

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.
2. The assignments were useful. I did not do additional preparation. I do not know. No.
3. Pre-course readings were semi-useful, but definitely not necessary.
4. They were quite useful.
5. The reading list gave a very solid foundation for the course.
6. I did not have access (nor could I arrange access) so cannot contribute an answer. That being said, I shall seek out these resources, for continuing study. It is significant that our instructors have identified these references and I am most appreciative.
7. I found the pre-course reading assignments very helpful.
8. Fine.
9. Yes, very helpful for establishing a background. The list seems like it could use a small update, as I don't remember any of it being published within the last few years.
10. I thoroughly enjoyed the pre-course reading! I did some extra reading and re-familiarizing myself with Greg, because the Bradshaw got me thinking. However, the pre-course reading was not often referenced, and in some cases I wish it had been. Not that the course is a book club, but some acknowledgement of the principles discussed would have gotten students more on the same page.
11. Yes, they helped give background to information learned in class, but we didn't refer to them during class.

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. Content was useful and will continue to be so. But we didn't get it in advance, and PLEASE have print copies provided!! Tuition is expensive; this is not too much to ask.
2. The workbook was appropriate and useful. Yes.
3. I thought the workbook worked well and I liked the digital format. A table of contents/organizational structure might have been helpful.
4. The course workbook is generally very good, but a bit too disjointed to be a useful tool after-the-fact.
5. The workbook was quite useful.
6. The workbook was useful for class reference but, lacking text, will only be of value when (if) I transcribe the class notes and combine them with the images.

7. The workbook was especially helpful in providing visual examples, but it would have been even more helpful with added annotations.
8. Course workbook was great—would have preferred a printed copy though.
9. The workbook is great! I've marked which pages I'll want to use as "cheat sheets" in future work.
10. The course workbook was distributed as a PDF for no discernable reason. There was no instance where a black-and-white paper copy would have hindered learning, and many instances where the use of a PDF hindered following discussion. In many cases, the ability to mark up and make notes on a printed workbook would have been very helpful.
11. Yes, we used the workbook a lot. I liked that it was digital and we could have good color images to look at.

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

1. N/A
2. N/A
3. This was a great RBS course. I really enjoyed all the hands-on experience and combo of physical and digital objects.
4. This was exceptional. I do, however, wish the instructors had been a bit more available during breaks, &c.
5. This was as rigorous, but had more chance for instructor interactions.
6. N/A
7. It was not as intensive as G-10: "Introduction to the Principles of Bibliographical Description," but it was no less informative.
8. {private response}
9. N/A
10. I was glad I had taken DesBib and even more glad I had taken G-45: "Analytical Bibliography," as many of the points made in class were hard to follow without a lot of grounding in bibliographical study. I probably missed a lot in the same vein by lacking a background in manuscripts. Reference to the pre-course reading might have alleviated some of that feeling.
11. They were different in that the other class was on learning a specific skill; this was more of a survey course. I enjoyed both a lot.

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. All aspects equally interesting.
2. Learning elements of descriptive bibliography to analyze basic elements of a book or manuscript was very useful to me since I encounter such descriptions in catalogs and censuses.
3. I most enjoyed the conceptual discussions we had about challenging pre-conceived bibliographical practices/ideas, and found the comparison and contrasting discussions of manuscript vs. print thought provoking.
4. The combination of expertise and inquiry was ideal. I simply don't think this course would work in a setting that didn't have such access to collections of this quality.
5. I was really taken with the opportunities for paper study to deepen our

- understanding of the printing trade.
6. Having no preconceptions about the course, I enrolled to learn about the fifteenth century in print and manuscript and now shall return to evaluate our holdings with the tools that I have (begun to) acquire and share my skills.
 7. The description of incunabula and early printing is most relevant.
 8. Learned lots, as I've come to expect from RBS courses. PN and WN are incredibly knowledgeable.
 9. I was most intrigued by the overlap in manuscript and incunable studies, and seeing where knowledge of one applies to another.
 10. I definitely got great ideas for teaching and instruction, as well as at least one idea for a research project. Best aspect of class is to teach an approach to examining books that truly works for all books, not just fifteenth-century ones.
 11. Yes, I learned so much about the materiality of early printed books and manuscripts. I have plans to learn more and integrate my institution's collections further.
- 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. PN and WN are excellent resources; true specialists. I learned a ton by watching them work, and enjoyed their dynamic. It helped me think about the relationship between manuscript and print by watching how they approach their special fields.
 2. Yes, nothing was left out. Yes.
 3. I did learn what I hoped. I do think a slightly more overtly structured schedule could have helped communicate the material more effectively. Receiving a printed schedule at the beginning of the week would be great.
 4. I absolutely had the experience I hoped I would have.
 5. Yes; No; Yes.
 6. Yes! Yes, the course helped me gain an insight of the depth of my ignorance.
 7. Yes. No. Yes.
 8. The content of the course, despite the promises of its name, was very narrow in scope—perhaps the Penn collections don't have fifteenth-century collections diverse enough, but I'd like to have spent some time on Hebrew or Greek books, &c.. Also, there was rarely time for discussion, and I'm not sure every concept was fully understood at the conclusion of each period.
 9. Yes! I learned even more than I was expecting. PN and WN are a great teaching team.
 10. I could have benefitted from more basics, maybe, but overall I learned a lot. I feel I'll still be having revelations based on knowledge gained in this course years into the future.
 11. Yes, it was perfect for me because I'm a beginner to this area of study, but I felt I could follow along just fine, and it has given me a lot of interest to learn even more.
- 6) *How do you plan to use the skills and knowledge acquired during your time here?*
1. Thinking differently about the book; thinking about manuscript-print

- relationships.
2. I hope to apply this understanding at the workplace when encountering manuscript and book descriptions.
 3. They will provide an important foundation for my scholarly research and teaching.
 4. I plan to immediately apply the methods of inquiry, philosophically speaking, to my examination of books and manuscripts going forward.
 5. I will be able to directly apply concepts in my day-to-day public service and cataloging duties.
 6. See Q4 above. I will also have a more critical approach to offers for acquisition.
 7. I plan to use the skills and information in upgrading cataloging records, assisting researchers, and in providing tours to the public.
 8. Research and teaching. General competency.
 9. To look at my institution's collection and grow as a new professional. This course has helped me with building specialist knowledge.
 10. In my work as a curator and in my research as a scholar.
 11. It will be useful in dealing with structural and descriptive metadata in my digitization projects.
- 7) *Please briefly describe the intellectual level of the course. What sort of person might benefit the most from taking it?*
1. Librarians, grad students, professors.
 2. Anyone involved with rare books could benefit enormously from this expertise.
 3. Intellectual level was relatively high. I was surprised that there were not as many academics in the course as I could see them benefitting.
 4. This class was well suited to Ph.D. researchers and curators. To some extent, the methods and ideas clashed with accepted cataloging/professional librarian practices. Some might find this disconcerting—and in a way, it is—but I found that perspective useful.
 5. I think that this course can be approached fairly well by those with some background in early book history. For those without, it may be somewhat challenging to keep up with the pace of the course.
 6. I have had a good deal of hands-on experience as a curator but none as a cataloger or bibliographer. The material was presented in a logical order, well organized, and was reinforced by the dialogue between WN and PN.
 7. {no response}
 8. There were many introductory sessions, but they felt necessary because the content was new to most of the students. Requiring codicology or paleography or DesBib as prerequisites might give PN and WN a chance to address more complex topics.
 9. It's not for someone without basic knowledge of terms and such, but it was still accessible as my first RBS course.
 10. Intellectual level was high. I would say if you try the pre-course reading and have trouble, it may be too much until you have taken other courses first.
 11. I think it could be appropriate for people with at least some level of knowledge about manuscripts and incunables, up to an advanced level of understanding.
- 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. How to think about an incunable; how to think about an exemplar; how varied the forms are; overlap between manuscript and print.
2. {no response}
3. I really found the discussions we had about similarities between manuscript and printed pages stimulating, and also enjoyed discussing the limitations of collation for manuscript.
4. Having PN walk us through his approach to bibliographical inquiry was revelatory, and worth the price of admission on its own.
5. This course illustrated, in a way that was remarkably exciting, how dynamic and inventive the incunable period was.
6. There is always something new to learn when examining incunables. Lots of “ahas”!
7. How do I choose just one?
8. Lots of new information.
9. I haven’t worked with collation much and found it confusing until PN explained it. It just clicked.
10. Other than my satisfaction that even the course instructors did not know the answers to some of my questions/confusions, not really.
11. Looking at original copies after discussing a topic helped to really drive home what we talked about.

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

1. PN and WN seemed so focused on using breaks and lunches as planning time that they rushed us out of the room and didn’t give us the chance to ask questions informally. This to me was a real shame. This lack of informal dialogue and chance to follow up essentially confined our experience to the classroom, and I then felt like asking questions was not allowed or appropriate. I’d much rather have a less-planned session and the chance to ask questions. I was quite happy to be in on the PN & WN dialogue (and liked watching them approach problems together), but wish they had included students more in this process.
2. Perhaps a syllabus and/or lesson plans we can follow along with. Also, two chances at hands-on analysis: a manuscript AND an incunable!
3. I do think a bit more of a systematic approach could be good. I would also have liked to look at more diverse materials—Greek, Hebrew printing, and more secular (not only sacred) texts.
4. Again, more structured time for questions/one-on-one interactions. I would have also liked a sheet/email that listed the call numbers of the items we looked at, for future reference. Links to catalog records/digital objects would have been really helpful.
5. I think I would have liked more unstructured time to continue asking questions of instructors.
6. Make the readings available online if possible.
7. It was often difficult to see the details of a physical example as a group.
8. {private response}
9. More details about the field trip ahead of time (got final details the day before!).
10. A section on reference sources for fifteenth-century books—it was covered very

- briefly, but could have been more detailed.
11. Easier access to be able to see the books while we talked about them. Sometimes it was too crowded to get a good look while we were all looking at a book.
- 10) *Do you feel that you got your money's worth? Would you recommend the course to others?*
1. Yes, and yes.
 2. Yes.
 3. Yes.
 4. Yes, and yes.
 5. Yes, very much so.
 6. Yes, and yes.
 7. This course is well worth the cost, and I will definitely recommend it to my coworkers and others interested in attending RBS.
 8. It was worth it for PN and WN.
 9. Yes, and yes! Loved it.
 10. Yes, and yes...but selectively, because it really was very high level.
 11. Yes to both.
- 11) *If your course made any trips outside of the classroom, do you feel that they were time well spent?*
1. Yes, the trip to the Scheide Library was amazing.
 2. Yes, very much so.
 3. Princeton was neat, and we saw a lot of great stuff. I do wish it had felt more integrated into the progression of the course, not just reviewing topics/books we had already covered.
 4. The Scheide Library was incredible. I hope this course will never be held without a trip there.
 5. Our trip to the Scheide Library was really a highlight.
 6. Scheide at Princeton? Nonpareil!
 7. Yes.
 8. Princeton trip was good, but it felt very rushed. I'd rather have spent more time with each object than rushing. Also, show-and-tell format with thirteen people makes it difficult to see.
 9. Definitely! You can talk about a book at length or view images, but there's nothing like seeing a Gutenberg Bible in person.
 10. The trip to the Scheide was PHENOMENAL. The librarians there were knowledgeable and professional, the collections AMAZING—so wonderful!
 11. Going to the Scheide Library was one of my favorite experiences of the whole course. We covered as much as we could in one day, the first forty years of printing.
- 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. Wished we'd had more informal gatherings (e.g., a designated bar where

- people often go out).
2. {no response}
 3. I wish the evening lecture had been even slightly related to one of the two courses offered, even broadly—something Renaissance would have made lots of sense.
 4. The lecture was good, but it was a bit specific, and not really in my field of interest.
 5. I thought they were valuable. I think that the cost of the Sunday reception was very reasonable, but think it should have been mentioned before we were asked to RSVP.
 6. Enjoyed evening lecture, interesting subject. Opportunity to network with classmates.
 7. I did attend Tuesday evening's lecture, and was glad that I did.
 8. N/A
 9. We only had the Tuesday lecture, which I very much enjoyed.
 10. Lynne Farrington's lecture was of particular interest to me, and I thought very in line with RBS's ethos—I loved that we got to see examples from the Penn collections!
 11. Yes, I went to the dinner on Sunday. I had to miss Lynne Farrington's lecture unfortunately.

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

1. Definitely recommend. You will learn a lot and come away with new ideas. Great course.
2. {no response}
3. {no response}
4. {no response}
5. Talk to the instructors. They are both expert and personable.
6. Do the reading!
7. Take the time to read the articles and books on the advance reading list. Although not entirely necessary to get through the week, it is helpful to have an understanding of the field of research.
8. Penn's campus and facilities are lovely. PN, WN, and IG are great people and top scholars.
9. They cover a lot of ground, so be ready to be mentally tired at the end of the day. However, it is totally worth it.
10. Take DesBib first...or, have studied bibliography first.
11. Do the reading beforehand; it provides good context for the course.

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

1. Fabulous.
2. My RBS experience was very beneficial, and I see it as a unique opportunity for professional development.
3. Exhausting but fun.
4. Completely delightful immersion in bibliography with a combination of instructors and collections that has to be close to unique in this world.
5. Mid-morning sun rays

- Filtered through linen paper;
Bull's head watermark
6. Sitting at my desk
Looking deeply in the text
Ha! I see it now
 7. My words will not do justice to such a visually and intellectually rewarding experience.
 8. Always intense, rewarding, and productive.
 9. Enlightening and exhausting (in a good way).
 10. {no response}
 11. Paper, watermarks, collation...oh my!

Student Data

Number of respondents: 11 (of 11)

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

- My institution/employer gave me professional leave time: 7 (63.64%)
I am a student or non-year-round employee, with a more flexible summer schedule: 3 (27.27%)
My situation does not fit any of the options above: 1 (9.09%)

Who paid your RBS tuition costs?

- I paid 100% myself: 1 (9.09%)
My institution/employer paid 100%: 5 (45.45%)
I used a scholarship/fellowship to pay/waive 100%: 3 (27.27%)
I used a scholarship/fellowship to pay/waive part; my institution/employer paid the rest: 1 (9.09%)
I exchanged goods or services in lieu of tuition: 1 (9.09%)

Who paid your RBS housing expenses?

- My institution/employer paid 100%: 4 (36.36%)
My institution/employer paid part; I paid the rest: 1 (9.09%)
I used a scholarship/fellowship to cover 100%: 2 (18.18%)
I stayed with friends/family, or stayed in my own home and commuted: 4 (36.36%)

Who paid your RBS travel expenses?

- I paid 100% myself: 1 (9.09%)
My institution/employer paid 100%: 4 (36.36%)
My institution/employer paid part; I paid the rest: 1 (9.09%)
I used a scholarship/fellowship to cover 100%: 2 (18.18%)

I live locally, and had no travel expenses: 3 (27.27%)

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

Library disciplines:

Cataloger/metadata librarian: 2 (18.18%)

Curator: 3 (27.27%)

Digital collections librarian: 1 (9.09%)

Subject specialist/bibliographer: 1 (9.09%)

Student working toward a/n:

M.L.I.S./M.L.S.: 1 (9.09%)

Ph.D./D.Phil: 2 (18.18%)

Professional educator:

Assistant professor: 1 (9.09%)