

Benjamin J. Nourse
H-140: The History & Culture of the Tibetan Book
6–11 July, 2025, Charlottesville, Virginia

1) *Were the pre-course reading assignments useful? Are there any readings that you would like to see added or removed in future years?*

1. Yes, very much.
2. Yes! I tried to read through as many as I could and they helped immeasurably since I'm new to the field of Tibetan studies. If anything, perhaps links to more online resources that could be of use, especially for background history, &c.
3. Readings are cohesive and helpful.
4. The reading list was thoughtfully curated and offers an excellent introduction to the topic.
5. The readings were very manageable and a fantastic primer for the course.
6. Yes, very useful.
7. The reading assignments were most useful. I consider the readings to be an important bibliography for further study in this field.

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. Very much. I will be going back to it in the future for my own research and teaching purposes.
2. The workbooks gave a great overview of the day's activities, and it was helpful seeing all the citations and additional readings for going back to things later.
3. I am excited to review course slides and content. All appropriate and useful.
4. The course workbook and teaching materials were very helpful, and I have no suggestions for improvement. All materials were consistently provided, and each session's topic was clearly introduced.
5. The course workbook is very helpful and will continue to be useful, especially its bibliographies.
6. All content was useful. Having both a printed copy of the course book and e-version is important as many of the resources listed are links.
7. As above, the workbook will be on my bookshelf as I intend to do further research in this field.

3) *Which aspects of the course were most intriguing and relevant for you as an individual? Did you walk away with any new insights, ideas, or project plans?*

1. The vast resources and secondary reference works I now know about will be useful to me for a long time.
2. The chance to see and comb through so many of the materials in the collection and from the instructor's personal collection. I find this teaching method helpful for really bringing the subject to life. I teach mainly Chinese history but want to include what I've learned could become a potential unit on Tibet and could incorporate some of the activities we have done into other classes.
3. I thought of plenty of research questions during the lectures.
4. The course offered a well-structured and organized overview of the history and culture of the Tibetan book, enriched by our teacher's extensive knowledge and the wealth of additional information provided. Overall, it was a very positive and rewarding experience giving us many potential new ideas for research areas.
5. Clarifying the anatomy of Tibetan books was extremely helpful and having a better sense of how these components manifest across different editions will benefit me greatly as I study these books.
6. Close looking at the books plus instructor's presentations.
7. The hands-on approach both in examining texts and actually printing some was an intriguing and valuable experience.

4) *Did the instructors help you to acquire all the skills and information promised in the course description? Did you learn what you had hoped to learn?*

1. Yes, and yes.
2. Yes, and now I have so many more questions and things I want to learn!
3. Yes!
4. The instructor provided us with a wide range of materials and sources, while maintaining a clear and engaging teaching style. The atmosphere in class was approachable and supportive, making it an overall enjoyable and valuable experience.
5. BJN is a fantastic professor with an encyclopedic knowledge of Tibetan history and Tibetan books. I learned far more than I expected to.
6. Yes, and more!
7. I learned more than I expected. I feel that I have learned a new skill set.

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

1. I will teach about books more effectively and I am now better equipped to join the conversation about bibliography in my own field.
2. In my own teaching. Activities and incorporating more bibliographic tasks into assignments as well as getting back to bibliographic methods on my own research on back matter in Chinese anarchist periodicals

3. I hope to be able to catalog Tibetan items in the future and feel confident to do so with the tools provided. I hope to continue learning about book culture in Tibet.
4. I plan to delve into the extensive list of suggested readings and revisit some of my earlier cataloging records to clarify and improve them.
5. I plan to take what I learn into my archival research and am more confident now working and identifying Tibetan texts.
6. It will better inform decisions in my work as well as inspiring areas of future research.
7. I'd like to examine the printing history of a variety of texts and printing houses.

6) *Who might benefit the most from taking this RBS course?*

1. Graduate students in history, religious studies, and literature of Tibet or adjacent cultural areas as well as post graduate scholars.
2. Everybody! I would like to see more educators, but all my historian colleagues are a bit too snooty.
3. Anyone with a background or interest in Tibetan culture. Those at institutions with Tibetan material.
4. This course will be valuable for anyone with an interest in Tibetan studies, librarianship, or the history of books and printing in general.
5. Anyone interested in Tibetan books history, of course. Yet, for anyone caring for or coming into contact with Tibetan books in an archive, this class is a must.
6. Our cohort was from a wide variety of backgrounds and all in agreement about the benefits of taking the course.
7. Anyone interested in Tibetology. People with an interest in the physicality of the book. People interested in a relatively new field.

7) *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. {no response}
2. Seeing all the physical materials.
3. I enjoyed the hands-on learning by trying my hand at calligraphy and woodblock printing!
4. There have been several notable moments, and I encourage anyone who is interested in them to join the class next summer!
5. Working through the organization of colophons was enlightening.
6. {no response}
7. The actual printing of texts was a marvelous experience. Aha! was happening all the time, as the teacher's knowledge was astronomical.

8) *Are there any other ways in which the course could have been improved?*

1. {no response}
2. More opportunities for printing activities, maybe carve our own text, paper making, &c. Pedagogy discussions. But honestly, this was just too much fun!
3. No, excellent course.
4. If it was held in Tibet :)
5. No.
6. N/A
7. It was a well thought out course. Can't think of any improvements.

9) *Do you feel that you got your money's worth? How likely are you to recommend this course to others? On a 1-10 scale, 1 would indicate that you disagree that you got your money's worth, 5 would indicate a neutral response, and 10 would indicate that you agree that you got your money's worth.*

1. 10
2. 10
3. 10
4. 10
5. 10
6. 10
7. 10

10) *If your course made any (virtual) field trips outside of the classroom or had guest speakers, do you feel that they enhanced the course experience?*

1. {no response}
2. Love visiting all the special collections.
3. Yes! It was great seeing Tibetan materials at the Shannon Library and SC.
4. Definitely.
5. Yes. Visiting the archive and SC was very helpful. I loved the more hands on moments in the class.
6. Field trips added to the overall experience.
7. The trips to SC and the Tibetan collection were very informative and well curated.

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

1. {no response}
2. Come ready to have fun and be overwhelmed in a good way!
3. Not required or causes any trouble if you don't have experience with the Tibetan language but I think my experience would have been enhanced with a bit of studying of the language.
4. Apply now.
5. {no response}
6. {no response}
7. Take the course! The teacher is a kind and generous person. A pleasure to be in his presence.

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

1. {no response}
2. Summer brings reading / A feeling of a joy and mirth / Back to teaching, fall
3. A great source of bookish learning, people, and fun!
4. Ancient woodblock prints, inked with echoes of the past—we learnt, side by side.
5. Don't be foolish, you / Tibetan Book History / is what you need now!
6. {no response}
7. Sarva mangled! (Sanskrit) All auspiciousness! I loved being here!