

Michael Winship
H-95: Reading Publishers' Archives for the Study of the American Book
31 July–5 August 2016

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-reading was useful. It helps you to understand the critical perspective and approach of the course.
 2. The pre-course readings were useful, but as this was my introduction to researching publishers' history/archives, much of it went over my head.
 3. Pre-course reading materials were all relevant and helpful.
 4. Yes, though some specific sections from the HBA volumes would be useful as examples.
 5. Well-chosen selection of material. Very convenient that scans were made available by RBS.
 6. They were pretty useful, especially the McGaw article, and *A History of the Book in America*, and MW's overview article (dated, but still useful for thinking about all publishers can do). Hard to suggest better readings. I took this course because there isn't really good reading material for researchers on the topic!
 7. Yes. I would recommend reading them shortly before the course. Volume three of the book history volumes was most relevant to the class. I'd recommend focusing on that volume.
 8. Yes.
 9. {no response}

- 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. Yes, the Dropbox materials and handouts will be very useful resources.
 2. I really enjoyed reviewing the content and the discussions concerning what we were shown.
 3. I really liked the use of Dropbox and digital materials. Made the classwork a real cooperative exercise.
 4. Handouts useful. Dropbox folder very useful. Certainly will continue to use.
 5. Yes, especially the Dropbox account we all have access to.
 6. Useful now and in the future. Thoughtfully prepared and distributed.
 7. The handouts were helpful as were the electronic resources MW shared.
 8. Teaching materials were fine.
 9. {no response}

- 3) *If you've taken previous RBS courses, how did this one compare?*
 1. N/A

2. N/A
 3. Both were taught by *the* expert in the field.
 4. Less hands-on, but that was fine under the circumstances.
 5. Built on previous courses. It was helpful to have had additional background in American book history.
 6. Much better.
 7. N/A
 8. About the same. The instructor was a bit less organized.
 9. {no response}
- 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 found the applied learning incredibly helpful—learning how to decipher financial documents will help me draw more definitive research conclusions.
 2. I left with a great many ideas for future projects, separate from and related to my original topic.
 3. I'm inspired to continue with a project I gave up for lost because MW unveiled a whole new possible realm for research...numbers!
 4. So many interesting ideas. I always leave an RBS course with enough projects to last a lifetime.
 5. Absolutely. I learned about a number of sources that will be useful to my professional work and research.
 6. Lessons in reading account materials and practice doing so was very illuminating and has immediate applications for my research.
 7. MW's encyclopedic knowledge of extant source materials was invaluable. I have countless entries in my notes that I have flagged for future research.
 8. Instructor knowledge. I came away more confident about my conclusions in my current project.
 9. Working with facsimiles of early documents (ledgers, account books, &c.) was especially enjoyable.
- 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 learned a lot more than I anticipated.
 2. I learned all that I hoped and more.
 3. Yes, I learned what I hoped to and more.
 4. Generally, yes.
 5. Yes. MW is fantastic, and I would listen to him talk book history all day for more than just one week.
 6. Yes, generally, though I wish we had spent a little more time practicing reading the documents on our own or with a partner. Embarrassing at times, but effective for learning.
 7. Yes. For me, the American nineteenth-century focus was perfect. The content is applicable to other periods, but I can imagine students with other interests finding it less useful. That said, MW would tailor examples to our specific interests.
 8. Yes. The bibliography could have been fleshed out. Yes.

9. I found many new directions in my research plans thanks to the information provided in class. The nineteenth century is not my period, and this course gave me a good survey of what I am up against, and how best to make my inroads into the archives. The instructor was very helpful.
- 6) *How do you plan to use the skills and knowledge acquired during your time here?*
1. To include circulation and income information in my book.
 2. I hope to begin researching a number of topics which will hopefully assist me in writing my dissertation in the future.
 3. I plan to continue my research and hopefully publish something relevant.
 4. Just a useful thing to have under my belt, and some of the material is useful tangentially for other things I'm working on.
 5. In my work as a librarian and my own research.
 6. Academic research, immediately.
 7. They will inform future research.
 8. Finish an article. Pursue additional projects over time.
 9. I will visit archives and dig in.
- 7) *Please briefly describe the intellectual level of the course. What sort of person might benefit the most from taking it?*
1. You need a pre-requisite level of expertise about publishing history to really benefit from the course. Anyone interested in the business side of book history would benefit.
 2. As someone not currently working in an archive, or studying book publishing, some of the historical context was unfamiliar to me, but by no means difficult to follow.
 3. This is a very specific course that is most fascinating for those with an interest in nineteenth- and twentieth-century book trade and with the patience to learn math.
 4. Anyone with an interest in publishing history. Some background in bibliography or book production wouldn't hurt at all.
 5. Scholars and librarians who work with archives like this.
 6. Aimed at a professional research level. Late-stage Ph.D. students, post-docs, junior faculty, specialized librarians probably benefit most.
 7. It's helpful but not completely necessary to have a general sense of American book history.
 8. Best for someone with some experience and a project underway.
 9. The intellectual level of the course is high. The classmates were all engaged in library or archives work either professionally or as researchers. They, along with the instructor, were principal resources, and I will be in contact with one of them in ways important for my research. The course and Rare Book School are very good for networking.
- 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. {private response}
2. {no response}
3. Credit is to receive. Debit is to give. Credit by. Debtor to.
4. Some good moments of realizing the whole range of options and places where information might be. Lots of places to check.
5. I learned so much from listening to MW's stories, not just on the assigned topics, but his very informative asides.
6. {no response}
7. {no response}
8. Getting to share my research questions and having MW help.
9. Yes. The "aha" moments came in seeing material directly related to my particular research project, which had been fished out by the instructor from his own research materials.

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

1. The exercises were so helpful. I would have liked more, especially more individual practice deciphering archival records.
2. {no response}
3. I would have liked to hear more about other people's research, why they were here, &c., but that's what the breaks are for, I suppose!
4. Instructor sometimes asked for questions and then didn't seem to want to answer them, which is off-putting. May be useful to broaden the scope ("Reading Publishers' Archives") to encompass more material. {private response}
5. Looking at more original material in person, although looking at a scan didn't really detract at all.
6. More time for practice built in.
7. The course is very fluid which some may find difficult, but I wouldn't change a thing. MW adapted to our needs and interests as he went.
8. A bit more organization. Less time following tangents.
9. With quieter ventilation, it would have been easier to hear everything the instructor said.

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

1. I would highly recommend this course.
2. Yes. I really enjoyed MW's clear passion for the material and his teaching style.
3. Yes, absolutely. MW is fantastic.
4. Yes. Will likely be more useful if you have a project in this area.
5. Very much so. Builds on MW's other courses as well.
6. Yes, and yes.
7. Yes, and yes.
8. Yes. Perhaps.
9. I would certainly recommend this course and this instructor to anyone who wishes to know about nineteenth-century American literature, publishing, printing, and the book trade. The instructor has an unbelievable depth of experience.

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

well spent?

1. Yes.
2. Yes. I enjoyed seeing a real ledger book after talking about them all week.
3. Yes. Only once we went to SC.
4. SC on Friday was a good conclusion to the week.
5. The SC visit made sense at the end of the session, although I wish it had been more hands-on.
6. {no response}
7. {no response}
8. SC, yes.
9. 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. {private response}
2. N/A
3. I only attended one evening lecture. It's nice to have the option to go to an organized event in the evening.
4. McLeod lecture on Monday was excellent. {private response}
5. I skipped a few of them to do my own research in SC, but I'm glad that they are provided.
6. {no response}
7. The lectures were entertaining though neither seemed to discuss exactly what they promised.
8. Yes, except the Movie Night. Documentary on Lynd Ward was not good.
9. I liked the Movie Night, for introducing me to a great graphic artist. It was also socially important for bonding with other RBS students, ones who weren't in my class. (And I enjoyed the ice cream and popcorn!)

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

1. Bring scans or photos of your own archival materials you would like help with.
2. Bring any material you're having difficulty interpreting, and chat about it with MW and the class.
3. Do the pre-course readings! And bring photos of your own research source material that is giving you problems.
4. Do the readings. Come prepared. Be patient.
5. I think it's helpful to know that the classrooms, &c., are cold, too, not just the dorms. I would have packed more pants, rather than dressing for potentially steamy outdoors conditions.
6. {no response}
7. Getting to work at SC (outside of class) while I was here was a great benefit!
8. Please encourage people not to stay on campus. It was not pleasant.
9. Bring warm clothes for the classroom. The library can be very cold.

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

1. MW has for sure an incredible amount of knowledge to share. Seriously, MW was wonderful, and I feel incredibly lucky to have had the opportunity to learn from him. He was very generous and the course was terrific.
2. The experience was insightful, illuminating, and delightful.
3. Exhausting, but so worth it. Thank you!
4. {no response}
5. Incredibly valuable and rewarding summer camp for book people.
6. {no response}
7. Wonderful. Well organized, and the perfect amount of content.
8. Bring your book nerdiness and have fun.
9. Stimulating and heady.

Student Data

Number of respondents: 9 (of 9)

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

My institution/employer gave me professional leave time: 6 (66.67%)

My institution/employer did not give me professional leave; I used paid or vacation days: 2 (22.22%)

I am retired, and can arrange my own schedule: 1 (11.11%)

Who paid your RBS tuition costs?

I paid 100% myself: 1 (11.11%)

My institution/employer paid 100%: 6 (66.67%)

I used a scholarship/fellowship to pay/waive 100%: 1 (11.11%)

No response: 1 (11.11%)

Who paid your RBS housing expenses?

I paid 100% myself: 2 (22.22%)

My institution/employer paid 100%: 4 (44.44%)

I used a scholarship/fellowship to cover 100%: 1 (11.11%)

I stayed with friends/family, or stayed in my own home and commuted: 1 (11.11%)

No response: 1 (11.11%)

Who paid your RBS travel expenses?

I paid 100% myself: 1 (11.11%)

My institution/employer paid 100%: 5 (55.56%)

My institution/employer paid part; I paid the rest: 1 (11.11%)

I live locally, and had no travel expenses: 1 (11.11%)

My situation does not fit any of the options above: 1 (11.11%)

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

Library disciplines:

Curator: 1 (11.11%)

Library administrator: 1 (11.11%)

Public services librarian: 1 (11.11%)

Special collections librarian: 1 (11.11%)

Professional educator:

Full professor: 2 (22.22%)

Other occupations/vocations:

Independent scholar: 1 (11.11%)

Post-doctoral fellow/researcher/scholar: 1 (11.11%)

Other: 1 (11.11%)