

Michael F. Suarez, S.J.
G-70: Advanced Seminar in Critical Bibliography
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. We had a large number of readings, many of them very good, but I think it would be more useful to focus on a few of the articles. {private comment}
2. Having access to these readings will be very helpful for the future. However, I think having more information about the shape of the class would have helped me to prepare better for it. It was so much reading that I was overwhelmed.
3. Our course readings were extremely dense and long, but rarely brought up in class. It would have been helpful to have a targeted reading or two identified well in advance for each day.
4. The reading assignments were too numerous to feasibly complete all of them, given professional time constraints. Had they been more judiciously selected, or more clearly annotated/sign-posted, they would have been more helpful. Learning how they were to relate to the schedule would have been helpful.
5. The pre-course reading list is enormous, and unrealistic as a reading list—a fact that the instructor understands. It functions much better as a very rich reference library.
6. Yes, but the sheer number and variety of readings was a bit overwhelming. Might be more effective to trim some fat, because everyone will be more likely to have read the same things.
7. {no response}

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 course workbook was not particularly useful, but the online course packet was, and will be incredibly useful.
2. The activities we got through were very helpful.
3. The workbook was great, but it would have been helpful to get an introduction to the workbook and its contents on the first day.
4. The material in the workbook will be very helpful. Even those assignments that we did not get to will be a great pedagogical resource.
5. I would have liked fewer in-class displays of materials, and more concentrated attention to a judiciously chosen sample.
6. Yes, especially the syllabi.
7. Very helpful and appreciated.

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

1. This course was much more focused on discussing, rather than doing.
 2. This course was far more about methodology than my previous course, which was about gaining expertise in a content area.
 3. N/A
 4. This one was less clearly structured, and did not convey a specific skill or method. But it was intellectually broad and ambitious, and the theoretical discussions will be helpful in contextualizing what I learned in other courses.
 5. This is much more focused on pedagogies than other RBS courses I have taken.
 6. I actually preferred the content of the previous course I took (more focused on my interests).
 7. The student cohort was much stronger. Great conversation.
- 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 was most interested in discussions about teaching/pedagogy, and will put much of what we discussed to work as I put together course descriptions and craft a teaching statement.
 2. The presentations of our research and the pedagogical exercises were the most helpful.
 3. I appreciated our discussions of the key methods and theories, and the ample room to debate with other students, who made up an excellent and interdisciplinary group.
 4. I was able to reconceptualize ongoing projects and re-think my teaching plans. I will be thinking in new ways about writing and publishing the work I presented.
 5. I am most grateful for our visits to SC, and for the extremely rich reference materials.
 6. Yes, the discussion of pedagogy was helpful, as was the inspirational message!
 7. Pedagogy discussions.
- 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. {private response}
 2. {no response}
 3. The scope was large, so the instructor did well to balance particular aims with the evolving interests and needs of the group.
 4. I confess I did not have clear expectations of skill development. I would have liked to have learned more about making arguments with material evidence in other disciplines.
 5. {no response}
 6. Yes; no; yes.
 7. {no response}
- 6) *How do you plan to use the skills and knowledge acquired during your time here?*
1. {private response}
 2. {no response}

3. To write a book!
4. To improve my teaching and second-book planning.
5. {no response}
6. Well, in writing a book, I suppose! I'm also going to revisit some books I thought I knew....
7. {no response}

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

1. The intellectual level of the course depends on the participants; it was a discussion-based class.
2. This is an intellectually rigorous course that will benefit early-career academics.
3. Definitely a junior humanities academic. Sometimes it seems most geared to those at well-funded and centrally (or coastally) located institutions.
4. An advanced graduate seminar. Best for early-career academics.
5. The level of intellectual engagement from my classmates was extremely high. Overall, the community of scholarship was one of the most unusual and valuable parts of the course.
6. High; Mellon Fellows.
7. Junior scholars.

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. No.
2. Thinking about constellations of objects is very helpful.
3. I loved learning about my classmates' research and methods. It gave me lots of ideas.
4. Many of the demonstrations with books and facsimiles were startlingly powerful.
5. {no response}
6. Advice about pulling a rabbit out of a hat (figuratively), and how to structure lectures, was most helpful.
7. {no response}

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

1. I would have liked to discuss the readings more.
2. {no response}
3. I feel like the course is still finding its balance between practical, conversational, theoretical, and pedagogical goals. I also think maybe a closing discussion regarding reach student's takeaways/concluding thoughts, because my biggest takeaway is how individualized critical bibliography is.
4. A more realistic structure, and better in-class management of time and discussion.
5. Better and earlier communication of readings. I would also consider adding a workshop element with pre-circulated writing by students, rather than only short oral presentations.
6. Not sure.

7. {no response}
- 10) *Do you feel that you got your money's worth? Would you recommend the course to others?*
1. Yes.
 2. {no response}
 3. It was free, so yes!
 4. My tuition was covered, but it was a good use of my time. It is required {for Mellon Fellows}, but those who have to take it should feel good about enrolling.
 5. My tuition was fully funded, but I do think my time was well spent in this community.
 6. Yes, yes.
 7. {no response}
- 11) *If your course made any trips outside of the classroom, do you feel that they were time well spent?*
1. Yes; the time spent in SC was the best part of the course.
 2. The trips to SC were extremely useful, as they helped us focus on concrete examples.
 3. We went to SC, which was awesome. I {heart} George.
 4. All trips to SC were valuable.
 5. SC visits were all excellent. (Thanks, George!)
 6. I wish we had, actually! (To somewhere off campus—I liked the SC trips.)
 7. SC was excellent.
- 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 enjoyed the lecture.
 2. {no response}
 3. I wish we had had no more than one talk.
 4. The lectures were good. {private response}
 5. Lectures were always worthwhile.
 6. N/A
 7. {no response}
- 13) *Do you have any additional thoughts or advice for anyone considering taking this course in a future year?*
1. No.
 2. {no response}
 3. Nope.
 4. Be adventurous in the work of your own that you share.
 5. {no response}
 6. Keep up the good work—and thanks!
 7. {no response}

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

1. {no response}
2. This is an excellent community of scholars who are welcoming and encouraging.
3. {private response}
4. Invigorating!
5. {no response}
6. Oh wormhole Willy/you will climb the Mt. Fuji/but slowly...slowly...
7. {no response}

Student Data

Number of respondents: 7 (of 7)

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

My institution/employer gave me professional leave time: 2 (28.57%)

I am a student or non-year-round employee, with a more flexible summer schedule: 5 (71.43%)

Who paid your RBS tuition costs?

I used a scholarship/fellowship to pay/waive 100%: 6 (85.71%)

I had an RBS course tuition credit from a previous year: 1 (14.29%)

Who paid your RBS housing expenses?

I used a scholarship/fellowship to cover 100%: 7 (100%)

Who paid your RBS travel expenses?

My institution/employer paid 100%: 1 (14.29%)

I used a scholarship/fellowship to cover 100%: 6 (85.71%)

Which of the following best describes your current occupation?

Student working toward a/n:

Ph.D./D.Phil: 1 (14.29%)

Professional educator:

Lecturer/adjunct: 1 (14.29%)

Assistant professor: 5 (71.43%)