

James N. Green
H-70: The History of the Book in America, c.1700–1830
5–10 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. The pre-course assignments were a good preview of the course. I read most of the “recommended” books as well as the required books.
2. {no response}
3. Useful, but a bit dry. Perhaps there’s a way to vary the types of readings a bit more?
4. The pre-course readings were very helpful, but I do wish that some of the A History of the Book in America readings had been in digital form (PDF).
5. They were useful, but quite lengthy, and will make better sense after the class.
6. The reading assignments were very useful, and prepared me for the coursework. The suggested readings were also on point.
7. The reading assignments were useful; I felt like they provided good background, so that I felt more confident in the class. No other preparation.
8. Reading materials were fine.
9. Yeah—the pre-course reading from A History of the Book in America (volumes 1 and 2) was useful, and served as a helpful primer for the course.
10. Yes! A list of where to look for inventories would be super useful.
11. They were useful, but also quite long. Much of what was in the readings was discussed in class. As a professional with limited time, I found that I had to choose which readings to complete, and which I could skim or skip.
12. The pre-course reading was very helpful. I would add Richard Sher’s book on the Enlightenment and the book (or at least the American section).
13. The two-volume A History of the Book in America is appropriate, although some articles seemed more important than others. Guidance on which articles to read would have been helpful.

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. Workbook materials were well-chosen to offer students good background material.
2. Helpful and illustrative of points made in class.
3. As is relevant, perhaps more exercises could be added to the sessions? The signature-folding exercise was simple, but informative.
4. Workbook was well designed, content-wise, but some of the images were of poor quality.
5. I thought it illustrated the points well.
6. Along with my own notes and photos, the course workbook is a great resource to

- keep handy. I expect to refer to it frequently while working with rare books in my own library.
7. All very useful—especially some of the lists/charts compiled by JG. I'm sure I'll refer to them in the future.
 8. Some of the pages were poor reproductions, and contents aren't clear.
 9. The workbook was great—full of interesting (and varied!) documents that I will undoubtedly return to in the future.
 10. Really appreciated it—gave me a lot of ideas for new sources and approaches to use.
 11. Very useful handouts, though I think handouts with some technical illustrations could be useful as well, demonstrating, for instance, parts of the book.
 12. The course workbook was great.
 13. The materials were well considered and extremely useful.

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

1. {no response}
2. Very good course complimented by the amazing holdings of the LCP.
3. N/A
4. Very good.
5. N/A
6. Both courses were great...no complaints!
7. N/A
8. This one is not as strictly regimented or interactive—classmates don't always see materials at the same time, so not always absorbed in the same way.
9. N/A
10. N/A
11. {no response}
12. N/A
13. At the top, along with TB's course on book illustration.
- 14.

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 feel that I now have a much clearer view of who print culture developed in America. The intersection between technology and social change provides a clearer perspective on why things happened as they did.
2. All was useful but will use more of the info about specific titles, editions, printers, &c. in my day-to-day.
3. As someone new to book history, nearly all the material was illuminating. I left interested in learning more about the notion of "critical bibliography" and incorporating it into my own work.
4. The mix of students and projects was very good. I enjoyed meeting so many Ph.D. students interested in book history, something that was not a part of my earlier, more topic-specific RBS classes.
5. I thought it was all very interesting.
6. I found the discussions about the business of printing, publishing, and bookselling to be very interesting and informative.

7. I was really interested in the history of the book culture in early America; it was definitely illuminating and somewhat unexpected. It will definitely help me frame future dissertation arguments.
 8. Revolution printing and literature becoming popular. It was interesting to learn about human relationships in the publishing trade.
 9. Was, in general, a great overview of the early American period, made all the more interesting by a specific focus on print culture. Useful in thinking about my dissertation work—and I took away a lot of ideas that I hope to share with my students.
 10. I walked away with new ideas about how to track reprints and find more library inventories and catalogs.
 11. A lot of gaps were filled in for me, and I am definitely walking away with a very clear timeline of the history of the book in America.
 12. The hands-on learning was one of the best aspects of the class (books being passed around, &c.). JG's knowledge and insight was the best part of the class.
 13. I formed a project on early American studies, which I can now see a path to execute. Very helpful.
- 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. Everything was covered well. I learned more than expected.
 2. Yes. More on African Americana and women would have been interesting but there's so much to cover....
 3. Very thorough, very impressive.
 4. The course and structure for each session were well thought out.
 5. He did.
 6. Yes, I am very satisfied with how this course was conducted.
 7. Yes. I would have appreciated some more information, to the extent that it exists, on book culture as it related to women or free-black and enslaved populations.
 8. {no response}
 9. Yes! The course covered a huge amount of information, and I learned everything I had hoped to and more.
 10. Yes, and yes!
 11. Yes.
 12. Yes; nothing was left out.
 13. The course could have benefitted from a bit more overview, particularly on the first day. JG is an excellent teacher, but an even better scholar and resource. Very pleased to have had a chance to learn from him.
- 6) *How do you plan to use the skills and knowledge acquired during your time here?*
1. It will alter my appreciation of the history of the book, both as a piece of media and as an object in itself.
 2. Everything will help me better understand and develop my collection and provide better reference and instruction.
 3. Generally, this training in material book history will inform how I think about all

- textual artifacts going forward.
4. {no response}
 5. Will better prepare me to answer questions related to this topic.
 6. I plan to apply the knowledge I have learned while curating and interpreting the rare book collection at my library.
 7. To guide dissertation arguments.
 8. {no response}
 9. I hope to carry what I've learned with me to all of my work with special collections materials; the course as a whole has given me a much broader understanding of the making of books in a historically transformative period.
 10. This is going to help me a lot during my dissertation research, both in terms of how I read and how I search for things in archives.
 11. I plan to apply it in my work as a cataloger of rare Americana.
 12. I will use the insight I gained for scholarship on the history of the book.
 13. Thinking of next steps in an early American studies project.
- 7) *Please briefly describe the intellectual level of the course. What sort of person might benefit the most from taking it?*
1. I think the class would best serve people with masters degrees.
 2. Librarians, collectors, and researchers.
 3. Nothing is too abstruse, though a genuine interest in the nuts and bolts of book history is required.
 4. Post-graduate—librarians, collectors, students of the book.
 5. I think all levels would benefit from this course.
 6. The intellectual level of the course was rigorous, but exactly what I had hoped for.
 7. Appropriate for graduate students in English or the historical disciplines.
 8. Definitely librarians and those who value the history of the book—it's life.
 9. Librarians probably found the course the most immediately useful, but it was crafted to be suitable for all levels.
 10. Graduate students.
 11. Anyone interested in books, history, or printing. It was stimulating, but not overwhelming, with plenty of opportunity for questions and discussion.
 12. Anyone with an undergraduate degree and an interest in the subject matter.
 13. The course was clearly pitched at graduate and post-graduate levels.
- 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. I enjoyed the exercise in which we tried to identify a book through bibliographic descriptions.
 2. Seeing and handling some of the earliest books printed in America was amazing. Also seeing the stacks.
 3. {no response}
 4. The role of publishing in creating an American literary community.
 5. {no response}
 6. {no response}
 7. I learned a ton, but was perhaps most unexpectedly delighted by the video

- showing the papermaking process.
8. Franklin's notes on an essay of rights.
 9. Loved looking at LCP's collection, and at their recently discovered stereotypes.
 10. Seeing variations in different editions, and just getting to see all the physical examples of what we were discussing, as we did it, made everything much more concrete.
 11. {no response}
 12. Hearing JG talk about an aspect of book publishing that is only available from manuscript sources.
 13. {no response}

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

1. I can't think of any possibility except perhaps more time.
2. More use of the workbook, better/clearer reproductions in the workbook. More chronological following and usage of the workbook.
3. As I mentioned earlier, perhaps adding more exercises could help. This might be as simple as more rhetorical questions about the practice and business of making books.
4. JG was great, but difficult to hear.
5. N/A
6. I don't know how it could be improved!
7. Perhaps more interactive sessions.
8. Better if the class could see materials together.
9. I would have liked to have seen a bit more analysis or interpretation in the class.... Much of it was historical and descriptive, and less theory based. I would have also liked to have seen more reflection on method.
10. If we got the discussion schedule ahead of time, rather than on day one, it would be easier to focus reading and prepare questions for discussion.
11. N/A
12. It can't be improved!
13. The room could stand a fan; JG could speak a little lower. Trivial stuff.

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

1. Yes. This course was well worth every penny I paid. I would recommend it.
2. Yes.
3. Certainly.
4. Yes, and yes.
5. Unfortunately, we had to be out of the building by 5 p.m., so we lost out on 2.5 hours of class time. That's my only complaint.
6. Yes, and yes.
7. Yes.
8. Yes.
9. Yes!
10. Yes, and yes! (I got school funding, but still, yes.)
11. Absolutely!
12. I would easily recommend this course.

13. *Yes, and yes. Superb value—because RBS knows what it's about, and adheres to its principles.*

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

1. {no response}
2. N/A
3. {no response}
4. The building tour was a nice addition to the schedule.
5. N/A
6. N/A
7. N/A
8. {no response}
9. Yes!
10. N/A
11. {no response}
12. Possibly.
13. N/A

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. The lecture at Penn was quite good.
2. Lecture was good and useful addition.
3. {no response}
4. Only one—good, but difficult to get to at rush hour. Maybe a more central location at another time.
5. I did, and the talk was very interesting and meshed well with the topic of this course.
6. N/A
7. The lecture on Tuesday was interesting. I would have appreciated a few more scheduled opportunities to socialize with others in the course.
8. {no response}
9. Mitch Fraas's lecture was very informative, and applicable to the wide range of courses being offered in Philadelphia.
10. The lecture was good, but the travel made it a bit exhausting.
11. N/A
12. The optional lecture was interesting.
13. N/A

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

1. Read the book on bibliography.
2. Do it!
3. {no response}
4. {no response}

5. Do it. JG is great!
6. Take this course. It's worth it.
7. JG is a wonderful, thoughtful, and helpful instructor!
8. {no response}
9. {no response}
10. Go! And don't be shy about asking to see things that speak to your interests. JG will pull items and compile lists of secondary reading for you—he's so generous with his time.
11. {no response}
12. {no response}
13. No.

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

1. This was a fantastic class.
2. I learned more than I thought possible in a single week.
3. RBS teaches you about how cultural knowledge has been built over the last five hundred years. Invaluable!
4. Very good. Thank you.
5. Overwhelming at first, but worth it in the end.
6. Everything is awesome!
7. Intense, but great!
8. {no response}
9. Rich.
10. Thrilling.
11. Summer camp for bibliophiles of all ages.
12. It was ultra nerdy and super cool!
13. Intensive reading, learning. Extensive learning, reading. One.

Student Data

Number of respondents: 13 (of 13)

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

My institution/employer gave me professional leave time: 6 (46.15%)

I am self employed, and can arrange my own schedule: 1 (7.69%)

I am a student or non-year-round employee, with a more flexible summer schedule: 5 (38.46%)

I am retired, and can arrange my own schedule: 1 (7.69%)

Who paid your RBS tuition costs?

I paid 100% myself: 2 (15.38%)

My institution/employer paid 100%: 6 (46.15%)

My institution/employer paid part; I paid the rest: 1 (7.69%)

I used a scholarship/fellowship to pay/waive 100%: 3 (23.08%)

My situation does not fit any of the options above: 1 (7.69%)

Who paid your RBS housing expenses?

I paid 100% myself: 3 (23.08%)
My institution/employer paid 100%: 3 (23.08%)
My institution/employer paid part; I paid the rest: 2 (15.38%)
I used a scholarship/fellowship to cover 100%: 1 (7.69%)
I stayed with friends/family, or stayed in my own home and commuted: 4 (30.77%)

Who paid your RBS travel expenses?

I paid 100% myself: 2 (15.38%)
My institution/employer paid 100%: 3 (23.08%)
My institution/employer paid part; I paid the rest: 3 (23.08%)
I used a scholarship/fellowship to cover 100%: 1 (7.69%)
I live locally, and had no travel expenses: 3 (23.08%)
My situation does not fit any of the options above: 1 (7.69%)

Which of the following best describes your current occupation?

Library disciplines:

Curator: 1 (7.69%)
Library administrator: 1 (7.69%)
Special collections librarian: 2 (15.38%)
Other: 1 (7.69%)

Student working toward a/n:

Ph.D./D.Phil: 4 (30.77%)

Professional educator:

Associate professor: 1 (7.69%)

Book trades:

Antiquarian bookseller: 1 (7.69%)

Other occupations/vocations:

Independent scholar: 1 (7.69%)
Retired: 1 (7.69%)