

Timothy D. Barrett & John Bidwell
H-60: The History of European & American Papermaking
14–19 June 2015

Narrative Course Evaluations

- 1) *Were the pre-course reading assignments useful? Did you do any additional preparation for your course? Are there any books or articles that you would like to see included in future years? Any that you might suggest removing?*
 1. Might add the Chronology of Paper History—Collings and Milnes, the Paper Conservator volume 14 (1990). Yes, all readings were useful, though I didn't get to all. Particularly good was Bidwell's *Early American Papermaking* book by Cutbrush.
 2. Reading any Dard Hunter will prepare you just fine. I think the more you come in knowing, the better suited you'll be to take advantage of the knowledge of the instructors. I think someone coming in without having read any of the pre-course readings would still gain a tremendous amount of learning from the course—that's how good the instructors are.
 3. Yes.
 4. The pre-course readings were very useful to understanding what was being taught in the class.
 5. Yes—particularly Dard Hunter, Joseph de Lalande, and the works of the two instructors. Class lectures and discussions moved naturally from this foundation.
 6. I think having the papermaking videos listed in the advance reading would be helpful. The videos are freely available on YouTube, and having the extra time in class for more lectures and questions on review of the RBS study collections would be great.
 7. The pre-course readings were a helpful primer to the contents of the course lectures.
 8. I did all the suggested pre-course reading, and found it quite helpful.
 9. Hunter makes for fascinating reading; might think about adding some of the articles (or maybe TB's "Paper Through Time" site) to the required list.
 10. I think Dard Hunter's book is out of date. Maybe Basbanes's book on paper could be used.
 11. {no response}
 12. The pre-reading met my needs.
 13. Yes, useful. I did the mandatory reading, and felt that was sufficient.
 14. *The Coming of the Book* is severely outdated.
 15. Yes, readings were easily accessible and appropriate.
 16. The pre-course assignments were useful only as far as I was able to devote time to actually reading beforehand. Unfortunately, I had very limited time; fortunately, I had already read many of the entries over the years. I will certainly go back to this list in the future, as I am curious about all the titles I have not read already.

- 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 bibliography is extremely useful. I discovered several books I was ignorant of. The workbook becomes part of my notebook(s) on paper that I will continue to use.
2. The workbook will be a valuable reference after the course, as well as a rich resource for reading suggestions.
3. It was helpful when TB and JB went over certain pages, explaining diagrams or charts; the workbook has useful info that will certainly be useful in the future. Yes, it was appropriate.
4. The teaching materials and workshop sessions were very useful in understanding the process and results of papermaking and the history of papermaking.
5. I anticipate using the course workbook extensively in the future—both in my work responsibilities and in my own research.
6. The workbook was okay, but I will probably turn to my notes or the course reading list more often.
7. The workbook provides useful supplementary material, as well as an excellent bibliography.
8. Yes; I wonder if organization could be better though....
9. Very useful. {private response}
10. {no response}
11. {no response}
12. Yes, and yes.
13. Yes, across the board. I will definitely refer to the workbook for my own research, and as a teaching resource in the future.
14. Very helpful to have all of these handouts condensed into a workbook. Some of the graphs could use a bit of clarification.
15. Yes, and yes.
16. I think the information in the coursebook is extremely interesting and very useful. The only suggestion I would make would be to perhaps have an order that is more closely aligned with the flow of the class. It seemed at times that we were jumping back and forth quite a bit. But that is really a minor thing.

3) *If you've taken previous RBS courses, how did this one compare?*

1. Perhaps my favorite so far; I especially enjoyed the hands-on afternoon sessions. Also, I'm glad I didn't spend all of class trying to write notes and take pictures on my camera as I did in early classes.
2. N/A
3. All the courses I've taken have been excellent in terms of the knowledge and enthusiasm of the instructors—it's the best thing about RBS.
4. Both were excellent.
5. This was certainly one of the richest and most rewarding courses I've attended at RBS—great subject, faculty, and cohort.
6. This one compares very favorably.
7. There were more students in this class than in my previous course, and fewer items circulated during the lecture portions than in David Whitesell's "Printed Books to 1800."
8. I enjoyed this one much more. Having two perspectives and a mix of practical, hands-on, and theoretical approaches made the topic much more interesting.

9. Excellent. Good mix of hands-on and lecture-style material. The labs are great, as is the background.
10. {no response}
11. {no response}
12. Favorably.
13. This was my first.
14. Not applicable.
15. {no response}
16. Not applicable.

4) *Which aspects of the course were most interesting and relevant for you as an individual? Did you walk away with any new insights, ideas, or project plans?*

1. More insights than I can count, or probably remember; too many ideas, some concrete projects that I will continue and that were inspired by this course.
2. The lectures on mill labor relations and the industrialization of handmade mills were most interesting to me. Taking in all of this history has sparked my interest, and I think I'll follow through by joining the British Paper Historian group. The newsletters JB showed us from this group were rich with content!
3. Having knowledge of the techniques of hand papermaking, but little knowledge of the history of papermaking as an industry, I found JB's perspective particularly interesting. I also really enjoyed watermark identification, as it's something that I can use back at work. And seeing TB at work pulling sheets was really great. I felt privileged!
4. Really everything, but mostly the research and discoveries of possible reasons why handmade paper holds up so well, and how to identify paper from watermarks.
5. It was the combination of approaches and voices that I enjoyed most—academic and hands on, historical and current, from the perspectives of a researcher and a practitioner.
6. I liked the hands-on session; it was an experience that I wouldn't be able to have outside of RBS.
7. I found the hands-on aspects of the course particularly helpful in grounding my understanding of the trade in terms of the physical labor and skill involved.
8. Can't say. I found all aspects of the course, from stories of early mills in the colonies to pulling sheets of paper, all quite fascinating and immersive. Provided me with the depth and insight I was hoping for.
9. The hands-on labs were really useful. You can read about it all day, but until you actually do it, it's impossible to really understand the process. I want to make more paper now!
10. TB's presentation on paper permanence was particularly important. I also found the information about printing on unsized paper to be personally helpful (I've done some letterpress).
11. {no response}
12. Many new insights. One will inform an appendix in my new book.
13. Historical methods and particulars of the process of papermaking were of particular interest to me. Yes, I leave with plans for summer projects in papermaking and art-making.
14. I learned a lot about American and commercial papermaking history.
15. I enjoyed the range of expertise, and having two very well-versed instructors. The

information presented helped to fill in the space of my previous knowledge, and to expand my view of papermaking and its historical connections.

16. I think the most interesting aspects for me as a conservator were: 1) Insights into physical aspects of paper from the point of view of a practicing papermaker; hands-on sessions making paper. 2) Learning about the labor, trade, economics, and social aspects of papermaking that I have rarely touched upon in my readings on paper. It was fascinating!

5) *Did the instructors help you to acquire all the skills and information promised in the course description? Was anything left out or undeveloped? Did you learn what you had hoped to learn?*

1. Yes—both are incredibly knowledgeable, and complement each other superbly. Perhaps that's why they've taught it for so long. I feel like I got the good foundation of knowledge that I wish I'd gotten ten years ago. Yes, there were things left out—but thirty-plus hours couldn't have been more full.
2. I have a better understanding now of the origins of papermaking and the movement of the technology from China to Europe. I would have liked to have spent more time doing the watermark-identification exercise, and also to have had another lecture or two on paper history in the industry after the introduction of the Fourdrinier.
3. Yes, absolutely. No, I learned what I'd hoped to learn.
4. Yes, both instructors were very knowledgeable and patient.
5. I learned more than I'd anticipated, although I could say that for any RBS course I've attended.
6. I liked the exercise with the watermarks; it was helpful to see how the various reference books worked.
7. Yes!
8. Nothing left out. Yes, I did learn all that I had hoped to.
9. Absolutely.
10. I was hoping to learn a bit more about best conservation practices in light of paper history and chemistry, though I realize that is not this course's primary purpose.
11. {no response}
12. Yes, no, yes.
13. Yes. I believe the material covered in this course could be expanded and divided into umpteen courses, so by nature things were necessarily left out, but I learned as much as I'd hoped.
14. The lesson on watermark identification was empowering. JB and TB are very personable knowledgeable instructors.
15. Yes; yes, and much more.
16. For the most part, yes, although I would have really loved it if we had spent some time looking at sheets and examining some "fabrication" evidence sometimes visible in sheets to better be able to "read" paper. I'm thinking of burnishing marks, creases from drying the sheets on horsehair string, poor sheet formation, or perhaps look at more examples of papers for which it is hard to determine whether they were handmade or machine made.

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

1. In my conservation work, in what teaching and training I do. This week was very helpful. Now I want to go make paper, and look for watermarks.
 2. I will be more informed now when I read other historical accounts on papermaking. I will share what I've learned with others. I will know how/where to start when I'm trying to identify watermarks.
 3. Researching watermarks; developing a historical papermaking component for teaching undergraduate/graduate students about medieval and early-modern manuscript production.
 4. To better inform my treatment designs by having a deeper understanding of the materials and processes that go into making paper.
 5. In curating collections, in teaching about a range of issues, including book production technologies, and in my book-arts work.
 6. {no response}
 7. I will use what I learned in the class in my position as a special-collections conservator to understand and make decisions about the objects that I treat.
 8. Mainly to have a better understanding and appreciation for the substrate I work with most as a conservator, but also to help with questions about dating paper and authenticity.
 9. It'll be great fun to begin to look for some of the telltale signs of paper production techniques that we saw examples of.
 10. I will give gelatin resizing another try, and be more discriminating when it comes to giving papers water-based treatments.
 11. {no response}
 12. Greater outreach with students; new exhibits; research and writing.
 13. For further research and creative practice, and in teaching.
 14. The course has prepared me as a more historically aware maker. I will share my insights with students.
 15. I hope to incorporate this information into my courses, and also to use it as a jumpstart to conducting additional research. I hope to organize a trip to bring students to visit the collection (and also visit the conservation lab).
 16. I hope to apply all this directly into developing a module on paper and papermaking for our teaching kit, "The Traveling Scriptorium," which we have been using for two-to-three years to teach the material culture of manuscripts to undergrads and grad students at Yale. Look us up, we have a blog that we wish we had more time to devote to.
- 7) *Please briefly describe the intellectual level of the course. What sort of person might benefit the most from taking it?*
1. It's very high level, and the more knowledge of history you bring the class, the better.
 2. Someone who has an affinity with paper, and/or interacts daily with paper as a material.
 3. Intellectual level suitable for anyone interested in the history of the book, conservators, rare-book librarians, working papermakers/artists wanting a solid background in the history of the craft/history of the business.
 4. The course was at a good level for conservators, historians, and papermakers who are looking for a good overview of how paper was made and some preservation concerns without going too deep in any one area.

5. The course was intellectually rich, but the practicality and hands-on sessions provide a finely modulated educational experience.
6. I think this is a good intro-level course for the history of papermaking.
7. I think anyone interested in the history of papermaking, as both a craft and as a trade, would benefit from this course.
8. It helps to have some background with paper and some familiarity with the history of papermaking.
9. Frankly, anybody who's interested in books, printing, illustration, binding, or collecting, in any capacity, would benefit. Our class featured a good range of folks, and that always makes things more interesting.
10. Bibliographers working in special collections.
11. Fairly high. The knowledge base in other courses I've taken has varied, but I think in this course most, if not all, students came with a fairly impressive understanding of the subject matter, which certainly benefitted everyone.
12. The level was high. It's not for someone without prior knowledge.
13. Anyone interested in paper as a key technological development in the course of human events.
14. Anyone who uses paper and is interested to broaden their depth of knowledge, and who desires an introduction to the technique.
15. The course was taught to accommodate various levels and areas of interest.
16. I think the level was satisfying in the sense that probably every person in the class knew already a certain percentage of the content, while still learning a great deal. It was easy to ask questions to push the subject a little further.

8) *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. Yes, there were several "aha" moments, but I can't recollect them as I write this.
2. The idea that American papermaking volume was limited because of a shortage of skilled labor, and that that shortage allowed the papermakers to set their own terms.
3. {no response}
4. {no response}
5. {no response}
6. {no response}
7. TB's anecdotes were particularly interesting as an "insider" perspective on the craft of papermaking, as was JB's advice on the possibilities and limits of paper research.
8. There are many "aha" moments—places where I linked or filled in gaps of knowledge.
9. See Q4, above. The hands-on labs were great.
10. The significance of printing on unsized paper was an "aha" moment for me.
11. There were quite a lot of "aha" moments, but no one that seems more remarkable than others.
12. Not "aha," more confirmation and clarification.
13. I'm certain there were, but my brain is operating at fifty percent—give me a weekend and a review of the notes....
14. Accurately identifying a watermark using a half-dozen books was a satisfying task.

15. Enjoyed hearing instructors talk about their research; it was interesting to have a “lunch” meeting with another class.
16. I’m not sure there were any “aha” moments, but there were many “Mmmmm! Interesting...” moments.

9) *How could the course have been improved?*

1. I can’t suggest anything that would keep the class to thirty hours per week.
2. {private response}
3. I’m glad we were all accepted, but the larger class size/splitting up into smaller groups made for a somewhat less bonded class than in previous years. I also enjoyed it when TB and JB bounced ideas off one another, and missed having that in the afternoon sessions.
4. Slower with the PowerPoint presentations to help write down names and dates.
5. Time may not allow it, but I wouldn’t have minded a bit more hands-on experience, if only couching another sheet or two.
6. JB talked a lot about how gelatin size affects the working qualities of paper. I think a demonstration of printing on sized/unsized paper would be nice, also writing ink on sized/unsized paper. Add a parchment sample to the RBS study collection in the classroom, so that handling and comparison can happen. There’s papyrus, so why not parchment?
7. {private response}
8. Maybe talk about ways history and understanding of papermaking can inform our work today.
9. I liked the split afternoon periods with the smaller groups, though I think if they do it again, trying to make more paper (maybe two sheets, rather than one per type) would be worth it, just for a bit more experience.
10. {no response}
11. I genuinely have difficulty thinking of any area where it really needs change.
12. Not sure. I thought it well done.
13. I would have liked more exercises in paper identification, even as a group.
14. {no response}
15. A few times the sessions ended early, but that allowed for a different kind of exchange. “So many books, so little time...” I enjoyed having smaller, changing groups, allowing for more individual/personal attention in the afternoons.
16. See Q5, above.

10) *Do you feel that you got your money’s worth? Would you recommend the course to others?*

1. Yes, and yes.
2. Yes, and yes.
3. Yes, and yes.
4. Yes.
5. Absolutely.
6. Yes.
7. I would absolutely recommend the course.
8. Yes, and yes.
9. Yes, absolutely. If you get the chance, take this course!

10. I got my money's worth, and would recommend the course.
11. Yes.
12. Yes, and I already have.
13. As a fortunate scholarship recipient, absolutely. Yes, I'd recommend the course without hesitation.
14. Yes.
15. Yes.
16. Yes, and yes!

11) *If your course made any trips outside of the classroom, do you feel that they were time well spent?*

1. Just to the papermaking studio and SC; yes, very helpful.
2. We were told the class used to take a trip to a recycling plant. I think a mill tour would be beneficial, and I hope they search for another such opportunity.
3. Yes—hands-on papermaking was crucial and definitely time well spent.
4. {no response}
5. I enjoyed the visits to SC. They largely followed the other sessions' lecture format, but I enjoyed seeing the books and sheets.
6. {no response}
7. Our trips to SC were always interesting and informative.
8. Yes!
9. See Q4, again. The labs are absolutely worth it.
10. {no response}
11. Yes.
12. Not applicable.
13. Yes.
14. Yes, though it would have been nice to have been able to touch the paper and books displayed at SC.
15. Yes—it was great to see the paper studio and make paper.
16. Yes, if you count walking to Ruffin Hall to make paper.

12) *If you attended any of our optional evening events, do you feel that they were a good use of your time? Were there any that were particularly important to your RBS experience? Any that you could have done without?*

1. Yes, especially Monday's Chinese paper lecture, and then Russell Marret's.
2. I thought the evening events were great optional add-ons. I went to two of them.
3. Not applicable.
4. Yes.
5. The Russell Maret lecture was probably the best evening talk I've attended at RBS, but I feel fortunate to have heard both this week.
6. Both lectures this week were excellent.
7. All of the evening events provided a fun, friendly way to meet students from other classes.
8. Chinese papermaking talk was terrific.
9. Attended both lectures and Booksellers' Night. All very much worthwhile. The lectures both visited and contributed to our class, as well, which was excellent.
10. They were a good use of my time, though I don't think they were vital; they served

as moments for socializing outside class, which was good.

11. Yes. They weren't necessarily within the bounds of my interests, but still found them interesting, and in fact worthwhile, especially because I mightn't have gone other than being at RBS.
12. Not applicable.
13. All were worthy—I could have enjoyed two hands-on experiences and one lecture, rather than vice versa, since we sit and listen most of the day.
14. Lectures were fabulous.
15. I loved the optional evening events. It was great having the opportunity to be exposed to individuals outside my area of expertise in the night sessions. Nice variety of hands-on experience in letterpress, too! It made me want to take another class.
16. For those that I attended, I thought they were worth the time. For those I did not attend, it was only because I was too tired.

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

1. No.
2. You'll be tired at the end of the week, but it will be worth it!
3. {no response}
4. {no response}
5. I encourage anyone with interest in historical or contemporary papers to attend this class.
6. {no response}
7. {no response}
8. Do your reading!
9. Take it!
10. {no response}
11. No.
12. Don't hesitate: take the course. You will be better for it.
13. Not that I can presently think of.
14. Do read Hunter and Basbanes.
15. Don't hesitate...take a class!
16. {no response}

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

1. {single question mark}
2. Summer camp for grown-ups!
3. Exhausting, stimulating, rewarding.
4. I'm looking forward to coming back.
5. It is exhausting to spend time learning at this level with other members of the bibliophilic tribe.
6. {no response}
7. The insight that instructors and students bring to RBS is essential to creating a community of informed, invigorated, and responsible professionals.
8. It's not often that we have the opportunity for immersive learning with such

- experts—incredible! One small suggestion—would be great to learn about exercise options like hiking trails, bike rentals, yoga studios, group walks, &c.
9. Exhausting, but so worth it! {private response}
 10. This has been an intense, mountain-top experience, and I only hope I can find a way to keep some of the same intensity as I return to work.
 11. RBS is certainly something everyone in the field needs to experience if it's within their means.
 12. I almost feel guilty having such a tremendous experience on my employer's dime.
 13. An intellectual jumpstart. After a good rest, I'm excited to put some new ideas to work.
 14. Gather a bunch of book nerds, scholars, and a fantastic collection of books and let 'em rip.
 15. Fabulous.
 16. Thank you for accepting my application to the course! I had a “magnifique” week!

Student Data

Number of respondents: 16 (of 16)

How did you arrange for time off to attend this course?

My institution/employer gave me professional leave time: 9 (56.25%)
 My institution/employer did not give me professional leave; I used paid or vacation days: 1 (6.25%)
 I am self employed, and can arrange my own schedule: 1 (6.25%)
 I am a student or non-year-round employee, with a more flexible summer schedule: 3 (18.75%)
 My situation does not fit any of the options above: 1 (6.25%)
 No Response: 1 (6.25%)

Who paid your RBS tuition costs?

I paid 100% myself: 2 (12.50%)
 My institution/employer paid 100%: 7 (43.75%)
 My institution/employer paid part; I paid the rest: 2 (12.50%)
 I used a scholarship/fellowship to pay/waive 100%: 2 (12.50%)
 I used a scholarship/fellowship to pay/waive part; my institution/employer paid the rest: 1 (6.25%)
 I exchanged goods or services in lieu of tuition: 1 (6.25%)
 No Response: 1 (6.25%)

Who paid your RBS housing expenses?

I paid 100% myself: 3 (18.75%)
 My institution/employer paid 100%: 5 (31.25%)
 My institution/employer paid part; I paid the rest: 2 (12.50%)
 I used a scholarship/fellowship to cover part; I paid the rest: 1 (6.25%)
 I used a scholarship/fellowship to cover part; my institution/employer paid the rest: 1

(6.25%)

I stayed with friends/family, or stayed in my own home and commuted: 3 (18.75%)

No Response: 1 (6.25%)

Who paid your RBS travel expenses?

I paid 100% myself: 3 (18.75%)

My institution/employer paid 100%: 5 (31.25%)

My institution/employer paid part; I paid the rest: 2 (12.50%)

I used a scholarship/fellowship to cover part; I paid the rest: 2 (12.50%)

I used a scholarship/fellowship to cover part; my institution/employer paid the rest: 1 (6.25%)

I live locally, and had no travel expenses: 2 (12.50%)

No Response: 1 (6.25%)

Which of the following best describes your current occupation?

Library disciplines:

Archivist: 8 (50%)

Curator: 3 (18.75%)

Other: 1 (6.25%)

Student working toward a/n:

M.F.A.: 1 (6.25%)

Other: 1 (6.25%)

Professional educator:

Lecturer/adjunct: 1 (6.25%)

Associate professor: 1 (6.25%)