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H-65: Material Foundations of Map History, 1450–1900  
1–6 June, 2025, 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, they were. In fact, I would prefer even more pre-course readings of short articles.
2. Yes, they were very helpful in building a framework for the lessons we learned in class.
3. The articles on atlases and maps in books were most helpful. I thought there should have been more reading prior to the course. In particular, some kind of historical overview of mapmaking, its history, and/or key terminology would have been helpful and would have reduced the time needed for informational lectures in class.
4. I think the reading provided a useful theoretical framework for the course
5. The readings were helpful to me personally, but there was very little reference to them in the course. They did not seem “required” for comprehending or following the course. One essay, by Dym and Lois, was particularly good. As it foregrounds the materiality and context of maps, it could have been used to frame the entire course.
6. Yes.
7. Yes, all the suggested readings were helpful, especially Dym and Lois.
8. {no response}
9. Yes, pre-course readings were useful!
10. Yes. It would be great to have a reading that is more basic info on maps, how they've made, terms we'll be using, etc. All the readings were pretty high level.
11. Yes. I would appreciate greater variety of material related to the production/printing of maps, separate from map theory
12. Yes—I appreciated the breadth and brevity of the readings. Having read Matthew's book helped me a lot, too—I would recommend adding the intro to the reading list!
13. The pre-course readings were useful, especially the ones about maps bound in books and about maps used as decoration. It could be helpful to have an additional reading of terms or a glossary of features/parts of maps.

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. Excellent. The course workbook and bibliography therein will be very useful in the future.
2. Incredibly helpful! I will definitely be referring to the bibliography section for future research.

3. The bibliography was especially helpful. I will definitely be using that after the course. I also appreciate ME sharing his PowerPoint slides with us.
4. The bibliography section of the course packet will be especially helpful. It is also helpful that the instructor has provided us with the PDFs of the PowerPoint presentations.
5. The bibliography in the workbook is useful for future reference, especially as the lecturer mentioned many books that were not in his slides.
6. The bibliography distributed in class was helpful. I will use this resource.
7. Yes, I will definitely consult the loooooong bibliography included in the workbook. Also appreciate ME sharing all the slides.
8. {no response}
9. Yes, the course workbook will definitely remain useful, especially the comprehensive list of sources that further explore the topics discussed this week. I also very much appreciate the detailed nature of ME's PowerPoint slides.
10. Fine.
11. The bibliography in the workbook is very helpful.
12. I love the bibliography—many thanks! Having outlines of what each session covered would have been a helpful addition, too, but getting copies of the slides is very appreciated.
13. The extended bibliography was useful and will continue to be after the course. It would be useful to add a listing of the RBS and SC materials that are shown throughout the week so that we could take notes next to their listing.

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. Listening to Matthew Edney's commentary—especially his analysis of maps (whether on the screen or by handling physical copies).
2. I found the day spent discussing printing processes to be the most useful and engaging because of the hands-on approach. I also really enjoyed looking at the atlases from SC.
3. I thought ME's organization of the course was well thought-out in terms of how the individual days were structured. The course did give me some ideas to guide my future work, but honestly not to the extent that I had hoped it would.
4. The sessions involving discussion of the material production processes for creating maps from woodblock to engraving to lithography were especially useful; however, I felt that this would be the main focus of the course, so I was left feeling that I had wished we'd spent longer focusing on these processes and had had the opportunity to view more materials reflecting each category.
5. Three aspects were most useful: the Dym and Lois article; watching ME inspect maps and demonstrate his immense knowledge of printing processes and early modern mapping; and our sessions learning to handle and classify maps. I came away with a much better understanding of the relationship of manuscript and print, and ideas for a new book.
6. The hands-on session on printing and the two sessions in SC were helpful. Both provided insights that will help me develop my project.

7. Hands-on activities were most exciting—printing day, obviously! Breakout/small group discussions and report-back style activities allowed more close viewing of materials. Appreciated seeing actual maps and books. Yes, I will use these ideas.
8. {no response}
9. The overview of how to approach map history, including the substantive introduction to the problems faced by current scholars, was the most intriguing and relevant to me. I really appreciated how this course gave me the vocabulary to express the materials with which I work.
10. I learned a lot about map theory.
11. The day of printing material and learning about map productions with real examples was wonderful and very insightful
12. I appreciated the deep dive into theory—how to think (or not think) about mapping was new and helpful for me. I think it will inform my further instruction + how I introduce maps-as-sources to students. Also—loved the hands-on printing!
13. The explanation of different printing methods was very enlightening. I appreciated the cartobibliographical exercise at the end as it gave me ideas of why and how to use bibliographies in my job.

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. But I would have preferred more exposure to the actual maps.
2. Absolutely, I learned everything I was hoping to learn and more!
3. Sort of. I would have liked ME to have done more modeling of how to interpret a map materially. There is a lot of basic map vocabulary that I don't feel like I grasp; I would have liked a reference source ahead of time to help me understand this better.
4. Based on the title and description of the course, I had hoped to get an in-depth and technical introduction to the material processes of creating and disseminating maps based on working closely hands-on with collections materials. In the end, I feel that I did get some of this experience. However, that said, the course began and ended with two days of highly theoretical discussion of the historiography and multidisciplinary development of the study of maps as a concept within modern scholarship/bibliographic practices of codifying scholarly discourse. This information was interesting, but would be much better suited to a graduate seminar rather than an RBS course with limited time. The first and last day topics could have been condensed into a session each allowing for significantly more time to work hands-on with materials and to discuss the material elements of maps.
5. ME is skilled, even encyclopedic, in his knowledge of maps. However, his teaching style favors the lecture, which is not my favorite way of learning or absorbing information. I learned much more when he demonstrated points with books, atlases, or maps. His deep knowledge came through more effectively with historical objects in his hands. I learned somewhat less than I had hoped.
6. No and no. The course description notes that the materiality of maps will be the critical theme for the course. Although the professor stresses materiality, the chief focus of the lectures on each day is historiography of the field of map history and

how these histories have taken into account materiality or not. The course builds in almost no time for discussion-based learning. The engagement with historical maps and primary sources is very limited. I expect an intense course at RBS to include at least one primary source session per day. Instead, we spent most of our time in lectures and looking at facsimiles. RBS should consider offering this course in a library like Yale's Beinecke Library, LC or the British Library, where it is possible to have a materially grounded learning with primary sources. Also, it could be helpful if the professor taught the course with a map cataloger. While the faculty teaching the course is very knowledgeable and a well-established scholar, at times it felt that their historiographical orientation to the field was outdated. Distinctions between Western and non-Western knowledge of mapping and mapmakers were arbitrary, as was their knowledge of a range of scholarship produced in materially grounded fields such as art history. Since much of the course's focus is on maps of America, I am unsure why the entanglement of Indigenous knowledge practices in mapmaking was entirely left out or mentioned in non-substantive ways. Similarly, the discussion of the medieval Mediterranean practices discusses Islamic map-making practices in incorrect and offhanded ways.

7. Yes, I think so. It is a vast subject with multiple ways of talking about/thinking/organizing information but I feel more confident in my knowledge after this week and have many tools to reference.
8. {no response}
9. Yes, and yes.
10. Yes? Maybe? I think I expected more on the physical making and circulation of maps and more discussion of artistic/material choices and less high-level theory. I think a better name for the course would be something like "A Historiography of Maps."
11. I thought the course concerned more map theory than I expected and less detail about the material culture of maps & map-making
12. Yes—I think I hoped to more access to/contact with materials to practice identification and grow my feels for various materials though.
13. Yes.

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

1. It provided a theoretical framework and enhanced my visual skills when handling maps. In addition, ME's encyclopedic comments on various mapmakers, map depositories, and reference books will lead me into various new directions following this course.
2. {private response}
3. I will definitely look up a lot of the materials referenced in lectures and listed in the bibliography.
4. I will use much of what I learned about atlases in teaching with the collection at my home institution and in assisting researchers who are using that particular area of our collection.
5. To frame and build out further reading towards a book and digital project.
6. {no response}

7. Teaching and describing maps at my institution.
8. {no response}
9. Use it to further my graduate studies.
10. Instruction and acquisitions.
11. For exhibition, teaching, and research.
12. 1) In one-shot library instruction 2) As a framework for future publications on maps and mapping 3) To better ID mapping processes in our collection.
13. I plan to use the skills and knowledge to help students and researchers with their work and to evaluate the relevance of potential new acquisitions. I learned what I hoped about understanding maps as material objects.

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

1. Obviously, anyone who professionally is involved in maps and anyone who personally reads books about and/or collects maps.
2. Anyone, but especially students, librarians, collectors, or those with a general interest in maps
3. Special collections librarians.
4. {no response}
5. The course included grad students, librarians, and a few professors. I'm sure most of us benefited from it, but the course could be better tailored to the needs of each constituency. Less historiography, more hands-on skills would help all these groups.
6. Undergraduate students.
7. Librarians, teachers, anyone working with maps.
8. {no response}
9. Students who haven't worked extensively with maps before, curators/cataloguers, historians of the book who only use maps instrumentally, and art historians who only see maps as illustrations.
10. Collectors, curators, academics.
11. Educators. Special collections archivists and librarians. Geographers.
12. New Map Librarians, people who are not familiar with the larger map history the spatial materials (Western) they work with are a part of. Western focus might be good to include in the description.
13. Anyone studying, researching, acquiring, cataloging or providing reference assistance with rare maps.

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. The theoretical approach to nomenclature, and the course's analysis by ME, was eye-opening. It will provide a framework for discussions and analysis of maps for the rest of my life.
2. Manuscript is not always a precursor to print!
3. There were some really amazing artifacts brought into class, from the Japanese maps to the geography textbooks. I am sure I would have had more powerful moments if I had had time to actually look at them in detail.

4. Learning that copper plate engraving existed as a process for creating maps as early as the fifteenth century in Berlinghieri's edition of Ptolmey was a real "aha" moment, as was being able to look at the image of the engravings and have the tools to distinguish what made it clear that it was copper plate rather than woodblock
5. Viewing some spectacular early modern maps; learning about bindings and print techniques; and of course the printing demonstration.
6. {no response}
7. {no response}
8. {no response}
9. Loved the sessions on printing!
10. I LOVED seeing the industrial art desk. That was my favorite experience.
11. The printing experience was wonderful.
12. I actually understand how lithography happens now—I've been trying for years! Also cerography—very useful. Day one pulled together a lot of theory I've been reading.
13. {no response}

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

1. Hard to say. A lot is jammed into the week. The only session which I felt was not a good use of time was the last one when the carto-bibliographic books were discussed by thirteen participants.
2. ME's course was excellent, but for the sake of everyone's knees, I recommend splitting up the SC viewing periods with more breaks in between.
3. Better time management; more succinct answers to student questions.
4. I would have enjoyed more time with the materials, and I also felt that the space in the classroom and also during our SC visit made working with the materials challenging for the large group. Division into smaller groups for more independent and exploratory activities with materials would have been more useful than lecturing with materials in a tight space where not all group members could see items as laid out on tables and, in the case of SC, where we were not allowed to handle materials and were unable to inspect them up close due to the space and logistics of the room, which proved frustrating.
5. {private response}
6. {no response}
7. {no response}
8. {no response}
9. Maybe a bit better timing regarding the PowerPoint slides and giving students more time to look at RBS/SC material? (Sometimes, it felt like too many books, &c. were pulled, although 90% of the materials were really interesting)
10. End lectures on time. Provide breaks—standing in SC for solid 90-minute chunks was painful. ME is such an encyclopedia of knowledge (great!) and spills a lot of info very quickly (challenging), so it can be hard to keep up.
11. I would love to have more of a focus on the material culture of maps and mapmaking, with access to more SC examples
12. Looking at materials before and after we discuss their history, materiality, etc. It doesn't seem like RBS has a great collection to support this course. People come to

RBS to access items! I suggest growing their collection as possible to better support this course's students getting exposed to various maps.

13. A set time each day for Q&A. I think we got off track sometimes with questions during the lecture.

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. 6
4. 7
5. 3
6. 4
7. 10
8. {no response}
9. 10. Yes. I don't know that I would recommend the course, unless someone has a good foundational knowledge of maps already. Or if they love theory and historiography.
10. 6
11. 7
12. 4
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. I would doubt it. ME was the star. Why waterdown this unique and privileged experience?
2. Yes! The print demonstrators were so informative and I would not have had an opportunity to use a period style press like that without this course.
3. The printing session on Wednesday morning was great and definitely enhanced my experience of the course.
4. {no response}
5. N/A.
6. {no response}
7. The printing demos definitely enhanced the course. Trip to SC was good to see more materials.
8. {no response}
9. Not applicable
10. N/A :(
11. Meeting with SC staff and learning the printing process was wonderful.
12. Yes— the printing workshop was a wonderful experience and really cemented my printing knowledge. Rare chance to print intaglio! SC was helpful, too—really glad these atlases were discussed as their own type of map-material and just bound maps lumped together.

13. {no response}

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

1. {no response}
2. If you like maps in any capacity, you'll really enjoy this class and benefit immensely from ME's expertise.
3. I was disappointed at the minimal time we spent actually engaging with primary source material. Too much of the course was PowerPoint lecture. I would suggest that lecture should constitute no more than half of any given class period. When we did look at rare books/maps, it was mostly Matthew talking while thirteen students crowded around craning to see whatever he was talking about. I would advise more active learning and more opportunities for student interaction and participation. For instance, instead of lecturing in front of the atlases, ME/the SC staff might have set up stations so that students could rotate through and look at each of the atlases in pairs. It would have been nice to do a session where we discussed and assessed online map collections. I did like the cartobibliography exercise we did on the last day, but it was really sad to be in a room with so many fascinating materials and to get only a fleeting few seconds near each of them. Further, there was a huge amount of expertise and wisdom in the room, and I wanted to hear more from the other students.
4. {no response}
5. You need patience for this course, take what you can get from it.
6. {no response}
7. If you work with maps, take the course!
8. {no response}
9. No.
10. No.
11. Be prepared for lecture-heavy courses and quite a lot of cartographical theory
12. Plan for equal parts theory and access to materials: the course title implies more handling of maps, atlases, books etc. than we did in the course. Though I generally enjoyed the theory and will use it in my work
13. We learned a lot but I appreciate that we didn't have any outside assignments. This course is a great introduction. I would like to learn more about maps and this course has given me a good understanding of what else to learn. Matthew is a great instructor, and it's helpful that he's a scholar and works in a library.

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

1. An outstanding week whose insights will last a lifetime.
2. RBS was a fantastic and invaluable experience to learn and grow your network!
3. I was really impressed with how well-run RBS was.
4. Rare books summer camp!
5. {no response}
6. {no response}
7. Educational and fun! (A phrase I am often teased for using but it can be true!)

8. {no response}
9. Had a wonderful time!
10. Thank you, ME, for sharing your knowledge.
11. I have found RBS to be a unique and engaging experience.
12. Concentrated learning, but from the very best.
13. I appreciated the RBS attention to learning and student comfort.