

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. I skimmed some of the pre-course reading assignments and did a few of the introductory exercises. I hadn't had any prior training, so it helped me get the look of the handwriting in my head.
 2. Pre-course reading was useful, though I didn't have time to get to it all.
 3. The online resources were particularly helpful, as I do not generally have access to expensive specialized handbooks.
 4. I only used the online pre-course readings, which were helpful because with reading handwriting, it really comes down to practice.
 5. The pre-course assignments added important background which made the course all the more intelligible and interesting.
 6. All of the materials were very useful. Initially I found it quite ironic that some of the materials were online courses (!), but they were quite useful and even enjoyable (particularly the Scottish Archive Network online materials).
 7. The pre-course reading was very useful but hard to come by in a few cases. RBS might consider making PDFs available on the website (even Alderman doesn't have a few, which was surprising).
 8. Yes. No. None. None.
 9. The pre-course readings were useful. The only thing I would like to have made available before the course is the complete list of readings. It might be helpful to get a sense of the scope of the class before arriving (this is not a negative at all). It might be fun to see what's in store for us.
 10. I'm lucky in that I was exposed to a majority of the material before applying to the course. I can't think of any works that would serve as better introductions to the topic, but Harold Love's *Publication in the Scribal Medium* would be a good addition.
 11. Yes, the readings were very helpful.
 12. The pre-course reading was helpful.
 13. The resources were very helpful, and I'd recommend all future participants to familiarize themselves with the alphabet for secretary hand prior to attending. Also doing any transcription exercises will help one in feeling prepared for the course.
 14. I had previously read/encountered most of the readings. Definitely useful, but not necessary prep for the course as taught.
 15. The online tutorials were great for preparing for the course. The printed texts were harder to use, but will be great resources now that I know more.

- 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 alphabet seems an invaluable resource. I'll keep using it in the future for sure. Working with printouts was also useful for making notes, &c.. One suggestion for the future: include a bit more time spent on looking at books or other primary sources (even if we have to read different things or pair up). When we looked at originals, I noticed how different it was than looking at the texts of a printout or computer—no zooming, no scribbling notes, no tracing. It would be good to practice reading books, if possible—they look/feel so different than pages/screens/prints.
 2. The teaching materials were good because they covered a wide variety of hands and spelling habits and types of documents. Also, exercises were paced well. It will be very useful in my work (or one part of it), but I will need to practice regularly!
 3. The alphabet book was very useful, and I will continue to refer to it for guidance on particulars like numbers. {private response}
 4. I will probably end up referring to my workbook every time I am transcribing, and even if I get good enough to not have to refer to the alphabet, there are so many other resources in the workbook I can utilize.
 5. The course workbook was packed with useful and otherwise hard-to-find material. It will prove to be a lasting and valuable resource.
 6. The materials distributed were excellent. Next year I might only suggest that the workbook be three-hole punched, as I expect many students will take it apart and reorganize sections into our own notebooks of other material.
 7. The course workbook will be very useful for refreshing my skills. It is an excellent miscellany of useful bits from some of the printed resources.
 8. The workbooks were extremely useful, and will be a great reference.
 9. Excellent. HW picked out of our assigned- and non-assigned readings the most relevant and useful pieces of information.
 10. Fantastic! It will be by my side for the rest of my graduate career.
 11. Content was all appropriate and useful.
 12. The handouts were great. I am taking my alphabet bible to England with me.
 13. All materials and content were excellent, and I will use it all. Yes.
 14. The workbook is a very valuable resource, and I will keep a PDF of it with me when I work with manuscript material.
 15. The alphabet book will be a fantastic resource in the future for research and teaching.
- 3) *If you've taken previous RBS courses, how did this one compare?*
1. Loved it! So informative and useful, just like the other (I-20: "Book Illustration Processes to 1900" with TB).
 2. I've liked all the courses. This was one of the more challenging ones, because some of the hands we looked at are just hard to read. I feel the course challenged a different part of my brain.
 3. This course upheld the high RBS standards for quality and quantity! We covered a lot of material in five days.
 4. They were both informational, and I would say on the same level of rigor.
 5. I took one previous excellent course, and this second one easily equaled it.

6. As good as any (which is intended to be a tremendous compliment).
 7. N/A
 8. Exemplary as always!
 9. All of my previous RBS courses were not only fun but also practical. I have always put my RBS tools and coursework to great use in my work, and I know this year will be no different.
 10. N/A
 11. N/A
 12. N/A
 13. N/A
 14. It was perhaps the most enjoyable of them.
 15. This is the best course I have taken!
- 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 basic reading skills are world opening. And HW put them in a context, which made reading even more exciting. Her deep knowledge of the Folger and her discussion of research methods and resources were also key. I learned so much from her talking through how to find things out.
 2. 1) That I can't make assumptions about what word I'm looking at because after my first quick guess is wrong! 2) There's a lot more info/help online than I realized. 3) Read manuscripts slowly and with care, don't try to wing it.
 3. The online transcription programs were great; I'd love to get my students on them transcribing for fun and for practice.
 4. Most interesting to me was reading recipes, but also learning about different forms of manuscripts and how paper was used. Physically using a quill and ink was insightful, because I'm interested in the physicality of these books/manuscripts.
 5. Concentrated work with other students and with the instructor greatly increased my ability and my confidence in dealing with challenging manuscripts.
 6. HW's teaching style—patient, supportive, and kind—reminded me that so much learning is accessible with these attributes.
 7. Practicing reading in groups was helpful, and getting some time to go over many of the digital resources (e.g., Dromio) and databases was very useful and will definitely improve my resources. The course has opened up many avenues for further research, because reading Renaissance manuscripts is so essential to research in the field.
 8. Very much enjoyed the letters and recipes, and online transcription exercises.
 9. Everything! I'm walking away with about a million new ideas.
 10. Dates and numbers were particularly interesting, as I had no prior training in that area. The multitude of web resources we worked with was great, and will definitely contribute to my thesis research.
 11. Information about writing culture during the early modern period will be incorporated into my research and teaching.
 12. I really liked how HW reviewed the letters of the alphabet periodically. It helped to reinforce/remind me of what I should be looking for. I loved all of the historical context she provided, i.e., how mail was distributed and how cookbooks were actually used.

13. I have never had any proper training on archival research methods. This course was an excellent introduction to manuscript culture and ways to approach research. Very well done and helpful for me.
14. Learning about the various forms of legal and other bureaucratic documents was extremely helpful. The research stations on Thursday were especially good.
15. The mix of transcription practice with larger discussions of the culture of manuscripts was great.

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—so complete a course. I thought the pace of the course was great; we covered so much, but kept practicing or reviewing or complementing what we'd already learned.
2. Yes. Would have liked to have spent more time looking at manuscripts but that would have required more time than we had.
3. Our skills in deciphering secretary hand developed markedly over the week. I would have loved more context (where did the hand come from, and how did it transition into and get replaced by italic?), but it's only one week after all.
4. I got everything I came for. Learned to read secretary hand and about the culture surrounding specific types of manuscripts and manuscripts in general.
5. The instructor was superb. Her knowledge of the material, ability to communicate, and encouragement were extremely appreciated.
6. Yes. No. Yes. I learned even more than I hoped to learn, particularly research and study techniques that will allow me to continue my study in the area.
7. Yes. No. Yes.
8. Yes. No. Yes, definitely! HW was great.
9. Absolutely and more. HW covered everything with a great sense of humor and great ease. If we struggled, HW reviewed and recapped.
10. Yes! I learned more than I could possibly imagine!
11. I do feel like I've acquired the skills I hoped to learn. The only addition that might have been useful would be a short section on Latin secretary hand (but I understand since we had so much else to fit in a week).
12. HW was extremely thorough. I believe she anticipated everything one might encounter in a manuscript, and gave us tools for addressing these things.
13. I only wish the course had been longer!
14. Yes.
15. Yes—I feel much more confident about my ability to access and use early modern English manuscripts.

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

1. Researching for my dissertation! (Trawling notebooks and letters for more popular perspectives.)
2. Prepare metadata for some manuscripts we're digitizing at work. Use in my cataloging work—will look again at the inscriptions, &c., that I've found indecipherable prior to this class.
3. I will use the paleographic training in my research on manuscript culture, but I

- would also like to bring some of the publicly available images and resources into my teaching of undergrads.
4. Teaching and personal transcription work.
 5. I will use my skills in further academic research projects.
 6. To inform my current projects, and to widen the scope of what I have heretofore undertaken.
 7. I would like to continue to practice reading secretary hand. Perhaps next summer or spring I will find time to go to the Folger to work on my project.
 8. Personal genealogical research; professionally will help to inform decisions about conservation treatment; teaching students about writing with quill pens and the culture of manuscripts in early modern England.
 9. I work in a library that houses early English manuscripts, and this course has provided essential skills in reading and handwriting and interpretation that will be critical for my interactions with library patrons.
 10. I've been working on a project transcribing the writing of Anne Hyde, Duchess of York (James II's first wife), so all of the skills learned in this course are applicable.
 11. Definitely in my archival research, especially plans to visit libraries this summer. This research will be integral to my dissertation prospectus. Also want to teach undergrads about letter writing culture in a literature course this fall.
 12. I'm leaving for a five-week research trip to England on July 16. The timing of this course was perfect.
 13. I have had projects in mind that have not been completed until I received formal training. I will very soon start on these projects again.
 14. I routinely work on manuscripts and annotations in early period books.
 15. This will help me better utilize manuscripts related to my research.
- 7) *Please briefly describe the intellectual level of the course. What sort of person might benefit the most from taking it?*
1. A person who wants to use the skills. I think knowing about the early modern period, especially the language, helps but HW did a great job of contextualizing for everyone.
 2. Fairly tough by HW made it delightful. Anyone working with material from this era; would be hard to retain and use otherwise.
 3. It moves quickly and assumes a certain background in early modern English culture and history, but anyone from an invested undergrad to a grad student or professor would benefit from the specific skill set.
 4. Anyone who is reading manuscripts, especially needing practice in secretary hand. It helps if you have a little bit of prior experience, but you don't need much.
 5. Even a person quite familiar with manuscripts will still find this course very valuable.
 6. Rather high; the course presumes a prior working knowledge of some basic Latin, English history, paleographic research sources, &c.. However, as noted, HW's instruction style allowed for all students to feel comfortable asking questions and receiving some critical background information concurrently with the core instruction. Appropriate for graduate students or higher.
 7. The course is pleasantly challenging and gives a glimpse of many aspects of the culture of handwriting from the period using the actual manuscripts as the focus. Reading is hard enough in itself, but the real challenge is to learn how to

- conceptualize what you're reading about. Any serious student of literature interested in this period would find this immensely valuable training.
8. Graduate students; professionals working with early modern manuscripts.
 9. Graduate students, professors, librarians—anyone who has to read early modern handwriting. This course is probably not for someone looking to take an RBS class that provides a general overview of things.
 10. This course has opportunities for people with little exposure to secretary hand to learn a lot, as well as opportunities for those with more experience to explore intricacies in the art of paleography.
 11. The person who would benefit most is someone with no paleography experience or only a tiny bit.
 12. The people are brilliant.
 13. This course is best suited for those with an interest in early modern studies, but is approachable for people from all backgrounds/disciplines.
 14. Seemed like it would be useful to everyone from interested hobbyists to professional academics.
 15. Although some of the students had a lot of experience with English literature, it was not expected or necessary. Anyone who wants to read secretary hand would benefit from this course.
- 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. It's not really a moment so much as an environment. HW created a great space for us to learn together. We talked through work, questions, and problems, and she did a lot to keep us all together in spirit, despite differences in skills, backgrounds, goals, and confidence levels. Working as a team/community was absolutely amazing, and I think I learned more because of it.
 2. {no response}
 3. Writing with real quill pens was so informative. It helps a great deal to practice making the letter forms, because they then become clearer in the manuscripts.
 4. Working with so many different hands, you get enough practice so that it's like a lens clicking into place, and the words come into focus, and you can suddenly read them!
 5. There were countless "aha" moments involving every letter of the alphabet and writing style, as well as data sources.
 6. The moment at which "squiggly lines" magically transform themselves into words with meaning was nothing short of wonderful. The "aha" moment comes from realizing that with patience and thoughtfulness, what looks at first to be indecipherable code is actually meaningful.
 7. The course was a series of these, but I think the quill exercise was very helpful in actually experiencing handwriting and how different it felt with that implement.
 8. Loved the letter-locking, and deciphering the "versos" of letters (postal stops; how long mail took to travel).
 9. Yes. HW's description of letter forms. Hot cross buns and buckets were my "aha" moments.
 10. {no response}
 11. {no response}

12. I loved writing with a quill pen.
13. {no response}
14. {no response}
15. The manuscript stations (research triage) were particularly helpful. I quickly learned to use a lot of new online resources. I plan to do something similar with my students.

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

1. Maybe the books suggestion from Q2. But honestly, this was such a wonderful course, I wouldn't change a thing!
2. {no response}
3. When we were doing stations exercises (moving from manuscript to manuscript, speed-dating style), perhaps fewer stations and more time at each station would help us dig in.
4. Can't think of anything.
5. I can't imagine.
6. I can't think of anything to improve the educational aspects of the course. I would only perhaps suggest that the SC visit might include some more sample "beauties" just for fun.
7. It would have been nice to maybe work closely with a manuscript or two for a day, and then share our findings with the class, but I realize it's a busy schedule.
8. So much was covered...maybe fewer stations for the paired activities when we only had 10-15 minutes per object.
9. The course could not have been improved.
10. More interaction with real documents—we spent a lot of time with digitized images.
11. Latin transcription; perhaps more transcribing of some very difficult secretary hand.
12. The station exercise on Thursday was a bit unwieldy. It might work better to have people work individually the first time they embark on this. Some folks have more experience than others at ferreting out info. I needed a little more time to familiarize myself with the databases and think about a strategy.
13. I wish we could have been at the Folger!
14. {no response}
15. {private response}

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

1. Yes, and yes.
2. Yes, and yes.
3. Absolutely. I already have recommended it to others!
4. Yes, and yes.
5. Definitely.
6. Yes, absolutely on both counts.
7. Yes! Yes!
8. Definitely. Yes.
9. Definitely. I would recommend this course to anyone interested in early modern

manuscripts in a heartbeat.

10. Yes. Yes.
11. Yes. I would highly recommend this course.
12. Yes! Yes!
13. Best money spent on a course, ever. HW is a great teacher. I only wish we had more time.
14. N/A and yes.
15. Yes! Yes!

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

1. Time in SC was great and a perfect amount.
2. Brief trip to SC was good, though I'd have loved a trip to the Folger, too!
3. The SC visit was great. I really appreciated having specific tasks and questions for each manuscript—it was more productive than just “browsing.”
4. Yes. We went to SC to look at physical manuscripts and letters. Amazing and interesting range of them to study.
5. {no response}
6. Yes.
7. {no response}
8. Yes.
9. Yes. A SC visit allowed us to handle some actual manuscripts, and it was wonderful to have the chance to see UVA's manuscript collection strengths.
10. Yes—the rare book library here is amazing!
11. The UVA rare books visit was excellent.
12. I really enjoyed UVA SC. This whole experience made me proud to be an alumnus.
13. {no response}
14. SC visit was useful. Helped expose us to a range of document types.
15. The trip to SC was great. I was glad to try out my new skills.

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 liked the option of an evening event, and enjoyed the ones I attended.
2. Really glad to attend lectures and film and typography demonstration. I can't always get to “extracurricular” events in my normal life, so was glad to take advantage of these.
3. I went to both lectures and enjoyed them in a casual way. I wish RBS could bring in more speakers on medieval and early modern manuscripts and book culture.
4. I loved them all. They are one of the things I look forward to during the week. It's nice to learn something beyond what is taught in the classroom.
5. {no response}
6. All of the outside events were worthwhile.
7. I went to a few of the lectures but not much else. I found them pretty interesting.
8. Yes.
9. I attended all of the evening events, and all were a good use of my time. I love that the people at RBS arrange events to bring us together and keep our spirits high all

week long.

10. Linotype and Ornament Night were fantastic! The book dealer lecture was quite underwhelming. *Zzzz....*
11. Yes—enjoyed the ornament workshop!
12. I have friends and family in the area, so I was tied up with them at night.
13. {no response}
14. {no response}
15. The ornament printing was lots of fun. {private response}

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

1. Do it!
2. HW is a wonderful teacher, patient and kind and so knowledgeable; don't be intimidated.
3. When they say you need a laptop, they mean it. A tablet isn't really compatible with the transcription programs online.
4. {no response}
5. Don't miss this excellent course!
6. It is not to be missed! You will learn new alphabets, and "learn" how to read all over again. This literacy is a skill to be continued through the generations, lest we lose our history. It's quite important.
7. {no response}
8. {no response}
9. No advice except to take this course!
10. Explore the Folger Luna archive ahead of time—you'll be using it a lot.
11. Practice paleography a little beforehand with the online tutorial to familiarize yourself.
12. {no response}
13. {no response}
14. {no response}
15. This is a fabulous course that has a nice blend of practice and theory.

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

1. Manicure thumbs up.
2. Fantastic. I loved being among like-minded people engrossed in such a deeply fascinating subject, so well taught.
3. The hot-cross-bun C,
Backward e's and bucket r's:
Secretary hand.
4. Deep learning and making connections with like-minded people from around the world.
5. The instructor makes the course a superb introduction to difficult materials "without tears," as she promised.
6. This is the happiest week of my entire year.
7. The course has made me reflect more on my own writing practices. I think I will start keeping a journal.

8. A very memorable, worthwhile, exhausting but stimulating week!
9. Magical—I don't know how they do it every year.
10. The most delightful mental challenge you could possibly undertake.
11. Manuscript culture
Will remember bucket r's
Thanks to brilliant folks
12. Outstanding.
13. {no response}
14. {no response}
15. {no response}

Student Data

Number of respondents: 15 (of 15)

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

My institution/employer gave me professional leave time: 6 (40%)

My institution/employer did not give me professional leave; I used paid or vacation days: 1 (6.67%)

I am a student or non-year-round employee, with a more flexible summer schedule: 8 (53.33%)

Who paid your RBS tuition costs?

I paid 100% myself: 6 (40%)

My institution/employer paid 100%: 4 (26.67%)

I used a scholarship/fellowship to pay/waive 100%: 4 (26.67%)

I exchanged goods or services in lieu of tuition: 1 (6.67%)

Who paid your RBS housing expenses?

I paid 100% myself: 6 (40%)

My institution/employer paid 100%: 5 (33.33%)

I used a scholarship/fellowship to cover 100%: 2 (13.33%)

I stayed with friends/family, or stayed in my own home and commuted: 2 (13.33%)

Who paid your RBS travel expenses?

I paid 100% myself: 8 (53.33%)

My institution/employer paid 100%: 3 (20%)

My institution/employer paid part; I paid the rest: 1 (6.67%)

I used a scholarship/fellowship to cover 100%: 2 (13.33%)

I live locally, and had no travel expenses: 1 (6.67%)

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

Library disciplines:

Conservator/binder/preservation librarian: 1 (6.67%)

Curator: 1 (6.67%)

Special collections librarian: 1 (6.67%)

Student working toward a/n:

M.A./M.S.: 2 (13.33%)

Ph.D./D.Phil: 3 (20%)

Professional educator:

K-12 teacher: 1 (6.67%)

Assistant professor: 4 (26.67%)

Associate professor: 1 (6.67%)

Other occupations/vocations:

Book collector: 1 (6.67%)