

Michael F. Suarez, S.J.
H-90v: Teaching the History of the Book
16–20 June, 2025, Online

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. I think they were a great set of materials to get started thinking through the course week.
2. Yes, they were a great grounding in the course topic—I felt prepared, even though the topic was new to me and the instructor was operating at a high level of sophistication.
3. I found the recommended pre-course readings helpful in providing me with the language and context I needed to jump right in. For H-90v, I would recommend readings focused on the pedagogy of teaching.
4. I have not completed reading all the pre-course reading assignments, as I was working prior to joining the class. I have, however, purchased several which I will be using in future in conjunction with my class notes and additional books I purchased throughout the week.
5. Great pre-course readings. Really gave me a good foundation for our in-class discussions. I wish we would have briefly gone over the readings at the start of the week to better orient us all.
6. They were useful.
7. The pre-course readings were very helpful in laying a good foundation for the discussions, and being a new teacher looking for resources, I really appreciated having the excuse to read this material and to consider if I want any of it for my own reference collection. However, you do not need to read everything in a completionist manner in order to get something meaningful out of the class, which I hope takes off a bit of the pressure for those who may be lacking in time.
8. Yes, the readings were very helpful.
9. Yes! I felt really primed for our conversations and now have some titles to return to to deepen my knowledge.
10. They were useful. I wish that MFS had included his own publications. I think I would have enjoyed that very much.
11. I thought they were excellent. Perhaps something recent on decolonizing the history of the book would be a good addition.
12. The pre-course readings were very useful.
13. Great reading material. It really helped me know what to expect in the course.
14. {no response}
15. I really appreciated the plethora of reading material: required, recommended, and optional. Perhaps put the required in some kind of priority order?
16. I thought the readings were engaging and useful. I'm happy to have added a few of the recommended books to my personal library. I foresee myself returning to them time and time again. In addition to these fantastic readings, I might suggest adding *Studying Early Printed Books, 1450–1800: A Practical Guide* by Sarah Werner.
17. Yes.
18. {no response}

19. I'm grateful for the extensive reading list, but did not have time to read everything before the course. I didn't find my experience to be hindered by this at all, as I have some background in book history.
20. {no response}

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. It was not always clearly organized (at least for day-to-day use) but it will be something that will be useful well into the future.
2. Yes. It is an incredibly valuable resource that I anticipate relying on heavily as I develop my course.
3. I felt that the course workbook and compiled materials available to me physically and digitally were incredibly helpful. I look forward to using the Google Drive materials as reference sources for enriching my instruction.
4. I am extremely impressed with the amount of information in the workbook, and obviously, the time taken to assemble and curate such a useful opus to share. I only hope that I am able to refer back to it for some time in the future.
5. Amazing material in the workbook. We didn't use much of it during our sessions, but I will be going back to it OVER and OVER for teaching material.
6. Yes, the materials were useful and will remain so.
7. Oh my gosh, this is one of the most generous and amazing aspects of this class!!! The amount of material shared via the class's official Google Drive folder and mailed ahead of time, in addition to the many, many, many tips and resources discussed/shared in class by MFS and the other participants just blew me away. It was one of the primary reasons I took the class, and, oh man, did I get what I hoped for. There is so much it is a bit overwhelming, but I am so grateful to have this be the problem I currently have, and I am just so excited to slowly work my way through it all and share some of it with other colleagues, who I know will also be interested.
8. The Google Drive folder is amazing! I will definitely be returning to it.
9. I thought everything that was shared was great. I would have liked to see the call numbers for the titles that we were viewing in real time. (They were shared after the fact in the daily email summaries which were wonderful but it would have been helpful to see them at the same time we were looking at texts, just so I could organize my notes that way. I know we get a copy of the chat transcript, but it also would be great to get a list of resources that are referred to during the lecture. (To be sure, I know I can generate this myself. But I'd like a quick list of all the books that the instructor referenced.)
10. The workbook and all of the other material are not only perfect and great, but also numerous. I feel like I am ready to teach one-shots or even to prepare a course.
11. Excellent, thorough; yes and yes; absolutely!
12. These materials are fantastic, and I will continue to reference them, especially as I update my history of the book course.
13. MFS shared a lot of fascinating resources that I will definitely use in the future.

14. {no response}
15. The only course materials were the folding sheets to learn about quarto, octavo, &c. There was a thin workbook included that we did not reference.
16. The course materials were most useful. I anticipate that they will continue to prove their use as I am able to put them into practice in my personal teaching. I appreciate that MFS was willing to compile and share so much valuable pedagogical material with us.
17. It would have been useful to have gotten an orientation to the materials. Perhaps having them organized by session. It was unclear how we were supposed to use the workbook.
18. The course workbook is very helpful. I found the exercises provided during class (paper folding/making a pamphlet) especially fun. The relevant links, articles, and resources will be immensely helpful moving forward—it's a whole asynchronous component to dive into after the class has concluded! I appreciated the fact that I didn't have to capture all of the relevant resources in my notes.
19. I'll continue to refer to the materials shared in the Google Drive folder as I plan lessons and courses. I am very glad to have them!
20. {no response}

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. MFS' approach to teaching and using rare materials was incredibly helpful and generative. It has given me lots of ideas about how to approach using these in coming semesters.
2. I got great practical ideas about how to design a course, exercises I could do, and particular texts that would be useful. Also, a huge number of resources for building expertise. Most of all I appreciated the inspiration.
3. I enjoyed being a student receiving instruction and observing MFS' process of instruction. I'm almost always on the other side of that transaction, so I found a lot of value in seeing someone else teach elements of the book. I'm walking away with more confidence in my lesson planning, having seen firsthand that what I felt was impactful and natural for teaching in this environment was reinforced in the instruction I observed (and through peer input). I plan on taking a few ideas from this course and incorporating them into my future instruction sessions.
4. MFS offered a myriad of examples and approaches to use in our own courses. This was the crux of the entire week. Not a lecture went by that one could not pull useful and practical information from. The course was inspiring, yet also pragmatic in its approach to answering many questions that the students came in with.
5. Of course, MFS is a treasure of knowledge, enthusiasm, and experience. Beyond that, the peer-to-peer learning was amazing. My classmates had so many smart, diverse, and practical ideas.
6. The discussions about building teaching collections on limited budgets/for diverse demographics were particularly helpful.

7. Learning more about the social codes embedded in the physical object, practical exercises to use in the classroom, and how to find/use materials creatively/cheaply to tell a story that inspires curiosity, critical thinking, and (we dared to say) love.
8. I like the idea of teaching books in pairs and will try to implement that more often in my classes. I also appreciated the other activity ideas, such as editing Hamlet/other Shakespeare passages.
9. I really appreciated the instructor's welcoming approach that invited all of us into the discipline. He encouraged us to remember that we don't have to be experts on everything and that we can learn alongside our students. I think the idea of pairing titles is a great one. I also liked the idea of developing my own teaching collection.
10. This is one of the best classes I have taken at RBS, if not the best. MFS is extremely inspiring, and at the same time, very practical and down to earth. I feel very excited to teach next school year.
11. Oh Lord, yes. I loved the third session each day with demonstrations, each of which gave me ideas for texts to use at my institution, new approaches to other works I teach often, and items to be on the lookout for. I was constantly checking my institution's catalog, making notes in lesson plans and old syllabi, and drafting ideas for new courses.
12. Oh my goodness, everything was so relevant and intriguing. I walked away with several new insights and ideas. When I was taught with rare books, we looked at them one at a time. The idea of pairing books and telling a story with those books is brilliant. I will be revising my syllabus and activities, so that my students look at pairs. I already have so many ideas on how I am going to do this with our collection. I'm also going to revise my final project. I now feel like I can revise my course to even better serve my students, which is so exciting. I also have a few other courses that are not book history courses, but I still have the history of the book embedded within them. I am so excited to revise these courses, too!
13. I loved the pairings of rare books that MFS showed us. The idea of teaching with facsimiles will work well in my situation.
14. {no response}
15. Learning how the history of the book encompasses so many other histories: economics, business, technology, printing, culture, &c!
16. I most appreciated the sessions during which MFS modeled teaching using pairs from the UVA and RBS collections. It was such a privilege to watch a master at work.
17. Left me with so much to think about and so much to do. I loved learning about the texts and presenting those works in the context in which they came to be.
18. I found the elements about particular exercises the most compelling. My favorite segment was the Alexander Pope deep dive. I felt like this presentation was perfectly timed, as we had been discussing many of the elements being explored (reading an imprint, definitions of bibliographic terms, &c), so this provided a sort of synthesis or demonstration of weaving all of these elements together. I also loved the paper folding exercises, and discussions around practical strategies for teaching. I plan to walk away with a plan to teach in pairs, motivation to do more research to "tell a story," and content to draw from as I start to create a teaching repertoire.

19. Getting an inside look at MFS's approach to teaching with rare books was highly relevant to my work as a teaching librarian. I'll apply his "teaching in pairs" approach right away!
20. {no response}

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. I learned everything and more!
2. Yes, and then some!
3. I believe so. If this were an in-person class, I think it would be really impactful to have the Friday afternoon sessions turned over to the students and allow them the opportunity to practice instruction with other professionals for workshopping, collaborating, and feedback opportunities.
4. MFS not only offered many insights into his own approach to teaching, but also offered many selections of other resources and books throughout the week. The real problem will now be how to incorporate all of these great concepts and practices into a select section of a course.
5. Yes, absolutely. This course gave me a multitude of avenues and options for how to frame my teaching of book history. Ideas, frameworks, community connections...I have a great number of possible ways forward.
6. Yes, the instructor was professional, deeply knowledgeable and engaging.
7. Yes, and even more so. I know I will be chewing on the thoughts, notes, and resources from this class for a long time.
8. Yes.
9. Yes! A million times yes! I learned some new strategies, had some concepts that were troubling me put to rest, and also learned to trouble other things I thought I knew. In short, it was an ideal learning experience. MFS is to be especially commended for making it enjoyable and invigorating even though we were not in the same physical space—his love for books and for learning about book history was evident. I feel inspired and invigorated!
10. Yes, and more. I learned about book history, refreshed my bibliographical knowledge, and learned about specific tips to prepare classes and effective pedagogical approaches.
11. Yes, absolutely.
12. MFS is one of the best teachers I have encountered in my lifetime, and he is so generous with his knowledge. I acquired more skills than I could have imagined in this course. When it comes to teaching history of the book, I now have so many tools in my arsenal to teach and provide more meaningful interactions with our rare books, but this goes beyond teaching history of the book. I know without a doubt that taking this class with MFS has made me a better teacher overall.
13. All the teachings and practices shared by MFS were relevant and inspiring.
14. {no response}
15. Yes

16. In short, absolutely. I came away from the course having new insights in bibliography, history, and pedagogy that I anticipate using for the rest of my career in rare books.
17. Yes.
18. Yes.
19. Yes! All that I expected and more.
20. {no response}

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

1. I will use these skills to expand and develop all sorts of coursework that incorporates special collections materials and teaches book history.
2. I will design and teach a book history course for my university.
3. What I got from H-90v will directly affect the structure of my instruction sessions, the activities in my sessions, and the framework that I teach within.
4. Based on the many options and suggestions, I will be rewriting my syllabus for three introduction to humanities courses for this fall, featuring the book as the central focus for the semester.
5. I am developing a traditional history of the book syllabus for a course at my institution. I will also be applying many of the approaches I learned to do more material-focused instruction with serials/ephemera/broadsides...things beyond books in my teaching.
6. To inform the development of curriculum at our college.
7. As mentioned in a previous question, I plan to go through it all slowly (mostly out of practicality, but also for better absorption) and to implement the resulting ideas and exercises as I go. I plan to start this by simply organizing it all for myself first as a way to process and then be able to share curated materials with others.
8. I plan to apply the activities and course materials to my own classes.
9. I intend to begin teaching items in pairs. I also intend to start to build my own teaching collection.
10. To prepare classes for next year and possibly exhibits, too.
11. In new course design, new texts to use, and new book-making exercises.
12. I'm revising my courses. I'm also going to do a better job building our collection of facsimiles, and my teaching collection.
13. I plan to use everything I learned in this course in my future teachings.
14. {no response}
15. I plan to apply some of the things I have learned when helping and teaching students about artists' books and books writ large.
16. Yes, I was already planning how to incorporate what I've learned at RBS into my own teaching before the course was even half over.
17. I plan to share materials with our Instruction Coordinator, and plan I to use them in my own presentations. In some cases what was presented was a great jumping off point, or even expanded my own knowledge of our own holdings.
18. I plan to use many of the skills and resources from the class immediately in my role. I teach a variety of one-shots and more embedded visits in my role as a special collections librarian, and I am often grappling with not having enough

time to design content or a lesson plan for class. The ideas presented by this class will help me build my repertoire of teaching content to draw from, and I generally feel more confident and empowered to teach book history as a librarian in a “guest role” in classes.

19. I'll apply the teaching approaches I learned right away in my special collections instruction sessions. In the future, I hope to develop a semester-long book history course, so I know I'll refer back to more of what I learned then.
20. {no response}

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

1. Librarians, university faculty, and other educators teaching book history.
2. Instruction librarians, or faculty in any discipline interested in teaching this kind of course.
3. I think it would be incredibly beneficial to equally consider applicants who teach ANY part of book history or primary and secondary source history with books to attend this course. I noticed many of my peers were specifically special collections librarians, but I think the class could be more diverse and offer different perspectives if instructors like archivists, historians, researchers, and artists were equally admitted.
4. Anyone and everyone who is currently working in library sciences and those whose teaching touches upon the importance of the book, either on an undergraduate or graduate level.
5. Anyone with a curiosity about teaching/learning/pedagogy. It gave me a great beginning understanding about bibliography writ large, but the biggest takeaway was all the resources...both educational and in terms of connections to people.
6. Librarians with instructional responsibilities.
7. Anyone who finds themselves in a role that directly engages with any kind of learner/student, or who supports those who are doing that work.
8. {no response}
9. I think folks in charge of teaching even individual sessions and not stand-alone classes would benefit from this course.
10. The new Rare Books Curator at the University of Florida, and other early-career librarians and cataloguers.
11. Anyone with interests in bibliography and the history of the book, cultural history, literary criticism, the history of science, library management, the rare books trade, special collections, university administration, or high school instruction...can I say anyone who cares at all about teaching books in any capacity? Specifically, though, higher-education professionals engaged in any teaching exercises.
12. Anyone who is interested in teaching anything having to do with rare books should absolutely take this course.
13. Professionals teaching the history of the book.
14. {no response}
15. Librarians and professors of librarianship.
16. I think this course would be especially helpful for humanities faculty who are interested in incorporating bibliography and the history of the book into their

teaching as well as librarians or future librarians who would like to see new ideas and perspectives for approaching book history pedagogy.

17. It would have been awesome have extended the course to full days with the additional time being used for assigned readings or just reading time. It would be helpful if the course was listed as 40 hours and clearly state the times of the course in order to plan for and to get the full days of professional development release.
18. I think faculty and librarians alike will benefit! The mix of participants also helps us learn how to collaborate better with one another and have an appreciation for the labor behind this work.
19. Folks who regularly teach with books as primary sources will get a lot out of this course.
20. {no response}

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. Too many!
 2. So many. The comparison of two books, one of which served as a memorial to the lost and the other of which affected the revival of a masterpiece, brought me to tears.
 3. One of the greatest takeaways is the idea of "teaching to a moment" and leading your students through a journey to help them arrive at one really good conclusion about something. It does not have to be comprehensive; it just has to be effective.
 4. I was struck by MFS's very candid and humble approach when sharing his experiences in the classroom, during his research, and in his own collecting of books.
 5. The biggest takeaway for me was the reinforcement of the notion that you have to be excited in your teaching if you want your students to be excited in their learning. Find a way to teach what you are passionate about...and that the most important thing for students is not to learn facts, but to have meaningful experiences.
 6. {no response}
 7. {no response}
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1. I definitely feel more inspired to go through our collections and find books that I may otherwise not think to teach, or to look for less immediately obvious stories to tell about them (e.g. books with interesting publication histories even though they might appear plain at first sight, e&c.)
 2. I think the idea that you don't need the fanciest books to teach book history in a compelling way. For example, you can cheaply purchase books that are falling apart so that all students can have an example of a woodcut in front of them. I also really appreciated the emphasis on wonder. We need to try different things and tell the stories behind the books to see what grabs students' attention and helps them realize why this work matters.

3. I was feeling very overwhelmed at the daunting task of being as knowledgeable and as inspiring as MFS, and then he said that we just need to design teachable moments, not the entire continuum.
4. Lots, too many to list. It's invigorating to hear MFS describe the value of rare books instruction since it's often not addressed in such convincing terms.
5. The differences between traditional and critical bibliography was incredibly helpful. Teaching books in pairs is something I will always take with me. I now call it the MFS approach to teaching! I also really love how MFS said that books gather a community of scholars, people, readers, &c. They have the power to build community. He also gave us several examples of this, and I will absolutely take that with me to my courses. The discussions of the book market were also incredible! A few quotes from MFS really stood out to me:

- When MFS said concerning global book history: "You honor the culture by showing the similarities and not the differences."
- "How did this book come to be the way it is? What are the human presences in this text? How can we discuss their historical recovery?"
- "What are the resources of the book? How are they deployed? And to what end?"
- "Books are informed by their predecessors and reflected in future books. It's really important to think about how books are inflected by what came before and help to inflect what comes after."

6. During the last session when MFS showed us the book of the Four Gospels! Amazing!
7. {no response}
8. {no response}
9. I especially enjoyed seeing MFS's selections of paired materials that he teaches with. One of my fellow students also gave a demonstration in the print studio where she works, that was interesting and informative. This was definitely one of the advantages of the online format.
10. Yes! Learning about Aldous's contribution to printing.
11. As I mentioned above, I loved the Alexander Pope presentation. The letterpress demonstration was also super fun, and a nice diversion from the usual Zoom Hollywood squares format.
12. I was particularly inspired when MFS spoke about building a teaching collection. I intend to start building such a collection of my own this year!
13. {no response}

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

1. {no response}
2. I would have liked to have done it in person.
3. {no response}
4. Please keep RBS going. There is so much for me to learn. Thank you.
5. I would have liked a brief, round-robin introduction of all my classmates...just to associate faces and voices with names and bios.

6. Knowing the topic of each session in advance.
7. {no response}
8. I think incorporating some small group discussions/break out rooms could have been fun/productive and broken things up a bit. I also would have liked a list of possible topics to cover/a general schedule, though I appreciated the flexibility.
9. I thought it was wonderful!
10. {no response}
11. Maybe updating the online materials—someone noticed duplicates, PDF and .docs of the same files.
12. No, it was amazing.
13. I was very pleased with every aspect of the course.
14. {no response}
15. {no response}
16. {no response}
17. No. But slower pace would have been helpful.
18. One element to include could be an opportunity to get to know each other more and build community. A Zoom coffee break where we introduce ourselves and our work, and our collections?
19. {no response}
20. {no response}

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. 8
4. 10
5. 10
6. 10
7. 10
8. 8
9. 10
10. 10
11. 10
12. 10
13. 10
14. 10
15. 10
16. 9
17. 9
18. 10

19. 9

20. {no response}

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. The visits to SC were a delight.
2. {no response}
3. Yes. Utilizing SC should be a requirement for online courses.
4. N/A
5. We had an amazing online demonstration of letterpress printing by one of my classmates. So cool!
6. {no response}
7. {no response}
8. N/A
9. It was very kind of Jessica Peterson to do a teaching demonstration. That's now the third time I've seen a teaching demonstration in a print room, and I still took away some new knowledge. That was great!
10. {no response}
11. Yes! The letterpress printing demonstration was excellent.
12. Yes! The trips to SC were fantastic!!
13. I wanted to take the course with MFS, so it was perfect the way it was.
14. {no response}
15. N/A
16. Every moment in SC was absolutely worthwhile.
17. Yes. The "field trips" to SC were helpful to see a session be modeled and to learn more about the works being presented.
18. {no response}
19. The SC visits were a highlight of the course. It was very instructive to see MFS teaching the history of the book live with primary sources.
20. {no response}

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

1. Take it!
2. You won't regret it!
3. {no response}
4. Come with questions; share your successes.
5. Do the reading. I know it's a lot, but it's really good stuff, and you'll be better positioned to follow the presentations and know the jargon.
6. {no response}
7. Do it if you can.
8. {no response}

9. Do spend time on the readings in advance. It will help you be prepared for the conversation that follows.
10. {no response}
11. Take it!
12. Do it! You will be better for it!
13. Don't miss the chance to take a class with MFS.
14. {no response}
15. To familiarize themselves with all the suggested reading beforehand.
16. {no response}
17. Set aside the whole day and plan to use it for readings or reflection time.
18. I was initially nervous about taking this course as a librarian, since I am not creating a syllabus/designing a credit-bearing book history course. I'm so glad I decided to join in the end—it was immensely helpful to me as a librarian doing one-shots, and it gave me a lot of confidence to own subject expertise in my role as a “guest lecturer” often working with a class for a session or two.
19. {no response}
20. {no response}

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

1. {no response}
2. It inspired me to create a class that will not only teach students about the history of books, but will encourage them to connect with the sparks of human imagination.
3. Teach to moments of wonder and you can show yourself and others that it's encouraged to be excited about the past.
4. An oasis for the educator.
5. The best way to improve your teaching is to embody the role of student.
6. {no response}
7. {no response}
8. {no response}
9. You have permission to fall in love.
10. Books: love, life, humanity.
11. Inspiring and practical.
12. MFS is a national treasure.
13. What a delightful experience to have the chance to hear MFS's stories and anecdotes!
14. {no response}
15. I loved it!
16. I can't believe my brain absorbed so much in just five days.
17. As expected but more than expected. Would love to take more courses with MFS. I would highly recommend!
18. {no response}
19. A true boon for my teaching practice.
20. {no response}