

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. The pre-course reading assignments were extremely helpful. The list served as a compass; it guided me through an unfamiliar field of study. The list was long but carefully curated.
 2. Useful.
 3. Yes. The pre-course reading assignments were useful and very interesting! The reading load is reasonable and could be completed in a week or so before the class starts. My favorite readings are the ones on writing and erasure. RC suggests additional readings during his lectures, and JP adds them to our shared drive. This method is helpful because I plan to finish the additional readings this summer and refer to them later on. Overall, I thought the readings selected for this course were excellent and addressed the question of textual mobility very well.
 4. Yes, definitely: RC did a fantastic job of summarizing the readings in broad-brush in lectures, but having read them before (even skimming) was helpful in following the steps in his argument. I did read a few things from the advanced reading list I found online for previous years of the course, and found the Armando Petrucci, Joan DeJean, Leah Price, and Blair (on information overload/commonplacing) readings especially interesting and relevant to much of what we talked about.
 5. Yes, the pre-course reading list was very helpful. I did not complete all of it, but a substantial amount. I would definitely recommend reading McKenzie's *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts* in full, ahead of time. Do what you can to complete the readings of the week ahead of time, but for those I hadn't yet read, I managed to do them all the night prior. It is tough but manageable.

- 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 a joyous, delightful, and lively learning experience. I enjoyed everything from readings to lectures to displays. The whole week was scholarly dense, academically rigorous, and intellectually challenging. The course had all the distinctive features of an RBS course: impeccably designed, adroitly contrived, carefully planned, and

- masterfully executed. The content is a superb array of resources and long-lasting reference material.
2. Useful.
 3. The course workbook is helpful, and I will continue to refer to it in my research. I like that the workbook has listed all of the rare books we looked at and the excerpts discussed in class. I plan to examine some of these rare books again in the future, and having their titles handy is helpful.
 4. The course workbook was a fantastic aid in class, not least the facsimiles of title pages/maps and the like. There are of course some leads I'll pick up and others I won't in my own research, but having the materials assembled in one place is very useful.
 5. The workbook was very helpful, and I appreciated having the record of everything we had seen during the seminar in case I'd like to see it again.
- 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. This has been one of the best professional development activities I have ever had. The course was a constant stream of "aha!" moments (putting pieces of a puzzle together, i.e., religious prayer cards traveling to the New World), new ideas (book circulation between Europe and the New World), or project plans (already thinking about bibliographical projects with Las Casas material in the U.S.A.).
 2. RBS Certificate (of Proficiency) (?).
 3. I took this course out of curiosity and didn't know what to expect, but it had made a significant impact on my research. RC and JP are very inspiring teachers, and they changed how I think about early modern Europe, global history, texts, and the meaning of mobility. I leave this seminar with more research questions and readings I want to pursue.
 4. I think that the general *mentalité* of the course was what left the biggest impact for me—particularly the emphasis on global, connected histories, the readiness to trouble boundaries of all sorts (national, disciplinary, ideological), and the investment and interest in languages and translation. In terms of my own work, I came away with multiple directions in which to take a current chapter I'm writing as part of a longer project, and beyond that I am thinking about how I can make my research more transnational in approach, as well as more attentive to the materiality of the book.
 5. Yes! I had several such moments and am excited to get to work with these new connections I made.
- 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. Big time! Once we "took off," each meeting was constant discovery and stimulation.

- The course description dwarfs compared to what we experienced, e.g., sixteenth- and seventeenth-century books mentioned in a previous lecture, were displayed in the next segment—learned how to handle them, discovering notes and peculiarities on them.
2. Yes, they did. They were very accommodating and helpful. Yes, I did.
 3. Yes. RC and JP are very knowledgeable about the history of the books and are excellent instructors too. I enjoyed RC's lectures and JP's analyses of the rare books. They have given me insightful ideas to think about for my research, and I feel very honored to have learned from them. I hope they teach a different rare book class every summer so I can keep coming back!
 4. The course went above and beyond my expectations in terms of the level of preparation on both RC's and JP's parts, and in terms of the richness and applicability of much of the material to my own field (literary studies). I'm not sure exactly what I expected to learn, but perhaps I thought it would be more strictly book-history oriented—I was very glad that it tended equally in the direction of intellectual history and literary culture.
 5. Yes!
- 5) *Are there other ways in which the course could have been improved?*
1. Add visual materials. Some of RC's are available on YouTube.
 2. {no response}
 3. I suggest some classroom exercises working with rare books, such as descriptive bibliography exercises. I have limited knowledge of rare books and didn't always understand what I was looking at in the rare books.
 4. No! An ideal week for me, from course instruction through course structure.
 5. Not at all. Both JP and RC are tremendously knowledgeable, and I could not recommend it more. {private response}
- 6) *Who might benefit the most from taking this RBS course?*
1. Archivists, special collections curators, and academics interested in the period.
 2. {no response}
 3. Anyone who is interested in the history of books! The readings and lectures presented in this course are targeted towards an audience with some knowledge of early modern Europe and the history of the book though. So I think graduate students, post-doctoral scholars, faculty members, and rare book librarians are the likely audience.
 4. We were quite a diverse group in terms of our fields/occupations and career stages, and I think we all found the course inestimably useful for our individual research, so I would say just about anyone interested in the mobility of texts, book history, issues of authorship, reading translation. It was—as JP said—like taking a high-level graduate seminar condensed into one week, and in that an incredibly efficient way to get a

- better handle on the main developments in bibliographical studies and cultural history more broadly in past decades.
5. Faculty, graduate students, and librarians.
- 7) *Do you feel that you got your money's worth? Would you recommend the course to others?*
1. Big time!
 2. Yes!
 3. Absolutely! I will retake this course in a heartbeat!
 4. I did have a scholarship for the course, but if I were to have paid for it I would give an emphatic yes to this question!
 5. {private response}
- 8) *If your course made any trips outside of the classroom, do you feel that they were time well spent?*
1. N/A
 2. {no response}
 3. N/A
 4. {no response}
 5. {no response}
- 9) *Do you have any additional thoughts or advice for anyone considering taking this course in a future year?*
1. If you are interested in this topic, take the course. You will not regret it!
 2. {no response}
 3. Regardless of your career background or research interests, just take this course. The lectures and readings are fascinating. RC and JP are legends—get to know them, and you'll leave the course intellectually enriched tenfold!
 4. Go for it. And make the most of the incredible resources you have in RC and JP—a real privilege to learn from them both, and a rare opportunity/setting in which to do so.
 5. It will be an intensive week, but I cannot recommend it more. I am reinvigorated and ready to get back to my own work and keep thinking about the issues discussed in class. The course also provided a great lit review for anyone who wants to deepen an approach or make a pivot.
- 10) *If you had to sum up your RBS experience with a single sentence, phrase, or haiku, what would you say?*
1. No future is possible without looking back.

2. Excellent.
3. Taking RC's course feels as if I were looking up at the Sistine Chapel—as if the heavens have opened and the angels are singing ...
4. As one of us said—*chapeau* (to RC, JP, and RBS)!
5. Magisterial graduate seminar.