

Erin Blake
I-10: The History of Printed Book Illustration in the West
05–10 July 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. Yes. Good as is.
2. Pre-course reading was very useful. No additional prep.
3. Yes, although I don't think it was necessary to read each book thoroughly. Given the total cost of the books, it would have been more helpful to have been sent scanned copies of relevant chapters.
4. All were useful.
5. Yes. They provided a good background for the class.
6. For me, useful and critical, as I had so little background. I would suggest students read Griffiths *first*. I found it easiest to work with.
7. I finished and found all the readings useful.
8. Yes, the course readings were helpful in providing context and background. I thought that they had slightly too much focus on process, considering that we did not focus on that in class.
9. The readings were quite helpful.
10. Yes. I also found watching YouTube tutorials for various print techniques to be very helpful.
11. Yes, very much! Ivins in particular was a revelation. Harthan was a slog, but I absolutely think reading it helped me get more out of class.
12. Pre-course readings were appropriate, a manageable list. I could get all online thanks to AbeBooks. No (though I had some background in some areas of book illustration, not necessary to get a lot from class). No, and no.

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. Excellent; yes; yes.
2. Yes, and yes.
3. Yes, quite helpful. Perhaps an added "cheat sheet" with strict definitions of each method discussed would have been useful.
4. It was simple and fine. List of resources were greatly appreciated.
5. The workbook was fine; especially appreciate the timeline and bibliography. One recommendation: leave more space between slide titles for note taking.
6. Yes. Very helpful. I will use it. Would be nice to have in digital format also.
7. More please! I was surprised how small the packet was for this course. The suggested reading looks helpful.
8. I very much appreciated having all of the slides and special-collections books listed—maybe more room around each entry for note taking would be helpful?

- The amount of documentation was comprehensive, but not overwhelming.
9. I wish there was a way to provide access to the slides after the fact. While there are citations, we may not have the same ability to track down images, so notes are not as useful. I will return to SC to look at some of these items again.
 10. The course book was helpful. Perhaps in the future, copies of certain images could also be included for reference.
 11. The course workbook was very useful—nice to have all the details of the books we looked at on hand, so I didn't get distracted writing them down.
 12. The course covered five centuries of book illustration well. EB's slides, choices of books to see, and notes were very helpful. Content was just as title says.
- 3) *If you've taken previous RBS courses, how did this one compare?*
1. N/A
 2. {no response}
 3. N/A
 4. N/A
 5. Just as good as most. Very pleased with the course.
 6. I haven't....
 7. Great! Just like the last one. I wish there was some kind of homework (additional readings) for the week.
 8. N/A
 9. This was much less hands-on than other courses, but it is a more general introduction. I very much appreciated a discussion of twentieth-century illustration. {private response}
 10. N/A
 11. RBS has an extremely high standard of excellence. This course absolutely meets that standard. I was thrilled—and overwhelmed—by the beauty of the books we saw.
 12. N/A
- 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. Ideas for future research. Additions to knowledge to impart.
 2. Learning more about connections between the arts in general and book illustration. Yes.
 3. The time spent in SC was especially interesting.
 4. Lots of examples of early reproduction processes. Bibliomania was great.
 5. It put the changes in and types of illustration in historical perspective.
 6. Really helped give me the background that I was after—broad-brush history of illustration, which really helps me put my own (nascent) work in perspective!
 7. Learning more about the artists and then seeing their work was very interesting.
 8. I loved the historical and chronological approach—helped me think about everything in context. I also appreciated the opportunity to work with real examples of the texts and images. I think the environment EB encouraged—very collaborative and interactive—helped me learn from my classmates, too.
 9. This was very useful to provide broad overview of popular illustrators and genres, useful in understanding which books in our collections may hold special value due

- to their illustrations. It also, as always, re-excited me and reminded me of the importance of providing access to the original objects. It even helped me understand a cataloging term we had been misusing.
10. The Bibliorama section was particularly interesting. I greatly enjoyed the opportunity to interact with a variety of books.
 11. I definitely have new projects in mind, and I learned many details that directly apply to the books I work with regularly. In general, getting an overview of books *in context* was most useful—and seeing the originals. Reproductions truly don't compare.
 12. So much was interesting and relevant (all of it). As a book collector, I was introduced to many types and periods of illustration that were new to me. I will explore a lot of the topics that EB discussed.
- 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, and yes. One general, and maybe too obvious, question has to do with locations of learning and product production. Did we concentrate on northern European countries because they were the centers of learning production? It might be helpful to incorporate this more strongly into discussion and/or use additional examples from North and South American products, Spanish products, &c. Explain what is meant by “the West.”
 2. Yes.
 3. Yes, EB is a fantastic, patient, and knowledgeable instructor.
 4. Would have liked a bit more on social role of illustration, but my expectations and needs were met.
 5. Yes. Again, very pleased with the course.
 6. Yes—EB was good at supporting the visuals with background info. That really helped.
 7. Yes, I would have liked to have learned more about the history of printing and the impact on illustration.
 8. Yes! EB was a fantastic teacher, and I loved the mix of lecture, discussion, and hands-on time. I definitely think the course lived up to its description.
 9. I would have liked a hands-on assignment.
 10. Yes, the instructor was very knowledgeable. It is an incredibly difficult undertaking to cover the entire history of book illustration in five days, but EB did a fantastic job.
 11. The course covered every time period equally, and we divided our attention among illustrators, styles, processes, and other aspects of book illustration very well. I definitely have a better sense of the role illustration plays in the history of the book, and a sense of what books were illustrated, when, and how. That's exactly what I'd hoped for.
 12. Yes, EB greatly helped me understand the range of illustrated books. In fact, though I haven't yet been able to take TB's course on print processes, EB does help you know the processes, and I feel more confident in understanding the basic, major processes.
- 6) *How do you plan to use the skills and knowledge acquired during your time here?*

1. In work—teaching/collecting/research.
 2. Apply to online image gallery/collection I am responsible for. Future projects.
 3. I hope to integrate more prints into my teaching and add more technical knowledge to my current research project on the etching revival.
 4. For collection development, and for a major public exhibition.
 5. To use in writing better catalog descriptions.
 6. It will be a great support for my book project, allowing me to jump right in.
 7. For work and for personal knowledge.
 8. This will improve all aspects of my special collections work: depth of knowledge, handling materials, cataloging, instruction, and more. I'm excited to go back to work and integrate everything I've learned.
 9. I will apply some of the knowledge to a metadata project I am working on. It will help me identify works of particular significance.
 10. I plan to continue conducting my own research, and to seek out further opportunities to expand my knowledge in this field.
 11. This course provides much-needed background for my research. It will also help me interpret books better in my curatorial work—I will have a better sense of what's important or unusual, and what is more run of the mill; and I will be able to help the users of my collection much better.
 12. Primarily to develop my book collection—and especially to better understand my books. Also, though I don't teach in the area of books, I will use this information to help my students become better aware of the book and its history.
- 7) *Please briefly describe the intellectual level of the course. What sort of person might benefit the most from taking it?*
1. Probably graduate-level individuals.
 2. Those interested in history of the book, art history, collectors, and those in the book industry.
 3. I think this course is perfect for someone who's looking for a broad introduction to the history of book illustration. Great course for someone with little prior knowledge.
 4. Excellent introduction to the field.
 5. It's an excellent introductory overview; perfect for someone without a background in book illustration.
 6. I was worried coming in as a novice, but it was fine. Just the right level.
 7. Someone wanting a fast, general background on illustration.
 8. I think someone with a basic knowledge of book history or someone who has worked with rare books, but who is not an expert, will benefit most from this class.
 9. This is a good course to whet one's appetite. But it also reinforces things learned in other RBS illustration courses.
 10. I would recommend this course to anyone who specializes in book history or has some background in art history.
 11. An introduction, in some ways, to books and book history (though a specific introduction, better for someone who has a basic sense of book history—not for the complete novice). Better if you have a rudimentary sense of art history (which is all I've got, and all you need, but it was helpful).
 12. I think for both a “newbie” to illustration and those with advanced knowledge. EB

covers a lot, but also gives background, and answers all questions clearly.

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. Generally, my art history training concentrated on painting history, very little on graphic-arts training. Most of the information imparted was understood, but had not been investigated in depth by me—I could probably take the same course again (after trying to digest it over a few years) to be able to digest names, dates, and titles fully.
2. Seeing the vast number of examples to illustrate techniques and historical developments.
3. I liked having the tools and copper plate accessible when we learned about intaglio prints.
4. Now I can tell the differences between woodcut, engraving, and etching. The chance to see and handle lots of great books from outside my field.
5. Can’t think of any.
6. I was surprised how the periods were all important/interesting/relevant. I was so focused on one, but all were good!
7. {no response}
8. {no response}
9. The striking power of images in their original processes.
10. {no response}
11. For me this course was more of a slow build—a steady flow of knowledge, rather than a sudden rush of understanding. Seeing the slow evolution of styles and printing processes and genres built up a sense of cultural history and now has me thinking much more deeply about the role of the image in our thoughts and lives. I will say that rethinking the term “illustration”—as an image with a real relation to the text—might have just reframed the entire research project I’m working on.
12. So many: 1) when I finally “got” approaches or terms in book history; 2) seeing, holding some fabulous books.

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

1. {no response}
2. {no response}
3. {private response}
4. Perhaps include a tiny bit on comic books and dust jackets.
5. It would be nice if students were provided with a take-home sample pack of illustration techniques and processes; sort of a cheap version of Wakeman’s *Graphic Methods*. I’d pay an extra “lab fee” for that.
6. I will probably do some background reading on the *shifts* between time periods and styles—maybe a bit more background on that.
7. Show different slides from what we would see in person, during SC trip or in class.
8. I much preferred being able to handle books, rather than just looking at them as we did in SC. Especially if you’ve already seen it as a slide, it’s not as interesting to just look at something.
9. As mentioned, I would have liked an assignment—perhaps just to note something

- cool, unanswered questions, &c.
10. It would be very helpful to include more information about the techniques.
 11. {private response} It was perfect.
 12. Can't think of anything!
- 10) *Do you feel that you got your money's worth? Would you recommend the course to others?*
1. Yes, and yes.
 2. Yes.
 3. Yes.
 4. Yes, and yes.
 5. Yes, on both counts.
 6. Definitely, yes.
 7. Yes, and yes!
 8. Yes, and yes.
 9. Yes, absolutely.
 10. In light of the expensive cost, it would have been great to have come away with a more thorough/informative course packet.
 11. *Absolutely*. RBS is always worth it, and EB is a star. Wow.
 12. Oh yes! Definitely recommend course.
- 11) *If your course made any trips outside of the classroom, do you feel that they were time well spent?*
1. Absolutely.
 2. Yes.
 3. Not applicable (other than SC, which was great).
 4. Yes.
 5. Yes, the SC visits were worthwhile.
 6. Trips to SC were exciting and useful.
 7. {no response}
 8. N/A
 9. N/A
 10. {no response}
 11. Totally! Thank you, SC, for your hospitality! RBS wouldn't be the same without you.
 12. To SC to see books. Very relevant.
- 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. Very good use, thank you!
 2. Yes. Evening events helped me to meet others, and provided time for discussion.
 3. N/A
 4. The Calvo talk was a disaster: poorly planned, poorly delivered, poorly researched. Karmiole's talk was *great*!
 5. The Moser movie was very good.

6. Lectures were fun. I missed the others.
7. Good use of my time.
8. I loved the Booksellers' Night, and thought the movies were great.
9. Lectures were lovely.
10. {no response}
11. I love RBS lectures. I also think Booksellers' Night is fabulous—a really excellent way to strengthen the rare book community.
12. Yes—I attended two lectures and the ice-cream social (two videos). Enjoyed them all.

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

1. No.
2. {no response}
3. {no response}
4. {no response}
5. Read the pre-course assignments; you'll be glad you did.
6. {no response}
7. General overview class. EB was great!
8. {no response}
9. {no response}
10. {no response}
11. Do the reading. If you're curious about how illustrations are printed, read about that ahead of time, too, so you can make your questions precise. We don't spend much time on that. That's what TB's class is for! And be prepared to leave with a list of books you wish you could buy, and RBS courses you plan to take....
12. If you have any interest in book illustration—the history, examples—EB's class is excellent. She's an outstanding teacher: knowledgeable, well organized, very interesting as a lecturer, and she cares about student learning.

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

1. Intense/intensive. As mentioned, my brain hurts!
2. The vast overview brought new insights into the history of printmaking and the importance of illustration in the visual arts.
3. A worthwhile course with a fantastic instructor—a great way to get your feet wet.
4. Great instructor, great chance for networking, and great town.
5. Another fine course.
6. All that I hoped it would be...and maybe more that I wasn't expecting.
7. Loved it!
8. I learned so much from my instructor, the materials, and my classmates.
9. RBS reinvigorates me—it reminds me why I do what I do, and why I should continue to do what I do.
10. RBS allowed me to not only interact with a variety of beautiful books, but also with a group of enthusiastic bibliophiles who love to learn and share their knowledge with others.
11. No one can combine intellectual rigor and Stendhal Syndrome like RBS. {private

response}
12. Extraordinary!

Student Data

Number of respondents: 12 (of 12)

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

My institution/employer gave me professional leave time: 6 (50%)

My institution/employer did not give me professional leave; I used paid or vacation days:
1 (8.33%)

I am self employed, and can arrange my own schedule: 2 (16.67%)

I am a student or non-year-round employee, with a more flexible summer schedule: 3
(25%)

Who paid your RBS tuition costs?

I paid 100% myself: 4 (33.33%)

My institution/employer paid 100%: 6 (50%)

I used a scholarship/fellowship to pay/waive 100%: 1 (8.33%)

I had an RBS course tuition credit from a previous year: 1 (8.33%)

Who paid your RBS housing expenses?

I paid 100% myself: 4 (33.33%)

My institution/employer paid 100%: 4 (33.33%)

I stayed with friends/family, or stayed in my own home and commuted: 3 (25%)

My situation does not fit any of the options above: 1 (8.33%)

Who paid your RBS travel expenses?

I paid 100% myself: 5 (41.67%)

My institution/employer paid 100%: 4 (33.33%)

I live locally, and had no travel expenses: 3 (25%)

*Which of the following **best** describes your current occupation?*

Library disciplines:

Cataloger/metadata librarian: 1 (8.33%)

Conservator/binder/preservation librarian: 1 (8.33%)

Curator: 3 (25%)

Digital collections librarian: 1 (8.33%)

Other: 1 (8.33%)

Student working toward a/n:

Ph.D./D.Phil: 1 (8.33%)

Professional educator:

Lecturer/adjunct: 1 (8.33%)

Book trades:

Antiquarian bookseller: 1 (8.33%)

Other occupations/vocations:

Independent scholar: 2 (16.67%)