

Todd Pattison
B-75: American Publishers' Bookbindings, 1800–1900
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. Yes, I think they were appropriate and represented a large range of features of the course and its material. Not having an extensive background in this, I feel it definitely gave me a head start, and helped build excitement. Maybe add something about eighteenth-century binding for contrast.
2. {private response}
3. Any content not covered in the reading list was included in the bibliography in our workbook—an excellent resource.
4. Pre-course readings were helpful. A reminder or a more explicit demand to attend to the reading would have been helpful. At least mention that the basic texts would be discussed, and that students were expected to be familiar with them.
5. The pre-course materials were very useful. I read almost everything prior to coming, but some titles were difficult to find. Some thought perhaps to tiering the readings into general/most important might help future students with more limited time or resources, to prep.
6. The reading was very useful, but maybe not fully applicable to the direct content of the class.
7. Read/browsed all of the reading list—kind of dull. But re-reading some of them this week, they made more sense. Future reading them will be very helpful now that I have context.
8. The pre-course reading assignments were very useful and I bought several for our institution to have available to students interested in book arts.
9. Read approximately 85% of course readings. They were integral for preparation. I felt very prepared for lectures and discussions.
10. They were very useful. Coming in not knowing anything about bookbinding, they gave me enough information to be able to understand the class from day one.
11. It was extensive, but helpful.
12. Useful, yes. Add Pickwood's *Onward and Downward*.

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. Yes, absolutely. I look forward to spending time with the workbook and going over the readings again.
2. The course workbook is great. I will absolutely keep it close as a reference as I examine bindings in the future.
3. All materials were appropriate.
4. Workbook was very well done. Would have been useful to have as a PDF a few

- weeks before the course. It will certainly be useful after the course.
5. Everything provided was very useful and appropriate—I'm certain that materials will continue to be useful after the course as well.
 6. Yes. The bibliography is by far the most useful, because of the amount of reference material. Online resources would be a nice addition.
 7. Helpful—especially the glossary and bibliography.
 8. Yes—all materials were presented in a thoughtful way, and were useful to the scope of the course.
 9. I look forward to using the coursebook and publishers' binding chronology for years to come.
 10. The workbook is very helpful. I especially appreciated the cloth samples included. I plan to use the workbook to relay the information learned to friends in the field, as well as to family who are interested.
 11. Very helpful, and I look forward to referencing it back at work.
 12. Workbook fantastic. Useful during and after.
- 3) *If you've taken previous RBS courses, how did this one compare?*
1. N/A
 2. Both have been excellent.
 3. This was my second-favorite class.
 4. Both courses were helpful and broadened my understanding and appreciation of the subjects.
 5. N/A
 6. N/A
 7. Better—more specific.
 8. This is one of the best courses in terms of overall organization. I enjoyed that the instructor and the class, as a whole, worked well together.
 9. More reading and more lectures. So it was different, but of equally high quality.
 10. N/A
 11. Both chock full of information and immersive learning.
 12. Probably my most immediately useful and applicable course. Nice to be able to focus on a finite period of time, in depth.
- 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 have always loved the various aesthetics of the nineteenth century, the history of art, and U.S. cultural and social history. This class only solidified and clinched that. I'm drawn to products from various periods for different reasons—some aesthetic, some more for the context of their production—I can't wait to continue to explore.
 2. TP's clear descriptions of process were invaluable, as were the decade-by-decade breakdowns of differences in style, technology, and materials.
 3. The information on nineteenth-century commerce helped gel the physical aspects of the binding chronology.
 4. The emphasis on structure and technique was useful.
 5. I'm especially interested in the development and aesthetic/technological changes related to stamping. I've been especially hooked by the combination of blind, gold,

- and pigment motifs—and the rainbow roll designs.
6. I was most interested in the working conditions of the binderies of the time, as well as the materials used/developed by the distributors. Leaving, I feel I have an overwhelming number of research topics! Very exciting!
 7. New insight: book covers have a “look” of their time period, in many ways. Book design correlates with what else is happening in life—technology improves, cultural norms change, &c.
 8. While I had some knowledge of later nineteenth-century book design—I learned a lot that I will find useful when working with my students.
 9. Dust jackets! Printed cloth. I can’t wait to evaluate our own collections for publishers’ bindings.
 10. I found the bookbinding demo and the progression of bookbinding techniques to be the most interesting. The story of the storybooks factory information was also fascinating.
 11. Great to see things first hand. I plan on returning to my institution and sharing the knowledge at a presentation for staff from our own collections.
 12. New areas to collect in and things to keep an eye out for.
- 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, I feel I have a really solid outline of the period—a detailed one and a rich one that I can continue to fill in with my own research. I think at this point I have the tools and knowledge to explore and just look at a lot of books to solidify and refine my knowledge.
 2. The McGregor Room sessions were wonderful. In the future, they could be expanded/reconceived as “labs” in which to write our own binding descriptions in a more rigorous way.
 3. I would have liked to learn more about the segue of binding styles leaving the Civil War period.
 4. All expectations met. Instructor was organized and always well prepared.
 5. I learned everything I was hoping to and more!
 6. With such a large topic, there is always more to learn, but I feel very satisfied with the content of the class.
 7. If anything was left out, there was not time! Yes, extremely helpful in learning to understand context of bindings, and much better ways to describe them.
 8. Yes—true to course description.
 9. Yes, TP delivered! We thoroughly covered a wealth of information in just one week’s time.
 10. TP is not only very kind, but he is extremely patient, and was very open to answering questions even from a novice such as myself. I feel I learned a lot in this class.
 11. And then some!
 12. Yes; I would have liked a little more time on paper bindings; yes.
- 6) *How do you plan to use the skills and knowledge acquired during your time here?*
1. I am excited to explore my library’s collection with new eyes. How have we treated

- these bindings? How can that inform our collecting/preservation/conservation/digitization priorities in the future? Also, our exhibits and promotion. Leather is not always better!
2. I hope to apply my new skills to better observe, analyze, and describe nineteenth-century bindings in archives I visit.
 3. For reference, research, and outreach.
 4. Greater appreciation of nineteenth-century American bookbindings. Will purchase a broader range for the library's collection.
 5. I plan to help develop nineteenth-century collections at my institution, based on my new knowledge of technologies, styles, and materials—as outlined by this course.
 6. I will use this in my physical work, both with editions and restoration. I also hope to research this time period more on my own.
 7. Help catalogers know what is important to include in the catalog, and better describe the physical book to anyone who will listen.
 8. To now search my own collections for samples, and to share with students who study the history of the book as an object.
 9. Assisting my library patrons as they look for new research avenues. I have a new appreciation for the book as an object that will serve me well in my future career endeavors.
 10. I hope to put the knowledge to work in library school, but I also hope to be able to educate some friends a bit, as well.
 11. I use it daily in my work in preservation.
 12. Buying and selling.
- 7) *Please briefly describe the intellectual level of the course. What sort of person might benefit the most from taking it?*
1. It was at a *high* level. I do think you have to come in with some knowledge of binding structure, book history, and terminology, and of American history. I think everyone could benefit—those who do know more about book structure and those who don't. You just get different things out of it.
 2. More academics should take this class! The course convinced me that binding is deeply entwined with some cultural and economic history, and with the entire history of visual culture.
 3. Historians, social anthropologists, and conservators.
 4. The intellectual level was high—appropriate to me, in any case.
 5. I felt the intellectual level was stimulating and challenging, but certainly not intimidating. Anyone with an interest in books, book production, or book publishing would benefit. I think those who think that the nineteenth-century is the most boring, both aesthetically and historically, would be the most amazed by the richness of the material.
 6. I think any level would benefit. I think being able to identify this time period is very important to the continued preservation of these books.
 7. Someone with book experience—true beginners might get lost.
 8. Anyone interested in nineteenth-century book history would find aspects of this course useful, and the course as a whole provided great insights into the development of the industry and production of the book in the nineteenth century.
 9. Intellectually stimulating. Lectures and discussions were thought provoking. The

- course is great for librarians, academics, book dealers, book collectors alike.
10. Someone with art interests would enjoy the later parts of the course, while someone with an interest in history of the more factory/mechanical side of books might enjoy the first part of the course.
 11. Graduate-level type experience.
 12. Not daunting, but definitely needs either some prior understanding of book structure or a thorough reading of the advance list.
- 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. Rainbow foils were a revelation, as well as combining colored paper and inks. Along the same lines, it also *really adds* to the cohesiveness and understanding to really understand *physically* how these things were made, and what the challenges and limitations were. It helps you to understand why they did what they did. It is important to let that be a focal point, I think.
 2. I loved starting with the daguerreotypes. Plus, the case demo was excellent.
 3. How little bookbinding was driven by design.
 4. Understanding a broader chronological range and variety of binding type and design.
 5. So many. TP had so many insights into the materials and processes of the time, it was a real joy to be in his class.
 6. Rainbow rolls as an attachment to arming presses.
 7. {no response}
 8. {no response}
 9. Too many “aha” moments to count.
 10. The bookbinding demo helped *a lot* in understanding both how books were originally bound, and how case binding changed things.
 11. I enjoyed the constant asking us to guess at the time period without always being told. I think it honed our skills.
 12. Many insights, cumulative “aha!”
- 9) *How could the course have been improved?*
1. Maybe a little more (more...I know there’s so much to cover) about what we are moving *from*?
 2. The question of definition was not a pressing intellectual question for me. For me, that time dedicated to thinking about publishers’ bindings as a category might be better devoted to doing more on the early period, 1800–1830. More hands-on demos would put an already excellent course over the top!
 3. Loupes!
 4. Just a bit more emphasis on historical, social, and cultural context—not so much as to change the emphasis of the course, but additional context. To be fair, there was some.
 5. I can’t think of anything!
 6. It could be split into two classes, easily.
 7. Some class members monopolized too much class time.
 8. It would have been helpful to have had loupes available to do closer study of

- grains, &c.
9. N/A
 10. It couldn't be.
 11. No suggestions—very well done.
 12. N/A
- 10) *Do you feel that you got your money's worth? Would you recommend the course to others?*
1. Yes, and yes!
 2. Yes, absolutely. TP is intellectually generous, extremely knowledgeable, and a stellar teacher.
 3. Yes, and yes!
 4. Yes, I would and will recommend the course.
 5. Yes, and yes. I recommend this class very highly.
 6. Yes!
 7. Absolutely! Would recommend.
 8. Yes, yes, and yes! TP is an excellent instructor, approachable. He encouraged questions and interaction.
 9. Yes, and yes!
 10. I would recommend to any first-time RBSer or a veteran.
 11. Highly recommend it.
 12. Yes, and yes.
- 11) *If your course made any trips outside of the classroom, do you feel that they were time well spent?*
1. Absolutely. I loved our time in the McGregor room—flexing our muscles and seeing the dust jackets—that really tied the course together.
 2. {no response}
 3. Very well spent—lots of hands-on experience.
 4. Trips to SC were valuable.
 5. I especially enjoyed the sessions in the McGregor Room—everyone chose such wonderful items from the collection, and the resulting conversations were a real highlight.
 6. Yes.
 7. Yes.
 8. Yes, the trips to the McGregor Room for hands-on exercises were most rewarding.
 9. Viewing dust jackets in SC was a great end to the course.
 10. Yes, the SC field trip was interesting.
 11. I thought the time spent in the McGregor Room and in SC was essential to the course. Very well done.
 12. Yes.
- 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. I did attend the first lecture and the Booksellers' Night. I felt they nicely added

- both to the social aspect and the immersive factor.
2. {no response}
 3. I went to both lectures. Both were a good use of my time. I can take or leave Booksellers' Night. This year, it was fun looking for nineteenth-century publishers' bookbinding, though!
 4. Evening events are essential—all efforts to build community are worthy. There should be even more.
 5. I enjoyed the Movie Night, especially as the subjects were very interesting to me. I liked that the lectures were on subjects outside of my knowledge, but I found them a little less engaging than I'd hoped them to be.
 6. I thoroughly enjoyed the Abbey Press lecturer.
 7. Loved Ken Karmiolo's lecture.
 8. I attended both lectures and I have enjoyed such lectures over the years to be introduced to topics outside of the course.
 9. N/A
 10. {no response}
 11. I enjoyed the night downtown at the booksellers the most.
 12. Lectures—yes, especially Karmiolo. Didn't attend Movie Night (too tired!).

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

1. Ask lots of questions as you have them—he is great at answering, clarifying, and summing up to make sure everyone is on the same page.
2. {no response}
3. No.
4. Engage with classmates and other students, and enjoy the community.
5. Do it! You'll look at nineteenth-century books in a whole new light.
6. Read the reference materials before class!
7. Bring good shoes and lightweight clothes.
8. {no response}
9. Don't hesitate; this is a great course.
10. Take it. It's worth it.
11. Again—I recommend it highly.
12. N/A

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

1. This was really an invigorating and re-energizing experience.
2. Thank you, TP! This course was invaluable!
3. Oh RBS/always/you leave me wanting more.
4. Instructive, agreeable, productive, positive, and uplifting.
5. I *can* date a nineteenth-century book to the decade just by looking closely.
6. Full.
7. TP is the best! Passionate about the subject and enthusiastic.
8. Rewarding to share thoughts on various aspects of the history of the book with so many people working on book-arts topics from different perspectives!
9. Thank you, TP, for a great course. The knowledge you imparted to our class will be

- an invaluable resource!
10. {no response}
 11. It is an exhausting, immersive, and fun week. Plan to socialize and network and make the most of your time here—it flies by too fast.
 12. N/A

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

Who paid your RBS tuition costs?

- I paid 100% myself: 1 (8.33%)
My institution/employer paid 100%: 8 (66.67%)
I used a scholarship/fellowship to pay/waive 100%: 2 (16.67%)
I used a scholarship/fellowship to pay/waive part; I paid the rest: 1 (8.33%)
Who paid your RBS housing expenses?

- I paid 100% myself: 3 (25%)
My institution/employer paid 100%: 7 (58.33%)
I stayed with friends/family, or stayed in my own home and commuted: 2 (16.67%)

Who paid your RBS travel expenses?

- I paid 100% myself: 5 (41.67%)
My institution/employer paid 100%: 6 (50%)
I live locally, and had no travel expenses: 1 (8.33%)

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

Library disciplines:

- Conservator/binder/preservation librarian: 1 (8.33%)
Library administrator: 2 (16.67%)
Public services librarian: 2 (16.67%)
Special collections librarian: 3 (25%)

Student working toward a/n:

- M.A./M.S.: 1 (8.33%)
Ph.D./D.Phil: 1 (8.33%)

Book trades:

Antiquarian bookseller: 1 (8.33%)

Other: 1 (8.33%)