

### **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. The pre-course reading assignments were extremely useful, but the class was so well done that if you were not able to finish the readings, you could still follow along.
  2. All very useful as background for the week. Even though we don't delve into them overtly, they nevertheless overlapped with course content at multiple points. Good reads, I have to say.
  3. Yes, but getting the syllabus earlier than the day before we began would have been desirable. It would have helped one situate the readings.
  4. Appreciate reading assignments for this course.
  5. I loved the pre-course readings; excellent preparation. I also liked that PS created a classroom environment that did not demand full recall, but built upon those readings.
  6. The pre-course reading was very useful. I especially enjoyed the de Hamel reading. I did do some additional subject-specific reading on my own.
  7. Very much so! The readings were very helpful and will be used in my work.
  8. The readings were useful for the course but more importantly, they will be useful as I continue to think about the questions we discussed.
  9. Very useful. No other prep required.
  10. The pre-course readings were all very helpful in preparing for the discussions, and in starting to think about the material to be covered. The week-long course is intense; it's advisable to arrive in a frame of mind receptive to the themes and attuned to the vocabulary to be used.
  11. Pre-course readings were extremely helpful, and made anticipation for the first day of class very high.
  
- 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 workbooks were extremely useful as were the hands-on assignments that we did while working in partnerships or groups. Content was appropriate and fascinating; I will absolutely use what I learned here in the workplace. Having the books surround the students was amazing.
  2. We could have spent a few minutes going through these. I never felt I understood how we were going to use the workbook. I see now that they are a "clippings file" of examples, some of which are also available digitally. I'll have to look more closely at these.
  3. I was skeptical about the workbook when I read parts of it prior to 11 July (see Q1),

but found it was most effective once the seminar began. I'd read some of it at night during the week, finding that it comes into focus more and more. I will definitely continue to use it.

4. A treasure trove. Useful for my own work and for pedagogy.
5. Very useful, and will continue to be useful as reference material, as an aid to memory, and especially pedagogically.
6. Content was appropriate and extremely useful for me to continue developing ideas about subjects covered in the course.
7. The workbook was copious! The readings were quite useful though I wish they had been used a bit more in the class.
8. I liked the instructor's approach to the material, which was to provide us with a lot of material, not all of which we used in class, but all of which will be useful resources as I proceed with my research.
9. Excellent, and will continue to be of use.
10. The course workbook will be useful to me in pursuing some of the themes in greater detail. The references and extracts are well chosen, and I can recommend them to colleagues and students.
11. The workbook was very generous and useful along with the shared Dropbox folder that PS has given the class access to.

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

1. N/A
2. The usual RBS high quality instructor, good materials, relevant topic, and keen classmates. A+.
3. This one was far better organized, satisfyingly well-focused, and at once recursive and cumulative. All of which the previous course I took was not.
4. DesBib was a skill-based course with necessary homework. Printed Book, too, had a skill component. This course ranged across intellectual history, material culture, studies, and textual interpretation. Thus, it was more discursive. Some skills, but not much.
5. N/A
6. N/A
7. This was as good and helpful as BS's "Advanced Seminar in Medieval Manuscript Studies."
8. N/A
9. Very favorably, especially as a course in the history series.
10. N/A
11. I enjoyed this class, however the previous class was more suited to my interests and knowledge bank. I did appreciate exposure to new concepts, and hearing classmates' research interests.

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 material discussed was very new to me. I feel as though everything brought tremendous insight.
2. Really quite a lot of good insights, and I do think the class will change the focus of some of my own reading, particularly relating to the Vulgate Bible and primers.

3. I'd reverse the questions—were any aspects uninteresting or irrelevant for me? NO. I was captivated virtually every second despite bouts of fatigue. I'd read parts of the Bible and knew a little about a few of the eras covered and about "book" history but am best described as a novice. I will build on the ideas and information of this course in research and teaching.
  4. Lots of new insights, mainly because the course was recursive and condensed. My own disparate knowledge came together at moments of the course.
  5. I enjoyed it all, but especially commonplace books, transcriptions, psalms, and learning more about Penn's collections. Very productive for teaching ideas.
  6. The course was entirely interesting and relevant to my interests in the history of printing liturgical texts. I've come away with a new understanding of how and why biblical texts are read and produced.
  7. Too many to count! The information was wide-ranging and I feel as if there was something for everyone.
  8. So many new insights, ideas, and plans that it would be difficult to list them. I found the course incredibly illuminating.
  9. The incredible array of visual images was especially helpful for me since that is not my area of specialization.
  10. Yes. The breadth and scope of this course is a great feature. Matters were discussed and taught in detail, but most of all, the course helped me to see the connections and relationships between different forms and genres, all drawing upon the Bible.
  11. Typography; biblical art; genealogy (books and persons); printing and publishing (physical and financial). Teaching: some of the typography exercises can be used in X'n education in the local church.
- 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! The instructor was helpful and inspirational. I learned even more that I had hoped.
  2. I think I learned quite a lot, even without knowing what to expect. Whatever expectations I might have had don't matter. I'm quite happy to just let PS go where he wants.
  3. I'd expected to get at readers a little more, but given the skills and information I'm coming in with, I can feel better equipped to explore that dimension (i.e., reading practices).
  4. Yes. Yes.
  5. This was an overview rather than a deep dive into any one period, and provided the synthetic experience I hoped for. Each unit could be productively explored in greater depth, but that would be a series of courses.
  6. Everything was covered, though we did run short of time on some topics. I learned much of what I was hoping to learn, and more that I hadn't expected.
  7. I learned exactly what I wanted. PS is absolutely generous, and a wonderful teacher.
  8. Yes, absolutely. I wanted to learn about the relationship between reading practices and the material formats of books, which I did.
  9. I would have preferred a more historically linear approach (i.e., one that hewed

- closer to de Hamel's text that we read in preparation).
10. The major points were well illustrated and developed. It was important and rewarding to hear PS's explication of points that are his own research interests. As I had hoped, the course taught me about the history of reading, how that history is done, and how it relates to the material history of the book.
  11. Modern interpretation was left to the last five minutes of class, an area I was especially interested in given the course description and my skill set.
- 6) *How do you plan to use the skills and knowledge acquired during your time here?*
1. I plan to use what I learned here daily. I will feel more confident assisting scholars and answering questions and interpreting text because of this class.
  2. I'd like to use them with identifying and organizing our biblical holdings and make myself more useful as an interpreter.
  3. In scholarship course, development, and teaching; in my intellectual life in general.
  4. My own research program as well as new course development.
  5. Pedagogically, developing undergraduate and graduate courses. Research ideas/areas for exploration in new research project.
  6. I hope to use the skills I acquired to inform my future comparative exploration of western and eastern biblical texts.
  7. I plan to integrate this class into my own work on devotional reading practices. It will influence my understanding of the later period particularly.
  8. As I develop my current book project.
  9. In my own research on early modern Bible reception and in teaching comparative literature (to demonstrate different instantiations of scripture across cultural and historical movements).
  10. I plan to extend my own research into Bibles and related books and to present materials from my library to students with the expertise gained.
  11. Integration in courses at the university and local church level. Also advocacy for preservation in community archives.
- 7) *Please briefly describe the intellectual level of the course. What sort of person might benefit the most from taking it?*
1. People in the field, Bible enthusiasts, history researchers, librarians....
  2. Advanced content level. Really best for persons with some academic experience.
  3. I can only say that as someone with virtually no knowledge of the Bible and its history, I have benefitted enormously—more than I could have imagined beforehand.
  4. A great introduction to material reading practices—the Ph.D. student as well as any academic whose work touches on early modern European reading practices.
  5. Some knowledge of book history is helpful, but not necessary; biblical knowledge helpful, but not necessary. Wide range of areas of expertise could be helped by this course.
  6. Certainly a special collections librarian or an academic interested in material history.
  7. There were many different levels and I think anyone with some academic background could perform well.

8. As an academic, I benefitted immensely. I'm not sure I can speak for other types or sorts of people.
  9. Someone with some background in book history and Western religious studies. In general, I found much of the material introductory, but the course was full of fascinating detail, and specific artifacts that continued to surprise me.
  10. Special collections librarians, academics. The Bible topic is relevant to any Western cultural studies. English and North American studies are best represented in the materials.
  11. Very high. One must know a great deal of early European history, and have a penchant for British humor and popular culture.
- 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. Basically, my "aha" moment was the realization of how much of history and the course of the world related back to the Bible. I HAD NO IDEA!
  2. A real "aha" realization for me was how much the visual and textual traditions are conflated and extra biblical.
  3. Too many to identify, but: typological reading, explained and demonstrated repeatedly, bringing in the usual, the verbal does not equal more, with lots of hands-on experience.
  4. Learning to use biblical calendars.
  5. PS's teaching style as a whole was fantastic—engaging, encouraging, knowledgeable.
  6. I greatly enjoyed the group exercise of working on one printed Bible as a class. It was a great way to discover intellectual and aesthetic aspects of Bible production I hadn't encountered previously.
  7. The emphasis on the Psalms was fantastic. I had no idea they were so important to the Middle Ages. This is hugely helpful.
  8. Every day had "aha" moments. The visual material from the Middle Ages was especially striking.
  9. Our discussion of the nuanced relationship between codex and scroll/continuous and discontinuous reading were very useful.
  10. Psalms, psalms, psalms.
  11. The class visit to the Philadelphia Museum of Art was especially insightful and a nice break from lectures. It also undergirded exercises that included observing woodcut images.
- 9) *How could the course have been improved?*
1. N/A
  2. A little more of a walk-through of the syllabus, and explanation of the arc of the course.
  3. See Q1.
  4. {no response}
  5. Perhaps saving the last day for students' areas of expertise, or as a day to build on earlier units that students found particularly interesting/helpful.
  6. I learned a tremendous amount, but felt limited in the extent I could contribute to

discussion at times. I don't think this was a consequence of how the course was run, however.

7. Perhaps a slightly more realistic schedule would have been nice—we didn't cover many things on the syllabus.
8. Nothing jumps to mind as a suggestion. I thought there was a great balance between discussion and hands-on exercises.
9. More extended student projects/presentations on a single book? I felt in general that I didn't get as much time with any given book as I would have liked.
10. {no response}
11. {no response}

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

1. Yes, and yes.
2. I am quite satisfied, and I would recommend to others any opportunity to learn from PS.
3. Without question—and then some. I will recommend it enthusiastically and unconditionally.
4. Yes, and yes.
5. Yes.
6. Absolutely! A tremendous amount of useful information for five days.
7. Absolutely on both counts!
8. Absolutely.
9. Yes, definitely.
10. Yes, heartily.
11. Yes. The scholarship received was worth it. I would recommend the course to Bible scholars specifically.

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

1. The field trip to the Philadelphia Museum of Art was a really good addition to the class. It was great to get out of the classroom. PS is extremely energetic and knowledgeable. Fantastic combination.
2. Yes, the museum was a great choice. I could have stayed longer.
3. Yes—to the Philadelphia Museum of Art.
4. N/A
5. Yes. The trip to the museum was fantastic. I loved seeing different representations of our course materials.
6. Yes, we went to the Philadelphia Museum of Art for a guided tour with PS. It was a great way to see the ideas we were discussing through a new context.
7. Yes! Our trip to the Philadelphia Museum of Art was a highlight of the course.
8. We went to the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and yes, it was time well spent. It was a lot of fun.
9. Yes, although I think a more focused approach to the museum's collection might have helped me organize my thoughts.
10. Yes, the trip to the Philadelphia Museum of Art greatly reinforced and illustrated the themes of the course.

11. The Philadelphia Museum of Art was time well spent, though it could've been scheduled during allotted class time.

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. I enjoyed the lecture on the Gotham Book Mart!
2. I enjoyed the evening lecture even though it was not relevant to my work directly.
3. The lecture on the Gotham Bookstore was fascinating, albeit not directly relevant to our course.
4. N/A
5. Sunday night dinner was a lovely introduction to the group. I did not attend the optional lecture.
6. The Tuesday lecture was wonderful. I appreciated learning more about Penn's collection strengths and its recent acquisitions.
7. N/A
8. The talk was interesting, and the reception was nice. Yes, they were a good use of time.
9. Events were enjoyable, although the Tuesday lecture was not particularly relevant to my interests.
10. {no response}
11. The lecture on the Gotham Bookstore was relevant and quite interesting.

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

1. If you get a chance to take a course with PS, do it! No one else can compare!
2. PS is a lot of fun. Be ready to laugh. Don't stress out.
3. PS's unflagging energy, extraordinary knowledge, intense curiosity, and respect for all of us, as well as his great skill as a teacher, made every minute a pleasure.
4. {no response}
5. {no response}
6. Come prepared to learn new skills, and to contribute personal knowledge!
7. Read the introductory material—it's very engaging and primes the course material.
8. It's a demanding, but simultaneously fun and rewarding week.
9. Brush up on early modern British political/religious history, and the nuances of Reformation-era sectarianism.
10. {no response}
11. PS is a very engaging professor, and incorporates various learning styles.

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

1. It was overwhelming at first, but by day four I did not want the class to end!
2. Lifelong education.
3. THANK YOU.
4. Over the next month or so, I will review all course materials as I return to my

- project. I know that I will see my project with a better perspective and more confidence.
5. This was a wonderful experience! Thank you, Lynne Farrington and PS!
  6. Wow!
  7. I always want to come back for more!
  8. Phenomenal. Stimulating and energizing...and exhausting! Thank you so much for such a wonderful, engaging week, and welcoming course atmosphere!
  9. Wide-ranging exploration of early modern/medieval Western Bibles.
  10. Immersion in the familiar to emerge renewed.
  11. {no response}

## **Student Data**

*Number of respondents:* 11 (of 12)

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

- My institution/employer gave me professional leave time: 4 (36.36%)  
My institution/employer did not give me professional leave; I used paid or vacation days: 1 (9.09%)  
I am a student or non-year-round employee, with a more flexible summer schedule: 4 (36.36%)  
My situation does not fit any of the options above: 2 (18.18%)

*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%: 5 (45.45%)

*Who paid your RBS housing expenses?*

- I paid 100% myself: 3 (27.27%)  
My institution/employer paid 100%: 1 (9.09%)  
My institution/employer paid part; I paid the rest: 1 (9.09%)  
I used a scholarship/fellowship to cover 100%: 1 (9.09%)  
I used a scholarship/fellowship to cover part; I paid the rest: 1 (9.09%)  
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: 3 (27.27%)  
My institution/employer paid 100%: 3 (27.27%)  
My institution/employer paid part; I paid the rest: 1 (9.09%)

I used a scholarship/fellowship to cover 100%: 1 (9.09%)

I used a scholarship/fellowship to cover part; I paid the rest: 1 (9.09%)

I live locally, and had no travel expenses: 2 (18.18%)

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

**Library disciplines:**

Archivist: 1 (9.09%)

Special collections librarian: 3 (27.27%)

Subject specialist/bibliographer: 1 (9.09%)

**Student working toward a/n:**

Ph.D./D.Phil: 1 (9.09%)

**Professional educator:**

Assistant professor: 1 (9.09%)

Associate professor: 1 (9.09%)

Full professor: 2 (18.18%)

**Other occupations/vocations:**

Post-doctoral fellow/researcher/scholar: 1 (9.09%)