

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, especially Gaskell. I do think it could be helpful if the instructor sent out an email a few days to a week ahead of time, informing the students which texts/what portions he plans to cover the first day, so the student could reread and be doubly prepared if so desired.
2. I did all the required reading and also almost finished the recommended additional reading. I am glad I did. Maybe add Tanselle to required reading.
3. The readings in Gaskell were extremely useful.
4. Yes, entirely appropriate.
5. The pre-course readings were very useful and helped to ground my understanding. I imagine that without them, each day might be very overwhelming. I actually went back to the readings after each day and felt as though that action further solidified my understanding.
6. Gaskell was useful, not too much reading, and necessary to have read ahead of time. I couldn't get a hold of Pearson or Bowers (nor could many others), so it might be helpful to have PDFs of some of the more important chapters, say, Bowers, chapter 5.
7. The required pre-course reading was very helpful as it was the foundation for the course. I would suggest "strongly rec." the recommended readings, as they were essential for some of the class readings.
8. Yes, both were useful and manageable. The combination of Gaskell and the DVD made for excellent preparation material.
9. Very useful. Maybe include the practice folding/cutting sheets in class activities students undertake.
10. Yes, the assigned readings in Gaskell were great. They were very helpful in following and better understanding the lectures and class discussions. I'm not sure about buying the DVD, however. Interesting, certainly, but perhaps consider listing as recommended instead of required?
11. The pre-course readings were an excellent way to familiarize oneself with the major elements of describing a hand-press book. It would be helpful if RBS had the required reading books available through the online store.
12. Yes, pre-course readings very useful. Additional preparation included some extra reading.

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 course workbook DW provided is great! I really appreciate DW's teaching

- style and organization. It was evident how much effort he put into preparation. The workbook was a helpful guide during class, and it will be a great resource in the future, particularly the structured exit reading list. My only suggestion would be to include some blank leaves dispersed throughout the workbook for note taking.
2. The workbook is fantastic. It will be a constant reference tool when I return to my library. Very well presented and interesting. It was excellent—pure and simple!
 3. The workbook is great, and will be a useful resource for me in the future. It helped me not feel overwhelmed with needing to write everything down.
 4. Excellent; I will consult it after. I particularly liked the bibliography for further reading. Not so helpful are the pages showing inadequacy of Worldcat, given that its metadata schemes weren't developed for the hand press book.
 5. The workbook was very useful and served as a solid companion to the class. I plan to keep it on my desk, and imagine I will frequently return to it.
 6. Excellent, and I will consult it often in the future, I'm sure. The exit reading list looks great, and DW's discussion of various bibliographic resources will be useful.
 7. The course workbook was so helpful. I definitely think that it is something that I will refer back to in years to come. Maybe some of the images included could be in color. {private response}
 8. Excellent. The materials were well organized, relevant, and will be of use in the future.
 9. Definitely useful.
 10. The workbook is AMAZING—chock full of terrific descriptive content and many illustrative photos. I will use it all the time, and am most grateful for the fabulous exit list of recommended readings.
 11. The class workbook will be an extremely useful tool for me as a reference not only to concepts we discussed, but also for the extensive list of further reference sources DW provided in it. During the class, it was a great way to frame the overall schedule of the week and have detailed visual and written examples of major concepts.
 12. Course workbook was very helpful. Will continue to use as a resource.

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

1. N/A
2. The best.
3. N/A
4. N/A
5. N/A
6. N/A
7. N/A
8. Superb. Certainly among the best that I've taken.
9. Same high-quality instruction with brilliantly coordinated material examples and images.
10. They've all been great, but this is probably my favorite so far.
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. Writing collation formulas was completely new for me, so I found this to be the most interesting part of the class. I appreciated the time set aside for us in the evenings to investigate volumes at our own pace and draw up said formulas.
 2. The entire course will be relevant to the next undertaking I will be doing at work. It was good to get an insight into the book trade and catalogs, but the crux of the course for me was understanding how the paper format transforms into the book and how the printer organizes the pages for printing. I liked the detective work involved in establishing editions, also.
 3. Learning to read and write collation formulas was the most useful part of this course for me. I also feel much more confident about identifying format.
 4. I emerged with a much better understanding of the hand press book as a physical object, and also saw how abstractions like collation emerge from the object itself.
 5. I really appreciated the discussions about bindings and illustrations. Those were the areas that were least familiar to me, and I feel that I now have a better understanding. The sheer breadth of material used to highlight the different styles was incredible (and incredibly helpful).
 6. The trip to SC was—by far—the highlight of the course. Amazing and invaluable experience.
 7. I found the discussions of bindings, provenance, and illustrations most interesting, but that may be because of my own interests. I did enjoy learning about paper, format, collation, and signatures too. Basically the whole course was so good.
 8. The introduction to papers and typography were most valuable to me personally. I intend to deepen the bibliographical content of all my future courses.
 9. Learning book structures and matching binding was especially clarifying. I'd like to try it out personally or with students. I also appreciated insights into illustration processes.
 10. I loved the fact that it felt like just the right amount of breadth and depth. Great survey of paper, type, bindings, collation and format, illustrations, provenance, and more. Made me feel like I now have a solid handle on those topics but also left me eager to learn more.
 11. I really enjoyed learning about the physical processes of making hand press books, and the opportunity to actually print was a great way to better understand the production process. I am excited to apply some of the {illegible} concepts we discussed in my work as a {illegible} and better describe rare materials.
 12. Interests on several levels. First, provided good insights into developing a course/teaching in the area. Second, several methods and techniques framed current research and were very helpful in developing current work. Third, the course has provided insights into project planning progress.
- 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. I was expecting the class to have a little more meat, more depth, but this, I believe, was more of an expectation I fabricated than one that was pulled from the class description. So, no, I did not learn what I had hoped, but I did gain some new knowledge, and had a pleasant experience overall.

2. The instructor was inspiring. He gave the breadth of the field, and was very encouraging to learn more. He covered everything and more.
3. I had hoped for more instruction on bindings, but I think that was out of the scope of this course.
4. DW has crafted a superb course. Every day built on what we learned previously, so I feel I have a rock solid foundation.
5. DW was very responsive to questions, and laid out a very reasonable timeline for discussing them. I do feel I acquired skills promised in the course description, skills that I can build upon as I gain experience in my field.
6. I learned far more than I expected to, and the course delivered everything it promised.
7. Yes, it followed the course description.
8. Yes. DW went above and beyond in providing hands-on exercises to develop our bibliographical skills. DW is also an excellent instructor with a firm sense of how to effectively run a course. His expertise was on display throughout.
9. Mission accomplished. I would have been interested to learn a bit more about the transition from the hand press to other modes of mechanized production, maybe just perspective on why the course ends when it does with examples.
10. Absolutely learned everything promised—and more!
11. Yes. I came into the class with a decent exposure to hand-press books and knowledgeable of cataloging description standards, but DW's class enabled me to learn more about the depth of {illegible} that can be applied to books and I have gained a much more solid understanding of how to construct a true bibliographical formula and collation.
12. Yes, instructors very helpful, knowledgeable, aiding all aspects of skill/information acquirement desired.

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

1. I will be able to incorporate some of the principles that I learned this week into my conservation reports.
2. I plan to use the collation and format knowledge on a daily basis at work. I will be more sensitive to the illustrations, the type, the structure, and bindings of the sixteenth-century books I will be handling for the next 18 months.
3. This will help me write better reports for conservation treatments that can be meaningful to bibliographers.
4. In writing a new book.
5. I primarily work with nineteenth- and twentieth-century materials. My notes, the course book, and the resources list have given me a pathway for working with hand-press era materials in a systematic way.
6. Perhaps only indirectly, but I will take a much higher appreciation for (and knowledge of) book structure and printing processes into my teaching and research.
7. I plan to go back to my institution and re-examine some of our books for the unique features we learned about in class. I believe that I now have a better understanding of the book as object.
8. See Q4 above.
9. By teaching book history either as a stand-alone class or integrating this into other courses. I'll be rethinking, too, any assumptions I had about the stability of any

- bibliographic object and its description/metadata.
10. I talk to students a fair amount about special collections, and feel like I now have so much more to share with them regarding the topics I listed in Q4 above. I also have lots of things to look for now in my collection that I wouldn't have known to look for or to understand before taking this class.
 11. I will use the skills I acquired during this course almost daily as I examine and create catalog records for rare books.
 12. 1. Finish and revise current publication to proper standard; 2. Incorporate into research, especially project application; 3. Further study as per workbook and other sources and insights generated in/by course; 4. Develop course and teaching aids into discipline; 5. Develop and enlarge my own collection and practices.
- 7) *Please briefly describe the intellectual level of the course. What sort of person might benefit the most from taking it?*
1. It is a good primer for those who have had very little to no exposure to describing the physical features or understanding the materials of books.
 2. The people who apply and are accepted into the course define the intellectual level of the course: educated, self-starters, book curious, and motivated.
 3. What a strange question.
 4. Equivalent to a graduate level course; short duration prevented us from doing the deep reading of graduate semester, but that was OK with me given that we had more time to do hands-on learning.
 5. The course was fairly intensive, and is for the person who truly wants an introduction to bibliography. Some understanding of the hand-press era would most likely be useful, but if you do the advanced reading you should be fine.
 6. Depends on the individual and their level of engagement, but I'd say middling. In many ways it's a skills course. I would have appreciated deeper discussions of the origins, implications, and ideology of bibliographical study, but I also recognize that this was not the place for it.
 7. I think the course is most suited for rare book catalogers, rare book librarians, and faculty teaching a history of the book course.
 8. Very high. Valuable for both academics and rare book librarians.
 9. For me, the course offered a guided tour of Gaskell in the best sense: as preparation for more complex work or for teaching. Offers a solid historical foundation.
 10. I think anyone interested in printed books to 1800 (and even beyond) would get a lot out of the course—curators, catalogers, professors who teach about the book or are interested in bibliography. I think it's particularly great as a detailed survey for newbies to this world—probably not for the skilled bibliographer.
 11. Anyone who either in their research or working in a library/museum/&c. who regularly encounters books from the hand-press period would benefit from this class.
 12. Good engagement allowing for intellectual development at different pace and levels through practice and opportunity to interact with the material.
- 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. Pen facsimiles!
2. The last evening (Thurs.) when doing the optional description workshop, the “aha” moment came after practicing on three books the collation formula. Realized I had been muddling foliation with pagination. They are two distinct functions of collation.
3. I was very excited to learn about pen facsimiles—that was totally new to me.
4. Printing the form in the press allowed me to really ground the theory in actual practice. In effect, they allowed the many “aha” moments in the class to happen.
5. Operating the hand press was a real “aha” moment. I’ve read about them and even watched videos, but actually moving the frisket and pulling the handle were incredible. About a day into the course I also started to “look closer” and see all the smaller aspects that separate out printed works (illustration, typeface, spacing, &c.); that was exciting.
6. I will never look at a book—any book—the same way again. The lectures on type, paper, and the printing process were especially useful to me.
7. I had seen signature marks in books prior to the class, but did not know what they meant. I am so excited to know how to read them!
8. Putting together my first collation formula correctly! I also benefitted from the typesetting exercise.
9. Books do not equal bindings. It’s a basic insight, but pretty consequential.
10. Loved getting to use the printing press and set type—that really helped my understanding of the mechanics slip into place. DW was also wonderful about providing other physical examples of whatever we were discussing—bindings, paper, indexing, provenance and so much more. I loved the little section at the end on identifying false imprints.
11. The printing demo/opportunity to ink and pull the press and setting type were great ways of getting a better sense of the physical nature of printing.
12. Yes, particularly through specific examples, hands-on practice and exercises and good humor of instructor.

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

1. I came with a number of questions and left with plenty unanswered—many of which I think DW could knowledgeably answer. No one wants to be the student that keeps interrupting the instructor with their questions, particularly in a class where everyone potentially has a different knowledge base and intentions for taking the class. I wonder if some brief one-on-one time could be arranged near the end of the week, perhaps during the evening workshop sessions, where students if they fancied could meet with DW with a prepared list of questions. Instructors would probably hate this idea.
2. I do not know how to answer. It was excellent.
3. {private response}
4. I would have liked if some of the material we saw in class could have been held in SC so that we could spend more time looking and examining outside of class.
5. I really enjoyed every part of the course.
6. Impossible to improve on perfection. My only suggestion might be to schedule the SC visit on Friday rather than Thursday because it was difficult to take in new information on the last day of a long week.

7. I think that it could be improved by having more opportunities to see examples of a concept that is being talked about. The books circulate the room, but by the time the book gets to you it may be 10–15 minutes later.
 8. This is an exceptionally well-designed course.
 9. Maybe a few hands-on exercises in material prep or book construction? If anything. Or examples of printing which did not become books (e.g., broadsides, ephemera).
 10. Honestly can't think of a single way to improve it.
 11. {no response}
 12. {no response}
- 10) *Do you feel that you got your money's worth? Would you recommend the course to others?*
1. I was fortunate enough to have a scholarship. I would have, however, been disappointed if I had spent my own money because there was not enough new information for me. (This has nothing to do with RBS or the instructor; the fault is mine.) But, sure, yes, I would recommend this class to the right individual.
 2. Yes to both questions.
 3. {private response}
 4. Yes, absolutely. It was so worth it to have the wealth of examples so that with every point, we could see and touch what we were discussing.
 5. I do! (I received a scholarship but would've paid for the course.) I also plan to recommend it.
 6. Five stars. Would take again!
 7. Yes, and yes. It was truly an honor and pleasure to learn from DW.
 8. Yes, and yes.
 9. Yes. People might want to be aware of overlaps with other courses or experiences.
 10. 100%.
 11. Absolutely. I will recommend the course to all early-career catalogers and paraprofessionals regularly working with books printed prior to 1800.
 12. Yes, would recommend course and instructor, definitely.
- 11) *If your course made any trips outside of the classroom, do you feel that they were time well spent?*
1. Yes. I learned some new things, and it was a nice way to break up the week.
 2. Enjoyed seeing the examples at SC.
 3. Yes, our trip to SC was very helpful and interesting.
 4. The printing and setting of type were invaluable.
 5. Yes, being in the UVA reading room, seeing the objects, really showed me why this matters.
 6. Yes, see above. {Q9}
 7. Yes! The trip to SC was amazing and drove home some of the things we learned.
 8. N/A
 9. Yes.
 10. Yes—loved getting to try out the common press and type setting (if only there were more time! But I wouldn't want to sacrifice anything else). Also greatly enjoyed our trip to SC.

11. The field trip to SC was great—it was a good way to show a variety of elements that we had talked about throughout the week and to see some of UVA’s treasures.
12. Yes, these were very valuable, especially SC and the printing press/type workshop.

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. Sure. I participated in over half of the optional evening events, and found them to be some combination of enjoyable, entertaining, and/or informative.
2. I attended all optional evening events except the tour of the Shakespeare exhibition. I had a prior private commitment that evening, otherwise I would have gone on the tour.
3. I attended the first film on Wednesday and really enjoyed it.
4. I didn’t go to Video Night because I wanted to practice collation—it was very useful to have DW on hand as we came up with questions.
5. {no response}
6. I didn’t attend evening events outside of the extra class sessions. A bit disappointing that the Video Night was switched and conflicted with our class session.
7. {no response}
8. The opening lecture was interesting, but also seemed a bit preliminary (in terms of the research discussed).
9. The reception and coordinated dinner thing was great. Wonder if that feature—either on paper or online—might be useful throughout the week (lunches +/- dinner).
10. Enjoyed Booksellers’ Night; didn’t do the others this time around.
11. The lecture and exhibition tour were fantastic—the opportunity to socialize with other RBS attendees was good. {private response} Made some great personal and professional connections.
12. The optional evening events were interesting and a good way to combine learning and socializing. The extra workshops were very helpful as well.

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

1. RBS had picnic blankets available to students!!! I wish I would have known from the start.
2. Take it!! It is excellent. You will not regret it. Very thorough on hand-press period.
3. Offers a great introduction to the making of books for someone with little or no experience with paper, printmaking, or bookbinding. Those with more experience may only find the collation and bibliographical description portions to be useful.
4. I cannot praise DW’s preparation and organization of the course highly enough. It was as beautifully crafted as a (good) fifteenth century book—especially in its use of hands-on examples.
5. {no response}
6. DW is a master of bibliography; you couldn’t learn from anyone more knowledgeable in the subject matter, or more intellectually generous.
7. DW is so knowledgeable about this topic and makes the class so enjoyable. He is

- very patient and encouraging.
8. This class will be well worth your time, particularly if you make an honest effort on the preliminary reading.
 9. {no response}
 10. DW is wonderful—so incredibly knowledgeable and generous with that knowledge. Provides tons of good examples of everything that we discussed in class.
 11. {no response}
 12. Be sure to prepare in advance with the readings. This was a great help.

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

1. “Oh dear” (says David)
2. An inspiring week and the instructor was brilliant.
3. {no response}
4. A perfect week!
5. AMAZING!
6. My only regret is that I waited so long to come to RBS.
7. DW rocks.
8. DW is a hidden gem.
9. Gee, DW is delightful.
10. Fantastic from start to finish.
11. {no response}
12. Awesome. Thanks. See you next time, soon I hope.

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 (67%)

My institution/employer did not give me professional leave; I used paid or vacation days: 1 (8.33%)

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%: 3 (25%)

I used a scholarship/fellowship to pay/waive 100%: 6 (50%)

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

Who paid your RBS housing expenses?

I paid 100% myself: 4 (33.33%)
My institution/employer paid 100%: 3 (25%)
My institution/employer paid part; I paid the rest: 1 (8.33%)
I used a scholarship/fellowship to cover 100%: 3 (25%)
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: 3 (25%)
My institution/employer paid 100%: 4 (33.33%)
My institution/employer paid part; I paid the rest: 1 (8.33%)
I used a scholarship/fellowship to cover 100%: 4 (33.33%)

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

Library disciplines:

Archivist: 1 (8.33%)
Cataloger/metadata librarian: 2 (33.33%)
Conservator/binder/preservation librarian: 1 (8.33%)
Special collections librarian: 1 (8.33%)
Other: 1 (8.33%)

Student working toward a/n:

M.A./M.S.: 1 (8.33%)

Professional educator:

Lecturer/adjunct: 1 (8.33%)
Assistant professor: 1 (8.33%)
Associate professor: 2 (16.67%)
Full professor: 1 (8.33%)