

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. {no response}
2. The required reading was very useful, especially Chappell and Eisenstein (my favorite though it requires time and focus and Google). I might consider bringing Carter back to the required reading list. Also, I wish there was a way RBS could provide the recommended reading essays—they are difficult to acquire outside an institution.
3. The reading was quite good. I felt well-prepared before the class began, but not as if the reading superseded course work.
4. They were very useful and I appreciated the division into “required” and “suggested.” The books were all pitched at the right level.
5. The assignments were so helpful. They were well chosen in terms of information and style, and they helped heighten my (already intense) enthusiasm.
6. Some of the best readings I have been assigned for a course of this type; they were great and very readable.
7. The pre-course readings were very useful.
8. I found them all useful. I would recommend that *ABC for Book Collectors* be required because it will always serve a purpose.
9. Embarrassingly, I did not do the pre-course reading. I will post-course, however. That said, I do not recommend that anyone considering this class follow my example.
10. Readings were useful.
11. I would have liked to see more specific reference to the advance reading texts, especially when we were told there were varying interpretations/understandings about a point, a technique, an age, &c.
12. Add: Philip Gaskell’s *A New Introduction to Bibliography*. Remove: Eisenstein.

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. Labels for the photocopies at the end of the book could be added. I will definitely be referring to the extensive book recommendations at the back.
2. The content was appropriate, useful, engaging, and enthralling. The workbook was very helpful and well-organized. I will refer to it many times in the future, I’m sure.
3. The hands-on course packets were invaluable for helping me to visualize and understand the more abstract ideas.
4. Excellent. I am excited to be taking away the comprehensive bibliography in the

appendix.

5. The material is really useful. I will absolutely use parts of it as a teaching reference.
6. Perfect, wonderful.
7. The course workbook is a resource I foresee returning to in my professional work and for continued personal study. {private response}
8. I found the workbook material useful. Anything that explains or illustrates the various printing processes is useful because it can be hard to understand.
9. Workbook and resource guide therein are very useful. As mentioned, I do plan to read the pre-course materials and refer to others suggested by faculty members.
10. Grateful to have a list of UVA's SC books but would be nice to also have a list of books from RBS's teaching collection.
11. The notebook was very useful—crucial to our being able to follow the day-to-day syllabus of the course.
12. The course workbook was very useful and facilitated, complemented, and built upon course content. The physical objects from the RBS teaching collection made possible a deeper, more tangible understanding of the history of the book.

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

1. N/A
2. N/A
3. N/A
4. N/A
5. N/A
6. N/A
7. N/A
8. N/A
9. N/A
10. N/A
11. N/A
12. N/A

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. Simply having a starting point in understanding book history, and rare books librarianship from the best of the best. Will also be researching rare book libraries and rare book sellers!
2. All the new insights, ideas, and project plans! Each day was a mountain top experience (especially LC, of course).
3. I feel much more confident in my competency in the materiality of the book, something that will certainly help my teaching, and which I believe will also impact my current and future research projects.
4. I don't know where to begin. I think the fact that almost all of the teaching was done with objects: hands-on, show-and-tell, look and touch. I have lots of new ideas about how to teach my course.
5. Material about early print will be most immediately useful for my teaching.
6. I loved the trip to LC and seeing all the great collections here—loved all the

stories!

7. The course struck a good balance between time in class and in SC, which kept things energized. It was a very helpful broad contextual history of the book. I look forward to more focused study.
 8. Learning about the incunables in detail is very useful to my current job. I will be able to help/understand researchers better.
 9. All of it! I learned so much, and I have gained a vocabulary of the book and its history that will be invaluable both at work and in polite cocktail party conversation.
 10. I'm particularly interested in taking this back and doing mere instruction. Content was amazing and wonderful as was MD's and JB's presentation, which will influence how I structure and plan future instruction at my institution.
 11. I loved handling and closely examining the early texts (pre eighteenth century); really made the class meaningful and exciting.
 12. As an archivist, this was my first opportunity to absorb formal lessons in rare book librarianship. I take with me an entirely new language with which to describe the holdings at my institution that inform my pedagogical and reference interactions.
- 5) *Did the instructors help you to acquire all the skills and information promised in the course description? Was anything left out or undeveloped? Did you learn what you had hoped to learn?*
1. {no response}
 2. I learned more than I hoped to learn. MD and JB will blow your mind.
 3. The course well fulfilled its stated goals.
 4. Yes! Absolutely. MD and JB masterfully balanced breadth and depth. They covered a lot of terrain, but lingered over details and fascinating stories.
 5. The course and instructors absolutely helped me acquire the promised—and desired—information. Everything was well developed.
 6. They were amazing. I am shocked at how much I learned. They are funny and fascinating.
 7. Yes; some things felt rushed, but only because of the nature of the course; yes!
 8. I feel like I got a good, comprehensive look at the history of the book.
 9. Yes, although I would have appreciated more time spent on contemporary artists' books with hands-on examples. Being at the end of the week, it got short shrift.
 10. Very comprehensive. Surprised we were able to cover so much in the time we did. Given the time, it was perfect—just wish we had more time to be with the instructors.
 11. Technique vs. culture—always an apparent tug-of-war in the decisions of the instructors about what to talk about. Technique usually won, which was fine.
 12. The instructors were very deliberate in their choice of words and use of examples so that students took away a very solid foundation in rare book publishing, printing, and historical knowledge.
- 6) *How do you plan to use the skills and knowledge acquired during your time here?*
1. Right now, I hope to apply this through digital projects, but know that I have the resources and inspiration that will enable me to continually learn.
 2. I plan to share the story of the book with my customers and community, as well as

- more accurately answer questions and assess my books in service of continuing the appreciation and preservation of print.
3. Both in my teaching and my research.
 4. This is going to greatly enhance my efforts to integrate material on the history of the book into my literature courses and to supervise students on research in special collections.
 5. I will be primarily incorporating this knowledge into my literature classes.
 6. I hope to become a rare books librarian in Hawai'i so having this Western background is a great complement and provides helpful context to my Pacific/Asian background.
 7. To improve my cataloging and further pursue more detailed study of the book.
 8. I can now help researchers at a better level. I can plan exhibits and have more detail about the power of text and printing and how it relates to the modern day. I feel more secure in my profession of choice.
 9. To further my understanding of the impact of books and printing on world history, and to convey that knowledge when conversing with friends and colleagues (hopefully with some grace in articulation, although that's debatable).
 10. Plan to use this in instruction sessions with undergrad and grad students. And will use to guide our collection development.
 11. I will look at books more comprehensively as I consider their authors, styles, and contexts.
 12. Knowledge absorbed from this course will be used in instruction endeavors for both traditional and non-traditional audiences. My ability to more fully evaluate and describe books will also be useful with donors and researchers.
- 7) *Please briefly describe the intellectual level of the course. What sort of person might benefit the most from taking it?*
1. Accommodating to all intellectual levels—it is a very rapid course, and benefits from the perspectives of students from wide backgrounds: booksellers, librarians working in a special collections repository or with special collections librarians, and academics/teachers.
 2. Rigorous, challenging, but accessible. Very experienced and educated classmates as well as novices like me gained greater understanding through this course.
 3. While this is in many ways an introductory course, it moves with a rapidity that is worth mentioning. I found it best as a way to fill in and contextualize a small area of knowledge within a larger field.
 4. The level was “introductory,” but engaging for people with lots of historical or technical knowledge. I think anyone but those with advanced expertise would benefit.
 5. This was an introductory class and was treated as such by the instructors. They assumed no knowledge upon entering the week, and filled us with knowledge. Anyone interested in book history and lacking formal training would benefit from this class.
 6. An early professional.
 7. Essentially a course for someone with a basic familiarity with the book, but with enough information and exceptional books on view to keep more advanced students engaged.
 8. Someone who may be earlier in their career and may encounter the types of

- books/manuscripts/&c. that were mentioned.
9. Anyone with a general knowledge of books, printing, and history and an abiding interest in how books and printing have shaped world history.
 10. All levels would benefit, but particularly those with limited experience/knowledge of the history of the book.
 11. Upper classmen, undergrad to professional in the field, or related field, would benefit.
 12. The intellectual level of the course was stimulating without being overly erudite. Content was delivered in a cumulative fashion, so that new ideas could be referenced, reinforced, and built upon each day. Useful for people already engaged in the field.
- 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. Seeing one of the course teachers in his workplace/in his element at LC. Seeing JB’s and MD’s love for books and deep knowledge demonstrated. The course has been a gradual “aha” moment, really.
 2. I think the cultural history of the book was an “aha!” moment in general.
 3. There was a moment while looking at the Nuremberg Chronicle and while discussing the theory of time that it displays where I felt (rather than understood) the move from the medieval to the early modern rather profoundly. Also, the display of Galileo’s fingerprints was rather amazing.
 4. The trip to LC was amazing. Seeing Galileo’s handprint is something I’ll never forget. It’s hard to single out “aha!” moments, because they came at me fast and furious, i.e., with gusto.
 5. Seeing versions of texts that I have taught and learning about their publication history was noteworthy. I loved the *Jane Eyre* case study. I loved the LC trip. Behold: Caxton!
 6. Seeing the book Galileo used was a real shock—I had no idea such a thing existed! And the illuminated items—just wow!
 7. The visit to LC was incredible! A once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to see the heavy hitters in book history all at once!
 8. Speaking about the power of print in the American Revolution really made me reflect on the power that printed words have—it was easily relatable.
 9. Too many to count. LC collections, UVA SC materials, Galileo, Jefferson...seeing, holding, touching their personal materials...WOW! I also enjoyed working with Brother John on the (barely) illuminated manuscripts in the dungeon...er, scriptorium.
 10. Two moments: MD talking about Galileo’s *Starry Messenger* and its impact, and the Declaration of Independence. These really emphasized the importance of printing.
 11. The exquisite moments when the bookmaking/printing process became an integral part of the culture being explored—one sees the absolute power of the book in those moments.
 12. The march through 2,200 years of history was saturated (in a good way) with information, but it was also helpful to absorb the anecdotes shared by the faculty members from their own experiences.

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

1. Discuss clear differences between illustration methods or give mnemonic device for distinguishing between them.
2. In this case, perfect is perfect and nothing but.
3. I might have liked a few more call-outs to the readings, just as groundings. Or make it two weeks long, which would be intense, but awesome.
4. Make it longer!
5. I don't have any real suggestions. JB and MD are absolute powerhouses and have this course down.
6. Obviously, the twentieth-century image printmaking info is not as exciting as Galileo but they did a marvelous job teaching it. No suggestions!
7. No suggestions, sorry!
8. I felt some parts were super rushed, but it is a lot to cover so there's really nothing one can do!
9. So much great material, so little time! Maybe a few less bibles at the front end of the week so other (contemporary/artists' books) don't get short shrift at the end.
10. More time with the instructors! Make the instruction time longer or make class longer.
11. More on copyright, glossary in notebook.
12. Challenges—maybe small homework assignments to reinforce class instruction?

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

1. Yes!
2. Absolutely, and I plan to do so!
3. Most certainly. In fact, I already have.
4. Absolutely. I'm already doing that.
5. Yes, and yes.
6. Oh yes, who wouldn't? Yes! Yes!
7. Yes, and yes.
8. Yes, and yes!
9. Yes, and yes!
10. Yes, and yes!
11. Yes, and yes.
12. Yes, and yes!

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

1. Yes!
2. That would be a very hearty yes!!! LC was a life-changing trip.
3. Oh my yes! The LC was nothing less than spectacular.
4. Yes.
5. The trip to LC was an absolute revelation in terms of the books we saw, in terms of the LC's rare book philosophy, and in terms of the building.
6. The LC trip was life changing. So amazed and impressed!

7. See Q8.
8. Yes! LC was awesome!
9. We went to LC on Wednesday—absolutely worth the time and effort. Amazing! I feel honored to go to LC with MD as our host and guide. He is like a kid in a candy store!
10. Yes! Trip to LC was outstanding and the dynamic between JB and MD makes the experience enjoyable.
11. The trip to LC was the highlight of the week.
12. Our journey to LC was a-once-in-a-lifetime privilege.

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. N/A
2. The Ornament Night was incredibly thrilling, as well as technically illuminating.
3. I really enjoyed Monday's lecture, as well as the printing demo on Tuesday; I was sorry to have missed Wednesday.
4. I liked the bibliographical talk on Monday night. For me, evening activities were a bit much after days that were almost over-stimulating.
5. The Monday night lecture was fantastic. It was a completely new topic (Samson Occom) and was really well presented.
6. N/A
7. Hit and miss. There is a great community here in general! Movie Night could be reworked into something more engaging.
8. N/A
9. I was so tired at the end of class I did not stay for any of the optional events.
10. Yes, attended all but one event. Would like to hear from more diverse perspectives, perhaps from underrepresented groups.
11. Loved doing the ornamental printing—felt like Benjamin Franklin as I used the composing stick!
12. The typesetting demonstration and exercise was amazing!

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

1. This course is a true privilege to take, from content to presentation, to demonstrating the history we discuss with the opening of a box or folder. JB's and MD's stories and warmth were invaluable.
2. Dress code is casual/business casual; bring comfortable shoes and an umbrella, just in case. And come to RBS! Oh, and bring a sweater.
3. Come for the content, stay for the simply delightful pedagogical display of these two fine teachers.
4. It is definitely worth doing as much of the advance reading as you can.
5. Be sure to do the reading. Get ready to fall even more in love with books. Get excited to meet and learn from MD and JB.
6. Do it! It was wonderful. The instructors are geniuses, and I kind of wish I could just hang out with them as friends in the future—so interesting!
7. Nope!

8. Take it only if you like having fun! No Debbie Downers!
9. Don't miss taking this course from JB and MD. Their team-teaching style is highly engaging, educational (natch) AND entertaining!
10. Consider having a full class in Washington, DC, at LC. I would love to have a full class with JB and MD in their own town/collections.
11. JB and MD are the great dynamic duo of RBS!
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. A little closer to heaven.
2. You'll never look at a book the same way again.
3. {private response}
4. "Sometimes you should avoid the content," I'm just saying.
5. This week was everything I hoped for and more.
6. Brilliant it was
Avec Sophistication
Brain full of Wonder
7. The rich materiality of the book on display!
8. I never want to leave!
9. Bookworms ARE real—I met a bunch of them in the flesh in this class!
10. Wonderful, life-changing experience!
11. In gratitude!
12. {no response}

Student Data

Number of respondents: 12 (of 12)

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

My institution/employer gave me professional leave time: 7 (58.33%)

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: 1 (8.33%)

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: 1 (8.33%)

My institution/employer paid 100%: 7 (58.33%)

I used a scholarship/fellowship to pay/waive 100%: 3 (25%)

I used a scholarship/fellowship to pay/waive part; my institution/employer paid the rest: 1 (8.33%)

Who paid your RBS housing expenses?

- I paid 100% myself: 2 (16.67%)
- My institution/employer paid 100%: 7 (58.33%)
- I used a scholarship/fellowship to cover 100%: 1 (8.33%)
- 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: 2 (16.67%)
- My institution/employer paid 100%: 4 (33.33%)
- My institution/employer paid part; I paid the rest: 3 (25%)
- I used a scholarship/fellowship to cover 100%: 1 (8.33%)
- I used a scholarship/fellowship to cover part; I paid the rest: 1 (8.33%)
- I live locally, and had no travel expenses: 1 (8.33%)

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

Library disciplines:

- Archivist: 1 (8.33%)
- Digital collections librarian: 1 (8.33%)
- Public services librarian: 1 (8.33%)
- Other: 2 (16.67%)

Professional educator:

- Associate professor: 3 (25%)
- College/university administrator: 1 (8.33%)

Book trades:

- Antiquarian bookseller: 1 (8.33%)
- Auction house staff: 1 (8.33%)

Other occupations/vocations:

- Other: 1 (8.33%)