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B-75 American Publishers' Bookbindings, 1800-1900  
12-17 June, Charlottesville, VA

**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. Useful as context.
2. It would be great if the readings assigned in advance were easier to find/access.
3. Yes—I did not have time to read it all but it was great.
4. {private response}
5. Yes, they were useful. I would have benefitted from a review of basic binding terminology and practices. I was glad I had read Gaskell recently and recommend it to future students.
6. Yes! I had little knowledge of the subject before this class, so it gave me a good place to start.
7. Absolutely. A few might be difficult to find if you do not have institutional access, but it is a bibliography I will return to for future reference.
8. Yes.
9. The readings gave a good background for the course information.
10. Readings were helpful and I appreciate that the course did not require heavy reading.

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. Yes—it will provide a more narrative record my notes can supplement.
2. I have only had a chance to read a bit, but the handbook looks very helpful and I am excited to have this resource.
3. Yes! The workbook is worth its weight in gold—bibliography is amazing.
4. The course workbook was excellent. Not only did it summarize what we talked about in class, but it also included a works cited/bibliography for further reading, and it also had pasted-in samples of different binding materials. I will definitely be using this workbook well after the course concludes.
5. The workbook will be a wonderful resource, especially the bibliography.
6. Everything was super useful. All the different binding examples we got to handle were incredible to look at and covered the wide and varied examples we discussed in class.
7. I rarely have time to consult the workbook until after my week at RBS, but I always

- find them eternally helpful. They have a permanent place on my bookshelf.
8. Yes.
  9. The workbook has lots of good information and will be helpful in the future.
  10. Content appropriate and useful—a good resource to return to after class.

3) *How do you plan to use the skills and knowledge acquired during your RBS course? Did you walk away with any “aha!” moments, new ideas, or project plans?*

1. Oh Lordy, yes—made me reevaluate my knowledge/assumptions from the first class period.
2. I am still thinking about this, but yes, most likely. I think I can see a lot of what I learned being immediately useful with collection management and development.
3. I hope to bring this knowledge back to my institution and let it inform my conservation decisions at work.
4. This course made me want to go back to all of the nineteenth-century American books that I have seen and re-examine the bindings, since I now have a better idea of what to look for. The course also introduced me to several new books that I want to track down and examine (and possibly also purchase).
5. I will use the knowledge to inform and improve my book history course for undergraduates. For that purpose, I found the information on the labor and business practices especially helpful and interesting.
6. I hope to apply this knowledge to our current special collections library to assess what we already have and for any potential future acquisitions.
7. Oh yes! I have a whole list of research projects, articles, cataloging projects, and my wish list has certainly grown.
8. This course interfaces very well with other RBS courses taught on the history of printing in this period. TP is particularly good at clarifying where there are overt differences of opinions among experts in the field, and why.
9. I will incorporate this into my teaching and conservation of similar materials.
10. By the end of class I was already starting to establish a clear publishing history for a text I write about using publishers’ bindings as evidence.

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, plus some.
2. Yes. Yes.
3. Yes, a thousand times yes.
4. Yes! I now have a much better understanding both of how these books were made and of the period in which they were made, as well as the people who made them.
5. Yes. Again, I was especially interested in the changes in labor and economics and

- appreciated that we paid attention to those elements and also to women's roles in the production of bindings over time—from folding to design.
6. Yes! ☺
  7. 100%.
  8. Yes, the course provided all that was promised in the course description and was tremendously enjoyable besides.
  9. As listed in the description, I am able to better identify and assess books from this period.
  10. I learned more than I expected and TP did a great job balancing information and opportunities to put that information to use by identifying publishers' bindings.

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

1. TP was amazing. My only regret is that we did not have more time.
2. I would have loved to have learned about lithography and photoduplication on covers. The dust jacket session was interesting, but the set-up made it hard to see everything.
3. No!
4. Sometimes I struggled to sit through an hour and a half of lectures at a time. The lectures were informative, but I personally needed more activities that made me think. {private response}
5. I hesitate to add anything because our days were already so full, but I would have loved to have some hands-on practice/experimentation—maybe with constructing a case or sewing signatures. The demonstrations were great, but doing it would have helped me learn even more.
6. I loved that there was an emphasis on women's work in the binderies! I would love to see (if possible) how people of color would have worked in and around binderies during this time (I know it is already a lot to cover...).
7. Perhaps more handling of books or demonstrations of binding processes? But honestly, happy with the amount of book handling and demonstrations we did get.
8. It might have helped to have some additional small flashlights available for those of us with weakening vision.
9. No.
10. I would have liked an opportunity to make a case binding in class.

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

1. Curators, catalogers, people interested in artifacts over content.
2. Librarians, curators, conservators, binders, dealers, collectors, students—anyone with an interest in nineteenth-century book history.
3. Anyone with an interest in the American book trade and bookbindings.
4. Anyone who is interested in how nineteenth-century American bookbindings were

- physically produced, and/or in nineteenth-century American publishers' bindings.
5. The course seems best suited to cataloguers and others with collections responsibilities in relevant areas who need to identify publishers' bindings and their elements—although I am not a librarian I also learned a lot that I will use.
  6. Special collections librarians, conservators, American literature academics.
  7. Special collections curators, cataloguers, conservators, and collectors.
  8. TP provides a truly 360 degree view of publishers' bindings and the historical sources that can be marshaled to provide insight into their design and manufacture. Graduate students who work with these materials could learn a great deal and sharpen their eye for physical evidence in the books themselves.
  9. Librarians and conservators who have these collections in their libraries.
  10. Americanists, artists, and binders interested in bindings, book design, and publishing history.
- 7) *Do you feel that you got your money's worth? Would you recommend the course to others?*
1. Yes.
  2. Yes. Yes.
  3. Yes and yes.
  4. Yes and yes!
  5. Yes and yes! TP is an unfailingly kind and generous instructor—even shortening the lunch break on two occasions to give us more hands-on time.
  6. Yes!
  7. 100% yes.
  8. Yes, I would warmly recommend the course to others.
  9. It was a great course and I will recommend it to others.
  10. Absolutely! Highly recommend this class.
- 8) *If your course made any trips outside of the classroom, do you feel that they were time well spent?*
1. SC came to us—staff was excellently prepared, very useful.
  2. N/A.
  3. N/A.
  4. N/A.
  5. We did not, but SC came to us, and it was time well spent. It is always preferable to see the actual objects rather than slides, even when (as with SC materials) we cannot touch them.
  6. N/A.
  7. N/A.
  8. N/A.
  9. N/A.

10. N/A.

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

1. {no response}
2. TP really paid attention to our needs and interests and built the class around them, which I really appreciated.
3. Get ready to see lots of beautiful books!
4. N/A.
5. It is a great course, with a thoughtful, helpful, and genuinely kind instructor. I do think it is helpful to come in with some knowledge about how bindings are made.
6. This was a great class for someone who was a first time RBS student! I was nervous at first, but TP has a warm and welcoming class environment. I was at ease and excited about the topic.
7. TP is wonderful, so knowledgeable and kind and I feel so lucky to have been his student for a week and absorb a bit of his wisdom. This class really inspired me to start a few projects that I have long considered.
8. TP is a wonderful instructor who makes any nineteenth-century binding, from the battered to the beautiful, into something that gives us insight into the historical period.
9. {no response}
10. {no response}

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

1. So much knowledge crammed in head. Very exhausted. Happy.
2. {no response}
3. A lot happens in a hundred years.
4. My brain hurts because of all the learning, and I consider that to be a good thing. ☺
5. {no response}
6. Don't lick books! ☺
7. I missed you, RBS, so so so happy to be back! <3
8. Looking forward to seeing the McGregor Room again!
9. {no response}
10. RBS is as much about hands-on learning as it is about connecting with other scholars, librarians, and students invested in book history, print culture, and bibliography. Always the best week of my summer.