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H-100: The Eighteenth-Century Book  
26–31 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. There were no assigned books for this course.
2. The lack of pre-course reading was problematic. There should be a pre-course list with a handout afterward of items for further reading.
3. N/A
4. Pre-course reading would be a helpful addition, although frankly, given that this was my first course at RBS, I didn't mind the lack of reading, and enjoyed "jumping in at the deep end."
5. No pre-course readings were assigned, and I would strongly suggest assigning pre-reading for any future instances of this course.
6. I know it will be included in future classes, but a pre-course reading list would have been very helpful.
7. {private response}
8. No pre-class readings. At least a list of three to four optional readings may have been helpful.
9. There was no pre-reading, although this would be helpful in future iterations of the course (and is planned, I understand).
10. We had no pre-course reading assignments, but as a class came up with some suggestions for the next time the course is taught.
11. N/A—but some readings would have been very helpful. I know this is just a consequence of this course's development.
12. There were no advance readings. There should be a substantial advance reading list, especially for non-eighteenth-century people.

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. I found the teaching materials helpful in class, and will use them as reference material in the future.
2. I would prefer to see more materials handed out. We received, for example, lists of books distributed, but little contextual material.
3. Thorough and informative.
4. The course workbook was helpful, and I found it useful to take notes about each reading listed. The supplementary materials were not referenced as much as they could have been, but again, I didn't notice that they weren't being referenced.
5. Content is appropriate and useful, but would have been more so if it were referenced during the course. The materials will be useful after the course. I appreciated the book lists that accompanied each topic.

6. I appreciated the bibliographies, tables, and illustrations that were provided in our notebooks. If possible, annotations or specific “takeaways” for them would be helpful.
7. {no response}
8. The list of works shown was extremely helpful. I will be adapting it to my collection, using it to fill in holes, and consulting it for my own future teaching.
9. The course workbook is a fine reminder of the many books consulted and viewed.
10. The workbook materials are and will be useful.
11. Very appropriate—very useful. I do intend to use it for the future.
12. Workbook could have been more substantial, especially with full catalogue entries for items examined and statements of format.

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

1. N/A
2. It was different to work with the LC collection, which is not formed as a teaching collection the way the RBS collection is. This largely made for a positive experience, but was strikingly different from Charlottesville.
3. Not comparable.
4. {no response}
5. N/A
6. {no response}
7. {private response}
8. This was the best of the five courses I have taken. MD is a gem!
9. {no response}
10. Very well. A very good course. Excellent idea to have one devoted to the eighteenth-century book.
11. Less structured, but just as informative. I think added lecture structure would be very helpful for learning.
12. Not as rich or as deep a learning experience as previous RBS courses.

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. I really enjoyed being able to handle and explore the individual books.
2. The course was an overview of material, some of which was familiar; much was new.
3. Seeing and handling such a great range of materials—and what materials!—was a rare privilege. Hearing anecdotes and stories colorfully told by an authority was likewise a special treat.
4. The hands-on experience was extraordinary for me as a bookseller. I specialize in the nineteenth century, and exposure to eighteenth-century work is sometimes difficult to achieve. This was an unparalleled opportunity to learn about, handle, and experience these works in a place I had always dreamed about visiting.
5. I was most interested in the common book, the Everyman's book: almanacs, household Bibles, journals, magazines, &c. I was also interested in the physical bibliography—bindings, publication forms, how changes in format represent changes in social/political ideology.
6. Nearly every topic in this course made me want to review my own library's

collection through this lens.

7. It was great to be able to handle monuments of eighteenth-century publishing like the Diderot *Encyclopédie*. Also the trans-Atlantic focus was great.
  8. It helped me better understand the significance of materials in my library's collection, and see what needs to be added. Many new insights on importance of the eighteenth century.
  9. The most useful part of the course was seeing fine examples of books previously only viewed electronically.
  10. It was fantastic that we had a good amount of quiet time to spend examining each book, then presented it to each other. The guest speakers were terrific. The massive exposure to the different eighteenth-century genres and forms was excellent, and so helpful to get a fuller sense of the book in that century.
  11. The section I was most looking forward to was actually dropped/cut for time constraints—so that was somewhat disappointing.
  12. Good modules: eighteenth-century almanacs, 1766 publications, and hornbooks.
- 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. I learned much about the technical aspects of book production, and appreciated the comparisons between books of different nations.
  2. {no response}
  3. I would have liked more direct lecture, and to have been assigned more to read. Otherwise, time well spent.
  4. MD was excellent, generous, entertaining, and accommodating: I often forgot I was in the LC collections. He was patient in explaining concepts we did not understand, allowed questions at any time, and guided discussion well. The subject range was so vast that it was unavoidable, in a first run, for there to be omissions.
  5. I learned a lot from this course, and enjoyed the guest lectures (cartoons, Blake, children's books). Pre-course readings would have helped ensure a baseline of knowledge so more time could be spent getting deeper with the books.
  6. I think MD delivered as promised. The course was informative and covered the eighteenth-century book well.
  7. {no response}
  8. Great course. Would have liked to hear more about the book trade, music, books in Latin America and Canada, maybe a word on similarities and differences between European books and other world cultures in the eighteenth century (if only briefly).
  9. {no response}
  10. I hoped to learn more context for the eighteenth-century books I worked with, and I absolutely got that.
  11. I was unsure of what to expect, so the syllabus and schedule actually had much more cultural/socioeconomic breadth than I was expecting. This was more than I had hoped for.
  12. Not enough attention to issues of book production and format.
- 6) *How do you plan to use the skills and knowledge acquired during your time here?*

1. If I teach a course on early American history, I will use the material learned and presented in class.
2. {no response}
3. I don't know yet.
4. They will help me identify value, craftsmanship, artistry, provenance, historic importance, &c. As an educator and researcher also, I will incorporate what I learned into my teaching and writing.
5. As an archivist, this course will influence my understanding of the eighteenth-century books in our collections, as well as give context for our larger nineteenth-century collections. Additionally, this course will aid in my ability to assist and instruct undergraduate researchers.
6. I plan to reconsider the books in our library, and to describe them better in the context of the century in which they were published.
7. I will be better able to understand the eighteenth-century books I see within the larger system of eighteenth-century book production.
8. Presentations, research, and collections development.
9. Many of the observations I made will be helpful in teaching.
10. To inform my cataloging of the eighteenth-century books at my institution.
11. To help contextualize the materials I already work on for my qualifying exams. The class will be a great supplement to my exam reading.
12. Gathered some useful images for teaching.

7) *Please briefly describe the intellectual level of the course. What sort of person might benefit the most from taking it?*

1. I think this course is best oriented toward a person who has some expertise/knowledge in book collecting, library studies, history of the book.
2. I would prefer to see more intellectual structure to the course, even at the cost of seeing fewer books overall.
3. Better suited for the generalist interested in the overall sweep of things, and for anyone who enjoys engaging briefly with a diverse range of materials.
4. An individual new to RBS would perhaps benefit the most, as the course stayed away from being highly technical or intimidating. Nevertheless, the intellectual level was quite high, and I felt challenged each day (despite having thirty-plus years of bookselling experience).
5. This course did a great job of appealing to varying fields and expertise, while maintaining an intellectual dialogue, aided by student input and personal interest.
6. Really anyone with an interest in eighteenth-century books would benefit from this course, but it's probably most useful professionally for special collection and rare book librarians.
7. {no response}
8. Useful to people who have a basic understanding of book history and want more specifics on this century.
9. The course would be useful for a graduate student or newcomer to the period.
10. You don't need a scholarly background in the eighteenth century to get it. And book processes and terms are briefly described if there's anyone unfamiliar with them.
11. Ph.D. and masters students without courses in book history at their home

institutions.

12. {private response}

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. There were several. I will name just one: I found a reference to a botanical garden in a period magazine.
2. I had never been exposed to early American printing, and was astonished to learn how different the trajectory was from the London experience.
3. People were more literate then! Or so it would seem.
4. The LC collections provided countless jaw-dropping moments that often left me reeling—the plate books were extraordinary; the hornbooks; holding a 1776 edition of Paine’s American Crisis; books signed by George Washington, &c.
5. So many! Stumbling across marginalia, bookplates, the hornbooks, and Oxford instructor, William Blake. The Thomas Jefferson library exhibit, and standing in the center of his circular room.
6. The use of the book in this course is definitely the highlight. In many cases, we had an individual book to work with, and had great class discussions as a result.
7. Seeing William Blake up close was awe inspiring.
8. It was interesting to see how much changed over the course of this century (rise of modern publishing, ability of the market to respond to demand).
9. Viewing the children’s material was revelatory—particularly in terms of scale. Curtis was also a show stopper.
10. So many! Lapse of copyright and its contribution to the explosion of print. The role of coffee houses in England. The role of printing in the revolution of the American colonies.
11. MD has a great cache of illustrative examples and anecdotes that really helped me to integrate what he was asking us to pay attention to.
12. {no response}

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

1. Perhaps introduce newspapers to compare with magazines and almanac format and content.
2. Pre-reading, more academic structure to bring together the hands-on experience with the treasures of the LC. A “for further reading” handout.
3. More organized lecture.
4. Pre-course readings would help, as would an in-depth focus on a single book or author—i.e., Defoe’s Crusoe, Paine’s Common Sense—for one session/period. A section on slavery/slave narratives/African-American history, would also be great.
5. More takeaways, more readings.
6. More direct and specific takeaway knowledge that wasn’t in the handouts. This goes back to my previous point about annotating the bibliographies. I do, however, consider this a small point in an overall successful course.
7. {no response}
8. I loved it.
9. {no response}

10. No ideas.
  11. More structure.
  12. Advance reading list—of recent scholarship. Fewer materials circulated, and more pointed guidance about what to observe.
- 10) *Do you feel that you got your money's worth? Would you recommend the course to others?*
1. Definitely, on both accounts.
  2. A good effort for a course taught for the first time.
  3. Yes, and yes.
  4. Yes, and absolutely, provided they had some background in books already.
  5. Yes.
  6. Yes, MD's knowledge and enthusiasm for the book was evident and contagious.
  7. Well worth the trip. LC has a great collection.
  8. Absolutely.
  9. It was super to be located at the LC. I feel like I have a better sense of this collection and its focus.
  10. Yes. The tuition, travel, and lodging experiences are a risk, but I got my money's worth, and would recommend it. The books you get to see!
  11. Yes, I do. Yes, I would—I already have.
  12. Not really.
- 11) *If your course made any trips outside of the classroom, do you feel that they were time well spent?*
1. Trips to the Prints & Photographs Division and the Early American exhibit were wonderful, very informative.
  2. The exhibit of early American printing was fabulous.
  3. Yes; in fact, one of my favorite things was going to the Early American Printing exhibit and hearing what the instructor said about the things there.
  4. The visits with MD to the exhibits he created were among the highlights.
  5. All guest lectures (in and out) were informative and time well spent.
  6. We had two tours with LC, and both were helpful.
  7. I enjoyed seeing Jefferson's library.
  8. The gallery tour was excellent. I think tours of facilities are not the best use of time/money, so I was glad there was none of that in this course.
  9. {no response}
  10. Yes! We were given a tour of the Bay Psalm exhibit, which was excellent.
  11. Excellent use of LC resources and exhibits. Yes.
  12. No—the prints and drawing session wasn't useful. We didn't know what we were looking at. Catalog records were printed out in minute font.
- 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. {no response}
  2. Tuesday's Museum Night, though focused solely on visual objects, was interesting

- and well done.
3. Liked Museum Night. Disliked the Japanese lecture.
  4. The lecture the first night could have been better organized/planned, but was fascinating nonetheless.
  5. The Museum Night was particularly interesting, and it was good to see what other RBS courses were studying.
  6. {no response}
  7. The Prints & Photography lab was well designed and interesting.
  8. {no response}
  9. {no response}
  10. Excellent Museum Night. And the chiaroscuro lecture was fascinating.
  11. The lectures seemed less than relevant to the course topic.
  12. No.

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

1. Thank you to MD and the RBS staff. This has been a rewarding experience!
2. {no response}
3. {no response}
4. Prepare to be dazzled, and to have fun, while learning a great deal.
5. {no response}
6. {no response}
7. {no response}
8. {no response}
9. {no response}
10. None.
11. {no response}
12. {private response}

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

1. Learning—like virtue—is its own reward.
2. Trying to minimize the losses.
3. Challenging and humbling.
4. “An embarrassment of riches.” Extraordinary.
5. Nothing beats the LC collection, and being guided through said collection by the curator himself was an extraordinary experience.
6. This was an exceptional experience for me, and one that I highly recommend to others.
7. Exhausting, enlightening, fascinating.
8. {private response}
9. Congenial and convivial.
10. Such exposure, studying rare books at the LC!
11. RBS this summer was, as usual, an intellectually exhausting, valuable learning and training experience.
12. {private response}

## 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: 7 (58.33%)

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: 1 (8.33%)

I am retired, and can arrange my own schedule: 1 (8.33%)

No response: 1 (8.33%)

*Who paid your RBS tuition costs?*

I paid 100% myself: 5 (41.67%)

My institution/employer paid 100%: 5 (41.67%)

My institution/employer paid part; I paid the rest: 1 (8.33%)

No response: 1 (8.33%)

*Who paid your RBS housing expenses?*

I paid 100% myself: 4 (33.33%)

My institution/employer paid 100%: 3 (25%)

My institution/employer paid part; I paid the rest: 1 (8.33%)

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

No response: 1 (8.33%)

*Who paid your RBS travel expenses?*

I paid 100% myself: 5 (41.67%)

My institution/employer paid 100%: 2 (16.67%)

My institution/employer paid part; I paid the rest: 2 (16.67%)

I live locally, and had no travel expenses: 2 (16.67%)

No response: 1 (8.33%)

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

Library disciplines:

Archivist: 1 (8.33%)

Cataloger/metadata librarian: 2 (16.67%)

Curator: 1 (8.33%)

Special collections librarian: 1 (8.33%)

Student working toward a/n:

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

Professional educator:

Associate professor: 2 (16.67%)

Book trades:

Antiquarian bookseller: 1 (8.33%)

Other occupations/vocations:

Independent scholar: 1 (8.33%)

Other: 1 (8.33%)