

Ian Gadd
H-80v: The Stationers' Company to 1775
5–9 June, Online Only

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. An excellent list of material to access. As a non-institutional attendee, some of the materials were hard to find or access.
2. I did not read ALL the pre-course readings, but I was grateful that I had read what I did. The reading informed the questions I wanted answered, which, given the time constraints (see below) on the course, turned out to be very important, indeed.
3. Very useful, but I thought Blagden was a slog. Even though it covered a later period than examined in the course, Robin Myers' book *The Stationers' Company: A History of the Later Years 1800–2000* was extremely helpful in explaining some of the terminology and structures used in Blagden.
4. The readings were incredibly helpful and provided phenomenal context. They laid the groundwork really well for the course; I wouldn't remove any of them. That said, many of the lectures repeated content from these readings and, having done all of the required and most of the recommended and supplemental readings, there were moments where I found myself waiting to hear new information. The lectures were incredibly helpful surveys but did not add a ton of new information.
5. A range of books and readings were suggested without any particular readings being assigned. I found that helpful.
6. Very useful.
7. These assignments were very useful—I was grateful to get so much background prior to taking the course as it prevented me from beginning with a virtually blank slate on the subject. I felt my ability to take in the information from the course was improved and the questions I had were more targeted. While I wouldn't suggest removing or adding any readings necessarily, it was somewhat confusing to know which of the readings were more suggestions and which were more necessary to complete prior to the course beginning. I did particularly appreciate the long list of optional further reading, especially as it could be self-guided depending on what each student was more interested in.
8. {no response}
9. Yes, they were helpful.
10. The pre-course readings were indeed useful. One article about which I'd wondered, particularly as we discussed statistical analyses later in the week, was Alan Farmer and

Zachary Lesser's "What is Print Popularity?: A Map of the Elizabethan Book Trade" in *The Elizabethan Top Ten: Defining Print Popularity in Early Modern England*, ed. Emma Smith and Andy Kesson (Routledge, 2019), 19-54.

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 is an excellent companion to the course and something I will be keeping in my reference library for years to come.
2. The workbook is pure gold. Thank you, IG, for your generosity in sharing so much (otherwise unavailable) material!
3. Very useful. I appreciated the appendices with general information, as well as the copies of original source material. IG's articles were very well-written and helpful for background information, as well.
4. I will definitely refer to the workbook as a supplement to my course notes. Having transcriptions of certain acts within the workbook makes it an especially helpful reference.
5. The workbook was thorough, helpful, and extensive. I will continue to use it beyond the course. Even more helpful were the exceptional materials posted on the course's Google Drive, which we continue to have access to after the course is over. Accessing those materials doubled the worth of the course for me. The instructor also posted all of the slides from his lectures on the drive as well. It's a hugely rich resource that I will use again and again.
6. The workbook is fascinating and will absolutely be of use after the course. The other materials were also quite helpful and I look forward to consulting them again.
7. The workbook was so thorough and extremely useful—I see myself returning to it far past the end of the course as I continue to perform related research. I could see some of the material within it being difficult for someone with less base knowledge of the period to access—in particular the readings in blackletter, which require some familiarity to parse.
8. {no response}
9. The reading recs and workbook content were excellent. I'm sure I'll return to it in the future, and I'm glad to have access to the slides.
10. The course workbook was extremely helpful, not only in the strong and detailed overview it provided, but also in its serving almost as a dialogue partner throughout the course. Revisiting it has already proved invaluable, and I look forward to consulting it for my own research and teaching in years to come.

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 found the overall history of the Company (and its legal and constitutional history) very interesting. It certainly has enriched my understanding of the history of the book in England. The course could easily have been extended by several days given the richness and detail of the history which for time reasons could not be explored in depth. IG provided a very good structure to the course allowing me to see the Company from a number of different perspectives.
2. Clarification on some things I've been wondering about forever!
3. I was intrigued by the social history of the Stationers, and the lessons learned gave me an even deeper appreciation than I already have for long standing traditions in the social history of the book community, the book trade, &c.
4. I really appreciated how IG structured the course via a chronology and allowed that to inform when he introduced the concept of apprentices/freemen, privileges, content regulation, &c. It felt very natural and organic, which is a testament to his teaching style as this could have been quite the information dump if presented differently!
5. I'm most grateful for (1) a sense of the development of the Stationers' Company over the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, with its many changes, and (2) information about how best to search various resources to find specific information. The larger picture helps me put my own research projects in perspective, and the strategies for research help me access important information. The course helped me identify new materials to research and new ways to work with them. It also encouraged me to pursue a specific project in the future.
6. The basics of how the Stationers' Company worked, what the imprint meant, how to search the registers, &c., all of that was most relevant and helpful.
7. The most relevant aspects of the course for me were those dealing with the operations of the Stationers' Company (the members, their different levels, their leadership structure, the documents they created and have left behind). I definitely have a better grasp on how the Company would have actually worked and what their major concerns, as an entity, would have been.
8. {no response}
9. I'm glad to have a better sense of the research, archival, and database materials covering the Stationers' Company. I'll use those in my research for my current project.
10. One of the angles of understanding I found most strongly enhanced through the course was its sense of how organizations, regulations, and other aspects of bureaucracy will have helped to shape individual stationers' experiences, both within the company and beyond. Encouraging my students to register this dimension more fully is likely to be extremely helpful as we return to work together throughout the semester. It will also inform my own research with primary documents.

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. The course was as described; actually better. I was looking for specific bibliographic tools and avenues for investigation as a cataloging bookseller. IG introduced us to a number of resources in print and online that will be extremely useful in the future.
2. Yes—But. We needed more time. Twelve hours is NOT enough time to cover the three or more centuries involved!
3. I learned so much, though I do wish we could have spent a bit more time on copyright, licensing, and other controls of the trade.
4. YES! I very much appreciated IG asking us what "one question" we wanted answered before the course was over. He definitely answered my question, and I believe he got through everyone's! This felt like a very thorough overview of the topic, which is exactly what was promised.
5. Yes, I learned very much what I hoped to learn plus much more besides. We were definitely given skills and strategies to pursue various forms of information.
6. Yes.
7. The instructors did fulfill the promise of the course description. I wish that we would have been able to work more with the Stationers' Register Online, since IG is one of the brilliant minds behind that project, but the time was overstuffed as it was.
8. {no response}
9. The instructor was very articulate, knowledgeable, and helpful. I'm not sure if the sequencing was ideal (it might have been) in that the march through the Stationers' Company history was broken up with continued follow ups from other discussions. Would it have been better to put all the history together? I'm not sure. I learned many things that are useful, and I think this was the best format in which I could have learned them. I'm a bit sorry to find that one of the resources that might be most useful (Michael Turner's database) isn't available.
10. Yes, absolutely. The course is information-rich and extremely thorough: this week, I am combing through my extensive notes and highlighting points of connection, further questions, and multiple resources that will advance my work.

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

1. I will be incorporating everything I have learnt into my antiquarian bookseller catalogs wherever possible. The course has given me sufficient grounding to better understand my specialization (pre-1700).
2. Personal knowledge.
3. I plan to apply these to my academic research on book history, and on a personal note, I now also more deeply feel the significance of my participation in longstanding book institutions.
4. I took this course more for my own edification as opposed to anything else. While I

don't foresee it having an immediate practical application to my personal or professional work, the overall sense of what the British book trade was like in this period (at least as it relates to the Stationers') is invaluable general knowledge.

5. I'm going to try to write an entry for the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography on a specific woman printer. The course has given me more information about her than I had beforehand, and the instructor has offered to have a look at a draft of my write-up. Information from the course will also be useful for two other projects I envision returning to.
6. To satisfy my own curiosity when questions arise from the great fun I have collecting and researching.
7. I plan to use this knowledge to perform my research more effectively, knowing better what sorts of questions can be asked of the Company's archival materials and where to go about searching them.
8. {no response}
9. I'll use what I learned in the course hopefully to offer a more capacious view of the book trade influences that are part of my research project. I anticipate it will also help me with other articles and publications simply because I know better what to look for and can draw conclusions from ideas about the Stationers' Company that I didn't know how to pursue before.
10. Within my current teaching, my students frequently focus on individual stationers and their biographies: resources and documents discussed and explored during the course will immediately impact the work they do, as well as the depth and richness of what they produce. Also vital to my work will be the reinvigorated and expanded sense of how key primary sources and resources intersect with and complement one another.

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

1. {no response}
2. Anyone curious about the history of the book in England, or even more, the history of copyright in the English language.
3. Researchers and scholars probably benefit most, though anyone who is interested in English history would also find this course a delight.
4. Scholars of British book history NEED to take this course! Even if this isn't their period, the context is invaluable and the reading list alone is a treasure trove. So much of the Stationers' Company's operations reflected or informed larger trade matters of the time, so this course lays a helpful foundation for anyone with a generalist interest in the British book trade or a specific interest in this moment of British history.
5. It might be more useful for advanced graduate students and professionals in the field rather than those at earlier stages of their careers. We had quite a few book collectors and antiquarian booksellers in the course, and I'm hopeful it was useful from them as well.

6. Certainly anyone interacting with English antiquarian books and who wants to know more about the London book trade of the late Middle Ages and early modern period. Book collectors and anyone working in special collections as an employee or as a researcher.
 7. This course would be of most benefit to people with some knowledge of the history of printing in England but not a lot; to those with a lot of interest in the different laws and governmental rulings that affected the Company's development but without much knowledge of the subject; and in particular to those who want to know just what the title of the course suggests, the history of the Stationers' Company from 1403 to 1775.
 8. {no response}
 9. Historians of early modern English books.
 10. While likely most directly beneficial to graduate students and scholars in the humanities—particularly history and literature—the course would inform and enrich the perspective of anyone who works with early English books and their histories.
- 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. IG's knowledge of the Stationers' Company and the research that has been done was extremely wide ranging and thorough. There were many moments where he was able to mention a reference, a contextualisation or a resource that added to my appreciation of the history of the Company and my reference list of databases, books, references &c. to consider
2. Grateful to wrap my brain around the English Stock.
3. One such moment was when the penny dropped on my understanding of the English Stock identity as separate from (though deeply intertwined with) the Stationers' Company. This understanding had always eluded me, and now I have it.
4. I really appreciate the clarification around the Stationers' lack of direct involvement with government or ecclesiastical censorship.
5. The emphasis on Arber's Stationers' Register as a primary site of research that is as or more significant than the STC was eye-opening to me. That's in keeping with the workbook's emphasis on primary source materials like regulations rather than secondary source histories or overviews. The instructor's elucidation of primary materials was admirable and helpful. This reliance is consistent with his status as a first-rate authority on the Stationers' Company who has arrived at his own conclusions based upon extensive research. IG speaks candidly about what has been done, who has done it, and how reliable their work is. The breadth of his knowledge of the subject is vast, and he shares it generously and kindly. He's a wonderful, diligent, deeply knowledgeable, and kind instructor.
6. Finding out what the English Stock was and that the "Printed for the Company of Stationers" imprints are the sort of Stock "stamp" : I suspect that could have been an

"aha!" moment not only for me but others too.

7. {no response}
8. {no response}
9. It was cool and useful to get a sense of the major events of the Stationers' Company, including its incorporation, the development of the English Stock, and the measures that led to the Copyright Act. Those are milestones that will help my thinking.
10. Hearing IG recast key points from prior scholarship was both powerful and a privilege. (To that end: our discussion *of* privileges was also particularly memorable!)

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

1. It could have been longer. As someone looking for bibliographic tools and detail in relation to specific books, publishers and printers, a practical hands-on delve into the online databases would have been useful. Perhaps even a research task to attempt out of class
2. MORE TIME! Twelve hours is insufficient. IG even talked about the hundreds of slides he had to delete in order to fit into the time. Minimum 15 hours, preferably 20.
3. This should definitely have been a 15-hour course, even without expanding the content we had in this twelve-hour course. More time would have allowed for more class discussion, of which there was very little and which often yields a deeper comprehension and new insights.
4. We could have benefitted from an extra one to two hours of class time; the students were very engaged (which is great!) but this meant that some of the later topics covered felt a bit rushed. Fifteen hours would be more comfortable for this course.
5. I did not find the portions conducted by Dr. Karen Waring to be as helpful, because she seemed unable to present the material in a way that highlighted what we most needed to learn.
6. Add one more day? Or make it a summer-long course.
7. Twelve hours seemed too short for the breadth of the subject and the depth of IG's knowledge. Either shorten the time frame (to 1710, maybe?) or extend the course time.
8. {no response}
9. It might help if it were one to two hours longer.
10. One only wishes there had been more time! It was a delight to be able to benefit so fully.

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. 6
3. 10
4. 8
5. 10
6. 8
7. 10
8. {no response}
9. 8
10. 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. Dr. Karen Waring was extremely knowledgeable and presented two interesting papers.
2. N/A
3. Dr. Karen Waring addressed our course twice. {private response} The content was useful and she clearly has spent a lot of time in the area.
4. {private response}
5. N/A
6. Yes.
7. We had a guest speaker in Dr. Karen Waring, who came at the subject from a somewhat different angle from IG and therefore her perspective was welcome. I particularly enjoyed when she shared photographs of relevant archival materials in her slideshows, although sometimes either Zoom or her presentation program loaded these slowly or not at all (there's always some technological issue in an online course and it was of course not her fault!).
8. {no response}
9. Yes. It was nice to change things up, and the information about the Stationers' Register as a primary document was interesting and useful.
10. I appreciated the depth and nuance brought to our sense of early Company materials by our guest speakers: I'd also love to revisit their insights now, with the full course in view!

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

1. {no response}
2. We had three hours per day of class time, with one to one and a half hours of breaks interspersed. Why so much time for breaks? And why not five days? The class really needed more time to cover all the promised material. {private response}
3. The course is recommended. Definitely read Blagen in advance, but leave plenty of

time for it (and have the OED and a lot of coffee on hand—it's a snoozer and full of terminology you'll have to look up, but you'll be glad you did it), and read Robin Myers' 1800–2000 book, especially the helpful glossary. I would also recommend IG including a link to his article “London's Book Trade Guild” be made available as early as possible, as it too provides helpful background.

4. Do it! RBS courses can be quite intense, but IG is a phenomenal storyteller and enlivens the material beautifully.
5. Because this course gets into the weeds of how the Stationers' Company and those associated with the book trade operated, I think it would be most valuable as an advanced course after one has had other introductions to early modern book history at the college/university level or via RBS.
6. {no response}
7. Do as much of the readings as you are able (and as much of the optional readings as are relevant to your interests) and ask lots of questions! IG has a wealth of knowledge and can make so many recommendations for further things to investigate.
8. {no response}
9. No
10. Definitely make as much time for the advance reading as possible. The more you are able to orient yourself through these and similar resources, the more fully you will be able to engage IG's extraordinary breadth and depth of knowledge throughout the course.

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

1. Just do it!
2. There once was a Mercer from 'minster, Who married a Stationer spinster. Her privileges granted her All kinds of books galore. Her husband was lucky to've win'ster.
3. The online experience is certainly better than nothing, but the in-person RBS experience is incomparable.
4. Informative.
5. In the numerous strategies and resources it offers for continuing research, in its attention to the interests of each student, and in its instructor's exceptional knowledge and generous handling of the material, this course exceeded my wildest expectations. It is a gem, and I treasure the RBS for offering it.
6. Delightful and informative.
7. I will always now / Know where the apostrophe / Goes in Stationers' (Just a bit of light teasing about one of IG's bugbears!).
8. {no response}
9. The level of expertise from the instructor and support from the RBS staff was excellent. This was a great use of time and a real help to my knowledge base. It's also the

kind of sprawling topic that works so well gaining knowledge from the expert in the course. It would have been very difficult for me to know where to begin, much less take in and synthesize all that content from my own reading.

10. {no response}