

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. Griffiths is useful mainly for basic technique. All other required reading was essential. All the recommended readings were good as far as I could get to them.
2. The pre-course readings were useful and essential. I did not do as much of the additional reading as I would have liked (or should have done).
3. Some more than others. Gaskell is a difficult text to understand (in parts).
4. Yes, and critical to understanding the more theoretical and philosophical discussions.
5. Absolutely—and I thought that it was perfect to have such a huge list, but with so many of them optional, I could really chart my own course.
6. Very useful. Kusakawa was great, as was RG's article, and Ogilvie's. All were useful, however.
7. Yes, the readings were useful, although I did not get through all of the pre-reading and still felt like I was able to follow the course. Gaskell and Griffiths are more useful as reference guides but difficult to read straight through. Suggestions: maybe Bayandall or another visual culture method since formal analysis was a central theme.
8. The pre-course reading assignments were well-chosen and appropriate, though I was unable to obtain a copy of the Kusakawa via library loan, and was unwilling to pay hundreds of dollars to purchase one.
9. Yes, readings were useful. I read most of required reading. These weren't discussed in detail, or at all, but were quite helpful for context.
10. Article by the instructor was very helpful, as was one of the assigned texts—they really provided strong introductory coverage. Two of the assigned texts, however, meandered too far off the track and would have been more useful as supplemental resources.
11. Pre-course reading was very useful. I also came across several related titles not recommended on the list, but on the shelves of my library, so it was good to see how much we owned already. Instructor forgot a few titles on advanced reading list he mentioned in class. These could have been helpful to read in advance.
12. The readings were good. A suggestion might be *Envisioning Information* by Edward Tufte.

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. Moderately useful, I think, mostly for the bibliography.
2. The course workbook is an amazing document. It will no doubt prove useful in the

- years to come. It was a nice touch to have a version of the workbook sent electronically before arrival. Made it all seem less intimidating.
3. The content was appropriate and helpful, and my workbook will continue to be helpful.
 4. The session where we passed packets around—consider introducing the topic, then passing a packet; next topic, next packet, &c.. I know, however, that it is difficult for students to listen and look simultaneously, but may be worth the trade off.
 5. The workbook was a bit more cluttered for this course than some others. But, it had everything in it somewhere that I needed.
 6. They were excellent, on point, and will be a useful resource.
 7. Wonderful workbook that I will refer to again and again. Especially helpful that this was made available as a PDF. The bibliography will be invaluable.
 8. The course workbook was very useful; if a little more white space could be left between each of the descriptions of books seen during class, it would facilitate note-taking directly in the workbook, especially since in SC it's easiest to just bring the workbook and a pencil.
 9. Workbook is great; very helpful to consult at RBS during week, and I'm sure I will consult in future.
 10. Yes to all of these questions. It might also be useful for the instructor to assign students to identify and read an article (or two) that is pertinent to the course beforehand, and which students could then bring with them to share with the class during early sessions of the course.
 11. Workbook was adequate and useful but should have more space for notes. Perhaps it should be carefully reviewed for organization and updating, which instructor mentioned it could use. Glad to have reading list, and illustrations and charts, as well as lists of what we handled on field trips and in SC.
 12. The workbook was and will continue to be useful. The packets didn't seem as useful to me.

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

1. Near the top: intellectually strong, innovative in approaches. Always impressed at how much I learn from the other students.
2. This one certainly ranks up at the top of many. It was the best orchestrated.
3. N/A
4. The first was more introductory, this one more advanced, and really most appropriate for people who've in some way worked with or have a familiarity with science books and illustration.
5. Among the best. This and TB's identification course have both been extremely taxing in the best way.
6. This one may have been the one best tailored to my personal interests to date, and having had some background in descriptive bibliography and illustration processes made it a richer experience for me.
7. This is by far the most engaging, interesting, and useful RBS course I have taken.
8. This course was an excellent balance of lecture, book examination, historical techniques instruction, and discussion. RG is excellent at signposting and summary.
9. N/A

10. Apples and oranges—both are good, just not the same.
 11. My other workbooks had more extensive reading lists, Glossaries were organized on a daily basis, and had sample formulas and note taking pages inserted. {private response} Glad to see so many librarian colleagues! Last course was too heavily skewed with academics and scholarship students.
 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. I feel the need to bone up on basic history of science, and would like to read some original sources to understand more fully the psychology of the writers and illustrators. My role and approach in acquisitions may change. I certainly have more knowledge now to evaluate possible purchases.
 2. The most relevant aspect was the training (or re-training) for looking, and as MFS talked about in his welcoming lecture, learning how to see again.
 3. I have definitely come away with project and article ideas especially in regard to understanding images appearing in text. The special collections that were made accessible to us were amazing.
 4. Yes, new ideas to integrate into teaching, and new appreciation for techniques of illustration and bibliography.
 5. The homework presentation was a great excuse to force myself to apply what I've learned. And yes, I will pursue it further.
 6. Integrating aspects of printing processes—practicing them—while studying them and examining materials was very illuminating. As for new project plans, I may well take up printmaking.
 7. The hands-on sessions were both fun and illuminating—printing copperplate engravings especially. The DC trip was worth the drive, as seeing the examples close up helped me understand some processes I had only previously read about (i.e., à la poupée color printing).
 8. RG drew our attention to bibliographical details I had never considered in-depth before, and I think I've come away from the class able to see more. CDM brought in a useful case study of her own which highlighted issues of editions and the circulation of books across Europe.
 9. Most interesting were the opportunities to print intaglio and to practice setting type, using common press. It gave me true appreciation. Most relevant was RG's lectures; they were great. But I also loved seeing so many items at UVA and in DC
 10. Better understanding of book structure, process of print production for illustrations and how to read a bibliographic record, not to mention the “how” of printing images.
 11. Seeing a number of titles in scientific fields beyond the scope of my library's own collections was very useful to give perspective. I was surprised by how much is not known.
 12. RG's intense inquisitiveness is inspiring. The day trip to DC was the high point for me.
- 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. More history of science itself would have been nice but that wasn't the intent and there's no time.
2. Yes, I did learn a tremendous amount. Perhaps underdeveloped was the role of format (in the lecture). Thinking in a more analytical way. Learning how to really look.
3. I did. It's difficult, but a bit more about bibliography—what it gets wrong and right—would be helpful.
4. Yes. Only a few of us teach so it wouldn't have been germane for the rest of the class, but talking a bit more about ways to integrate info into teaching and outreach.
5. Yes.
6. I was very satisfied.
7. Yes, and they were patient about explaining basic processes or ideas that others with library backgrounds may have already been familiar with. I felt comfortable asking any questions. I am leaving this class with my goals achieved.
8. The course was exactly as I had hoped. RG is extremely conscientious as a teacher and CDM brings additional warmth and enthusiasm to the sessions.
9. Yes, RG and CDM are great. Yes, I learned what I hoped to learn and more.
10. As so often happens, I learned something a bit different than I thought I would learn. Different, but no less useful.
11. There were several questions that were not adequately answered or addressed in the literature I reviewed. I had one question about technique that could not be answered by staff members or the instructors. Perhaps it needs more research. I had hoped to survey more fields of science but perhaps those works were not illustrated as well.
12. All was delivered as promised, and then some!

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

1. Exploring the science collection at my own institution, which at this point lies outside my curatorial responsibility. This will be a springboard for working more with foreign language material. See also Q4.
2. Whatever description of a book or image I write will be more thorough.
3. To assist in promotion and understanding of my library's special collections.
4. Integrate into teaching and outreach, donor development, and collection development.
5. To identify and think about materials for my dissertation with a bit more rigor than I might have otherwise.
6. TBD.
7. This class will help me in the immediate future with writing a chapter of my dissertation that is about scientific illustration. But, it will also be valuable in the long term for identifying illustration/printing methods, and has given me some future project ideas.
8. I intend to go back to materials I've examined before and re-examine them more carefully.
9. Very helpful in terms of future collecting, but also bibliographic instruction with undergrads and others.

10. Interpreting scientific works for students and faculty at my home institution.
 11. I have much to read up on, and intend to publish an article or two on my research. I will use my skills to enhance my teaching and show-and-tell displays.
 12. In classes I teach.
- 7) *Please briefly describe the intellectual level of the course. What sort of person might benefit the most from taking it?*
1. The topics were wide ranging enough that probably everybody will find a “sweet spot” as well as experience periods of inferiority. Sort of high–middle range in specialization and sophistication.
 2. While I believe the intellectual level is very high, it should not be a course simply geared towards academics. Anyone involved in any aspect of book history would benefit. Its appeal should be marketed as such. Or, I wonder if the class would be better served by being split, leaving the more theoretical issues for an advanced course.
 3. Those already working with collections that have a focus on natural sciences.
 4. Someone with more than a passing familiarity with rare materials.
 5. I think someone already familiar with science history or materials fares best. Without that there would be a lot of overhead.
 6. I think the instructor worked to gauge our “herd” as a whole early on, and the student’s backgrounds and knowledge bases did vary. That ended up being a valuable thing. I do think that coming into the class with some foundational knowledge of format, collation, print processes, &c., we might have been able to dig a bit deeper together.
 7. Quick moving, detailed, information heavy, rigorous, but not conceptually or theoretically too difficult. Best for curators, library professionals, archivists, and academics thinking broadly about thematic questions (not for those interested in an encyclopedic history of science).
 8. The overall tone of the course is one of lively intellectual curiosity. Anyone who is comfortable with open-ended conversation/discussion should enjoy it.
 9. I think this course is suited for a variety of people, but most beneficial to grad students, curators/librarians/archivists, collectors, or dealers. Or to those having knowledge or interest in history of science or printing. RG is great at explaining, but required reading list would help someone gauge if this is a good fit.
 10. Impossible to answer.
 11. I think there should be requisites of collation and format if not already stated in the course description. Many issues were addressed, so it is good for all levels.
 12. Everyone in the class was at the top of their field. This class allowed us to bridge into other areas of expertise so we are better able to do our chosen work.
- 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. Some of the books, which I want my institution to own, and may now be unattainable. The book for my presentation on the last day really caught my imagination.
 2. The complexity (I know) of book production and the economic factors.

3. {private response}
4. {no response}
5. SC sessions with RG's tips for each book. Really taught me how to read for points of interest more systematically.
6. The Naming of Parts. This may not be what you're looking for here, but I loved the poetry.
7. Hands-on printing demos and typesetting were extremely useful and illuminating.
8. The course was consistently interesting and well-paced throughout, but my favorite session was the one on bibliographical description, which RG has clearly been thinking about for a long time.
9. Hearing RG say things like "Oh, I never noticed that," or "I had not thought of that," was noteworthy. A reminder that we all learn something new.
10. Working with the different printing presses was an incredibly useful experience.
11. {no response}
12. Seeing original copies of books I've seen only in reproductions.

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

1. RG is sometimes not in control of his slide show. Perhaps its two-dimensional nature is ill suited to his saltatory lecture style, or maybe he hasn't had enough time to rehearse. A lot of time lost searching for slides, or finding his place, or losing the presentation entirely. Multiple copies of the same book in the show-and-tell probably better replaced by something different. CDM seems under-utilized. She was delightful and informative.
2. It took a while for the instructor to relax and find a rhythm. He should be more confident in his vast range and depth of knowledge. The participants were flat, I think, not wanting, or not knowing, when to chime in. Have DesBib be a prerequisite or demonstrated knowledge of. The Thursday morning lecture on bibliographical description fell flat.
3. {private response}
4. More time on topics discussed on Thursday and Friday, e.g., authorial control, and a tiny bit less on Monday and Tuesday lectures which, if students have done the reading {private response} was a bit of a review of the texts.
5. Maybe some kind of exercise for generating discussion—our class was bit unsure.
6. See Q7.
7. The course is great as is. If somehow more time was magically added, more categories of science would be welcome, especially more medical materials.
8. Very minor logistical details concerning SC visits, and the field trip, could have been improved (more advance instructions re: meeting points, what to bring or not bring, coordination of meals). A bit more sportscasting/explanation would have made the illustration packets more effective (e.g., dates, context; what in the packets is original vs. facsimile; why the facsimile is useful, if at all).
9. We saw a lot of books which was great, but speed dating to see everything was a bit overwhelming at times, especially on field trip day. Also, I do think introducing a few wunderkammer related books would be interesting and would add to discussion.
10. A bit less looking at "stuff," and more assignments involving interacting with and interpreting the books.
11. I would like to have heard more from CDM. I enjoyed her presentation on the last

day of class. Perhaps an outside lecturer or two would enliven things as well.
12. More time.

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

1. N/A, since I didn't pay, but I can't imagine anyone saying it wasn't worth it. Yes, I would recommend the course to others.
2. Yes, I did, and I will.
3. I would recommend this course to those already working/studying in the field.
4. Yes. Yes.
5. Absolutely.
6. Yes, I would.
7. Absolutely, and without a doubt (I already have).
8. Yes, and yes, would definitely recommend.
9. Yes! Yes!
10. Yes.
11. I would recommend this course to others. I don't feel costs were excessive. I really think this course should be held in Washington, DC with all its rich library offerings.
12. Yes!!!! TAKE THIS COURSE!!

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

1. Yes.
2. Extremely well spent. The Washington trip was not as arduous as billed. The bus was comfortable. A pit stop on the way up would have been nice.
3. My course visited Washington, DC and it was worthwhile.
4. Yes.
5. Yes.
6. It was an epic day, very long, and well worth it.
7. Yes—I was surprised at how productive and smooth the DC trip was.
8. Yes, our field trip was time well spent. The books we saw were very interesting, and the extra time to spend with classmates made the long bus trip more enjoyable than expected.
9. Yes, it's a long day. The speed dating/looking at books was great, but intense. I'm just not sure how to improve that system.
10. Yes.
11. It was quite a long drive but good to see many volumes at the Smithsonian. Even better to teach using Washington as our base instead of a trip from Charlottesville.
12. YES!

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. Monday lecture pretty dreary. Came for one video on Tuesday—worth it. Had to miss Wednesday event. Booksellers' Night is always worth it.

2. I wish I could have participated in more. The field trip and work on presentation (and general tiredness) had me miss a lot.
3. {private response}
4. Lecture—audio was not terrific, hard to hear in back of room.
5. I did not. I usually work in the evenings while I am here.
6. I attended the lecture—and yes, it was time well spent.
7. {private response}
8. N/A
9. The optional events, in my humble opinion, were a way to socialize and talk with others here at RBS. I personally didn't get much out of other planned events.
10. The lecture was great. I skipped Movie Night and missed the digital talk due to a class field trip.
11. {no response}
12. Lectures were good. I opted out of Booksellers' Night. I have too many books already.

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

1. The course uniquely combines RG's expertise in both historical and descriptive bibliography. It covers a very broad plain with great thoughtfulness and care. Very sure-footed.
2. Come with a good working knowledge of bibliographical description. The course will be skewed otherwise.
3. It is a very full week, so be advised that it is exhausting.
4. {no response}
5. Do the advance reading! It makes the experience of the books much richer.
6. {no response}
7. This is an exceptional course, highly recommended to those interested in thinking/learning more about broad issues of illustration, visual culture, format and process, and printing techniques. An interest in science pre-1800 helps but isn't critical.
8. Reviewing Bowers on illustration as well as Gaskell would be useful (if you have taken DesBib at RBS).
9. I found it to be very worthwhile. RG is so knowledgeable. I would have liked to hear more from CDM, too.
10. {no response}
11. It gets real hot out there, so bring sunscreen and a hat. Come prepared to ask questions; examine and survey your library's holdings beforehand.
12. Well worth it. You will understand books better from this.

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

1. Always something to look forward to, always physically stressful, always a high point of my year. {private response}
2. A way back, or a way out of a rut.
3. The materials and opportunities this experience provides can be amazing.
4. {no response}

5. Totally exhausting in the best way.
6. Thank you!
7. RG and CDM are gifts to the rare book and printing community. Thank you for your hard work, patience, and enthusiasm in teaching us!
8. Today we have a naming of parts.
9. It's exhausting, but worth it.
10. Intensity, on the wheels of a book cart (or two).
11. We came, we saw, we have much yet to conquer.
12. I never grow tired of learning more.

Student Data

Number of respondents: 12 (of 12)

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

My institution/employer gave me professional leave time: 8 (66.67%)
 My institution/employer did not give me professional leave; I used paid or vacation days: 1 (8.33%)
 I am 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: 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%: 2 (33.33%)
 I exchanged goods or services in lieu of tuition: 1 (8.33%)
 My situation does not fit any of the options above: 1 (8.33%)

Who paid your RBS housing expenses?

I paid 100% myself: 1 (8.33%)
 My institution/employer paid 100%: 6 (50%)
 I used a scholarship/fellowship to cover 100%: 2 (33.33%)
 I stayed with friends/family, or stayed in my own home and commuted: 2 (16.67%)
 My situation does not fit any of the options above: 1 (8.33%)

Who paid your RBS travel expenses?

I paid 100% myself: 1 (8.33%)
 My institution/employer paid 100%: 6 (50%)
 My institution/employer paid part; I paid the rest: 1 (8.33%)
 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 live locally, and had no travel expenses: 1 (8.33%)
My situation does not fit any of the options above: 1 (8.33%)

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

Library disciplines:

Cataloger/metadata librarian: 2 (16.67%)
Curator: 3 (25%)
Special collections librarian: 3 (25%)

Student working toward a/n:

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

Book trades:

Book artist, artisan or printer: 1 (8.33%)

Other occupations/vocations:

Other: 1 (8.33%)