

Ellis Tinios  
I-90: The Art of the Book in Edo and Meiji Japan, 1615–1912  
6-11 December 2015

**Narrative Course Evaluations**

- 1) *Were the pre-course reading assignments useful? Did you do any additional preparation for your course? Are there any books or articles that you would like to see included in future years? Any that you might suggest removing?*
1. Yes. Yes. No.
  2. Yes, they were helpful.
  3. I thought the pre-course readings were useful because I was slightly new to the subject. I enjoyed reading them and they gave good background knowledge.
  4. The pre-course reading was useful. The workbook provided was excellent.
  5. Pre-course readings were useful for general background, but not especially useful for discussion and what we saw in class. Works discussing the printing process would have been extremely helpful.
  6. Yes, they were. As someone with only minimal experience with the course topic, I found the pre-course reading helpful.
  7. The assignments were useful and provided a decent background to the course material. I particularly liked having required and recommended readings as well as others worth consulting—it helped me prioritize my time preparing. I did no other additional prep.
  8. The pre-course readings were helpful. I supplemented the course reading with other readings, including Kornicki's *The Book in Japan*. It may be helpful to have *Understanding Japanese Woodblock-Printed Illustrated Books* as a required book as well. I found it very helpful.
  9. The pre-course reading assignments are always useful.
  10. A very helpful required reading list.
  11. Yes.
  12. They were very useful. I very much appreciated the separation of the list into required and recommended readings. I was able to get through all of the Guth book (*Art of Edo Japan....*) but due to work couldn't finish the rest of the readings.
- 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. Very helpful. Yes. Yes.
  2. Appropriate and useful—a list of all books we've seen would be helpful.
  3. The course workbook was extremely valuable. I consulted it very frequently and I'm going to continue to do so well after this course.
  4. The workbook was great and it will be useful after the course.
  5. The course workbook was quite useful for contextualizing what we saw during the course. The content illustrated the incredibly wide selection of art books well—if a bit meandering in focus.

6. The coursebook was very useful and very informative. It is obvious that a lot of attention went into making it.
7. Course workbook is very good, but I think it will be most useful after the class as a reviewing tool. I didn't consult it much during the course or take notes in/on it because this class was so heavy on observation. I will certainly keep it around for future reference.
8. The course workbook is useful, and I will definitely refer to it in the future. I hope that lists of items that we looked at in the various collections (with accession/call numbers) will be available after the course as well.
9. Yes. It was very useful.
10. Workbook will be my important reference book about Edo and Meiji books.
11. Yes. I will continue using them as a reference source.
12. The course workbook is phenomenal and will be a frequently consulted aid in the future. You can tell a lot of thought was put into the construction of the workbook. I especially appreciated the additional info on the books we examined and the graphic of common book sizes on the final page.

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

1. Both are fantastic. Having a sit down dinner right in the beginning of the class was very helpful to get to know the classmates.
2. {no response}
3. This was my first class!
4. {no response}
5. N/A
6. N/A
7. N/A
8. This course was as excellent as the other courses that I have taken at RBS.
9. It is getting better and better. It is always wonderful to be able to see real books, get explanations, and plan for further learning inspirations.
10. Each venue provides its own fine rare books, each course is unique and a must to attend.
11. N/A
12. This course was much less lecture heavy when compared to "B-75: American Publishers' Bookbindings, 1800-1900." This wasn't a bad thing at all, especially since for more than half of the week the books were considered "art objects"; just different.

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. Hokusai manuscripts at the museum is one of the highlights of all the books/works viewed at the class.
2. How the artistic and commercial aspects were intertwined. Enjoyed the range of books and styles. Interesting to compare editions.
3. I mostly work with English language/Western materials, so this course provided such a brilliant contrast to those materials.
4. {no response}
5. While there was less of the later Meiji period materials than I had hoped, I did get

- some insights into previous shifts in woodblock print culture.
6. The time actually spent with the books, which fortunately was most of the time. Being able to see the books outside of vitrines (as those books are considered art objects) was fascinating and provided me with new insights and understanding that I would not have had otherwise.
  7. Discussions of printing and its technologies in practice were very interesting to me because of my background as a printer. I learned a ton about the culture and context that produced these books. I'm wondering how I'll find the time to pursue all the ideas I had for future projects!
  8. Being able to look at so many books closely in smaller groups was interesting—especially when there were opportunities to compare multiple copies of printings. I am feeling overwhelmed with possibilities for research and further study.
  9. History of books, graphic design aspects, and production are my interests.
  10. The illustrated Japanese books require experience to see as many copies {as possible} to understand the quality, meaning, and styles of them. I am grateful to be here to witness all the fine examples of very rare Japanese books.
  11. I was hoping to learn more about skills and knowledge that can be applied to cataloging. Though much of the course content was not directly related to that area, I obtained useful reference sources from the instructor. They should help with my daily work. The course also helps me develop an appreciation for some of the materials in our institutional collection which I had not paid attention to before. It will also change my practice of dealing with duplicate copies, educating me to be more cautious with weeding.
  12. I very much enjoyed examining Hokusai's *Manga*. I also found the comparison between Shunpon and European art of the same nature very revealing of societal difference in beliefs. Of course the material examined at the MFA was also amazing.
- 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. Yes. No. Yes.
  2. Yes. Would like more information about physical process of making the book, paper selection, wood block carving, inks. Very knowledgeable, charming instructor.
  3. Absolutely. I expected to gain an understanding of these books beyond just admiring them for their beauty and that's exactly what I'm walking away with.
  4. Yes. ET is clearly an expert in this field so I honestly believe I've learned from one of the best.
  5. See Q4.4. The big picture is a little patchy, and there was less Meiji than I had hoped. These are limits in the collections surveyed, however.
  6. The instructor was outstanding and I cannot think of any gaps or underdeveloped parts.
  7. Yes—and it didn't seem that anything was left out. I'm certainly finishing the course with a very full brain—but it's also clear that I have an endless amount left to learn.
  8. Yes, I learned what I hoped to learn—and more.
  9. Yes. This course was my second time around but in a different location. To be able

- to see different sets of books is a treat.
10. The workbook provided all the basics. In addition to that, the instructor gave us generous comments about each book we saw.
  11. {no response}
  12. Yes. ET is extremely kind and patient. He is great at fielding questions from novices like me and from more experienced Japanese art connoisseurs. We even covered a bit of Meiji material even though the collections on location were sparse in that area.
- 6) *How do you plan to use the skills and knowledge acquired during your time here?*
1. To further equip myself to be a special collections librarian.
  2. Plan to look at Japanese books online, compare editions, and continue my education.
  3. I'm hoping to use them with the materials I work with at my job.
  4. I'm studying Western rare books so it was interesting to see how Eastern and Western compare. I would love to do a future project involving that.
  5. For a dissertation.
  6. It will be very useful as I begin to read (and re-read) about these books. There was invaluable information that could only have been gained by seeing the books in viro, things that do not come through looking at reproductions.
  7. I'd like to find some time to take a closer look at the Japanese books we've been working on that are in our physical and digital collections with an eye towards making them more accurate. I'd also like to do a survey of the Edo and Meiji books (if any) in our library collections and work on improving/correcting their descriptions and housing. I'm also looking forward to my next trip to Japan!
  8. I hope to use this for cataloging materials at my institution.
  9. {no response}
  10. To research my inventory of Japanese books.
  11. In addition to applying them to my organization and cataloging of collection materials, I will share them with my coworker who has been working on Japanese visual publications with me.
  12. I plan to add the knowledge acquired to my growing knowledge on Japan. Eventually I plan to pursue a higher degree in the area.
- 7) *Please briefly describe the intellectual level of the course. What sort of person might benefit the most from taking it?*
1. All people interested in this subject will benefit from the course.
  2. A person interested in a good introduction to Japanese books and connoisseurship.
  3. I was surprised at how diverse the class was. Very good for beginners but also those who may have been studying these materials for some time.
  4. Someone with Japanese or Chinese language experience, but it's a great course for anyone interested in Japanese art. The intellectual level fits all levels of experience.
  5. An art historian or book enthusiast might have benefitted most—there was a digital resource on how to find materials, though not catalog or {illegible} similar. We just paged through art books.
  6. I think it is suitable for all levels as the teacher addressed all types of questions

- (basic to advanced) with seriousness and an apparent enthusiasm about the topic.
7. I thought it was a stretch for raw novices, challenging for those of us with little experience. The people that would benefit are those like my classmates: book dealers, librarians, Chinese specialists, and collectors.
  8. I think that this course is best for students with some background in East Asian art, literature, or printing history. Language skills were not absolutely necessary, but I felt that I gained a lot simply by being able to read the texts. I don't know if non-Japanese readers lost some of that aspect of the course.
  9. {no response}
  10. Any book enthusiasts, even if {their} own interest is in Western books, will be greatly rewarded to acquire the knowledge of Japanese illustrated books.
  11. People with background in art history and Japanese language and culture. Medium level.
  12. This course is perfectly accessible to newcomers yet not boring for even repeat students (of which we had two) due to the variety provided by differing collections. Some knowledge of Japanese is helpful but not entirely necessary. The same applies to art history (an area in which I had no prior experience).
- 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. Too many to share. Comparison work between different editions, and printing.
  2. Visit to MFA and looking at the absolutely unique material there. Also, ET gave a very good intro leading up to it.
  3. Our trip to the MFA was most exceptional because we were able to view these books in their pre-production stages. We had seen the artistry of the finished product all week so the difference/contrast was incredible.
  4. The field trip to the MFA and being able to see the materials that were shown was definitely noteworthy.
  5. There were many moments in which I was amazed by the material presented.
  6. As stated previously, just seeing the objects out from behind the vitrines was enormous.
  7. It was amazing to be able to handle many volumes in our first day and a half.
  8. There were a lot of "aha!" moments—too many to easily share here. Again, being able to look at multiple copies was invaluable and extremely educational.
  9. {no response}
  10. Every rare Japanese illustrated book they showed us. They are all precious and greatly educational.
  11. I appreciate the rich exposure to rare, unique, original materials.
  12. The comparison between Shunpon and Western art of the same nature was extremely interesting as it pertained to fundamental differences in each society's values. The chance to see absolutely unique manuscript holdings at the MFA was also amazing.
- 9) *How could the course have been improved?*
1. {no response}
  2. It could have been a little more sequential. Also would like to know more about

- the iconography in books—allusions to stories, more of what would have been obvious to the Japanese at the time.
3. I honestly can't think of a suggestion for this one. It was that excellent. We really benefitted from ET's passion and the locations we visited.
  4. Since we did see many items, if there is a future course with the opportunities we were provided then perhaps a bibliography should be compiled.
  5. A bit more clearly delineated in the meanings of what we saw—less looking at books and more informational lectures—might have improved the course.
  6. As someone new to the subject I'm not sure what could have been improved. I was quite pleased.
  7. The only thing I can think of would be to provide lists of what was viewed, and we got that for a certain percentage of the material. (It's also on us as students to track that, maybe.)
  8. No suggestions.
  9. I hope the course will evolve to be held other places where there are different sets of book collections.
  10. Class felt fantastically perfect. What was missing was my side of flow.
  11. The course title is "Edo and Meiji," but the course itself focuses on Edo. I wish it were more balanced because I have questions that are specific to Meiji publications and they can't be answered by Edo examples.
  12. It would be great to have more time with the collections each day but given restrictions at the buildings, this simply was not possible.
- 10) *Do you feel that you got your money's worth? Would you recommend the course to others?*
1. Yes. Yes.
  2. Yes. Yes.
  3. Most definitely.
  4. Yes, I would definitely recommend it.
  5. I would recommend this course to people who already had a strong background in art books, especially in Japan, though perhaps not those with a more casual interest. Generally speaking, I got my money's worth.
  6. Definitely on both accounts.
  7. Yes on both counts.
  8. Yes, and yes.
  9. Yes.
  10. Must take. This class made our eyes open to the refined Edo and Meiji illustrated books and history and technical information.
  11. Yes.
  12. Absolutely, and of course!
- 11) *If your course made any trips outside of the classroom, do you feel that they were time well spent?*
1. Yes!!! Great!
  2. Yes!
  3. We hopped around to three different places which I thought was extremely valuable. We saw these books in three different contexts.

4. Yes, the trip to the MFA was a great experience.
5. The trip to the MFA was amazing—we saw a lot of unique materials which impacted my understanding of the printing process.
6. Yes. The field trip added a lot to the entire class.
7. The exhibitions at the various museums were certainly relevant. It was great visiting several different collections.
8. The trip to the MFA was a helpful supplement to the course. Being able to see an unpublished Hokusai work was amazing and gave me insight into the book production process.
9. Yes.
10. Well planned and the trip to MFA provided us the once-in-a-lifetime viewing of exceptional fine items. Thank you very much.
11. Yes.
12. Our class had a field trip to the MFA on Thursday. I cannot imagine a better way we could have spent that time. The opportunity to see the Hokusai manuscripts we saw there was a once-in-a-lifetime chance.

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. Yes. No.
2. The dinner and ET's lecture were enjoyable and worthwhile. (The B. Franklin lecture was not compelling.)
3. They were fun. Meeting other students is good to experience, but I wouldn't say they were absolutely necessary to get a worthwhile experience.
4. The lectures were interesting and compelling.
5. Evening events (lectures) were interesting though none were especially impactful.
6. They were all equally fine. The reception dinner could perhaps have been in a room with RBS students only, and tables could have been grouped by class. Nevertheless, I had an enjoyable dinner with the instructors of the other course.
7. ET's lecture the first evening was extremely useful. The lecture for the other RBS class I didn't find was worth my time, but perhaps that's just a question of subject interest.
8. I felt the evening events were enriching and worthwhile. It did make for two very long days at the beginning of the week, but I am glad that I attended.
9. Yes.
10. The lecture by ET was good preparation for the rest of the classes.
11. {no response}
12. I attended both lectures, the Sunday dinner and the Monday and Friday receptions. I very much enjoyed the Monday (ET) lecture.

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

1. Highly recommend to anyone who is interested in the subject.
2. {no response}
3. Take advantage of the pre-course readings and consult the workbook often during class.

4. {no response}
5. Advice: try and keep track of all the things which we see in a meaningful way—it's very easy to get lost in all the amazing things which we saw.
6. The course is well worth it. The instructor is very knowledgeable and obviously enjoys teaching the course.
7. Take good notes while you're viewing the books! Note which ones really struck you during the week so if there is an opportunity to look again at something you can ask for your favorites!
8. No suggestions.
9. {no response}
10. Just be here to take advantage of the viewing and intricate commentary of the instructor, and open up your eyes to the entirely different world of Japanese illustrated books.
11. {no response}
12. Do not be afraid of taking the course even if you have minimal experience with art or Japanese. ET is a joy to be around no matter where he teaches but if the course is held at Harvard again, DO NOT PASS IT UP. To do so would be beyond foolish.

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

1. An amazing week.
2. Wonderful immersion into world of Japanese books.
3. Outstanding!
4. I feel I lucked out to have had this as my first RBS course because I definitely want to take more.
5. Information overload, but worth it.
6. It was a great week that went by too quickly.
7. I can't imagine that there is another RBS course with more beautiful or compelling materials than this one.
8. A visually and intellectually overwhelming week (in an entirely good and worthwhile way).
9. {no response}
10. What an experience I had, taught by the fine, experienced instructor and many rare books. Thank you very much.
11. {no response}
12. Lovely bokashi,  
Fuji, Manga and Shunpon  
Kyoto is better.

## **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: 5 (41.67)

My institution/employer did not give me professional leave; I used paid or vacation days:

1 (8.33%)

I am self employed, and can arrange my own schedule: 3 (25%)

I am a student or non-year-round employee, with a more flexible summer schedule: 1 (8.33%)

My situation does not fit any of the options above: 2 (16.67%)

*Who paid your RBS tuition costs?*

I paid 100% myself: 7 (58.33%)

My institution/employer paid 100%: 3 (25%)

My institution/employer paid part; I paid the rest: 2 (16.67%)

*Who paid your RBS housing expenses?*

I paid 100% myself: 6 (50%)

My institution/employer paid 100%: 2 (16.67%)

I stayed with friends/family, or stayed in my own home and commuted: 4 (33.33%)

*Who paid your RBS travel expenses?*

I paid 100% myself: 6 (50%)

My institution/employer paid 100%: 3 (25%)

I live locally, and had no travel expenses: 3 (25%)

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

**Library disciplines:**

Cataloger/metadata librarian: 4 (33.33%)

Digital collections librarian: 1 (8.33%)

**Student working toward a/n:**

M.L.I.S./M.L.S.: 1 (8.33%)

Ph.D./D.Phil: 1 (8.33%)

**Book trades:**

Antiquarian bookseller: 1 (8.33%)

**Other occupations/vocations:**

Independent scholar: 1 (8.33%)

Other: 3 (25%)