

Stephen Tabor  
G-45: Analytical Bibliography  
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. Reading assignments were concise and relevant. I had some difficulty locating Blayney's publication from the site listed (the Folger gift shop), but located a used copy on Amazon.
2. Pre-course readings were extremely useful...I did try to do a bit of reading around recent work in the field, which was also helpful. Very reasonable amount of prep work.
3. Yes and no. Gaskell and Tanselle were useful, to a degree, but the Blayney and the article on printers' shops were not used. They were interesting, but could have seen on a reading list. Bowers is helpful as some bibliographical knowledge is certainly of value. The video of Belanger folding should just be shown in all bibliographical classes—so helpful.
4. They were useful. No further suggestions. Thanks for the supplement to Tanselle.
5. The pre-course reading is pretty light. I think the DVD ought to be "required," rather than optional, and that people should practice their folding in order to save time during class and make students feel more confident when it comes to discussing, e.g., inner and outer forms.
6. The texts were absolutely helpful in preparing me for class, especially Blayney's *The First Folio of Shakespeare*.
7. The pre-course material was helpful in preparing for this course. We didn't cover the last two articles in depth in class, but they provided an interesting perspective on matters that were discussed in class. Gaskell was most helpful, especially the illustrations on imposition.
8. They were useful, especially the Gaskell, because you need to be familiar with the printing shops and processes. It's an essential task.
9. The pre-course reading materials were excellent.
10. Yes.
11. Yes, they were useful.
12. Yes. No.

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. Working from photocopies is not ideal, but understandable given the nature of the course. I wish there were a way to eliminate issues of scale and distortion in certain materials we compared.
2. The workbook was very useful. It was/is probably *most* useful within the context of the classes this week, but some will be useful for later reference.

3. The workbook materials were helpful, but another format would be better. Spreading twenty pages out in front of you on a small table is difficult. Perhaps a single sheet with all running titles on it would be more useful.
4. I found the course workbook and associated materials fully sufficient and appropriate for the course. I intend to use the content and specific materials both as an aid to my own research and (with ST's permission, which I'll write to ask for) on such occasions for teaching as I might myself have in the future.
5. I found the materials distributed during class very useful, and I can see that a lot of time has gone into selecting them. I didn't like the folder, as I found that we frequently wasted time finding the right sheets; a ring-binder (as in "Desbib") would be better. Also, please could you crop "black spaces" off for the running-headers exercise. Thanks.
6. The workbook was obviously very carefully and thoughtfully put together—each section of workbook activities was well chosen for its purpose.
7. The majority of the material in the workbook relates to the hands-on instruction in class. The other items, especially the prints, will come in handy for future study of printers' habits. (Thinking of when works were printed by forme.)
8. Workbook may have been better in binder form, because it was easy for pages to fall out, but contents were both appropriate and useful. I believe some of it will be useful after the course. The organization of it was fantastic.
9. The workbook would have been easier to navigate through if it was in a three-ring binder. All very useful materials.
10. The course material was relevant. I prefer a binder to keep them in.
11. Appropriate content. Perhaps, it would be nice to include handouts of some of the slides. Some of the diagrams were complicated and too arduous to draw.
12. Although we worked mostly with photocopies materials, it was extremely useful to have reproductions of so many different versions of the same work.

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

1. N/A
2. Same *very* high standard. Well-organized material, well delivered.
3. Previously I took "Desbib," so this was a lot less intense. I did find that this course was a bit more unorganized—perhaps because ST has not taught it as long.
4. All the RBS courses I've taken have been truly excellent. This one offers exact, indeed brilliant, insight into various complicated questions of the bibliographical analysis. Although the course includes discussions of the "so what" question, the glory of this course is in the details. Watching ST think through problems was both illuminating and fun.
5. I took "Desbib" last year, and this is nowhere near as intense, so you will get to socialize. This course is complementary, and I learned *a lot*. There was a fair bit of overlap with "Desbib."
6. This course was definitely the class most concerned with minutiae, but I think it's one of the ones I'll take the most away from.
7. N/A
8. N/A
9. I have not taken any other RBS course.
10. Not as time consuming as the "Desbib" courses, but just as intellectually stimulating.

11. It compared favorably. I found all the information useful and helpful.
12. Slightly less intensive, in terms of not having homework.

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 feel I learned a great deal about the individual processes of early-modern book production. After taking this course, I plan to suggest teaching an introduction to book history course at my institution.
2. The last couple of days were a great culmination of everything touched on earlier in the week: very interesting to hear about ST's own work, and how he's applied the techniques we've learned about.
3. What to look for when doing analytical bibliography was helpful, but the repeated looking for things was not as much. A bit of practice is useful, but I feel we could have covered more/different ground. If the class was more than one week, we could get away with so many examples.
4. I still have tons to learn, but what I learned in this will not only help me attend to bibliographical questions as I come across them in books. What I have learned will also, I hope, serve as a foundation enabling me to continue to teach myself. The course has not just given me tools, but the knowledge to continue to use them and to identify areas for further exploration and growth.
5. I adored the sessions in the print room, and cannot express just how much this will aid my future work. The same goes for the fantastic exercises on type identification, woodcut damage, running titles, shared printing. I can't wait to get back to my own work as I am brimming with new skills and ideas...I only wish I could take the entire class and ST with me to help me solve puzzles!
6. This was my first significant experience with analytical bibliography. Comparing different copies for printing differences—however small they may be—helped me better understand the elaborate nature of book production.
7. I found the work on the common press and the work in the RBS print studio/lab to be most interesting, as it was great to see how all of the processes we read about in the pre-course reading actually took place in a print shop. I walked away with a new-found respect for printers and compositors!
8. As an individual, I was most interested in the printing practicum.
9. The type-identification exercise and hands-on printing experience were the most interesting aspects of the course. Quite a few insights, but I am still unsure how I will deploy them in my research project.
10. Learning to observe the details of printing requires a disciplined focus that takes time and effort to master.
11. I am still processing all the information I have received.
12. Using recurring types to determine order of printing.

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 feel I learned *above* my expectations, especially with regard to the detailed process of analyzing variant states of a project ST had been working on for decades. This helped the application of learned skills to be far more relevant.

2. Definitely, the course delivered as promised. An exit reading list would be nice (though Tanselle's "Introduction" was great, and should continue to provide reading materials to follow up on).
3. I think, overall, yes, but I felt the first day was a bit slow. If people had done the pre-reading and viewed the video, we should not have had to go over chainline direction. Time could have been used more efficiently to go over more things we may encounter.
4. I don't think any of the skills and information that we covered can be taught in a week. I think the course provided a tremendous and exceedingly useful introduction to those skills and that information. It has also created a thirst to learn more.
5. I think he did, yes, and I learned what I'd hoped to learn. I hoped also to learn more about "fingerprints," but that's very minor and I'm more than happy with the instruction I received.
6. What was promised was delivered. I feel like the course has whet my appetite for more analytical-bibliographical endeavors.
7. I came to this course with only a little printing knowledge, but a great interest in the operation of printing houses. I feel I have learned quite a lot in this course, and I feel encouraged to read the post-course reading list provided. The exercises we did in class helped to train my eyes, and I feel satisfied with this course and its description.
8. Yes, I learned and began to develop the skills/info promised.
9. I acquired all the skills I expected, and more.
10. Yes.
11. All was covered and then some. Indeed, I gained new insights that may help explain many processes.
12. Yes.

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

1. I'm thinking of embarking on a project to analyze one of our incunabula and compare it to another, digitized copy online, possibly for my own amusement, but who knows?
2. Getting back to my own project!
3. Primarily in reference work at my institution. Also personal projects looking at books, and in instructing students on basic book printing.
4. I would like—after acquiring more experience and reading far, far more than I have currently read—to produce scholarly articles on analytical bibliography.
5. By continuing to try to solve bibliographical puzzles of my own.
6. I think what I've learned will make me a better cataloger of rare books, and also a better teacher of book history/production techniques.
7. I hope to get a little more hands on and do some more printing.
8. Much of the course was looking at fine details, and that is a big takeaway for me. The techniques of looking at and determining different states/impressions will help me when I study the multiple copies of plays in the collection I am currently studying.
9. I will apply them in my bibliographical research for my dissertation.
10. As a collector, I am interested in evaluating items that I have or wish to purchase.
11. Check with me in a year.

12. Examine books with more critical eyes, and try to understand what went on during the printing/imposition process.

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

1. This course is actually broad in its relevance. I felt some of the earlier material was a refresher for me, but I was able to deepen my understanding of concepts.
2. ST presumes *some* familiarity with early books. The later materials in the course can sometimes be challenging to follow, but well worth the effort.
3. Some pre-knowledge of book processes, history, &c., would definitely be valuable. There is a lot of basic stuff at the beginning, but I think someone would feel lost without pre-knowledge. Librarians and book-related academics (or self-studiers) would do well.
4. High. A course for someone who already has basic knowledge of the vocabulary and main issues.
5. Academics, librarians, anyone who plans to edit texts, librarians/book collectors who wish to distinguish better between editions and identify forgeries.
6. The intellectual level is fairly high. You should definitely have a firm grasp of the basics of handpress book production before taking this class. I'd recommend "Desbib" first.
7. I would recommend this course for someone that has an understanding of collation. It might be difficult to understand concepts without this.
8. Someone who is good at, or wants to be good at, paying close attention to detail.
9. It is a specialized course that I feel is more useful to researchers pursuing research in a narrow subject area, rather than for a librarian who wishes to more fully describe a book (the amount of effort and time needed to deploy these techniques would be impractical for information professionals).
10. A person who wishes to understand subtle differences in printing.
11. Having introductory bibliographical description is a huge plus.
12. I thought the intellectual level was just right, although I cannot say I understood everything. Anyone who works with handpress books would benefit from taking this course.

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 very much appreciated the methods for determining which forms were printed first—this was an "aha" moment for me.
2. I have a much better appreciation of the *human* side of early book production now! The printing practicum was *way* more critical to understanding that than I'd appreciated earlier in the week.
3. I had a few moments where I wrote a note to myself to check things at work that I had never thought of before.
4. Cover the discussions of running titles, type recurrence, imposition, &c. So glad that ST also introduced the work of other analytical bibliographers of note; will be reading some Randall McLeod in the near future. "Sweeping the sidewalks with his eyelashes"—I liked this phrase.

5. So many “aha” moments! I really enjoyed my time as a compositor, as I made so many interesting errors when trying to copy from a manuscript. (I’d only done free composition before.) My attempts to correct within the comp {illegible} and the need to then justify taught me a lot about an edition I’ve been examining, and I now think a variant considered a “substantial” may actually have more to do with a compositor’s attempts to justify a line.
6. Honestly, there were several. ST taught us, as he says, “a lot of nerdy little things,” but by the end of the week the little things reach a critical mass—I’m still reflecting on how much I’ve learned, which I feel is a lot.
7. Understanding printing by forme (and why it was done) was an “aha” moment for me.
8. {no response}
9. The type-setting/compositing exercise was incredibly useful as we try to understand the psychology of the compositors and pressmen.
10. In seeking to understand printing, you must be willing to try varied approaches to your subject.
11. The final wrap-up sticks out, as it brought the significance of analytical bibliography into view. I can see its need for helping to understand the historical process of book publishing.
12. Mistakes/irregularities you see in printed books are not always random mistakes.

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

1. Ideally, more hands-on work with collections materials, but the limitations in amassing multiple copies of the same texts are vast.
2. Hmm....more books? Tough to manage in a class like this, though. And a follow-up course! I feel like I’m just getting my feet wet.
3. Better organization, for one. Sometimes the instructor seemed confused about what he was teaching, as well. More practice teaching would also help—lots of allowing students to go off track and dominate conversation.
4. More overview, during the first period, of where the course would take us over the course of the week. Did feel, occasionally, as though the sequence of exercises and order of the different sections of the course were arbitrary.
5. Ring-binder for handouts. More time in the print room with discussion of our errors.
6. It’s not fair to say, but if RBS had more actual books for students to paw through....
7. More time looking at gatherings and actually printing a couple of quires by forme. (Although I understand time does not always allow for this.)
8. {no response}
9. The instructor could have told us what the aim was (such as which form came first, &c.) before we would start looking for the variants. Also, a short example of how to undertake the exercise before actually doing it on our own would have worked better.
10. {no response}
11. See question containing slide handouts.
12. {no response}

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

*others?*

1. Yes!
2. Absolutely. Highly recommended.
3. I would probably recommend “Desbib” over this class. I felt like a lot of what we learned I could have learned from texts, which is not the case with “Desbib.” However, the instructor’s personal experiences are valuable to know.
4. Yes, to both. Would recommend, enthusiastically.
5. Yes, and yes.
6. Yes, and absolutely.
7. Yes, and yes.
8. Yes, and yes.
9. Highly recommended.
10. Yes. I would recommend it to a person who will handle a variety of material, and who needs to make subtle distinctions in that material.
11. Yes!
12. Not sure. Yes.

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

1. Yes. I appreciated getting to see the Hinman collator up close.
2. The trip to the collating machines wasn’t terribly useful for me, but I’d seen and worked with them before.
3. We went to see the Hinman collator, which was all right. If it had already been set up, that would have been better. Using it (or a different collator) on a text we were looking at would have been interesting as a comparison of techniques.
4. Yes. Thanks to Josef Beery for help with printing and typesetting exercises. Thanks to AN for the same.
5. Yes.
6. The experience of compositing and printing will stay with me forever. Very fun, and educational, too.
7. The print lab/studio work was most worthwhile.
8. Yes.
9. Yes.
10. N/A
11. Yes. While having already seen the collator in action, it was only once. Always nice to have a refresher.
12. N/A

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 exhibit tour on Monday was late, and left little time for lunch. I enjoyed both lectures, and feel this is a critical part of RBS.
2. Lectures, as always, were great. I look forward to them as an important part of my week in Charlottesville.
3. Yes! It was nice this year to be able to attend. The lectures are superb, and

Booksellers' Night is fun and a chance to really interact with classmates. Movie Night is so-so.

4. {no response}
5. {no response}
6. {private response}
7. Yes, I enjoyed the Booksellers' Night quite a lot.
8. Yes, I particularly enjoyed Movie Night and the lecture on the Abbey Press collection.
9. They were excellent events. Very good programming.
10. I enjoyed both lectures and the Video Night.
11. Yes. I felt the knowledge was useful. It is too bad the Monday night speaker had not done much public speaking.
12. {no response}

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

1. This is *critical* course in understanding the basis for how we understand the printed culture of the early-modern period. Anyone interested in material-culture studies will find it useful!
2. Do the readings, try and explore other work in analytical bibliography. Enjoy your time here!
3. Don't stress too much about the readings. Maybe learn book/printing terms.
4. {no response}
5. If you've already attended "Desbib," then you should choose carefully between this course and "Scholarly Editing." It depends on what you want to do with it.
6. {no response}
7. Do the pre-course reading and make tiny paper models when reading the Gaskell. It helps!
8. Learn and understand imposition. It will help if you are very familiar.
9. {no response}
10. {no response}
11. {no response}
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. How noble it is/studying books in the wild/to tame our own souls.
2. Broken type and fonts/spacers, woodcuts, ornaments/Steven's playground rocks!
3. There once was a girl who loved books/Other people gave her strange looks/She went to RBS/and it is the best/place to meet other nerdy kooks.
4. Exacting, thorough; fineness of insight.
5. Bloody brilliant...now let me loose on more "books in the wild," as ST would say.
6. "A lot of nerdy little things" that will stay with me and be helpful in my career and instruction.
7. Great people, great minds, great work.
8. Enough challenge and encouragement to inspire me to work harder and be excited about starting a library-related career.

9. I can now confront books in the wild.
10. Intense, fun, congenial, rewarding.
11. {no response}
12. {no response}

## **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: 8 (66.67%)  
My institution/employer did not give me professional leave; I used paid or vacation days: 1 (8.33%)  
I am a student or non-year-round employee, with a more flexible summer schedule: 2 (16.67%)  
I am retired, and can arrange my own schedule: 1 (8.33%)

*Who paid your RBS tuition costs?*

- I paid 100% myself: 1 (8.33%)  
My institution/employer paid 100%: 5 (41.67%)  
My institution/employer paid part; I paid the rest: 1 (8.33%)  
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: 2 (16.67%)  
I used a scholarship/fellowship to pay/waive part; my institution/employer paid the rest: 1 (8.33%)

*Who paid your RBS housing expenses?*

- I paid 100% myself: 4 (33.33%)  
My institution/employer paid 100%: 3 (25%)  
I used a scholarship/fellowship to cover 100%: 3 (25%)  
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%: 3 (25%)  
I used a scholarship/fellowship to cover 100%: 2 (16.67%)  
I live locally, and had no travel expenses: 2 (16.67%)

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

### **Library disciplines:**

- Cataloger/metadata librarian: 3 (25%)
- Library administrator: 1 (8.33%)
- Special collections librarian: 3 (25%)

**Student working toward a/n:**

M.A./M.S.: 1 (8.33%)

Ph.D./D.Phil: 2 (16.67%)

**Professional educator:**

Lecturer/adjunct: 1 (8.33%)

**Other occupations/vocations:**

Book collector: 1 (8.33%)