

David Pearson
C-90 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. I read most of the books and skimmed the remainder. The information in them was useful and interesting, though maybe not essential. (DP covered so much in class that I probably would've been fine if I had skipped the reading.) It definitely provided a good background for the course material, though.
2. Joseph Dane was fantastic. All others were very good.
3. The pre-course reading assignments were very useful—they definitely laid a strong foundation for the course. I didn't get to complete them all, and will probably do so on my own, but didn't suffer for not reading anything.
4. The pre-course readings were very useful, and prepared me well for class.
5. Good selection of pre-course reading. DP's Provenance Handbook is the obvious essential reading.
6. Readings were good and appropriate, especially DP's Provenance Handbook.
7. The advance readings gave a good overview of the course material, though it's not necessary to wade through all of them, as much of the information is covered in the course.
8. Yes. It was not too intense, and it gave me just the right amount of preparation.
9. Good reading list. Some of it was unnecessary based on my existing knowledge and experience, but they should still be assigned for basic knowledge.
10. The list of books was quite long. I assumed the most important were those written by the instructor. I did read all, but two were available only in SC. A list with more indication of priority might be better.
11. I began working on assigned reading back in April, and finished the night before leaving for Charlottesville. All the materials were useful and thoughtfully chosen; I began applying what I learned to my catalog records at once.
12. Very useful.
13. {no response}
14. Yes, there were eight; I read them all. I had very little knowledge of the subject, and this was excellent background.

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 workbook was excellent—very informative. I expect to keep it by my desk at work. The sections on paleography and heraldry were especially helpful—it was useful to have all the sources put in one place. The bibliography also looks like it will be especially helpful. Lastly, I found it very helpful that DP included outlines for each lecture in the packet—to focus on class discussions, slides, books under

- discussion, &c.
2. Workbook was perfect for the task.
 3. Excellent—I loved that all of DP's lecture notes were laid out in the workbook. It made focusing on the class much easier. I also liked the exercises we did—very helpful.
 4. The course workbook, and all of the distributed course materials, really, were amazingly helpful—and I will continue to consult them professionally for some time to come.
 5. The workbook is and will be helpful as a reference.
 6. The workbook was very useful. I will absolutely be referring to it later.
 7. The workbook is wonderful. I will use it for reference for years to come.
 8. It was fantastic; I will most certainly refer to it in the future. The bibliography was particularly helpful.
 9. The bibliography in the workbook will be very valuable. The heraldry handout will see use, too.
 10. Course workbook was excellent, making note taking often unnecessary. The class exercises were well planned and fun! The information in the notebook was most helpful during the class, and will be useful reference material.
 11. DP's workbook is a resource that I will value for the remainder of my working life. It is well organized and easy to use. I so appreciate receiving it!
 12. Workbook is very useful, now and in the future.
 13. Useful and well thought out. It should be useful in the future.
 14. I will use some of this every day in my work.

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

1. This is the only RBS course that I've taken.
2. {no response}
3. N/A
4. {no response}
5. Up to the usual high standard. Good mix of lectures and exercises. The homework assignments were useful and enjoyable and not overly time consuming.
6. A very good and useful class, one of the best I've taken at RBS.
7. N/A
8. N/A
9. One of the best. Every aspect of the course was relevant to my work.
10. This was even better—better coverage of the whole subject, better planned as far as lectures versus hands-on exercises.
11. It is just as valuable as other materials, but more immediately germane to my daily work.
12. As good as all the rest, and all have been excellent.
13. Not as good.
14. One of the best.

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. Paleography was very interesting, and a good introduction to a fairly difficult topic. The same goes for heraldry. I also found it very helpful to have an

- introduction to assignat and approximate dates to bookplates. These are all things that I expect to use on a regular basis.
2. The course was invaluable for how well it put the problems and challenges of provenance into perspective. I leave with far more confidence about what my collection needs, and it does not need.
 3. The early-modern paleography was helpful, especially with regard to reading obscured inscriptions. I also appreciated the updated resources DP provides to his text in the workbook. Heraldry was so much fun, and useful!
 4. Most of what we covered in this course I had some familiarity with, but it was so helpful to be able to work through some practical exercises and examples with a world-renowned expert in the room. The paleography exercises in particular!
 5. For me, the heraldry and bookplate sections were most useful, as I had the least knowledge in these areas. I am determined to learn more about early-modern handwriting in the future.
 6. I now feel more comfortable describing provenance. The session on heraldry was particularly valuable in shedding light on a very formidable topic.
 7. The sections on paleography and heraldry were particularly useful to me.
 8. Learning how to read bookplates, armorials, and secretary hand were particularly helpful. Yes, I know how to proceed with two projects that I had been stuck on.
 9. The hands-on lab on Friday and all of the exercises were very useful. Helped develop a lot of basic skills that only click when you practice them.
 10. The work on paleography was quite useful. Heraldry was totally new and gave us an entry point into a puzzling “language.” Information on how to approach deciphering and recording provenance was very helpful.
 11. The entire course was relevant, and will influence how I catalog and recatalog rare materials until I retire.
 12. DP’s extensive experience in the course subject matter. I always walk away with new insights and ideas. This is why I continue to attend.
 13. The careful treatment of heraldry was very informative and organized.
 14. The hands-on exercises. I have much more confidence in my ability to evaluate books.
- 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, absolutely. This was an excellent introduction to provenance. Some of the topics covered (such as paleography) are really areas that one needs to work on for several years to become proficient in, but this course was great for providing the building blocks to get started.
 2. DP was incredible. One of the most important things I learned was to stop thinking that rare book librarians would be able or inclined to help me in my work as curator of a private collection, when it comes to provenance.
 3. Yes. DP is an excellent professor, and extremely patient and willing to answer all questions and comments. He even arranged for a demonstration of an electron microscope (I think) after learning one was used in UVA conservation. I really appreciated his pedagogical style.
 4. I am totally satisfied in this regard. The only things we touched lightly upon were completely reasonable omissions due to time, &c. We covered the basics—and

more!

5. The course description was accurate, and I got a lot out of the course.
6. Yes; no; yes.
7. Yes, everything in the course description was covered very well. Nothing was left out, but we could have spent more time, I think, on heraldry and paleography.
8. Yes; no; yes.
9. Great crash course on heraldry. Bindings and paleography were also helpful, and I see I need to take courses on those in the future. I could have described books all day, so that part feeling too short couldn't be helped.
10. Yes. I don't think anything was left out.
11. Yes. The course more than fulfilled my hopes and professional needs.
12. Yes; no; yes, and more.
13. Hard to say; I guess I was looking for more.
14. One hundred percent.

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

1. I try to identify provenance details for cataloging records, exhibition labels, and teaching, so I expect to use these skills in all those areas.
2. I will revise the provenance section of our catalog to reflect more of the evidence of provenance, and depend less on the documentation accompanying acquisitions.
3. In my job, researching titles for acquisitions, and in answering reference queries and updating catalog records. Potentially even for special projects.
4. The skills and knowledge I've gained will help me better my institution's provenance project, which has been in need of reinvention.
5. Our library will be contributing to a larger provenance project in the next two years. This course has given me time to think about how to organize this.
6. To better describe provenance evidence.
7. These skills will help me greatly when cataloging books.
8. In two ways: I am now much more prepared for some of my future research projects. Also, I feel better able to develop an undergraduate course on the history of the book.
9. My catalog records will be much more robust with provenance information in the future.
10. I don't need the skills professionally, but they will help me when I'm participating in research, as I sometimes do.
11. What I learned will be integrated into all my rare book cataloging.
12. My appraisal practice will improve and I will be better able to serve my clients.
13. Better skills in book analysis (marking, book plates, &c.).
14. In my job as a bookseller.

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

1. Rare books librarians especially, but really anyone from a discipline that has to deal with questions of provenance (booksellers, collectors, scholars, &c.).
2. I suspect the more experience one has in provenance issues, the better the outcome. Very smart people in this class, but not sure that intellectual strength was as important as understanding pragmatics.

3. I would call this early–intermediate. If you know a little about rare books and special collections, you’ll be fine. I wouldn’t recommend this for those who are interested in provenance outside Europe and colonial North America. The focus is primarily British and from the fifteenth to the twentieth century.
 4. The course was academic and very practical at the same time. I imagine librarians, book scholars, and possibly personal collectors would benefit the most.
 5. A good general knowledge of book history and bibliographical terminology is helpful. Having a couple of Latinists in the class also was good (though knowledge of Latin is not necessary).
 6. Anyone interested in book provenance: librarians, book dealers, collectors, and educators.
 7. I found this course to be very intellectually accessible for any sort of person interested in provenance—students, scholars, librarians, &c.
 8. All sorts of people would benefit: the class was a mixture of librarians, booksellers, and academics. I think the intellectual level was just right for the mixed audience.
 9. Works best for librarians, but anyone who receives donations or researches book ownership should take it.
 10. The course was aimed at people with basic book knowledge and some library skills.
 11. High, but not so lofty as to be unhelpful.
 12. Experience in provenance was helpful, but not wholly necessary.
 13. Special collections catalogers. Rare book dealers.
 14. I was very inexperienced. I received a great foundation.
- 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. In the various exercises, it was especially helpful to be able to try things like paleography, heraldry, &c., and then see the correct answers that an expert has put together. This is always frustrating when trying to cover on my own, since there is no one there to confirm if I have correctly deciphered and interpreted or not.
 2. {no response}
 3. Being able to see such strong examples of the principles we discussed in the RBS collections, and especially in SC, was invaluable. The final day, which we spent completely hands on in SC, was fantastic.
 4. There were a few “aha!” moments, especially when we went through our Friday exercise and discovered all sorts of interesting real-life examples of things we’d talked about in class in SC.
 5. Really appreciated the mix of backgrounds, age, and professions in the class. This is one of the strengths and joys of RBS. I always feel privileged to have been selected to participate.
 6. Again, the session on heraldry. I can’t wait to use what we learned in class! I also liked the Myscope demonstration.
 7. Learning common Latin abbreviations was very helpful, and certainly solved a few of the mysterious inscriptions I’ve been struggling with.
 8. Learning how to read a coat-of-arms was quite fun.
 9. Figuring out inscriptions and identifying coats-of-arms is immensely satisfying.
 10. Our class exercises were fun, and there was sometimes a sense of solving puzzles

- together where someone would produce a clever idea. Whole tone was informal and pleasantly collegial.
11. {no response}
 12. The paleography exercises were noteworthy, and will initiate further study for me.
 13. Can't think of any.
 14. Thomas Jefferson's marking of his books. Discussion on bookplates—aha.

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

1. The section on cataloging was maybe the least essential, but it was still helpful.
2. Though DP would disagree, I would have loved knowing what expertise was in the room.
3. I can't think of a change I would make.
4. If only we had more time! More paleography and heraldry exercises.
5. Different classroom layout to facilitate discussion.
6. I would like more exercises on paleography and heraldry—something we could do on our own if we felt we needed additional practice.
7. I felt that we could have gone a bit further in depth into paleography and heraldry, and dealt less with the general overviews of what provenance research is and why it's important. It could also be useful to bring some of the reference sources (Papworth's, &c.) to class, and for the students to use them in the exercises.
8. Not sure. DP is fantastic—so learned, yet humble and approachable.
9. Had a gap of time on Thursday for discussions and to look at Myscope, which was unnecessary. More exercises would have been better.
10. It was great as it was.
11. For me, it was perfect.
12. While improvement is always possible, DP's mixture of lecture, exercises, and demonstrations are in good preparation.
13. More exposure to reference sources. Recommend self-introduction at the outset so that people can understand the background of others in the class.
14. As always, more books!

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

1. Absolutely, to both questions, I've already recommended the course to other students during the breaks.
2. Yes. Yes!
3. Yes, absolutely to both.
4. I would absolutely recommend the course, especially to any special collections librarian.
5. Yes, to both.
6. Yes. Yes!
7. Absolutely.
8. Yes; yes.
9. Absolutely. I think it is a must-take course for library professionals and anyone who works with books.
10. Yes, definitely got my employer's money's worth.
11. Yes, and yes.

12. Yes, very much so. Yes, most certainly.
13. Not sure.
14. Yes, and yes.

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

1. Yes—the trips to SC were both fun and very useful.
2. Very good visit to SC.
3. Yes. Again, our time in SC was so helpful in letting us apply our learning.
4. The time spent looking at SC's books was definitely well spent.
5. SC. Excellent sessions examining books. Thank you to the SC staff.
6. Yes. Especially seeing the books in SC on the last day.
7. Yes.
8. Yes. I thought our visits to SC were great.
9. There is a lot of interesting material in SC, so that was worth the trip.
10. N/A
11. Yes—we spent two sessions at SC.
12. N/A
13. The sessions in SC were quite beneficial.
14. Yes, hands on in SC.

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—I went to the lectures and Video Night. The first lecture was a little lacking in information, but the other one was great.
2. The lectures were disappointing. Speakers were less open to sincere questions than I would have expected.
3. I was disappointed that RBS did not mention the printing museum. I appreciated both lectures, but wished we had known about the printing museum in addition to the paper museum. I didn't get a lot of out Video Night—I'd suggest different items.
4. I enjoyed both evening lectures, but Video Night was a big "meh." I think it would have been better if more students had come.
5. Really enjoyed the Shreve Simpson talk. Werner's talk was thought provoking, but more ephemeral.
6. Yes. I really liked the Wednesday talk.
7. The lectures were great; I skipped Video Night just because I wasn't interested in the films.
8. Yes, they were fun and educational. I did, admittedly, skip several events because I had some work to do. The lectures were good, but I would have enjoyed more controversial ones even more.
9. Both lectures were worthwhile. Wednesday's was a bit brief and shallow, but entertaining.
10. Presentation on social media was interesting, though a little flip. There were issues brought up and then left hanging, but perhaps that was inevitable.
11. Yes. They were enjoyable supplemental experiences.

12. Yes, both lectures brought new ideas.
13. Always find the lectures worthwhile.
14. Lectures were interesting, Video Night is informative/entertaining.

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

1. Not really.
2. Come with special provenance questions and problems, and remain clear throughout the week as to what your needs are.
3. Knowing some paleography is helpful, but you don't need it. There will be no "magic bullet" on researching provenance, but working with DP is fantastic and really useful.
4. {no response}
5. {no response}
6. Do the readings, bring pencils and a magnifier.
7. Having a laptop throughout the course was helpful in terms of being able to look things up quickly (people's names, bookplate mottoes, &c.) and to access some of the reference materials mentioned in class that were not available at UVA (heraldry sources, &c.), but it was not essential for the course.
8. {no response}
9. You will not regret it. You don't need to do all the pre-reading, but the information in class is invaluable.
10. It's fun—take it!
11. Take the opportunity; apply early!
12. Read the suggested materials before coming.
13. {no response}
14. Make sure you are at least familiar with the reading.

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

1. Rare book summer camp—it was great.
2. So much heraldry/I want to poke my eyes out/azure a sword or.
3. Exhausting, but exhilarating!
4. Argent on a bend/sable three lions rampant/or—that's heraldry!
5. The people make the experience (teachers, students, administrators, assistants, &c.).
6. A great experience for anyone who works with or loves books!
7. Certainly worth the trip, and I'll be back.
8. Doctus gaudeo.
9. The important thing is to look at a lot of books.
10. An energizing, worthwhile week.
11. Come and learn.
12. The best, as always.
13. {no response}
14. I love this place.

Student Data

Number of respondents: 14 (of 14)

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

My institution/employer gave me professional leave time: 6 (42.86%)

My institution/employer did not give me professional leave; I used paid or vacation days:
4 (28.57%)

I am self employed, and can arrange my own schedule: 3 (21.43%)

I am a student or non-year-round employee, with a more flexible summer schedule:
1 (7.14%)

Who paid your RBS tuition costs?

I paid 100% myself: 4 (28.57%)

My institution/employer paid 100%: 7 (50%)

I used a scholarship/fellowship to pay/waive 100%: 2 (14.29%)

My situation does not fit any of the options above: 1 (7.14%)

Who paid your RBS housing expenses?

I paid 100% myself: 4 (28.57%)

My institution/employer paid 100%: 6 (42.86%)

I used a scholarship/fellowship to cover 100%: 2 (14.29%)

I stayed with friends/family, or stayed in my own home and commuted: 1 (7.14%)

My situation does not fit any of the options above: 1 (7.14%)

Who paid your RBS travel expenses?

I paid 100% myself: 5 (35.71%)

My institution/employer paid 100%: 5 (35.71%)

I used a scholarship/fellowship to cover 100%: 1 (7.14%)

I used a scholarship/fellowship to cover part; I paid the rest: 1 (7.14%)

I live locally, and had no travel expenses: 1 (7.14%)

My situation does not fit any of the options above: 1 (7.14%)

Which of the following best describes your current occupation?

Library disciplines:

Cataloger/metadata librarian: 2 (14.29%)

Curator: 1 (7.14%)

Library assistant/clerk: 1 (7.14%)

Special collections librarian: 4 (28.57%)

Other: 1 (7.14%)

Professional educator:

Assistant professor: 1 (7.14%)

Book trades:

Antiquarian bookseller: 1 (7.14%)

Appraiser: 1 (7.14%)

Other occupations/vocations:

Independent scholar: 1 (7.14%)

Other: 1 (7.14%)