

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. All course reading assignments were helpful. One was difficult to understand at the time of reading, but the course aided in making the reading clearer.
 2. Yes, though as the reading list mentioned, the recommended Cave reading was hard to find. I know Gaskell is a fixture but it is bone dry. Readings could probably be updated.
 3. I always have trouble getting to do all the readings, but I at least got to skim three of the four books and found them useful.
 4. They were useful to get a sense of what I might be expected to know about, for background.
 5. The pre-course reading assignments were useful but really only clicked when we discussed them with physical examples in class. Anthony Rota's *Apart from the Text* was by far my favorite.
 6. Readings were informative and helpful.
 7. All of the readings were appropriate and provided an excellent base of knowledge.
 8. {private response}
 9. Pre-course reading was very useful. While only the relevant time period (post 1800) was required, I read the pre-1800 sections, too, and was very glad I did. Those sections provided an excellent vocabulary and a foundation for the later periods.
 10. Overall, I found the pre-course readings useful, though a little too technical. I didn't do any additional preparation. I'd love to see more readings about digital books and e-readers. I liked the Rota book the best and would suggest removing the one by Steinberg.
 11. The readings were very useful and appropriate preparation. I especially enjoyed Rota's *Apart from the Text*.
 12. Yes, and I would recommend prioritizing Rota's *Apart from the Text*, though this one was the most difficult to track down.

- 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 content was definitely helpful—it serves as a great illustration to complement my written notes. They will continue to be useful as I plan to put all of my notes with the workbook in a scrapbook for future reference.
 2. Yes, and yes! I noted each of the videos we watched in class as well. So helpful to see processes in action.
 3. Very helpful to have illustrations/diagrams handy, and looking forward to having

the PowerPoint slides as well. I will reference these and my class notes for years to come!

4. The workbook was OK—maybe just describe it a bit when it's distributed for some context, i.e., how it's organized, &c..
5. The workbook will be a useful reference for me as I try to apply concepts outside of class. The PowerPoint slides were also helpful supplements.
6. I will continue to refer to the workbook.
7. Yes, the materials will be useful for review at a later date.
8. The workbook will be a very helpful resource to me in future years.
9. Course workbook has excellent illustrations and a timeline. The timeline will be particularly helpful afterwards for integrating the various aspects of book production we learned about.
10. I thought the course workbook and EH's PowerPoint slides were extremely useful for helping me to envision the printing processes we learned about. I will continue using them after this class to refresh myself on the material.
11. The workbook is a nice reference to have on hand with visual reminders of the processes we have discussed in class. The PowerPoint slides with URLs for videos shown will be a particularly useful tool to take away with us.
12. I will consult the workbook and the posted videos for years to come, especially in teaching.

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

1. Both were equally well done—a good balance of lecture/discussion/Q&A in both.
2. N/A
3. Just what I've come to expect: a dynamic group with an expert leader. An intense but pleasurable experience, start to finish.
4. N/A
5. N/A
6. N/A
7. This was equally as good.
8. Best course yet (of three)! It really worked for me as a successor to the big survey course, H-10: "The History of the Book, 200–2000" as it gave special depth to the modern era.
9. N/A
10. N/A
11. This is an excellent class and has helped me visualize and wrap my head around trends and processes alluded to in other courses.
12. All have been wonderful, and this course was especially useful for its granular instruction in technological processes, skillfully communicated.

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. The most helpful and interesting aspects were the hands-on examples we had at the end of each day, helping develop my ability to determine the processes used in the production of the books.
2. History of the modern fine press movement and the general emphasis on illustration. I'm going to pursue the subject of women's involvement in book

design and production.

3. Many new resources for my ongoing efforts to use our archives and special collections in the curriculum and to be a better interpreter of book history in a general sense.
 4. Always interesting to see the stuff, the artifacts. The Jane Eyre collection and BEH's presentation of it was relevant as I'm doing something similar with *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.
 5. The entire course was both interesting and relevant, though the post-nineteenth-century sessions were less so. The 1830–1900 sessions will definitely be undergirding my dissertation work.
 6. {no response}
 7. The time with the private and fine printers. Very relevant to my work collections.
 8. I was deeply impressed by the transformational impact of technological innovation over two-plus centuries of bookmaking. I think this will become a new research interest of mine.
 9. Sections on illustration production were most useful, especially in the context of the entire book production. I will view the materials with which I work with new eyes.
 10. I found the discussion of the nineteenth-century books and periodicals, particularly their changing appearances, to be most relevant for me.
 11. The discussions and videos demonstrating printing and illustration processes were so valuable to me I have a much stronger appreciation for how books come together in the hand press period. Lots of new ideas swirling around in my head that I hope to translate into new projects or inquiries.
 12. Most useful for me were the lectures on historical printing processes.
- 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, especially by incorporating the hands-on group work as mentioned in Q4.
{private response}
 2. Yes, and more.
 3. Yes, a thorough and deep survey.
 4. Pretty much. It was great to have a variety of levels and areas of expertise in the class. The instructor was good at following up if he didn't know something.
 5. The topic is so immense that it would be impossible to cover absolutely everything, but I was satisfied with what we did cover. I would have been interested to learn more about nineteenth-century book sales and early best sellers.
 6. The course covered more than I expected!
 7. Very satisfied with the information.
 8. Bingo! I gained immensely from this course. The dominant impression: how various innovations broke through long-standing constraints to provide books of vastly higher quality, lower cost, wider distribution, and greater appeal.
 9. Yes. The course covered everything I expected. I particularly appreciated the opportunity at the end of the day to work on applying what we learned to actual books. The sheer number of examples we looked at was very helpful.
 10. Yes, I think the course fulfilled its description. I would have liked to spend a bit more time discussing the triple-decker and serial publications during the

- nineteenth-century. Overall, I feel I have received a comprehensive overview of the printed book's history.
11. The course was great for understanding production processes and fine press development. I would have been interested in more about reception and reading, including three-decker novels, circulating libraries, &c.. But these were covered in readings and there's not time to do it all in the week—I understand!
 12. Yes, absolutely. I would have enjoyed learning more about binding processes and styles with more specificity. Some more coverage of issues relating to distribution and reception/reading would be useful (though I know there is only so much we can cover in one week).
- 6) *How do you plan to use the skills and knowledge acquired during your time here?*
1. I will be attending library school with an interest in special collections and preservation.
 2. It will affect all of my future work describing books and printed matter, and has enriched my life as a reader.
 3. Continuing education, career development, and imparting book history.
 4. The exposure to printing processes and how they developed will be useful and relevant to my daily work with books. I'll be a better instructor.
 5. I plan to apply these skills and the knowledge I gained in my dissertation and, eventually, teaching.
 6. {no response}
 7. To help prepare exhibitions with our collection and to showcase the collections to our users.
 8. This will greatly sharpen my scholarly writing, and critical evaluation of others' writing. Plus, I will become a more astute collector.
 9. I plan to use what I learned to do outreach to scholars on my library's nineteenth-century collection. The course gave me knowledge and a vocabulary to describe our books.
 10. I hope to use the knowledge I acquired in this class to enhance my future research on nineteenth-century literature by taking into account a publication's physical features.
 11. For me, the knowledge learned in this course is really foundational, and I expect it will shape how I look at, understand, and appreciate books in the machine press period. So, I expect it will inform most of my ongoing work with books.
 12. I plan to apply what I've learned here to my own research, and hopefully, in some way, to teaching.
- 7) *Please briefly describe the intellectual level of the course. What sort of person might benefit the most from taking it?*
1. Anybody. This course had a variety of people in attendance, people working with these books for years, and people like me who are beginners, as well as Ph.D. candidates working on their dissertations.
 2. It is in-depth but operates as a historical rather than (too) technical overview, so I imagine anyone with a basic to intermediate basis in book history would benefit.
 3. I was particularly pleased with the diversity of backgrounds and career paths of class members, and their willingness to participate in discussions.

4. The level was a most times introductory—{illegible} I expected. A survey course. A person who {illegible} some background in social, economic, and mostly technical factors affecting print history.
 5. I think this course could be taken by a variety of students. While it provided depth of information, it did so in a very accessible way because EH was engaging, thorough, and patient.
 6. {no response}
 7. Anyone with an interest in the history of the printed book.
 8. It is clearly pitched at the graduate school level. Prior exposure to American and European history is helpful as a frame of reference for understanding trends and developments discussed here.
 9. The course was challenging. The mechanics of printing and the number of different technical processes were not always easy to retain. I will need to refer to my notes regularly to really retain all the information.
 10. A person with little background knowledge on book history but a scholarly desire to learn more would benefit from this class.
 11. I think our class had a mix of librarians, academics, and collectors and we all got a great deal from the class, as would book dealers and anyone else interested in books and book production in the modern period.
 12. I think someone brand new to bibliography would get a lot out of it, but it helped me that I came in with a bit of background in this period.
- 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. I finally understood the difference between wood engraving and copper plate/metal engraving as well as finally understanding how lithography works.
 2. Most of the clips EH chose went so much farther in solidifying various processes in my mind than the reading had. Incredibly helpful. That and the Janson exercise!
 3. “That’s why they’re called chain lines!”—the paper and binding museums, the selections from SC that we were able to see.
 4. The daily exercise of examining and reporting on a book (done in pairs) was always interesting.
 5. I loved the parts of the course in which we got to apply concepts by examining actual books and the examination of various illustration techniques under a loupe.
 6. Having the examples out and hearing the specifics linked to the conceptual aspects of the book made me feel that I saw the book for the first time.
 7. Seeing live examples of books and materials that I had only read about.
 8. Aha’s for me occurred at the pivotal technological innovations such as the Fourdrinier paper-making machine, the Linotype machine, and offset lithography.
 9. {no response}
 10. I was inspired by the exercise involving the Audsley brothers’ chromo-lithographic print and the Jane Eyre collection. I also absorbed so much from trying to identify a book’s features with a partner every day.
 11. I probably had a few “aha” moments throughout the week as I finally could visualize various printing and illustration techniques that I’ve read about before but could never truly understand until I could see them here.

12. Not so much “aha” in the Oprah sense. This course was a steady, stimulating stream of knowledge, all of it noteworthy.

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

1. I honestly cannot think of a way it could be improved because it was well structured, well balanced, and varied in the ways in which info was conveyed and presented.
2. I'm always hoping for more social/historical context, but that may vary with the student cohort.
3. I wish we'd gotten to flip a little more through some of the items—sometimes we only got to see one or two openings.
4. More showing (maybe), e.g., videos of processes.
5. I think it would be interesting to assign reading by female book historians to see if the emphasis changes.
6. {no response}
7. {no response}
8. {private response}
9. My only suggestion for improvement is to provide a bibliography of recommended readings in the various sections of the course. The pre-requisite readings are excellent but old so their bibliographies are not current and many items are probably out of print.
10. I would have liked more readings about the e-book/reader trend in recent years. I think one or two of the longer films on printing can be cut.
11. A bibliography or exit list of resources for further reading in the major topics covered would be greatly appreciated.
12. {private response}

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

1. Absolutely.
2. Yes, and yes! It is a good mix of lecture, discussion, and exercise.
3. YES! YES!
4. Yes, and yes.
5. Yes. Absolutely.
6. YES.
7. Yes. Yes.
8. Yes! Yes!
9. Yes. Yes.
10. Yes! Yes!
11. Yes! Absolutely.
12. Yes. I recommend it highly to anyone who wants a skillfully communicated survey of the major developments in printing in the last 200 years.

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

1. Yes, they served to compound on what we had been learning and solidify the info

- in my mind.
2. Oh yes. The Jane Eyre collection presentation was a definite highlight.
 3. See Q8.
 4. Yes!
 5. Yes.
 6. {no response}
 7. Yes.
 8. N/A
 9. Yes. We saw two exhibits—one from another course and one set up for us and they were excellent.
 10. I enjoyed our trips to view the Jane Eyre collection and to do the Janson exercise.
 11. Very much. Our time spent in LT for the Jane Eyre presentation and the Janson exercise were interesting and really central to our discussions. Great exercises.
 12. Yes. BH's presentation was compelling. So, too, SC and the Janson exercise.
- 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. Booksellers' Night is a must while attending RBS, even if you don't plan to buy any books. It provides communion with your peers and a trip to see the local antiquarian bookseller community.
 2. I attended all or part of all of them, and would do so all over again. Very helpful for providing a way to get to know fellow students and educational.
 3. I am pleased with the variety of evening activities in general, especially the open invitation to community members.
 4. I didn't attend all but I think it's great that these are offered. Don't stop! Good variety.
 5. The events were all time well spent. I was particularly happy about the Paper Museum and Alice Schreyer's talk.
 6. The optional events were informative and enjoyable. They complemented the course discussions and rounded out my understanding.
 7. Yes. The movies were excellent and very helpful for understanding some printing processes.
 8. {no response}
 9. I attended the Wednesday evening digital project lecture which was terrific. The movies were old but still good overviews of seeing a process in action.
 10. I went to the Paper Museum and I found it exceptional. It provided a clear and informative history of paper and reinforced what I learned in class.
 11. I enjoyed both of the lectures that I attended very much and they were an important part of the week.
 12. I enjoyed Booksellers' Night. As someone who is not a book collector, I really appreciated how Mary Gilliam enticed us with wine and ham biscuits. Thank you! The gesture made me feel welcomed.
- 13) *Do you have any additional thoughts or advice for anyone considering taking this course in a future year?*
1. This goes for any course: don't forget to bring a notebook or paper. I wrote my

- notes on scrap paper.
2. DO IT! There's something here for any interest and you'll meet all kinds of people. EH is a remarkable shepherd through 200+ years of printing history.
 3. {no response}
 4. Don't feel you need to do all the readings before the class!
 5. This is an informative course with a wonderful instructor.
 6. {no response}
 7. {no response}
 8. {no response}
 9. RBS is very well managed. From application to pre-arrival, to welcome and organization—everything was well staffed and organized. I was very impressed and appreciated how efficient everyone is.
 10. {no response}
 11. Don't hesitate—this is a great, foundational course. I think it would be a great introduction for beginners. I've taken a lot of classes on early book, but learned much more about modern books than I could ever have picked up on my own just by reading.
 12. Read the Rota, which is a highly accessible introduction to the themes of this course.

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

1. Why does it have to be over??
2. Unique.
3. Fifty pages of handwritten notes is a badge I pin on with an RBS button.
4. It was well-paced and I appreciated the breakfasts, breaks, and snacks! Congenial and fun. I liked EH! He made it congenial and fun.
5. RBS is book nirvana.
6. The RBS experience was engaging, fulfilling, and beyond my expectations!
7. A brilliant and intellectually stimulating week.
8. EH is an outstanding teacher: friendly, approachable, humorous, well-organized, deeply knowledgeable, and wise! If he offers another course, sign me up!
9. RBS was professionally and personally rewarding.
10. I have really enjoyed taking this class! I learned so much over this past week about the book's history. I am so excited about the material, I look forward to reading more about nineteenth-century printing and the book on my own time.
11. I learn so much when I attend Rare Book School—from readings and exercises or demonstrations, from expert instructors like EH, and from an amazing community of bibliophiles from all kinds of backgrounds. The overall experience is priceless.
12. Yes.

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: 9 (75%)

I am a student or non-year-round employee, with a more flexible summer schedule: 3 (25%)

Who paid your RBS tuition costs?

I paid 100% myself: 2 (16.67%)

My institution/employer paid 100%: 6 (50%)

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

My situation does not fit any of the options above: 1 (8.33%)

Who paid your RBS housing expenses?

I paid 100% myself: 4 (33.33%)

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

My institution/employer paid part; I paid the rest: 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: 4 (33.33%)

Who paid your RBS travel expenses?

I paid 100% myself: 4 (33.33%)

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

I used a scholarship/fellowship to cover 100%: 1 (8.33%)

I live locally, and had no travel expenses: 5 (41.67%)

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

Library disciplines:

Archivist: 1 (8.33%)

Library administrator: 2 (16.67%)

Special collections librarian: 1 (8.33%)

Subject specialist/bibliographer: 1 (8.33%)

Student working toward a/n:

Ph.D./D.Phil: 4 (33.33%)

Professional educator:

Full professor: 1 (8.33%)

Other occupations/vocations:

Other: 1 (8.33%)