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H-120: Textual Mobilities: Works, Books & Reading Across Early Modern Europe
11–16 June, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

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 was really helpful for preparing for the course.
2. Yes, the readings were useful, though many of them were from at least ten years ago. The readings are still relevant, though I think they should be updated in some places.
3. Unfortunately, I was traveling for the whole month before the course and unable to do the pre-course reading assignments. However, the list of readings is a really valuable resource that I am glad to take away from the course. I have now started to make my way through it and already found several entries that are proving fruitful for a current research project.
4. Very useful. The readings are well-selected and cover a good deal of interesting topics.
5. {no response}
6. The pre-course reading assignments were very useful, if numerous. It might be helpful to frame the reading list as a tool that will serve students both before and after the course itself, and to emphasize which are essential to the course and which will serve to deepen the conversation.
7. {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. The workbook was incredibly useful and the class would have been challenging to follow without this kind of material to follow along with.
2. Very appropriate and useful—I will be looking back at this notebook again!
3. The course workbook was very useful during the course, as it contained images of relevant title pages, engravings, and excerpts from the books under discussion. I am not sure it will be useful after the course unless I work on these specific texts.
4. I appreciate how all the materials are carefully curated for this course. I am excited to keep exploring the materials covered in the workbook and will continue using it as an important reference for my future work.
5. The course workbook was, and will continue to be, a great resource. It included bibliographical notes for most of the books we examined in class, as well as scans of

various title pages, translations, and secondary literature. These materials allowed for close readings with the group, and also put compendia into an easier format for study. Very grateful for the time and effort the instructors put into making this workbook (and I love having a hard copy)!

6. The course workbook is invaluable! It helps to connect the course readings to the larger arguments of the course, as well as connecting them to the actual books we saw over the course of the week.
7. {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. I really enjoyed seeing the books that we were discussing in person. The exhibition of the books provided a great balance to the lecture. I also found a lot of material from the lectures to be useful for my dissertation.
2. I did—the day that most related to my research was of course the most interesting and useful, though I did find much intriguing over the course of the whole week.
3. I was especially interested in questions RC raised about the relationships between oral and written culture, between readers and "the reader," and between writing, memory, and forgetting. I have started turning these issues over in my head with the idea that perhaps they could help shape my next book project. At the very least, they will lead to some interesting reading and thinking.
4. I also really enjoyed the opportunity to present my own research to the class (and I wish more of my classmates had presented their research as well). Not only did it help break up the day's lectures, but RC, JP, and my classmates asked interesting questions about my project that I had not considered before and that will help shape my future work on the topic.
5. This course has been an eye-opening experience for me. I am amazed by the broad range of topics covered and the comparative models that have been introduced. I definitely walked away with some new thoughts regarding my own research.
6. Coming from an Art History background, it was incredibly helpful to be among others coming to the material from different disciplines—especially how historians, English Studies students, rare book librarians et. al. approach the history of the book. Their perspective and methods were very inspiring, not to mention interesting in terms of finding edges and overlaps between print and printed book culture (which of course are related, but also, I learned, not exactly the same).
7. I was most interested in how the idea of the global life of a text, as illustrated through a few key examples in the course, could serve as a model for new directions in collecting. I work in a collection that is looking to expand its collecting, but in ways that remain closely connected to the core texts and subjects of our historic holdings. I think this through line of the global life of a text could help justify an interesting and diverse

range of new acquisition directions.

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. The course was incredibly useful
2. Yes, and yes!
3. {no response}
4. Yes, we did.
5. Emphatically yes.
6. Absolutely!
7. {no response}

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

1. I plan to use the knowledge from this course in the formulation of my dissertation.
2. For dissertation writing and teaching.
3. {no response}
4. I will continue reading and exploring the aspects of textual mobility that we covered. While my work is not closely related to early modern Europe, I have greatly benefited from the approaches mentioned in the course and am eager to re-examine my project from fresh new viewpoints.
5. I plan to apply these skills and interdisciplinary approaches as I conduct dissertation research. Ways to think about reading across early modern cultures will be particularly instructive (and was the most different aspect of the course for me).
6. I look forward to continuing to think about the material textual component of works in my day to day work as a special collections librarian—using that lens in my cataloging work and imparting it as a critical tool in my teaching.
7. {no response}

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

1. Those interested in either the history of books or early modern literature.
2. I think that the choice to have a significant number of Ph.D./ graduate students in the class was really useful, particularly for a more historically-oriented course like the one I took.
3. Someone who works on the movement of books from Europe to the New World in the early modern period. I think it would work better for someone who works on the specific topic of the course than for someone who works on adjacent topics, other texts, or other periods and areas.
4. I think everyone can take something from this course, but it might be most helpful for

- Ph.D. students who are in the early stage of developing their dissertations.
5. Anyone interested in how information is codified, circulates, congeals, &c.
 6. This course is well-suited for those with an interest in the circulation of works in the early modern world, particularly between England, Spain, and their colonies.
 7. {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. I was really struck by the way in which book titles could change for translated works depending on the personal, political, and social atmosphere in which the translator was living.
2. {no response}
3. JP's rare book displays, especially the one based on Montaigne's visit to the Vatican Library, were a really excellent addition to the course. It was really special to be able to see these books up close. JP was also more than happy to add books to his planned displays that he knew would interest particular members of the class, something I really appreciated—my research interests are pretty niche and not entirely related to the course topic, but JP was still able to find books that connected my work and the course, which were both inspiring in terms of future research plans and also just very cool to see and touch.
4. There were many "aha!" moments. While the lectures are definitely inspiring, I would also like to express my gratitude for the opportunity of observing relevant collections of the Kislak Center every day, which is an irreplaceable part of RBS.
5. {no response}
6. {no response}
7. {no response}

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

1. N/A
2. {no response}
3. Even with the coffee and lunch breaks, five to six hours per day of straight lecture without visual aids or interaction is too much. It is just too difficult to stay focused for that amount of time, especially if one's own research is not on the particular texts being discussed in the course. The course would benefit from incorporating some interactive activities, as well as time for independent research and consultation with the instructors (as promised in the syllabus). I also would have appreciated more discussion of theory/methodology and less focus on the case studies.
4. I would appreciate it if we're given more time to work on the pre-course readings before the RBS week. That said, it must take the instructors much time and effort to

organize everything before the course, which I totally understand.

5. Maybe one or two longer lunches for anyone who wants a bit of time to conduct independent research.
6. {no response}
7. {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. 8
3. 6
4. 10
5. 9
6. 10
7. 7

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. N/A
2. {no response}
3. {no response}
4. N/A
5. Yes, especially the first two additional events: Claire Bourne's lecture and the visit to Uncommon Press.
6. We didn't make any field trips outside of the classroom, but the fact of the course being taught out of Penn—and its special collections—really made the course. The examples from the rare book collection we got to see and work with were truly incredible.
7. {no response}

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

1. N/A
2. {no response}
3. Don't stress too much about the readings. While you will certainly get more out of the class if you do them, you can still get a lot out of it even if your preparation time is limited. RC's lectures do a great job of synthesizing the main issues raised in the

readings.

4. Be prepared for an adventurous week!
5. Come prepared to inhale information and digest it later.
6. This course was as described and more. I was curious how the instructors would bring the ambitious and wide-ranging reading list together, but they did so convincingly.
7. {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. An incredible opportunity.
2. {no response}
3. {no response}
4. It's an excellent reminder of how much we love books and how books bring like-minded nerds together.
5. Brilliant. A reminder of why I want to work in this field, with these people.
6. {no response}
7. {no response}