

David Whitesell (et al.)  
G-10: Introduction to the Principles of Bibliographical Description  
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. The reading assignments were useful, but challenging...particularly Bowers. TB's short article rewarded repeated reading.
  2. Pre-course readings in Bowers and Gaskell were just what we needed to give us the background we needed.
  3. The pre-course readings were very helpful, and a familiarity with them is rather essential. I was only able to glance through Carter's ABC's, so I cannot speak to how useful that particular one would prove. Bowers was obviously integral to this course, and Gaskell provided some very good context to the materials in question.
  4. The readings were very useful, but also very hard to digest, especially beforehand without the context of the class.
  5. The pre-course reading assignments were incredibly useful, if difficult to work through without examples to make the abstractions clear (but that's what class is for!).
  6. Extremely useful.
  7. The pre-course reading assignments were imperative for the course. Though they—especially Bowers—seem impenetrable at times, actually doing descriptive bibliography opens them up completely. It also helped that, after reading the majority of the assigned reading, I tried my hand at collating a simple 1600s book. Knowing what to expect going into the course helped me to be less daunted by the homework.
  8. Gaskell and Bowers were essential texts in complementary ways—and must be read before the course begins if the work is to be comprehensible. Carter provides an entertaining introduction, even if we learn to disregard some of his information. The DVD and sample sheets would have been more helpful if I had started with them, but provide another kind of useful information.
  9. Gaskell was an enjoyable read, although not as directly applicable to the homework aside from some key parts. I practiced collation on the eighteenth-century books, as I had no previous experience with collation, and would recommend trying to put Bowers into action before coming, if possible.
  10. Yes, Gaskell and assigned articles were great for a general overview. Bowers was a slog, but even my half-hearted reading was sufficient to help me get familiar with the methods, which was crucial as we jumped into the class assignments.
  11. The pre-course reading was essential: take a few weeks to read through Bowers and Gaskell, especially if you're new to the hand-press period and/or book history. I had taught myself Gaskell years ago and had written a dissertation on early-modern book history, and still I found this course (and the reading) very challenging (but also very rewarding).
  12. I found the pre-course assignments helpful in general, and essential in particular,

- for getting a lot out of the course. I invested two very full days of reading before the start of the course, and found the time well spent.
13. The pre-course reading seems daunting initially, but you reap the rewards of having done it once you are in class. You will still get plenty of things wrong, of course, but you will quickly (or more quickly) understand why and where you went wrong, and that creates its own kind of satisfaction.
  14. Yes! Gaskell was great to read first. Bowers was difficult to understand, especially without books to practice on. The video was also helpful.
  15. Gaskell and Bowers were, of course, invaluable. The video and paper folding helped to solidify things, but were less essential. {private response}
  16. Jumping into Bowers without initial familiarity with some of the conventions was difficult at times. For instance, he would use a formula to illustrate a point, but the formula would have a sign in it he had not yet discussed (like the meaning of \$), A sort of basic intro sheet before Bowers might be helpful.
  17. The pre-course reading assignments were extremely helpful. I don't think I could have completed the course without reading them. They were very well chosen. None of them could have been eliminated, and I think they were sufficient.
  18. Yes, the readings were useful.
  19. The Belanger article and video were good introductions before taking on Bowers. As others have said in the past, reading Bowers and Gaskell beforehand is essential—if you don't prepare, you affect the quality of education for everyone around you. In addition, I did a few sample collations at my home institution to test out my knowledge while navigating Bowers.
  20. The pre-course reading assignments were crucial. It would have been impossible, otherwise, to do the collations during homework sessions.
  21. While tedious, the pre-course readings were indispensable. If possible, students should try to handle early books while reading Bowers to gain an understanding before class.
  22. Yes—couldn't have done the course without them.
  23. The readings were useful, but we could be told to mostly skim/ignore all the "notes" in Bowers.
  24. The pre-course readings were necessary to fully understand what was being discussed and completing the assignments. Especially Bowers and Gaskell, which were referred to continuously.
  25. The pre-course reading was essential!
  26. The pre-course readings were good. I did not buy the DVD, and since I did not hear anyone talking about it, it may not be useful.
  27. Very helpful!
  28. The pre-course readings, all of them, are vital.
- 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 and museum catalog are tremendously impressive, and will continue to serve as resources for me as I flex my scrawny, but growing "Desbib" muscles.
  2. All the materials were well chosen and very helpful.
  3. The workbook and materials were very helpful, and have quite a bit of material I

- look forward to going through in more detail.
4. The course workbook and museum handbook were both very helpful. I will keep them both at my desk, and I'm sure I'll use them often.
  5. The course workbook and museum catalog clearly represent years of careful research and examination of materials from RBS collections, and will be useful for years to come—especially if and when I tackle the structured reading list.
  6. Content was very useful, fun, and extremely well organized. I am certain I will use it as a reference for years to come.
  7. All of the course materials were useful, and I am saving most of them. They offer excellent explanations of the concepts of descriptive bibliography, and, especially the museum book and workbook, are worth keeping as reference books alone.
  8. Excellent workbook. Since this is an introductory course, the extensive bibliography for further reading is particularly important, and its variety and comprehensiveness address the varied interests of the course participants. During the week, I referred to the guidebook's précis of Bowers multiple times while doing homework, and the visual exhibit in the guidebook helped illustrate the lectures.
  9. I wish the workbook had many more examples of the sorts of descriptions we were supposed to write, but I love examples. The content was very useful, and I will definitely keep the materials for reference.
  10. Very helpful—key ideas were illustrated, and the basics presented in a way that will be a handy reference/refresher going forward. Bibliography provided is great! I would like to see the geographic scope of bibliography expanded in the future.
  11. I am awed by the hundreds and hundreds of hours that clearly went into curating the workbook and museum-guide contents, and I plan to have both on my desk as essential references in the future. The exit reading list alone will be vital for my continuing education in bibliography.
  12. All excellent. The summaries to supplement Bowers were very helpful. The museum workbook and exit list, too, will be useful after the course is over.
  13. The workbook was very useful as a regular reference point, both during homework and afterwards. Please laminate the index to Bowers, or send it to Oak Knoll for binding into their stock of Bowers.
  14. So much good stuff! I will definitely continue to refer to the workbook. I am also grateful for the exit bibliography.
  15. Most excellent! I'll definitely keep both, and I envision consulting them in the future.
  16. The workbook is amazing and I know it will be valuable moving forward as well.
  17. The workbook, the museum book, and all the additional handouts were wonderful. They summarize all the most relevant information, give additional information. I am certainly going to refer to them often in the future.
  18. Yes, I liked the breakdown of the material and additional useful information that was included in the binder that I was using for quick reference.
  19. All great, all useful. The quality of reproductions could be improved, but that is minor—they are currently adequate.
  20. The material was very useful, and will be an invaluable future reference source.
  21. I am in awe of the level of thought that went into the course materials. I intend to keep them at my desk as reference works. The reading list will keep me busy for a while.
  22. I will definitely consult the workbook and museum guide in my work in the future.
  23. Well structured, and I will continue to refer to it when I'm back at my home

- institution.
24. The workbook was extremely helpful, as were the other teaching materials. As with Gaskell and Bowers, I referred to it many times while working through assignments. It'll serve as a good resource to have on hand.
  25. I know I have lots more to look at and use when I get home.
  26. Very good. I'll keep using them.
  27. Content was appropriate/helpful. A little advice on the post-class reading list might have been nice, as it is extensive.
  28. {private response}

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

1. N/A
2. Both courses I've taken so far—"Rare Book Cataloging" and "Desbib"—emphasized skills. Both imparted those skills effectively and compellingly. As I did last year, I look forward to applying the skills I learned this year in my work.
3. N/A
4. N/A
5. This course was far, far more rigorous and demanding. We had no time for activities besides homework, Monday through Wednesday. I'm not complaining, though! We worked next to/with our cohort and instructors, which was wonderful.
6. This was my first.
7. N/A
8. {no response}
9. It was less immediately useful for me professionally, but still offered many insights into book production and description that I think will serve me well throughout my career.
10. N/A
11. Not applicable (first time).
12. I found the comparatively large amount of time spent in the museums and in practical exercises particularly helpful. I feel particularly strong after this course, having developed new skills.
13. This was quite different from the technical work I did in David Seaman's TEI course, but just as rewarding. And the level of instruction in both was consistently high.
14. N/A
15. N/A
16. While the two were very different in terms of content and structure, they both seemed more focused on training you to develop the tools to apply moving forward, rather than simply teaching answers ("teach a man to fish..."). This is, incidentally, why I love RBS courses.
17. They were both excellent, extremely interesting, and well organized. My previous course was "The Identification of Nineteenth-Century Photographic Prints."
18. This is my first course.
19. "Desbib" is a different animal—I missed the interaction with colleagues in the evenings, &c., but the challenges and rewards of homework—or as DW put it, "boot camp"—were overall very positive. This has been a very valuable experience, and I am confident these skills will be readily implemented.

20. Exhausting and phenomenal!
21. My previous course was also taught by DW, so they were on par with one another. This was far more rigorous, though, and built a stronger sense of community.
22. I really enjoyed this one. It was a ton of work, but I learned a lot that builds on the previous course.
23. N/A
24. While one of the more intense courses, I definitely feel like I've walked away with something concrete that I will be able to use on a daily basis.
25. This is the most intense class I've ever taken in my career.
26. N/A
27. This one was much more hands on and rigorous, which I was expecting, and enjoyed.
28. This course was more intense, but valuable and a core element of my work.

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 have a much better understanding of and appreciation for bibliography and bibliographers. I feel much better equipped to work with and speak about post-sixteenth-century books.
2. The practical labs and homework sessions were the most immediately relevant. The lectures and museums offered larger theoretical and historical issues that I hope to pursue later—particularly in the area of typography.
3. I have done some collating previously, but this course really gave me a strong foundation and an excellent opportunity to explore some more complex examples. I now have a much stronger grasp of many areas of bibliographical production that were previously a bit fuzzy.
4. The lab sessions were the most useful for me, because they allowed for great discussion of the process, as well as room to ask questions and get clarifications. I also really loved the printing demo.
5. The sessions on paper (museums and lectures) may have been the most interesting, merely because I haven't done any real research in the area before taking this class. I have at least four new project plans because of this class.
6. My background and my career trajectory are in book conservation. This course armed me with new tools for understanding book structure and recognizing evidence of production, which should be preserved during the conservation treatment of a book. The course was engaging and fun, and I'm truly impressed by how much I learned in only one week.
7. The experience of working with rare books was amazing. There is nothing quite like holding a five-hundred-year-old printed page in your hand. Because of this sort of experience, I can think about my field differently, and approach problems of theory, criticism, and history through a different and more responsibly researched lens.
8. This course provided a different way to look at books in presenting them in the context of the printer's universe (with the ideal of standard copy as the product of the printer's intention, for example). I'm not sure how I will incorporate this knowledge yet. The course raised questions that I will have to answer.
9. Book format—very useful as a conservator when rebinding volumes with pages out of order or missing.

10. Learning to look at books in a new way. Even if I don't make collational formulae of my own, I have a much firmer grasp on how books are made and how I can work with books as material evidence in my own scholarship.
11. Learning the nuts and bolts of collational formulae, but also hearing about debates over the course of bibliographical history. I wouldn't say I have new project plans, but a huge gap in my skillset has been filled.
12. I leave with a new sensitivity to the physical structures of books and to the meanings of those structures. I leave with a new enthusiasm for building bibliography into my study of the history of philosophy. One of the insights with which I leave, though, is that I will need more study and practice to do the kind of ambitious project (a publishing history of a particular text) that I am now, as a result of this class, considering undertaking.
13. I found the museums on paper and typeface/printing very relevant to my scholarly interests, and have already begun thinking about new projects that will emerge from this course.
14. The museums were great, and covered so much in such a short time. Although labs and homework were intense, I will never look at a book in the same way.
15. As an academic, I gained skills that will enable me to ground my research in concrete observations, which I appreciate. No new plans were generated, but my existing plan is better supported now.
16. This course has many practical applications for my job, so being put through the paces by the gold standard is just what I needed. New ideas for projects—yes! Much to think about where there are gaps—illustrated works, nineteenth through twenty-first century books....
17. I walked away with an incredible amount of knowledge; things that were completely confusing and scary became transparent and exciting. The most useful for me were probably the labs and homework, but I would not have missed museums or lectures for anything!
18. As a conservation student, this course provided me a whole way of looking at a book to identify its composition. I will definitely use this in my studies.
19. Learning to collate, learning the history of the discipline and what we can learn through the bibliographical enterprise. I look forward to testing these new skills on the volumes we hold, and employing them in my teaching.
20. Collation exercises and lab sessions were most relevant. I'm looking forward to applying my new knowledge in my daily work as a rare book cataloger.
21. I had never collated nineteenth-century materials before, so that was an eye-opening experience. I leave with a better sense of the methodology I should apply when examining a book.
22. I learned that I still have so much more to learn. I think the course has given me renewed insight/motivation for my work.
23. I feel like I have a firm grip on formats and collation formulae!
24. The labs to me were extremely interesting, because we were able to walk through everything step by step. Homework also helped to cement ideas and apply what we learned.
25. I'm ready to go to the library! Conversations with classmates and other RBS students/faculty/staff inspired me.
26. My hope is that this will be immediately useful for my research. All sections were marvelous and relevant.
27. So many new insights! This class (and my classmates) inspired me, and I look

forward to contributing to my institution in new ways with my new knowledge.  
28. I learned that I need to keep review copies of new material I get as well as versions of digital content.

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. The instructors were unfailingly generous with their knowledge, enthusiasm, and time. A good boot camp requires the instructors to work just as hard—if not harder—than the students. This was a good boot camp.
2. Nothing left under developed. Under the instructors' guidance, I learned what I had hoped to learn and more.
3. I am very satisfied with what I've learned in this course, and it will benefit me significantly in my position. For a week-long course, I learned quite a bit.
4. Yes. My lab instructor was very enthusiastic, and helped remind me how cool this work is, even when it's tedious. He also really boosted our morale by genuinely considering our answers and processes, rather than giving a flat right-or-wrong answer. I think this helped me build both confidence and problem-solving skills.
5. The instructors absolutely helped me to acquire all the skills promised in the course description. I so value the opportunity to contact the instructors with questions as I encounter various bibliographical puzzles.
6. I learned even more than I had hoped. The instructors were attentive, patient, and worked hard to customize activities and materials to cater to our individual needs and interests.
7. The benefits of this course exceeded my expectations. It may, however, be valuable to touch more on the parts of the descriptive bibliography not covered extensively in class (catchwords, title page facsimiles, &c.). I don't mean to suggest that they be covered, just mentioned.
8. No, I learned more than I expected.
9. Lab assignments were very useful, and I learned all I had hoped to learn and so much more. As always, an RBS course is a total information dump (in a good way).
10. Yes. The format really works: in-class lectures offer basics, then we're thrown into hands-on work, and finally debrief in small groups where we go over our work and cement the ideas through discussion. There was a good balance of styles to ensure you could figure things out, and no hand-holding, which forced you to solve problems.
11. I learned everything I hoped to learn and more. I was not expecting the lecture/museum/lab/homework structure, which was a dynamic way to learn a difficult skill. Loved the lab sessions and the chance to work on those detailed pieces of evidence in such a focused way.
12. Yes. I believe the time was used efficiently, and anything left out was done so appropriately, given our time constraints.
13. Absolutely, and with great patience and good humor! Bravo to DW and Chris Adams—please do not let them leave!
14. Yes! I learned all I thought I would, and then some.
15. No complaints!
16. The instructors were very skilled at adapting to our individual needs.

17. I certainly did, and more. The instructors were incredible: lucid, patient, wonderful teachers—they were kind, and shared their knowledge with great generosity.
18. Yes, the instructor was very helpful.
19. I am shocked by the progress my colleagues and I made this week—we've come a long way. I think this was a rigorous, but well-paced and thorough introduction.
20. Yes, yes, no, and yes.
21. I learned all I hoped, and more.
22. Yes—I have a far more solid understanding of collation and relationship to format, which is what I had hoped to gain.
23. The instructors were very thorough and accommodating to special requests. I've learned exactly what was promised, and more.
24. Yes, they did. I learned more than I had hoped to learn. I'm able to see overall how everything fits together, thanks to how the class was structured and the knowledge of the instructors.
25. Yes! This is an amazing team.
26. I am leaving with exactly what I had hoped to learn.
27. Definitely learned what I hoped to learn, and more.
28. Our instructors were proactive in their teaching, going above and beyond the basics. I learned much more than I planned to.

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

1. I will be able to make better use of the special collections at my home institution.
2. Most immediately, I plan to use my new "Desbib" skills to produce more bibliographically nuanced catalog records.
3. Aforementioned, what I learned here will certainly help me in my professional capacity, and has in general added to my understanding of the history of bookmaking.
4. Every day in my job, as I am writing book descriptions. While we do some things slightly differently in the trade, and I may not always use such in-depth things like the statement of signing, this course drastically improved my understanding of how books are made and will without a doubt inform all my work to come.
5. I plan to use these skills to help the researchers in my library understand the physical formats of books in the collections. In the past, I sometimes felt as though I was treading on thin ice at times, yet I now feel fully confident. Fully confident. Thank you!
6. I will give a small presentation to the art conservation graduate department at my university about what I have learned. I will also share relevant information from this course with colleagues. Insights I have had here will influence how I approach and treat books in the future.
7. Skills in knowledge will be applied in coursework (finding and comparing books of particular interest to me), and in work cataloging my university's early-modern book collection.
8. I plan to use the skills and knowledge I learned here to further my research and, ultimately, my practice.
9. I think it will be a useful tool to be able to draw upon as a book conservator, and it's a body of knowledge that I'm glad I acquired.
10. In my historical scholarship, and hopefully in the college classroom in the future. I



- will probably never collate, but I have a much deeper understanding of book production to work with.
11. I'm an English Ph.D. transitioning into special-collections work, so I will use these skills to research collations, (maybe) catalog rare books, and interpret printed artifacts for scholars and patrons.
  12. See Q4, above.
  13. Initially, I will use these skills to create descriptions of hand-press books in my library, but I will also incorporate them into my ongoing research into the print history and reception of More's Utopia.
  14. I hope to collate books at my own institution.
  15. I plan to construct my own analytical bibliography as part of a larger book project.
  16. This will greatly enhance the quality of the work I produce in my profession.
  17. I am planning to catalog rare books.
  18. I hope to be able to write better condition reports with my new understanding of the bibliographical descriptions. It showed me how to apply my knowledge of paper to figuring out the structure when the binding is not accessible.
  19. It will inform my institutional collecting, and I plan to incorporate it into my teaching of book history.
  20. Collation formulae will become a part of my rare-book cataloging routine.
  21. I will be collating books on my first day back at work, with more confidence.
  22. Will use it in cataloging work.
  23. Hopefully to get to catalog some early books at my library!
  24. Hopefully I'll be able to better understand and use our bibliographies, as well as to describe more accurately the items in our catalog.
  25. To analyze playbooks in greater detail, as I research and write my monograph.
  26. For my research.
  27. 1) To help my institution to create fuller bibliographical records; 2) for personal research.
  28. I hope to go home and enhance the research value of my collection and highlight unique material.
- 7) *Please briefly describe the intellectual level of the course. What sort of person might benefit the most from taking it?*
1. To make use of Bower's formulary requires patience more than intellectual rigor, but the instructors were thankfully willing to explore hypotheticals and acknowledge ways in which any one set of principles may be viewed as deficient.
  2. The course is intellectually rigorous. Anyone interested in book history and the description of books would benefit from this course.
  3. The course was challenging, but not impossible. While it required a good deal of effort, the payoff is substantial. A prospective student should complete the pre-class readings and expect to be challenged (but also rewarded!).
  4. I found the course to be very intellectually challenging. Early on, I hit a low point of being overwhelmed by the amount of information and the pressure (mostly internal) to complete the books. Once I pushed through that, and came out on the other side, everything felt clearer and more positive. I would not change the level, because looking back it feels necessary to have struggled.
  5. Catalogers, and those interested in including bibliographical analysis in their research, should take this class. It's incredibly intensive, so someone with a casual

- interest might not have the necessary diligence and dedication.
6. Visual thinkers and individuals who love to find patterns will love this course. People who like solving mysteries and puzzles, and are tolerant of repetitive tasks....
  7. I think that the most important thing is that the student must want to learn this process purely for no reason beyond pure scholarship. Of course, the application of descriptive bibliography in critical/technical ways is excellent, but to really learn it, the raw curiosity must be present.
  8. A variety of people would benefit. One important aspect was the variety of points of view among the participants. Anyone who is intellectually curious about the subject and willing to do the work would benefit.
  9. The intellectual level of the course felt introductory, though I'd previously taken the "History of Papermaking" course, and I have a background in bookbinding history, so much of that was revisiting old ground. The "Desbib"-specific parts of the course were helped by how our cohorts were divided up, so we were able to approach the material with similar backgrounds, which helped a lot. I think people doing cataloging work will benefit the most, or academics researching this sort of thing.
  10. The course was rigorous, although mostly focused on analysis of materiality and developing observation/description skills. Good for those who want to learn how to scrutinize book production through observation/historicization, not for philosophical rumination.
  11. Highly educated people who love books and culture (and who aren't afraid of math). Librarians, scholars, collectors, dealers, enthusiasts who "geek out" over books, print, and manuscripts.
  12. The variety of careers and interests among the participants suggests the many different uses of bibliography. I found the intellectual level appropriately high.
  13. This course is challenging, but does not require any particular background. Rare book librarians, dealers, and book historians would benefit most.
  14. The intellectual level was very high. Our course had all sorts of people in it—librarians, academics, booksellers—and we all benefited from that diversity.
  15. It requires care more than genius. Anyone willing to work hard in order to learn how books were made would benefit.
  16. I would only recommend it to someone who likes intellectual challenges. Otherwise it might be prohibitively difficult as it requires a sort of intellectual stamina by nature of the intense format.
  17. Anyone interested in bibliography and books would benefit. The intellectual level was high.
  18. Professionals/students interested in understanding collation, as well as scholars interested in bibliographical materials.
  19. This can be esoteric knowledge, in a way, but the lab instructors and DW made it very approachable. I expect people who already have a background in the history of the book would be most attracted to it.
  20. Appropriate. Any person interested in book history, cataloging.
  21. This course is great for anyone who wants to understand the structure of a book and the meaning(s) behind it. It's a course best suited for the self-motivated, the curious, the humble.
  22. It would be useful to anyone cataloging rare/special materials, or anyone acquiring rare/special materials collections.

23. I think the intellectual level is quite high, but not out of reach if you're prepared for class and willing to put the time in to learn.
24. Someone who already has experience working in depth with books, and who needs to be able either to understand or to make accurate descriptions.
25. High. Humanities researchers and librarians.
26. I think that anyone working with pre-modern books must take this course. Although I understand and use texts on a daily basis, the skills I learned this week were paradigm shifting.
27. Perfect class for people who have some knowledge of handpress period, and are ready to go deeper.
28. I believe most who want to could do this skill/class, but the desire has to be there. No advanced degree required due to the skill of the instructors.

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. The museums! What a way to make books and the book-creation process come to life.
2. All of the lab sessions were noteworthy. In each, some bibliographical problem became clear, demonstrating yet again the value of the craft of descriptive bibliography, for library catalogers in particular.
3. I walk away from this course with a much firmer grasp of many concepts that, though understood previously, now make much more sense. I appreciate the broader understanding I've acquired and the new connections I now see.
4. Not a specific moment, but I appreciated the thoughtfulness put into assigning the lab groups. It allowed for very interesting and relevant discussions.
5. So many. DW's lecture on patterns in books based on geographic locations of print shops was definitely one of those moments for me. Who knew so many required variations exist?
6. I think I may have contributed to the revision of a descriptive bibliography record sheet! I used paper evidence (watermarks) to determine that a formula should probably be changed from  $\text{A}^2 \text{A}^4(-\text{A}1)\dots$  to " $\text{A}^2 \text{A}^4\dots$ "
7. Realizing that I was looking not necessarily to describe the copy of a book in front of me, but how the copy would have looked sitting on the press (the "ideal copy" "aha" moment).
8. Lab work provided many such moments, as we discovered our mistakes and rationales behind them and behind the correct formulations. The homework practice was essential.
9. The first time I did anything—figured out format, collation, signing, pagination—on a book. Very exciting.
10. {no response}
11. One of our books in lab had four cancelled leaves, and the shibs{?} had been flipped around to face the opposite direction. In the expert hands of our lab instructor, we learned how and why this happened. It was crazy!—but helpful in recognizing how bizarre these books can be.
12. Yes—looking at a book that was important to my research in SC on the day after the course ended, and realizing: 1) that the title page's indication of "sixth edition" may be false, and 2) that I can now see how I might go about investigating that

- further.
13. Today's concluding lecture on 10° in fives was one such moment, but another was when I discovered that a book that looked like it had two two-leaf gatherings was actually a four-leaf gathering with leaf four wrapped around to appear as leaf one.
  14. The first day, DW said "look for the patterns." It's all about the patterns!
  15. I found the feedback from my lab leader on my homework to be most valuable. The museums were fantastic, too.
  16. {no response}
  17. Many every day!
  18. Yes, every time I did not understand how to write the collation formula of a book and the lab instructor would explain it in a way that would make perfect sense.
  19. Several—in fact, I had one or two each homework session. I am extremely impressed by the clear level of thought and care that went into selecting the books for homework each night vis-à-vis what learned in lab and lecture earlier in the day.
  20. I enjoyed most discussions with our lab instructor, Eileen Smith. I appreciated her patience and lucid explanations.
  21. "Look to the gutter!" Sewing doesn't lie.
  22. I really appreciated how well designed the format of this course was, with lectures, museums, labs, and homework. It provided a lot of variation in order to understand different concepts presented. Overall, I feel like I have a renewed appreciation for the types of materials that I work with.
  23. I did enjoy when I started to figure out the "trick books."
  24. {no response}
  25. This is not especially vivid, but I have a new strategy in mind for dealing with a tricky book. I'm excited to go look at it again.
  26. Seeing DG's note sheet from collation and reading Greg's bibliography at the Thursday museum. Both powerful.
  27. The labs provided many "aha" moments.
  28. When DW said that it would start to click on Wednesday.

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

1. The first homework assignment seemed particularly tough. Perhaps a small group walk-through of one book before we plunge into the deep end?
2. Though fascinating, the museums were, for me, a bit over stuffed. I never felt that I did them justice, and always left feeling glutted with information. Perhaps they could be streamlined, offering fewer, but especially illuminating, examples of particular issues. For example, the paper stations seemed a bit repetitive.
3. I honestly wouldn't have minded if it was a two-week course, though the logistics of that might prove tricky.
4. I would have liked to have had a little more lecture on collation, before diving into the first homework session. I think that would have helped me process the readings, and would have made them more tangible and less abstract.
5. No suggestions for improvement, except that we might have more one-on-one time with DW.
6. {no response}
7. It was excellent.
8. No immediate suggestions.

9. I think having books with complete descriptive bibliography records available to look at during the homework sessions would have helped me answer some of my questions about putting Bowers into action.
  10. Expanding examples beyond the Anglo-American context. This is where instructors' expertise lies, but it would be great to push the disciplinary boundaries.
  11. Maybe fewer events cutting into homework time, though both lectures were great and I understand it was just a matter of bad timing.
  12. I found it excellent, as is.
  13. Longer hours at Clemons Library? (I'm kidding).
  14. Less homework? I knew the course would be intense, but I didn't think I'd have to skip dinner to get my work done.
  15. Less time spent on pagination (maybe one or two books), replacing that time with more tricky collations.
  16. I don't know how productive it is to ask students to read that much of Bowers without first giving them a bit more straightforward lay of the land (more than Gaskell in terms of collational grammar, for instance).
  17. Cannot think of anything except coming back soon.
  18. Adding examples of collation formulae that can be broken down to what kind of book they belong to.
  19. It seems to me like a well-oiled machine.
  20. N/A
  21. More days in the week. I also feel slightly sad that the amount of homework meant I couldn't go to the lectures or Movie Night.
  22. {no response}
  23. I can't think of anything that needed improvement aside from maybe giving people the option to leave "museum" early if they had looked at everything already—there were a couple of times I had finished ten or so minutes early, and could have used the time for homework, but didn't feel comfortable leaving.
  24. {no response}
  25. More coffee?
  26. Museums could be a bit long. I'd rather replace them with focused labs on basics for identifying papers, bindings, &c.
  27. Allowing us to enter the library up to 8:30 instead of 8:00. Having time to attend the lectures on Monday and Wednesday and grabbing a bite to eat made it tough to get back by 8:00.
  28. Perhaps more time in museums—a little rushed every day.
- 10) *Do you feel that you got your money's worth? Would you recommend the course to others?*
1. Absolutely, though I might suggest that they have a better idea of how they will apply their newly acquired ideas.
  2. Yes, and yes!
  3. Yes, and yes.
  4. Yes, and yes.
  5. Yes, on both counts.
  6. I would enthusiastically recommend this course to others, and cannot wait to return to RBS for additional courses.

7. Absolutely, and absolutely.
8. Yes, I would recommend.
9. I definitely feel like I got my money's worth.
10. Yes, if they have a serious interest/practical need.
11. Yes, yes!
12. Yes, though I did not in fact need to spend the money. It is quite evident that the unusually high price is commensurate with the extra labor that goes into this course year round.
13. Certainly—the instructors were exceptional, and the experience transformative. Highly recommended!
14. Yes, and yes!
15. Yes, to both!
16. Yes, and yes!
17. Yes, to both!
18. Yes, and yes!
19. Absolutely.
20. Absolutely!
21. I (my employer) got my money's worth. There's really no substitution for this level of guided, hands-on instruction.
22. Yes!
23. Absolutely, and absolutely.
24. I definitely got my money's worth, and will be recommending this class to others.
25. Enthusiastically!
26. Of course!
27. Yes, and yes!
28. Yes, and yes. In all ways, a good use of time and money.

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

1. Yes...if "trips" include the museums and the printing demonstration. These were highlights, for sure.
2. N/A
3. Yes. I enjoyed the printer's demo.
4. N/A
5. The printing demonstration would have been very helpful for understanding the process of imposing and printing, but I had attended during another past RBS course and so found it less useful a second time.
6. I loved the common-press printing demo. Josef Beery is a gem.
7. Yes. The museums, lectures, homework, and lab were all extremely valuable, as was the printing demo.
8. N/A
9. N/A
10. Visits to the various "museum" sessions where we observed different examples were really helpful, and fun, too.
11. Yes, though the printing demo was maybe too long (cutting into homework time). That said, I loved the prints and the chance to print a sheet.
12. Yes.
13. {no response}

14. The printing demonstration was great, but dragged on too long.
15. The printing-press demo repeated much in our readings, but was valuable for the tactile experience.
16. The museums were a crucial part of the learning experience and so was the printing demo.
17. {no response}
18. Yes!
19. The museums were all excellent. Having the open time to see examples and handle them was a really valuable addition to the rest of the coursework.
20. N/A
21. N/A
22. {no response}
23. N/A
24. {no response}
25. The museums were wonderful! I learned a lot from seeing the examples, and it was a welcome change of pace.
26. N/A
27. Very much so. The museums were super helpful.
28. 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 lectures were both interesting, and the receptions were a nice way to meet fellow students.
2. Not applicable—not time for these in “Desbib.”
3. I was too busy with homework for the course to attend many of the evening events. They sounded great, though.
4. I did not feel it was possible to attend most because of the amount of homework, which was disappointing. I did really enjoy Booksellers’ Night, though.
5. Because of homework, I was unable to attend Movie Night (which would have been fun, but not necessary). I did attend both evening lectures. I found the lecture on signed manuscripts to be less illuminating, but Sarah Werner’s lecture provided an entertaining break from homework.
6. {no response}
7. I felt they were important for getting to know my classmates and other students better. I met a lot of people who will be helpful to me professionally.
8. Because of homework, I missed a couple of events, but the lecture I attended was both entertaining and pointed. I missed the booksellers’ evening because the printing demo cut into the evening hours, but I wouldn’t have missed the demo.
9. I only had time to attend Sarah Werner’s Wednesday talk, but really appreciated it as an introduction to what not to do on social media. A lot to keep in mind.
10. Booksellers’ Night was very fun, and well deserved after a week of homework nights. I also enjoyed the lectures on wider ranging topics.
11. I enjoyed both lectures, and it was a good use of my time.
12. {private response}
13. {no response}
14. The Booksellers’ Night was wonderful.

15. The evening events I attended had little relevance to my interests, and seemed to be aimed at particular segments of the student body. I could have skipped them both.
16. I think the optional events are a key aspect of a wider RBS goal—building a community—and are therefore important in themselves.
17. {no response}
18. Yes.
19. Alas, I mostly did homework!
20. N/A
21. The only one I was able to attend was Booksellers' Night, which was worthwhile. However, most closed rather early.
22. Not applicable—we had homework/labs.
23. Unfortunately, the course doesn't leave much room to attend the evening events, but I did enjoy the print demonstration!
24. {no response}
25. The Monday and Wednesday lectures.
26. Good to have the talks. But those of us in G-10 don't get out much.
27. All were great.
28. I have found value in all evening programs, regardless of topic. To discover a topic to be of interest is a great thing.

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

1. Do not get bogged down in Bowers, but do make a good-faith effort to read the assigned passages. And arrive well rested!
2. Go and enjoy!
3. The course requires effort and work, but is well worth it. Both stimulating and fun!
4. Leave plenty of time to do the readings. No joke.
5. You have to be serious about books! If you're not, do not apply.
6. Do the reading in advance, and don't be intimidated.
7. It is challenging and slow going, but not necessarily tedious. "Introduction" may be a misnomer, as this class gives an astounding breadth of experience.
8. Do the advance reading and be prepared for a long day's work. Things will become clearer.
9. It is a lot of useful odds and ends to know, even if you won't spend your career writing pagination. You will dream about turning pages and counting leaves. Not joking.
10. It's a pretty intense commitment, so be sure it's a skill you really think you can use.
11. DW is a wonderful teacher, with a kind, patient demeanor and a great (and understated) sense of humor. And Chris Adams (my lab instructor) was simply fantastic—smart, patient, witty, and engaging. But if you're not up for twelve-plus hours of bibliography for the first three days, then this class isn't for you.
12. To make the most out of the time in discussion with faculty and students, I recommend reading as carefully as possible beforehand.
13. Do the reading before you arrive, but don't assume that this will spare you the experience of getting things wrong. In fact, throw out your need to succeed entirely, and the accompanying delusion that being a successful bibliographer



- involves getting things right! It really involves being comfortable with getting things wrong, learning from your mistakes, and listening to others.
14. Be prepared to work very hard! But by the end of the week, you will think it was all worth it.
  15. It's a great way to acquire skills and knowledge in a hurry.
  16. Take your preparatory reading seriously—you will be thrown in the deep end on your first day!
  17. Please do the preparatory reading; you have to come to this course with knowledge of concepts and some basic skills.
  18. Completing the readings will prepare you for the course.
  19. Do the readings! But don't worry too much if Bowers doesn't make total sense. Also, if you can, try collating before you arrive.
  20. Do not attend class without completing the pre-course readings.
  21. Be prepared to work! Embrace mistakes as teachable moments. Talk to your fellow students because you'll rarely meet so many intelligent, talented, and lively people in one spot.
  22. I really appreciated being put into labs with other catalogers—I learned a lot from my fellow group members, as well as from our lab instructor.
  23. Seriously bring a blanket if you are staying in Brown. They aren't kidding when they say it's cold.
  24. {no response}
  25. Bring granola bars and sweaters! Don't worry if you don't understand Bowers right away; you will by the time you leave RBS.
  26. {no response}
  27. Be sure to do the reading. Be prepared to invest time doing homework. Trust that things will start clicking and making sense.
  28. Read all material twice, and practice folding paper.

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

1. One of the smoothest-running educational experiences I've had. I learned a new skill in one week, and I don't often get to say that. Thanks!
2. Bibliography rocks!
3. Thanks!
4. I made it!
5. Okay, I'll try a haiku: Okay, David Whitesell/high priest of Bowers, I mean:/Assign me more books!
6. Summer camp for brilliant book lovers.
7. The metaphor is often used at RBS, but I was willing and glad to study in the Bowersian Seminar School with the most knowledgeable clergy and fellow laymen around. Sublime.
8. Valuable.
9. "If you faint from hunger, it requires a lot of paperwork, so please eat. Thank you, and you may return to your collation." —our rapsallion at 9 p.m. on Wednesday.
10. Bibliography boot camp!
11. 1) WWBD (unless there are plates or ads), or 2) the most generous cultural/academic community I've ever had the honor to be a part of!
12. The three qualities of RBS that stand out most for me are the honesty, pure

- motives, and competence of its staff, and of its “persona” (embodied, quite evidently, in our instructor, DW). These qualities seem to be in increasingly short institutional supply these days, and I cannot praise RBS enough for them.
13. {no response}
  14. Inspiring!
  15. Bagels, gatherings/collating, counting, then sleep/Suarez: “Wash your hands!”
  16. Keep doing what you’re doing. We love you for it. Don’t forget to wash your hands.
  17. I thank everyone at RBS for making this one of the best learning and studying experiences.
  18. I can’t wait to come back next summer.
  19. A feathery edge/deckled, hence, imposition/a small victory. Great, as always—RBS provides a real service to our field. Keep it up! And see you next year!
  20. Huzzah!
  21. It hurts so good.
  22. Fabulous.
  23. I came, I saw, I learned collation formulae.
  24. It was worth it.
  25. I learned a lot from/puzzling through books with the/help of my cohort.
  26. The week: 5<sup>o</sup>: © | A-B<sup>4</sup>(f1A2,f1B1)C<sup>4</sup>D<sup>3</sup>
  27. Can’t wait for next year! I hope Johanna Drucker teaches “Modern Art of the Book” again, so I can take that!
  28. Best use of post-graduate education funds possible.

## Student Data

*Number of respondents: 28 (of 30)*

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

My institution/employer gave me professional leave time: 14 (50%)

My institution/employer did not give me professional leave; I used paid or vacation days: 4 (14.29%)

I am a student or non-year-round employee, with a more flexible summer schedule: 10 (35.71%)

*Who paid your RBS tuition costs?*

I paid 100% myself: 3 (10.71%)

My institution/employer paid 100%: 11 (39.29%)

I used a scholarship/fellowship to pay/waive 100%: 13 (46.43%)

I used a scholarship/fellowship to pay/waive part; my institution/employer paid the rest: 1 (3.57%)

*Who paid your RBS housing expenses?*

I paid 100% myself: 10 (35.71%)

My institution/employer paid 100%: 10 (35.71%)

I used a scholarship/fellowship to cover 100%: 5 (17.86%)

I stayed with friends/family, or stayed in my own home and commuted: 3 (10.71%)

*Who paid your RBS travel expenses?*

I paid 100% myself: 10 (35.71%)

My institution/employer paid 100%: 8 (28.57%)

My institution/employer paid part; I paid the rest: 3 (10.71%)

I used a scholarship/fellowship to cover 100%: 6 (21.43%)

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

Library disciplines:

Cataloger/metadata librarian: 7 (25%)

Conservator/binder/preservation librarian: 1 (3.57%)

Curator: 2 (7.14%)

Library administrator: 1 (3.57%)

Library assistant/clerk: 1 (3.57%)

Special collections librarian: 1 (3.57%)

Other: 1 (3.57%)

Student working toward a/n:

M.A./M.S.: 3 (10.71%)

Ph.D./D.Phil.: 2 (7.14%)

Professional educator:

Lecturer/adjunct: 2 (7.14%)

Assistant professor: 2 (7.14%)

Associate professor: 1 (3.57%)

Book trades:

Antiquarian bookseller: 2 (7.14%)

Other occupations/vocations:

Post-doctoral fellow/researcher/scholar: 2 (7.14%)