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G-70: Advanced Seminar in Critical Bibliography
7-12 June 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. There were too many, which diluted the discussion. It might also be useful to pre-circulate the Fellows' papers.
 2. It would be more useful to have fewer readings, so we could discuss in greater depth. Useful to have the bibliography then.
 3. Extremely interesting, but too much (two weeks' solid reading). Less is more, &c. Give them out earlier.
 4. The reading assignment was too large to be useful. It should be restricted to no more than two articles per class meeting.
 5. The readings were interesting and I appreciated how they were grouped thematically. However, the volume of reading made it impossible to discuss them in any substantial way. I would prefer far fewer main readings, and a large bit of recommended readings.
 6. The pre-reading assignments were very helpful. I will continue using them. I would have liked to get the link earlier, together with an approximate class plan, i.e., when readings/discussions would be planned.
 7. A bit too much. Particularly important readings should be starred, or otherwise indicated, to help focus attention.
 8. Yes. I found the Gell material particularly stimulating. I felt as though the reading could have been trimmed considerably without much loss.
 9. Yes. I'd have liked to have switched out some of the readings for publications by Fellows or drafts of the papers they planned to present in the course. I'd also have liked some theoretical readings that decentered the field, e.g., Stuart Woolf or Dipesh Chakrabarty.
 10. Readings were useful and interesting; perhaps suggestions for focus in each group would be useful in preparation.
 11. Yes, they were useful, but 1) they were distributed too late during a busy spring semester to allow me to read them all; and 2) contextualizing the readings with a set of guiding questions would have helped.
 12. Very useful readings, both as reminders and the new work. Perhaps a post-RBS class survey to participants, asking for and distributing additions {?} could be incorporated.
 13. I saw the reading list as a useful guide to the developing theory and practice of critical bibliography.

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. {no response}
2. Useful.
3. Good. We had fabulously interesting discussions—really illuminating.
4. Excellent. Yes, they will be tremendously useful.
5. The discussion questions for each “museum” were thoughtful. I would like greater detail in the instructions for the activities, though: a point-by-point guide through one object to model the lesson, for example.
6. {no response}
7. I am very grateful for the supplementary teaching materials. To be honest, though, I don’t think a course workbook is particularly useful for this seminar.
8. The teaching materials look fantastic, and I anticipate using them in the near future.
9. I was very grateful to have a syllabus (which was included in the course folder) and leading questions for the exercises.
10. The bibliography and download of course readings and teaching materials will be useful in the future.
11. Teaching manual distributed by BH on the last day was useful.
12. It will be enormously useful for me in the future. The digital distribution was very generous and future oriented.
13. The course workbook was not used very much in the course, although the supplementary material on teaching available for download seemed useful.

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

1. {no response}
2. {no response}
3. Just as good.
4. Equally good.
5. {private response}
6. The other course was completely different, and difficult to compare.
7. Apples and oranges.
8. The courses were both excellent, but very different in their content and approach.
9. This was definitely the best course I’ve taken so far. I really enjoyed the discussions among the course participants.
10. On par with all of my previous courses in terms of intellectual content and rigor.
11. Apples and oranges. Most RBS courses I’ve taken are about learning a specific, technical skillset. This course is oriented toward academic discussion. I enjoyed both forms of interaction, and profited differently from them.
12. A great intellectual experience—by nature very *different* from the others.
13. Definitely more collegial and scholarly than other RBS courses, given the range of Fellows’ interest and training. It was wonderful to hear about the many fascinating new projects.

- 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 most appreciated hearing the presentations of other Fellows.
 2. {no response}
 3. Pedagogical and anthropological material was equally good.
 4. The interactions with classmates.
 5. I deeply enjoyed hearing about everyone's research. Their materials, methods, and arguments were truly a pleasure to learn about. I think it will change how I think about my own research.
 6. Yes, definitely—especially with regard to my teaching.
 7. Discussions with MFS and the other Mellon Fellows were very invigorating—I can't describe it.
 8. The presentations were superb, and I also appreciated the ways in which pedagogy was incorporated into the discussions. I plan to use many of the exercises mentioned in the classes I teach.
 9. Presentations of Fellows' projects. I learned *a lot* about the Fellows' disciplines, and about the issues that are pertinent to their fields.
 10. Conversations with other course participants were incredibly provocative and useful.
 11. Interactions with Mellon Fellows both inside and outside of class was the best feature of the course. *Yes, many new insights, &c.* Very profitable.
 12. Very helpful for designing my new undergraduate course *and* for re-thinking the methodological foundations of my research.
 13. The opportunity to present and receive feedback was the most valuable aspect for me.
- 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. {no response}
 2. I wanted to learn what "critical bibliography" was. Now I know!
 3. Absolutely.
 4. Yes.
 5. As noted above, I think the lack of discussion of the readings was detrimental—I would have liked to understand how the non-bibliographical/book-history readings relate to critical bibliography.
 6. {no response}
 7. Not quite relevant to the course, which wasn't really about information.
 8. Yes, absolutely.
 9. I'm sure what I'd hoped to learn, so in that way I can't say whether the course did or did not meet my expectations. I wish there had been more discussions of a political/ethical nature.
 10. {no response}
 11. The "teaching" discussion was not profitable for me. The course needs more non-Anglo-American materials, and also more medieval materials.
 12. {private response}

13. Yes.

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

1. {no response}
2. In research and teaching.
3. I plan to construct a “History of the Book” course, re-tune my project, and re-think my symposium.
4. In thinking about my work and projects more broadly.
5. Not sure yet, except that I know it will influence my scholarship and teaching.
6. In my classes and in my research.
7. Collaboration; approaches to my work.
8. See above, regarding pedagogy. I also felt that the Gell readings helped me articulate an agenda/guiding framework for my ongoing projects.
9. I will apply the theoretical points I’ve learned to my research and teaching.
10. {no response}
11. In research and writing.
12. In teaching, and in my academic work and conference organization.
13. I intend to review the readings and consider their significance for my scholarship.

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

1. {no response}
2. Academics.
3. Very high. The curious.
4. The highest level, because of the caliber of the students. Only advanced Ph.D.s and professors.
5. {private response}
6. This is an academic course—Mellon Fellows and other scholars.
7. N/A
8. Extremely high. Mellon Fellows.
9. Academic, theoretical. Specialists.
10. Fellows, academics.
11. Very high level of discussion from other Fellows. Those interested in how their work intersects with material object studies (art history, archaeology, &c.) will benefit.
12. This was a high-pitched course for well-prepared post-graduates and academics—but, at the same time, generous and welcoming.
13. This course had some elements of a graduate course and a pedagogy seminar, albeit at a much more advanced level. I feel future students would benefit from first taking “Introduction to the Principles of Descriptive Bibliography” for preparation.

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 response}

2. Discussion of the Paris Bible in SC.
3. The SC session, especially the manuscript comparison.
4. All of the student presentations.
5. Discussing ideas about anomalies with the other class members.
6. Looking at the manuscripts vs. print books. The “museums” are great occasions to see and learn from conversations with DS and BH.
7. N/A
8. See above. I also appreciated the discussion of exceptions and “limit cases.”
9. These occurred in small group discussions over breaks and beers.
10. Feedback from other participants on presentations—and the vocabulary used by other participants—was wonderful.
11. There were many, but I am tired and hungry. It would be easier to have an online survey.
12. MFS modeled teaching with books in a truly exemplary and excellent fashion. His ability to direct interdisciplinary conversation was reassuring and productive.
13. No.

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

1. Less time for the museums; discussion of student contributions at greater length.
2. {private response}
3. The museum sessions were interesting, but took up too much time—I’d cut them all.
4. More student-student interaction; more focused readings.
5. Fewer museums, or fewer examples, but with deeper digging into the materials. I especially wanted more “pair and share” or “peer-to-peer” teaching and learning activities.
6. Having a better sense of the plan ahead of time.
7. More discussion, better integration of exhibits—“museum” is a bad term—with the discussions being had. More actual attention to non-Western material from MFS.
8. The “museums” were fun, but might have better used the expertise in the room. For instance, Fellows with an expertise in early printing might be asked to lead a short discussion on a particular object in the collection, as opposed to having everyone rotate through each “station.”
9. Fewer hands-on exercises. {private response} Develop collections and staff expertise to teach non-European materials!
10. {private response}
11. More honest engagement with the labor market in the academy. More non-Anglo-American early modern materials.
12. A bit more rigor in the structure of the seminars.
13. It was remarkably well conducted by MFS.

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

1. {no response}
2. {no response}
3. Absolutely.
4. {no response}

5. Yes! Yes.
6. Yes, I would.
7. N/A
8. Yes.
9. Yes, and yes.
10. N/A
11. I did not pay for it.
12. Yes!
13. Yes, on both counts.

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

1. {no response}
2. Yes.
3. N/A
4. Yes.
5. Yes, in part because *variety* is important.
6. Yes, they were excellent examples illustrating both pedagogical and academic use of the materiality of the book.
7. I enjoyed the SC trip.
8. SC trip was great.
9. We took one trip to SC. I do not feel that that time was time well spent. It would have been so had the Fellows been invited to present/discuss objects from the collection.
10. {private response}
11. N/A
12. N/A
13. Yes, and I feel more time in SC would have made it even better.

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. {no response}
2. {no response}
3. {private response}
4. Yes, they were excellent and essential to the experience.
5. I was too mentally exhausted to go.
6. I attended the first one.
7. N/A
8. I attended the Boswell lecture, and was very pleased.
9. N/A
10. {private response}
11. N/A
12. The talks I attended were interesting, although this year not as excellent as in earlier years.
13. N/A

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

1. {no response}
2. {no response}
3. Take it.
4. {no response}
5. Come prepared to offer ideas and suggestions from your own research in class discussions.
6. {no response}
7. N/A
8. Enjoy!
9. Pre-circulate Fellows' papers/presentations, so that one can digest them in advance, and thus get more out of the presentations. Also: enjoy!
10. Ask for direction on what to focus on in the readings.
11. Engage critically, but generously.
12. {no response}
13. N/A

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. Intense.
3. Community.
4. Inspiring.
5. {no response}
6. {no response}
7. {no response}
8. I had a great, exhausting, free-wheeling experience!
9. Capacious!
10. Wonderful conversations; thank you all!
11. Planned incongruity.
12. Thinking about objects that connect.
13. Spectacular combination of scholarship and intellectual generosity. The Mellon Fellowship is truly unique.

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: 1 (7.69%)

My employer did not give me professional leave; I used paid or vacation days: 2 (15.38%)

I am a student/non-year-round employee, with a more flexible schedule: 9 (69.23%)

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

Who paid your RBS tuition costs?

I used a scholarship/fellowship to pay/waive 100%: 13 (100%)

Who paid your RBS housing expenses?

I used a scholarship/fellowship to cover 100%: 13 (100%)

Who paid your RBS travel expenses?

I paid 100% myself: 1 (7.69%)

I used a scholarship/fellowship to cover 100%: 12 (92.23%)

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

Student working toward a:

Ph.D./D.Phil: 3 (23.08%)

Professional educator:

Lecturer/adjunct: 2 (15.38%)

Assistant professor: 5 (38.46%)

Associate professor: 1 (7.69%)

Other occupations/vocations:

Post-doctoral fellow/researcher/scholar: 1 (7.69%)

No response: 1 (7.69%)