

Joel Silver
L-45: Reference Sources for Researching Printed Americana
10-15 May 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.
2. The pre-course reading was useful.
3. This was the only weak part of the course.
4. Readings were very useful, but could have more.
5. Readings were a very good introduction!
6. Yes, excellent.
7. Yes; the Bill Reese articles were excellent.
8. Readings were all useful.
9. The pre-course readings were interesting, although most of us had already read them.
10. Yes. Some additional reading.
11. Very useful, but not absolutely necessary.
12. Yes, though not especially substantial.

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. As usual, JS has superb materials.
2. Course materials were ideal. They will continue to be helpful to me.
3. Outstanding, and will be of continual use.
4. The notes pages and sources form a new reference work for me that I will use and share with colleagues.
5. The handouts made note-taking a lot easier, and will serve as a great resource in the future in its now heavily annotated state!
6. Yes, great handouts, presented superbly.
7. The way JS does this is great. Having note-taking sheets with Xerox copies of the books referenced makes it easy to follow along and take notes.
8. I will keep the list of titles for future reference; very helpful.
9. Absolutely.
10. Excellent. Yes, and yes.
11. The materials will become a standard source for me that I will refer to many times in the future.
12. Yes, indeed.

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

1. One of the best.
2. About the same. Both were top notch.
3. This was the best.
4. N/A
5. Just like previous courses. This class was amazing, and I cannot recommend it highly enough.
6. {no response}
7. One of the best.
8. This was a good, collegial group. Good group dynamics.
9. {no response}
10. Equally useful and stimulating.
11. Among the best—but then all RBS courses taken are the best.
12. 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. This is my specialty, and I learned a great deal.
2. Everything was interesting and relevant. Yes, I have new insights, ideas, and project plans.
3. Much better understanding of the breadth and nature of American reference materials—and how to use them.
4. I gained many new insights into sources I've not used or known about, and after assembling the sources (or acquiring them) into a ready reference work, will research some materials already obtained.
5. All aspects were relevant. As I am relatively new to the area of Americana, I gained more new insight than I could have hoped for, and have gotten ideas for how to use skills in classes and for exhibit records.
6. {no response}
7. I really enjoyed the "Voyages & Travels," "Maps & Travels," and "Various Subjects" classes.
8. Topical reference sources.
9. {no response}
10. All aspects. Yes—accumulate resources discussed.
11. JS gave invaluable professional and personal information.
12. I have so many new insights, ideas, and project plans my head is spinning. It's wonderful.

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 *more* than I expected.
2. Instructor was outstanding. Yes, I learned what I had hoped for, and much more.
3. Yes, no, yes.
4. Yes.
5. Yes—he did more than just help; he truly inspired me. Coverage was amazing, in

- true RBS fashion! I took away so much more than I could have hoped for.
6. The instructor, JS, is a great gift to the entire field of bibliographical research—an amazing leader, with a truly amazing fund of knowledge.
 7. Yes; the course was what I had hoped for and expected.
 8. JS answered all questions—he was never stumped.
 9. {no response}
 10. Yes. No. Yes.
 11. The course lacked nothing: promises delivered, nothing left out, and I learned more than I had hoped for.
 12. Yes, indeed.
- 6) *How do you plan to use the skills and knowledge acquired during your time here?*
1. In my business.
 2. In my antiquarian book business, and in additional research projects.
 3. Reading and acquiring many of the works covered.
 4. By writing up descriptions of our notable acquisitions, and by raising awareness.
 5. I will use the skills to help with acquisition decisions, to enhance bibliographical description for better access, to search for exhibits and class presentations.
 6. {no response}
 7. Researching books and writing catalog descriptions.
 8. Academic research and scholarly writing.
 9. {no response}
 10. In my business as book buyer, seller, appraiser, and collector.
 11. This course extends my knowledge, greatly enhances my appraisal practice.
 12. My cataloging for selling antiquarian books will be immeasurably improved (I hope).
- 7) *Please briefly describe the intellectual level of the course. What sort of person might benefit the most from taking it?*
1. Very specialized, and so *perfect* for anyone interested in Americana.
 2. A person with interest in learning a vast number of helpful research sources.
 3. It was not intellectually challenging, but very useful. Collectors, dealers, and some librarians could benefit.
 4. All levels of librarians, graduate students.
 5. Accessible, but highly developed at the same time. Anyone interested in any aspect of Americana and the book trades, collectors, &c.
 6. Quite high.
 7. Good beginning course. As a bookseller, I know I'll benefit. I think having taken JS's general course first helped.
 8. It was not overly advanced (which was good for me), but I have become well versed in reference sources in a matter of days.
 9. Perfect and appropriate.
 10. Moderately high. People with some academic or trade knowledge.
 11. A broad reach from collectors to booksellers to librarians.
 12. The intellectual level is pretty high in my opinion. I can't imagine a bookseller not benefiting.

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 took the general reference course last year. This is a great course sequel to anyone wanting to know more about Americana.
2. {no response}
3. {no response}
4. {no response}
5. JS shares personal experience and anecdotes that help pull the concepts together, deepening the understanding of all the expertise he has to share.
6. {no response}
7. Nope.
8. JS’s off-topic stories! Good stuff.
9. Too many to list: JS is a superlative instructor.
10. {no response}
11. Being in JS’s presence.
12. {no response}

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

1. I was very pleased—JS is fantastic.
2. I don’t think it needs any improvement.
3. {no response}
4. {no response}
5. No!
6. {no response}
7. I think the mix of topics and the pace of the course were good.
8. I would have liked to hear more bookseller stories from the other students.
9. No suggestions, for it was all well planned and executed.
10. {no response}
11. Can’t be improved.
12. I would have liked more evening presentations.

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

1. Yes, and yes.
2. While the trip overall was very expensive for me, I think it will pay off well in the long run. Yes, I would definitely recommend it.
3. Yes, and yes.
4. Yes.
5. Absolutely!
6. {no response}
7. Absolutely.
8. Yes, and yes.
9. Will highly recommend.
10. Yes, and yes.
11. Yes, and most definitely.

12. Yes.

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

1. The tour of Lilly Library was very interesting.
2. Yes. A bonus was a twenty-minute lecture in an adjacent room that was wonderful.
3. Yes—the tour of the Lilly Library, especially the vault.
4. Yes. The Lilly tour was great, and the visit with the donor illuminating.
5. N/A
6. {no response}
7. Yes; the vault visit was excellent.
8. The tour of the building was wonderful.
9. Yes!
10. Yes.
11. N/A
12. {no response}

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. The lunch and the dinners were fun and educational.
2. The lecture by an Indiana University professor on Audubon was very worthwhile.
3. It was terrific.
4. Very much: the lecture on Audubon.
5. Yes, the lecture was wonderful!
6. {no response}
7. Yes; the Audubon lecture was excellent.
8. Good dinner.
9. The optional events were outstanding—and every single student attended.
10. {no response}
11. Yes.
12. Enjoyed the presentation on Audubon very much.

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

1. *Do it!*
2. The sheer volume of great information covered so proficiently by JS is worth the cost of admission!
3. {no response}
4. Drink a lot of coffee at lunch.
5. {no response}
6. Strongly recommended.
7. Nope. They should take it.
8. Come prepared to learn.
9. Simply this: Do it.

10. {no response}
11. Take the course, by all means.
12. {no response}

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

1. If not life changing, then career changing.
2. I-m sad to see it end!
3. Outstanding!
4. A wonderful, stimulating week.
5. RBS classes are truly life-changing experiences! Thank you! And thank you to the wonderful staff of the Lilly Library.
6. {no response}
7. {no response}
8. JS is amazing.
9. Delightful, informative, useful.
10. Time well spent.
11. The best.
12. Sitting in classrooms/Is not everyone's forte/They should try JS.

Student Data

Number of respondents: 12 (of 13)

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

My institution/employer gave me professional leave time: 3 (23.08%)

I am self-employed, and can arrange my own schedule: 8 (61.54%)

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

Who paid your RBS tuition costs?

I paid 100% myself: 8 (61.54%)

My institution/employer paid 100%: 3 (23.08%)

I used a scholarship/fellowship to pay/waive part; I paid the rest: 1 (7.69%)

Who paid your RBS housing expenses?

I paid 100% myself: 9 (69.23%)

My institution/employer paid 100%: 3 (23.08%)

Who paid your RBS travel expenses?

I paid 100% myself: 9 (69.23%)

My institution/employer paid 100%: 3 (23.08%)

Which of the following best describes your current occupation?

Library disciplines:

Archivist: 1 (7.69%)

Subject specialist/bibliographer: 1 (7.69%)

Professional educator:

Full professor: 1 (7.69%)

Book trades:

Antiquarian bookseller: 8 (61.54%)

Other occupations/vocations:

Retired: 1 (7.69%)