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H-90v: Teaching the History of the Book  
31 July–4 August, 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. All readings were very useful.
2. {no response}
3. Reading list was useful.
4. {no response}
5. I really enjoyed McKenzie and wish we had had time to discuss the book together. Some of the more nuts and bolts readings were just ok, but I think that may be because I already knew most of the information.
6. The pre-course readings were interesting and useful, but they only focused on one aspect of the course. I understand that the class needed to have a balance between book history content and pedagogical content, but I feel that the second one can start earlier in the course. One way to achieve this is by including in the readings a 'false' and not-so-good syllabus or a 'false' outline of a special collections workshop. These examples can be something students look at and even describe, similar to how we described books in the first session.
7. Yes, I learned some new approaches to thinking about the history of the book.
8. {no response}
9. {private response}
10. Yes.
11. I thought they were very interesting.
12. Yes, they were very helpful since we discussed bibliography and I don't use bibliography all the time in my work.
13. N/A
14. It may have been helpful to share a short list of recommended or required readings to help narrow down a more reasonable amount of reading, but I wasn't sure where to begin and didn't complete any pre-course reading.
15. Yes, the readings were useful in providing me with a better understanding of the fields relevant to the history of the book (like analytical bibliography, literary criticism, &c.) prior to the course.
16. {no response}
17. {no response}
18. {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. Yes, they all are very useful.
2. {no response}
3. Helpful.
4. {private response}
5. Yes!
6. The materials will undoubtedly be useful for me in the future. There are many files and topics, and I am certain I will refer back to them. The folder offered diverse sources and different kinds of content, and its creation is a very generous gesture that also invites contributions. Overall, the provided materials offer a wealth of information and resources that will benefit my learning journey. The variety of content available ensures that I can delve into various aspects of the subject matter, allowing me to gain a comprehensive understanding. Additionally, the act of sharing this folder demonstrates a spirit of generosity, encouraging others to contribute and collaborate. I appreciate the effort put into assembling this collection, and I look forward to exploring its contents further in my studies and research. It serves as a valuable asset and will undoubtedly support my academic pursuits.
7. I have not had a lot of time to review them in full, but I believe they will be extremely helpful.
8. {no response}
9. One of the real strengths of the course, apart from MFS's brilliant lectures and discussion facilitation, is the collection of pedagogical resources shared with us. Collectively, it offers a very solid foundation for building and adapting my own future syllabi and course materials.
10. Yes, MFS was incredibly generous in sharing materials that I have no doubt I will use or reference for years to come!
11. Mine had gotten lost in the mail, but was replaced immediately and I received it today, after the class. From the demonstrations in class, it looks like a good teaching tool.
12. The content was incredibly helpful! I plan to use a variety of activities that were sent to us in my classroom.
13. The list of resources in the Google Drive were extensive and very helpful to give more context to class discussions and for future use.
14. The materials shared on Google Drive were incredibly helpful and relevant, though they could have been organized more clearly. It will be very useful to have access to these resources going forward.
15. I haven't had the chance to go through much of the teaching materials, syllabi, assignment examples, and other resources that MFS provided us with, but from what

I've seen so far, it will be a rich and valuable source of resources for my teaching.

16. {no response}

17. The course material distributed during the class was extremely useful. The materials were well curated and I can see they will continue to be relevant and useful for years to come.

18. {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. Yes, there are so many new insights that I can barely list them all here. I'm very grateful for the course.
2. I leave with an arsenal of assignments, activities, and reassurance that I don't need to know absolutely everything to teach this subject.
3. Creating course exercises was useful.
4. {private response}
5. I really enjoyed the opening and closing activities. I thought we had an interesting discussion, which gave me an idea of how to guide students through some of the issues. I also really like the idea of a thematic approach to book history. A fellow student shared his idea of working from within a book (paper, type, ink, binding) out (publishers, authors, sellers, readers).
6. MFS's work is incredible. He is inspiring and generous, guiding the class in a clear and purposeful way, providing a well-structured sequence of reflections, materials, and goals. Additionally, the transformative experience of listening to others and learning from them enriched the course. The class opened up new paths of inquiry and solidified intuitions and ideas that I had already been experiencing. MFS's teaching style and the content of the course combined to create a stimulating and impactful learning environment. I am grateful for the opportunity to be a part of this course and to benefit from MFS's expertise. The knowledge and insights gained from the class will undoubtedly have a positive influence on my academic and personal growth. I look forward to applying what I have learned in future endeavors.
7. All parts of the course were interesting and helpful.
8. {no response}
9. Three highlights of the course were (1) MFS's skillful framing of the practices of bibliography and book history in the context of pedagogical development; (2) developing a sense of how bibliography and book history are currently taught in a variety of institutional and disciplinary settings; (3) brainstorming specific approaches I might adopt in the classroom, (4) sharing ideas, perspectives, and materials with a diverse group of scholars and practitioners; and (5) seeing the broad ideas and pedagogical theories we discussed applied to objects in special collections—I found the presentation of books individually and in mini-collections to be particularly helpful

and meaningful, even over zoom.

10. I really enjoyed the special collections visit sessions to see MFS emulate concepts we had just been discussing. I also really liked our first exercise as an ice breaker and confidence builder.
11. Absolutely. I really liked the approach of looking at bibliography from the viewpoint of economics—this is something I hadn't thought about before and something that I think my own students will find very interesting. I really liked the break out room discussions, and I think the activities we discussed in class are ones that I can adapt and recreate.
12. I really enjoyed the idea of bringing in everyday paperbacks into my teaching.
13. Hands on activities and show and tell with special collections materials was the most intriguing and spurred a lot of discussions in class.
14. I appreciated the balance of both practical, applied pedagogical approaches like class assignments and syllabi, with more bibliography and special collections visits to learn more about the content of what we can teach. I have a long list of ideas that I am ready to bring to my teaching this fall, including ways of working with collections in our institution, connections I can make with different disciplines and audiences, as well as ideas for materials to add to our collections to expand how we can teach and support research around the history of the book.
15. I feel this course greatly broadened my conception of book history and how it can be taught, and provided me with a huge variety of ideas and approaches that will, I hope, greatly diversify and improve my teaching methods. This was an incredibly useful and practical course!
16. {no response}
17. {no response}
18. {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, absolutely.
2. My motive for taking this class was to build up my syllabus and confidence for teaching the history of the book, and I got those things.
3. Yes.
4. {private response}
5. {no response}
6. Yes, I learned a lot and left with many questions and impulses thanks to the class.
7. Yes, and much more.
8. {no response}
9. In a word, yes.
10. Yes, I have several ideas and resources now that I didn't before.

11. Yes. I learned new insights into the history of the book, which will help me teach it better in the future. I would have liked to workshop activities a little more.
12. Yes, very much so. MFS is incredibly knowledgeable and has a great way with explaining the idea behind the activities that he employed.
13. Yes, it was helpful not only to learn activities I can use in class, but also watch them employed by the instructor, so I can see what it's like as a student to interact with the activity.
14. Yes.
15. MFS was excellent, drawing upon his deep experience as an educator and scholar, while delivering practical advice, ideas, recommendations, and feedback with wit and great humanity. I left the course newly-inspired in my vocation as an educator, and eager to head back to the classroom with fresh new ideas.
16. {no response}
17. This has been the most successful Rare Book course I have taken to date in regards to overall experience and inspirations. After attending rare book classes through Rare Book School and the University College London (London Rare Books School)—his class was the best value for the skills I retained after the class.
18. {no response}

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

1. I would like to teach a course on the history of the book.
2. {no response}
3. Additional student resources.
4. {private response}
5. I'm working on designing a few classes to propose, one general introduction for undergraduates and one advanced one for early modernists.
6. I plan to create syllabi where I can include some of the materials, and I would also like to share some ideas with colleagues too.
7. I will be applying them in my teaching.
8. {no response}
9. I plan to develop several new courses that draw on the approaches we covered.
10. I'm developing one course right now, but this course has given me ideas for the development of several more.
11. I lecture about the history of paper and book production in many of my sessions, so it will be helpful to include the new knowledge I acquired.
12. I plan on utilizing the activities in the one-shot instructions I teach for the "History of the Book" course and also propose an "Economics of the Book Trade" course for an Honors College class at my institution.
13. For future instruction sessions.
14. Incorporating different materials into my teaching and using them in new ways in the

classroom. I am bringing a new level of confidence and enthusiasm to my work going into the fall semester, and am eager to apply what I've learned.

15. I plan to use what I gained through this course to make my archives sessions this fall semester more student-centered, perhaps preparing them more in advance so that we can allow our time in SC to be driven by students' curiosity and observations. I plan to try teaching in pairs and using some of the assignments and activities we discussed.
16. {no response}
17. I already found the knowledge helpful with a group of travelling dignitaries in being able to more clearly describe some of our rare books.
18. {no response}

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

1. Anyone who is interested in the history of the book, broadly construed.
2. Anyone interested in teaching aspects of the history of the book. There is so much to learn and explore, I don't think anyone interested in teaching these topics would not benefit from the time spent in this class.
3. Librarians and faculty.
4. {no response}
5. {no response}
6. Professors, and librarians.
7. Anyone teaching, or planning to teach, the history of the book, whether as a one-session introduction or a full-semester course.
8. {no response}
9. I certainly did, and I hope my students will too.
10. Anyone who is involved with teaching from a special collection.
11. I think it is most logically geared towards archivists, teachers, and researchers—but I think anyone would find it to be of interest.
12. I think really anyone but especially librarians and English faculty.
13. Anyone who works with students interested in the history of the book.
14. Teaching faculty and archivists or other librarians who are seeking to better understand how to engage students with the history of the book, regardless of their background, discipline, or type of collections they have access to.
15. New educators as they will gain a useful wealth of teaching ideas and approaches, but even experienced educators will benefit from MFS's expertise and the valuable discussions we had, in which a diverse group of educators shared experiences and solutions.
16. {no response}
17. {no response}
18. {no response}

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. {no response}
2. That the history of the book is the story of the humans whose presence is recorded in/on that book. That the picture of a book is not the book. That I can teach the history of the book with very cheap books!
3. Importance of variations in editions.
4. {no response}
5. The Harlequin romance novels!
6. The first day describing the Harlequin novels, some sessions in SC, and the general discussions.
7. There were many "aha!" moments. Pairing books was very powerful.
8. {no response}
9. {no response}
10. The first exercise and our conversations regarding specifics did more for me to understand bibliography than any other course I've taken. MFS made it click for me, which is really such a gift! I have also added several new words to my vocabulary thanks to MFS.
11. Definitely a better understanding of the business of bookbinding. The financial aspect that drove production was my "aha!" moment!
12. Definitely using everyday paperbacks for class activities was a real "aha!" moment for me!
13. {no response}
14. I'll take with me the idea that we can work with what we have, focus on the strengths of our collections and the materials that speak most strongly to our students. Focusing on the stories that the materials can tell, and highlighting the "life" of the book and the many ways that it has both shaped and been shaped by the people who created it, read it, and passed it down to us today.
15. I really enjoyed MFS's use of stories to help us remember, his focus on studying the book to recover the stories of the people who made them, and I was really inspired by an offhand speech he gave near the end of the course in which spoke of the humanist and humanizing value/effects of our educational work.
16. {no response}
17. {no response}
18. {no response}

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

1. {no response}
2. {no response}

3. Longer length.
4. {no response}
5. {no response}
6. Yes, I believe that the course can benefit from a more hands-on pedagogical reflection. Considering the limited duration of the 22-hour course, the class is already doing a great job, but I think we can further enhance the learning experience by introducing some homework assignments from Thursday to Friday. For example, students could spend one extra hour (outside of class time) working on a syllabus, an outline, or any other final product they need to develop. These formats could be created by the instructor specifically for teachers, with a Word document asking for course title, learning goals, class structure, assessment methods, ideas for in-class activities, and suggestions for primary and secondary texts, including one or two materials from the RBS folder. For librarians, a similar Word document could focus on a target population for a workshop, workshop duration, learning goals, materials, possible structure, and the potential use of one material from the folder. On Friday, we could use 25 minutes of class time in small groups to share what we have worked on and discovered during this homework assignment. While it's great that the course does not include regular homework, having just one piece of homework to complete from Thursday to Friday, providing a tangible output from the class that we can go back to, would be highly beneficial. The discussion about this homework assignment would require more in-class time, and we could compensate for it by having one less SC session. By reallocating this time, we can dedicate it to developing our own pedagogical products and even seek feedback from others. Perhaps Day Five can be more focused on final products, without sacrificing the valuable reflection on the 'vook', which was an excellent component of the course.
7. Perhaps a three-minute break within each 90 minute session.
8. {no response}
9. {private response}
10. {no response}
11. I think the Google Drive folder could have been more organized. I had a hard time finding anything in it.
12. {no response}
13. {no response}
14. More awareness of time constraints and remaining focused on the question and topic at hand. I enjoyed all of the extra stories and threads that came from different students' questions, but in a few instances the instructor took detours into topics that were not a great use of our time.
15. No.
16. {no response}
17. {no response}
18. {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. 7
4. 10
5. 10
6. 10
7. 10
8. {no response}
9. 10
10. 10
11. 10
12. 10
13. 9
14. 10
15. 10
16. 5
17. 10
18. {no response}

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. {no response}
2. {no response}
3. Rare book collection useful.
4. {private response}
5. {no response}
6. No, I think the course didn't need those components.
7. N/A
8. {no response}
9. I thought the virtual visits to special collections were particularly helpful and meaningful. They also worked surprisingly well, even over Zoom.
10. If anything, I wish I could have more time with MFS as an instructor, he is so full of knowledge and so willing and encouraging to share it!
11. Yes, we went to the archives at the university through the iPad. It was really neat

talking about the books while we could see them. My institution had quite a few of the same ones, so this was practical for me as well.

12. Yes! I really enjoyed all the SC visits.
13. N/A
14. The SC visits were a real treat, and where I enjoyed learning a great deal.
15. Yes, the visits to SC were an essential and valuable complement to the rest of the course.
16. {no response}
17. The SC trips gave us the opportunity to see and compare resources "in person."
18. {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. {no response}
3. Lots of material.
4. {no response}
5. {no response}
6. Introduce the diversity/colonial topic sooner. I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to MFS, Annie Rowleson, and all the staff, both visible and behind the scenes, for their hard work and dedication throughout the course. Despite the virtual setting, they managed to create an environment that made us feel at home while at home. Their efforts in facilitating the learning process, fostering a sense of community, and providing support were truly invaluable. Thank you for making this learning experience memorable and rewarding.
7. I would strongly recommend the course.
8. {no response}
9. {no response}
10. Don't hesitate, take any opportunity you can to have a course with MFS, you'll learn so much more than you expected!
11. {no response}
12. {no response}
13. Come prepared with questions.
14. Take advantage of the resources on Google Drive, and try to do at least some of the pre-course readings.
15. {no response}
16. {no response}
17. {no response}
18. {no response}

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

1. {no response}
2. {no response}
3. Books reflect the times during which they were created.
4. {private response}
5. {no response}
6. The course enabled me to not only understand but also experience, think, and imagine one of the ideas MFS shared with us on the first day of class: book history must be done in a community.
7. Powerful, fascinating, and extremely helpful.
8. {no response}
9. {no response}
10. A lovely bubble of books, history, knowledge, and warmth.
11. Books are wonderful / They make my heart sing with joy / Thank you Rare Book School.
12. As Lady Gaga would say "Talented. Brilliant. Incredible. Amazing. Show-stopping. Spectacular."
13. Amazing!
14. Inculcating wonder!
15. Thank you, MFS for a truly wonderful and inspiring course! And for offering this as an online course to allow people like me to take it.
16. {no response}
17. {no response}
18. {no response}