be welcome especially on the trades. Pictures of the illustrations we used would be most helpful, since it is hard to associate notes describing the object to a remembered image.
8. Yes, they were.
9. Yes. The terminology in *ABC for Book Collectors* is great to know, and the short history was a great foundation of printing knowledge.
10. I thought Chappell and *ABC* were helpful background, and some needed context before learning book vocabulary/seeing examples. However, the process of printing was a bit difficult to understand from the readings until seeing the press and the type—maybe a video after the reading before RBS would help? Would also love to learn more about collecting readings.
11. Yes, recommend adding Stephen Fry's "Machine that made Us" youtube video.
12. Yes, they were very helpful. I learned a lot from them that provided context for the class and will help me with my job. Great resources for references!

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. Very appropriate and appreciated. Well-thought-out and fun. I do lament that I have maybe a few too many unfolded sheets, but that's probably of my own doing.
2. The course workbook provides enough information that I can refer to when attending the lectures. I would love to have more relevant details in the course workbook.
3. Highly useful.
4. The workbook was very useful for organizing notes.
5. The workbook and materials were extremely helpful. I will refer to its content for further study and to research this subject more fully.
6. I took many notes on books to look up after the course and materials I wanted to revisit—I will definitely use this as a resource going forward.
7. They were appropriate and useful, and I will refer to them again.
8. It is useful and will stay useful. I wish the workbook could be more tailored to the stuff we have covered but since there always will be schedule changes it seems good enough for me as is.
9. Yes, it was helpful. MA didn't always point out which section we were in, which would have been helpful. It would also have been nice if he had introduced each item in SC with the date, title and author. The selection of slides and collections items was fantastic, and I will be reviewing the list later to learn more. The paper folding was extremely helpful and also fun! And the printing demo!!
10. I appreciated having the workbook and slide notes, plus the teaching materials. I will definitely refer back to the notes and use the teaching materials with future students and researchers. Some instructions on folding and different sizes would be another useful addition.
11. Appreciated all the handouts, especially practice sheets to learn format. Would love a Google Drive with images, slides, articles, &c. the lecturer is willing to share.
12. The course workbook was very helpful and I know I will reference it in the future. I wish there had been a few blank pages each day for taking notes about lectures and pages for taking notes during the SC visits. They're a little disorganized because I didn't have space and we didn't cover everything in them. The content was very appropriate and useful and I will definitely be using it after 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. I had a very emotional experience at RBS and my time here has made me question what career path I should lean towards. It's left me with a difficult crossroads.
2. The most exciting part of the course is the hands-on experience of visiting SC, examining objects, and seeing a demonstration of the bookbinding process.
3. In this time of frequent cultural wars, the relevance of the subject matter is hard to

miss.

4. The conditions around why printed books appeared in Europe when they did; letterforms—totally new to me; the process for setting type and printing it and making corrections.
5. How the book is created through different time periods. My head is swimming with information I can use to promote my library's collection of rare books.
6. Seeing books we discussed in lecture in person in all their glory; personal stories of important figures/collectors/printers; I didn't realize just how complicated printing/papermaking/binding was! I gained new appreciation for the whole craft.
7. Once type moved away from calligraphy, fonts could not be handwritten. They were a new form.
8. Since it is an intro class in general, I think it heightens my sense for books' materiality in general, which is a good and refreshing shift of perspective. Also, I like when the course content squarely interacts with literary history. For example, I like the edition comparison we did on Shakespeare's text. Plus, I think the printing and bookbinding demos are very straightforward and clear.
9. As a calligrapher, I was intrigued by the relationship between calligraphy hands (even those of individual scribes) with early typefaces. The interface between manuscripts and printed books was also fascinating. The details on woodblocks, typesetting, imposition schemes, and so on will help with my reproductions of early books.
10. Having an idea of the evaluation and printing was really interesting as well as helpful for my work, and the examples in lecture or SC visits added to that broader story. Seeing the materials at SC, seeing a bookbinding demo, and trying hand-press printing were highlights of the course. I also have a greater appreciation for books as examples in pedagogy, and how to teach with imperfect copies.
11. Appreciated case studies and lectures with slideshows. Much better understanding of the structure of the book as text and artifact.
12. The aspects dealing with the origins of paper production, evolution of typeface, and processes of bookbinding were most interesting to me because I know the least about them. I will absolutely use this material for teaching, presentations, programming, and helping researchers.

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. I learned everything I'd hoped and so much more. Although I feel I've learned so much, it's really only the tip of the iceberg. I can't wait to learn more.
2. I have had the experience as expected. The instructor has done an excellent job unpacking the course subject in five days.
3. I learned far more than I expected.
4. Yes. I wish we had covered everything in the workbook but I appreciate the detail we

went into on the topics in general and don't hold it against MA!

5. Yes. I learned so much more than I had hoped.
6. Yes, and more! It's amazing that we got through so much in such a short time.
7. Any failure to acquire all the skills is mine. I did learn what I hoped, which was an understanding of the change during the period.
8. Yes.
9. Yes.
10. Yes, I think the course included all I expected and more. MA was willing to answer questions, teach additional skills (folding, some pedagogy, identifying key features of illustrations) as well.
11. Yes, a good foundation and overview of the book in the West to 1800.
12. Yes, this course was very accurate based on the course description. It covered everything I expected and more. I learned what I hoped to learn plus more I didn't even know I needed to learn.

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

1. In book collecting, in book selling, in possible future classes I may take during an M.A. or library degree.
2. I will teach the history of the book by incorporating the pedagogical methods that I have observed in this course.
3. This is my first course at RBS, so I'm not sure yet.
4. To better interpret and understand the material evidence presented by the books I work with.
5. To promote our rare books collections.
6. Insight into career options from other students. Research questions based on what we learned (possibly in grad school).
7. To expand my appreciation of old books.
8. I will probably need to have more exposure to this approach before I decide on this one.
9. They have given me a deeper background for my reproduction of printed and calligraphy work, and bookbinding.
10. The course knowledge, notes, and teaching materials will go to good use in organizing and describing my institution's rare book collections for students/researchers and will also feature as a part of my professional development.
11. To better identify and describe books for work.
12. I will use the knowledge to help prepare presentations to teach students about rare books, presentations for outreach and public programming, and outreach conversations with faculty. It will also be very helpful in reading dealer and auction descriptions to determine books to purchase and in determining collecting and acquisition policies and decisions.

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

1. I feel that more undergrads should take the course and it should be advertised to them more heavily. It's a great resource and vehicle for learning.
2. Students who have no background in studying the history of the book.
3. All beginning students: it's a great survey course!
4. Anyone with an interest in learning more about rare books, no prior knowledge needed.
5. Archivists, special collections librarians.
6. Professionals working with/trying to identify books from this period; history buffs; beginners to the field dipping their toes in.
7. Students and librarians as well as would-be collectors. I think some high school students would enjoy the course.
8. Beginners who want to dip into the field.
9. {no response}
10. Librarians/archivists, collectors, and bookselling/appraising professionals starting out in rare book work, but who also have already invested time in starting to learn the trade and want an intensive course to learn more.
11. Students. Librarians with no prior rare book schooling. Those in the trade and individuals who are curious to learn.
12. Curators, librarians, and archivists new to the field of rare books would greatly benefit from this class. Students interested in book history could also benefit.

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. Learning the history and structure of typography, binding, the press, and specific individuals were all "aha!" moments for me. I felt I was constantly putting pieces together and making connections throughout the week.
2. When the class went to operate the printing press, I gained a better understanding of how points might work as bibliographical evidence. The demonstration of bookbinding also helped me to better understand the process of bookmaking.
3. Greatly enjoyed the printing press demo and the binding demo.
4. The demonstrations.
5. {no response}
6. Jill Deiss's binding/finishing demo; seeing Shakespeare's Second Folio; printing on a press ourselves.
7. For many, books were prestigious objects, like expensive watches today: telling time or the text was not always foremost.
8. The demos, especially the folding of sheets in person. Finally clarifies my confusion

about the different formats of the book.

9. Using the title page as a flyer to advertise the book. The educational path under a master.
10. Seeing the punches, matrixes, type, and press in motion revealed how technical, artistic, and physical hand-press printing could be.
11. Concept of paratext. All the labor, skill and finesse required to make a hand-press book.
12. Watching the binding demonstration was really awe-inspiring to me, especially seeing her apply gold leaf. Getting to print on a real hand press also finally connected all the dots in understanding how everything works.

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

1. I think if we had had the chance to view more "cheaper" books outside of SC, then that would be very helpful and fun. I was engrossed deeply in the lectures, but it would have been nice to break them up a bit. I would also appreciate it if the tables were set out differently so I was not constantly looking to the left.
2. {no response}
3. {no response}
4. No.
5. No.
6. {no response}
7. More take-away pictures.
8. I wish we were allowed to touch the SC items more. To crowd the entire class around one book made it kinda hard to see the details of the book from certain seats and perspectives.
9. {no response}
10. It's a lot of content for five days—smaller sections of book history in each course? Overall a great course, though!
11. Felt a little rushed for some lectures without the opportunity to go over every section. Maybe more time for a couple more talks?
12. I wish we'd had more time to cover everything in the workbook. I think better organization of the workbook and more blank pages are my only suggestions for improvement. It was a good mix of lectures, hands-on activities, and SC visits. I do wish we could have touched things in SC.

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. 10
4. 10
5. 10
6. 10
7. 10
8. 9
9. 10
10. 9
11. 10
12. 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. Absolutely. That would be very interesting and a good use of time.
2. Yes, the trips to SC enhanced the course experience.
3. Yes—SC librarian; printing press expert, and bookbinder all enhanced the learning objective.
4. Yes.
5. Yes. The hands-on demos were fantastic and really enhanced what was discussed in class.
6. Yes! Everyone we met (esp. Heather Riser in SC) was smart, friendly, and had so much good information to share.
7. N/A
8. Absolutely.
9. Yes. I saw many things I needed to know about bookbinding in the demonstration. All the visits to SC were amazing (aside from turning into an ice cube).
10. Yes—perspectives on printing and bookbinding that I'm so thankful were included!
11. Loved all the demonstrations and SC trips.
12. Yes, all of the guest speakers and demonstrations were excellent.

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

1. H-30 is spectacular and a celebration of all things about the book. I cannot recommend it enough.
2. Make sure that you read the books assigned before the course.
3. {no response}
4. No.

5. Take this course even if you have a slight interest in rare books. MA is a master teacher!
6. Bring a jacket; don't be intimidated by the brilliance of your professors and fellow students! You are a part of that brilliance!
7. Read more of the suggested reading.
8. The lunch break could be either shorter or longer. As is, it's too short for formal lunch and rest, but too long for just a quick lunch.
9. {no response}
10. Reading before the course is important, but also helpful to learn your own collections and big names in the field.
11. Come well-rested and with a mind ready to take a ride through the centuries of the hand-press period. Preliminary readings help to familiarize with terms before the course.
12. Shorten the course evaluation.

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

1. A dazzling kaleidoscope of eras, histories, people, and motifs dancing through your gaze like the most blinding of parades.
2. It is great to have an opportunity to visit the center of bibliographical studies in the United States and make connections with students, scholars, and enthusiasts in the field.
3. MA was a phenomenal guide who generously shared his enthusiasm and vast professional knowledge. He had a fine way of linking the materiality of the book with larger societal development. MA made great use of best practices, working with the wide variety of experience and backgrounds of the students.
4. It was great!
5. I'll be back!
6. The nicest people / Snacks every 90 minutes / The oldest books.
7. Learn, enjoy, reflect.
8. Eye-opening.
9. Wow! :)
10. A well-minded, educational introduction to the book trades and study of print history that every library and/or bookselling professional should consider.
11. I, too, have been touched by the 'gentle madness' and delighted to join those who appreciate the Book.
12. Take the class!