

Martin Antonetti
H-30: The Printed Book in the West to 1800
31 July–5 August 2016

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. Very useful on history of printing. *ABC for Book Collectors* is a bit dry since it's really a reference book, but I'm glad I've read it and know how to use it. Should require reading on growth of literacy, censorship, and spread of ideas.
2. I enjoyed Chappell's book, and found it to be an easy read and a good introduction to many of the topics that we discussed in class.
3. Pre-course reading did help me.
4. I would recommend providing a comprehensive bibliography.
5. Yes, readings useful. No additional prep. I have one concern about the numerous errors in the Chappell text. Maybe we need to create an errata sheet on use of first edition of this work as some personal names are corrupted and big stretches of text are missing letters.
6. I found the first and second chapters of Chappell frustrating, so I didn't continue as far as I should have; I think I will find it useful after the course, though, so I'm glad to know of it. I could follow along in class just fine without it.
7. The pre-course reading was helpful but somewhat dry. Hands-on demonstrations in the course more than covered the reading material.
8. The pre-course reading for this class was perfectly suited for preparation to the class.
9. The book was a little typography heavy, but the style was readable with good illustrations.
10. The readings were helpful. I would suggest that a more direct guide of pertinent terminology in Carter be made (though this might be asking too much).
11. Yes, although *ABC for Book Collectors* was difficult to get through outside of a class.
12. Pre-course books were appropriate and complemented information provided by the instructor.

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. Workbook is useful. Structural suggestion is to leave much more space under each topic for note taking so all notes can be taken in the workbook, and to add extra blank page for notes when viewing books in SC. This will make it much more useful as a reference later.
2. The course workbook was fine. However, I would like if it had an additional reading list.
3. The workbook was very helpful with note taking, and I know I'll be referring to it

- in the future.
4. Good. Yes.
 5. Excellent. Well organized. Very useful.
 6. The workbook was very useful, and I will continue to use it and the other handouts in the future. A bibliography or “further reading” list would be a nice addition.
 7. The workbook was helpful for reference points. It would have been helpful to have a list of the books we saw in SC. Yes, the materials will be useful later, if I take the time to clean up my notes while it is still fresh.
 8. This material also was perfect.
 9. I appreciated that the workbook provided major names and citations. A little more room for note taking would have been a bonus.
 10. The workbook was very helpful since it had space for notes and key points written out. I will definitely be using it again.
 11. Very good. I appreciated the guide to lectures very much, and am sure I will continue to refer to it.
 12. The workbook was useful. It provided outlines to facilitate note taking.
- 3) *If you've taken previous RBS courses, how did this one compare?*
1. Well, as always, fascinating people around the table with great sharing of knowledge. Very good lectures and slide presentations, though we didn't get through all the material.
 2. This course covers many of the topics discussed in DesBib, but in varying amounts of detail (sometimes more, sometimes less).
 3. Every RBS course I take seems better than the last!
 4. Excellent.
 5. N/A
 6. N/A
 7. More fun in terms of the types of books we were able to look at. Parts of it were not as relevant to me personally but did benefit the majority of the class.
 8. I feel that this faculty member was very much more engaged with the students.
 9. They have all been excellent and distinctive.
 10. This is one of the better ones I have taken. MA is a fantastic and engaging teacher.
 11. N/A
 12. Excellent and on par with the others.
- 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. New skills in bibliographical description and observation. Especially valuable to have MA walk us through examples from SC.
 2. I greatly enjoyed the opening lecture on the history of the history of the book, as well as the discussions of type, illustration, and binding. I'm more knowledgeable in all three fields as a result. The library sessions were also great.
 3. I am coming away with a much better overall picture of the historical forces that shaped the history of the book. I have a sense of having gained a fresh and more comprehensive approach.
 4. Book history was most relevant to me.
 5. I appreciated understanding more about the minutiae of book creation and

- production. Very much appreciate learning about intricacies of papermaking, type production, printing, binding, &c. This information will be particularly helpful for my work with college faculty and in my own teaching.
6. I found the whole experience to be intellectually stimulating. Thinking consciously about a two-pronged approach to book history (the “social” and the “bibliographic”) will help me articulate these threads in my own teaching on similar topics.
 7. The most relevant parts of the class were the historical and technical contexts of this time period. There was a lot of information to be quickly absorbed. It definitely gave me ideas on further areas of study.
 8. The hands-on experience, particularly printing. Josef was invaluable! And the bookbinding demonstration as well as access to all the books. The hands-on experience helped things click for me.
 9. The second half of the class was the most relevant for me. I get a little lost after the incunabular period, as things get more complex. This course illuminated this period for me, and I will certainly use this knowledge in my daily work.
 10. The course helped fill gaps in my knowledge of the period, and I feel I now have a stronger general knowledge.
 11. I enjoyed the well-rounded and multidisciplinary approach to the class very much. I will continue to study the social history we covered but am glad to have the hands-on experience with printing and binding as well.
 12. This course provides an excellent overview of the genesis of the printed book, and its place as a stimulus to European/American social history, as well as a reflection of it.
- 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. Didn't cover the “typography section” and the “literacy, censorship and spread of ideas section” which was missed.
 2. Yes, though we weren't able to talk much about censorship.
 3. There are things we didn't get to, but I feel like the course prepared me to pursue those lines of inquiry with further reading.
 4. I thought the course would be more chronological, and it would be helpful if it were structured to tell a historical narrative. Day one: What is a book?, Day two: 1000–1500, from manuscript to print, Day three: Sixteenth Century, Day four: Seventeenth Century, Day five: Eighteenth Century.
 5. I would recommend adding a short segment on watermarks in the section on papermaking and a little discussion of the reference works available—online and analog sources that one can use to identify watermarks. This can be a very nice hands-on activity in teaching with rare books.
 6. MA covered an enormous range of topics! A little more class time on fonts and how to recognize/classify them would have interested me (but I'll go back to Chappell for that!). I am less interested in bindings.
 7. I don't know. It was very comprehensive, and I think I need some time to absorb it all. We didn't make it all the way through, mainly because we had super-smart people in the class, so discussion was lively and on a high level, which was also very helpful. Yes, I learned all I hoped to and more.

8. Exceeded my expectations.
9. We didn't get to censorship, &c. I would have preferred this to the presentations, alas.
10. I definitely learned what I had hoped to learn, though I wish there had been more time to cover topics.
11. Yes, very happy. Of course there's still so much to investigate.
12. The material was comprehensive and presented in a logical sequence with much evidential support from examples both from RBS and SC.

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

1. To better understand the place in book history of individual books I conserve.
2. As a way to hone my interests, so that I can now start reading about more specific subjects. Also, to help my descriptions.
3. In my own special collections at my university. I feel better prepared to research and interpret our collections.
4. Not sure.
5. I would like to plan additional class exercises for upcoming gender and philosophy and history of the book classes.
6. I am developing an undergraduate course on "Reading and Writing from Antiquity-1800." This will give me an enormous advantage navigating the later material.
7. I plan to look for more of this type of material and continue to develop my understanding of this time period.
8. I plan to first exercise this knowledge and then to proselytize in my community.
9. In my teaching with rare books, mostly, but generally in my reference work too. All very useful.
10. I will apply them to my responsibilities at work.
11. I will continue to work on Racine's library.
12. I will use the information in developing my antiquarian book business.

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

1. High, made even higher by the academics around the table, but all can benefit from the course in different ways.
2. I found this course to be a good introduction that could be of interest to someone who has little to moderate knowledge of and experience with rare books.
3. We had a wide range of backgrounds in my group, and I feel like we all came away with new knowledge.
4. Beginning course that became intermediate, because the students are all advanced. Someone who has not previously taken an RBS course would benefit the most.
5. Someone who is intellectually curious, from librarian to book dealer to graduate student.
6. We were a very diverse group and most everyone seemed to benefit. I thought the course was nicely balanced between a sophisticated approach to history and a very hands-on experience with physical materials.
7. There was a range in our class and I think everyone benefitted in their own way.

Librarians, scholars, teachers, collectors, booksellers...all benefitted and enjoyed the course.

8. This class is well suited for any level student. The pre-reading prepares you and the skillful organization and presentation of the material can cover many levels.
9. I wish I had taken this class as a beginner, but it was also good to have some grounding in the history of the book, so it seems to work for multiple levels.
10. This course presented high-level topics in an accessible way. Anyone looking for a general overview would benefit.
11. The expertise the other students brought to the class was inspiring and exhilarating. Great classroom environment.
12. The course was intellectually stimulating, both from the perspective of the instructor and fellow students (who came from diverse backgrounds).

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. There is lots of gray when considering answers to book history questions and that makes it exciting and relevant!
2. Looking at the Blake and the 1513 Ptolemy.
3. Looking at books in SC together was so much fun. Everyone was engaged and my group had a lot of knowledge and insights to share. There were many "aha" moments in which we all discovered something together. Our instructor was truly a master at facilitating and guiding us in that collective discovery.
4. Aha: There is so much WORK involved in making a book! Excellent instructor.
5. Printing with Josef Beery and binding with Roger Williams. Very powerful. Great sessions at SC. The Ptolemy was beautiful and memorable.
6. The visits to SC were excellent; lots of little "aha" moments as bits and pieces of my patchy early modern history knowledge fell into place.
7. OMG, looking at all the beautiful texts and illustrations really brought it all together! Even MA, who has seen all these books before, was still moved by looking at them. His word "thunderous" was appropriate at one point.
8. Pretty introspective, but I really think I'm beginning to get this.
9. It will take me a while to process everything, so I can't say at this moment. But, I had lots of good "aha" moments.
10. Much of what was foggy in my knowledge was honed to a finer point, especially regarding the differences between Anglo and French study of book history.
11. I enjoyed the library collections lecture especially well. Glad to have a sense of how and why certain collections got amassed.
12. "Aha" moments aplenty: demo of hand press, book binding, details shown on slides, and spectacular books in SC.

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

1. Faster-paced lectures so we could get through them all.
2. If we kept to the schedule better, though I understand how hard that must be given how vast of a subject we were covering.
3. {no response}
4. Sessions could be more focused on specific topics, including: materials, production

- processes, script/font/language, text and genres, illustrations, bindings, markets and consumers, literacy, censorship. I think the instructor could emphasize what technological changes or styles occurred over time and why. In addition, it is important to explore the implications of book making (for labor, education, &c.) in depth.
5. This is a really superb course. The instructor is committed and knowledgeable. His linguistic background is a real plus during the visits to SC. I would add a little content on watermarks but otherwise the course is EXCELLENT!
 6. N/A (though I was sorry we so often fell behind schedule).
 7. ?
 8. Two weeks! Just kidding, but this was truly an excellent, first class experience.
 9. {private response}
 10. The “museum” sections in SC were great, but perhaps more time could be made available for lectures.
 11. An extra week.
 12. Not all material in workbook was covered. Could be done if there were fewer digressions.
- 10) *Do you feel that you got your money’s worth? Would you recommend the course to others?*
1. Yes, and yes!
 2. Yes. Yes.
 3. Yes, and yes!
 4. Yes. MA is very knowledgeable.
 5. There is a lot of material packed into this course. Very relevant to my position in special collections. I would recommend to others.
 6. Yes, and yes!
 7. Yes, and yes.
 8. Yes, absolutely. Yes, absolutely.
 9. Yes, and yes.
 10. Absolutely. I plan on recommending this course to my colleagues.
 11. Yes.
 12. Absolutely—highly recommended.
- 11) *If your course made any trips outside of the classroom, do you feel that they were time well spent?*
1. N/A
 2. Yes. We looked at spectacular books in SC.
 3. We were in SC every day and those sessions were eye opening.
 4. We spent too much time in SC. There was an overload of information without context.
 5. N/A
 6. The SC visits were integral to and well integrated with our class time. The print shop was great.
 7. Definitely. Really enjoyed the printing press demonstration.
 8. Yes. Kudos to the SC people.
 9. Yes.

10. See Q9.
11. Yes, loved looking at the books MA pulled.
12. Daily trips to SC were an essential part of the course.

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. Both lectures were well worth attending.
2. I enjoyed both lectures, though they were certainly for a more advanced audience than me.
3. The lectures were excellent, and at Movie Night I learned about an illustrator I otherwise wouldn't know as much about.
4. N/A
5. I attended both lectures. {private response}
6. I learned a lot from Randy McLeod and Johanna Drucker's lectures, even as I struggled to follow at times. They were real highlights for me.
7. N/A
8. I attended the lectures. They were a tad above me but stimulating nonetheless. Something for me to aspire to.
9. {private response}
10. Definitely! Part of RBS is the socializing. The lectures were all enjoyable and Movie Night is always fun.
11. Enjoyed the lectures in particular.
12. Lectures were outstanding.

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

1. {no response}
2. No.
3. {no response}
4. I think this course is good as a first RBS course, but if you have taken any other RBS classes, there will be a lot of repetition.
5. {no response}
6. It is excellent and very valuable!
7. Have fun!
8. Just do it. Leap.
9. It's a great course and described accurately.
10. Don't feel too pressured to memorize all the terms in Carter, though it is a good resource.
11. Take it if your interests include the early modern era.
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. Intellectually and socially stimulating!
2. {no response}

3. {no response}
4. Thank you.
5. This was very intellectually rewarding. I had great compatriots and hope I have a chance to take additional courses in the future.
6. "Libros oportet esse thesaurus, non libros!"
7. Too tired to think of anything witty.
8. I'll be back if you'll have me. Thank you all!
9. Exhilarating, exhausting, and worth it.
10. I love RBS. How soon until I can come back? These are my people.
11. A fascinating march through the history of the printed book, replete with anecdotes, pictures, witticisms, and life advice.
12. Very concentrated, highly organized, stimulating educational experience in a collegial environment.

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: 6 (50%)

I am self employed, and can arrange my own schedule: 4 (33.33%)

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

I am retired, and can arrange my own schedule: 1 (8.33%)

Who paid your RBS tuition costs?

I paid 100% myself: 5 (41.67%)

My institution/employer paid 100%: 4 (33.33%)

My institution/employer paid part; I paid the rest: 1 (8.33%)

I used a scholarship/fellowship to pay/waive 100%: 2 (16.67%)

Who paid your RBS housing expenses?

I paid 100% myself: 5 (41.67%)

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

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

I used a scholarship/fellowship to cover part; I paid the rest: 1 (8.33%)

I stayed with friends/family, or stayed in my own home and commuted: 1 (8.33%)

Who paid your RBS travel expenses?

I paid 100% myself: 5 (41.67%)

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

My institution/employer paid part; I paid the rest: 1 (8.33%)
I used a scholarship/fellowship to cover 100%: 1 (8.33%)
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: 2 (16.67%)
Special collections librarian: 1 (8.33%)

Student working toward a/n:

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

Professional educator:

Lecturer/adjunct: 1 (8.33%)
Associate professor: 2 (16.67%)

Book trades:

Antiquarian bookseller: 2 (16.67%)
Other: 1 (8.33%)

Other occupations/vocations:

Book collector: 1 (8.33%)
Other: 1 (8.33%)