

Tony White
H-155: The History of Artists' Books since 1950
14–19 July, 2024, New York City, New York

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, the pre-course reading assignments were useful. They helped ground the history and theory of the course and provided a good overview of the general course subject.
2. {no response}
3. All of the readings were a great read. I did wish we would have had access to them earlier to have more time to read and digest the content.
4. {private response}
5. The pre-course readings provided valuable context for the lectures and physical objects presented throughout the week. It would be great to see a greater geographical diversity of scholarship and movements.
6. Yes—it was a LOT of readings but useful for a better understanding of and contextualization of the course and subject matter.
7. The reading was a great introduction to the subject and a good basis to have that the course immediately led on from. Would definitely recommend the essential reading beforehand! I will be picking up the additional reading texts post-course with the knowledge I now have.
8. Yes, but I think there were too many. Or maybe emphasize that only the suggested one should be read before and provide additional bibliography at course. I felt pressured to read it all and it was tough to finish them before arriving (when it's a scramble to leave work for one week).
9. The readings were incredibly helpful, though I wish we had discussed them more.
10. Yes, TW's selections were helpful and on topic. The digital files perhaps could be reviewed as not all translated well in orientation when opened on a computer.
11. Yes. It would be helpful to receive PDFs of these materials to be able to review and return to them.
12. Yes. The amount of material and level of detail/complexity was appropriate to equip me for the class and to help me in the future.
13. The pre-course reading assignments had wonderful historical and theoretical breadth—especially the essays contextualizing Art-Rite magazine and Johanna Drucher's imagery on bookish mentality and haptic touch. More Drucher, please!
14. The pre-course reading was incredibly useful. I appreciated how it was broken down into required/recommended/suggested. If possible, I'd recommend putting readings within categories in an order that enables students to track a chronological history of artists' book development, perhaps pairing primary and secondary literature together (i.e., articles on Dianne Vanderlip's catalog with the catalog). Adding the supplemental videos on printing to the reading list posted on the website would be helpful too, because we discussed print processes so much in class.

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. One of the major strengths of the course in my thinking was the course materials. They provided a rich understanding of artists' books as a genre and were tangible examples of the theory and history we were learning. I will be using this information in my future career as I continue on to a Ph.D.
2. Thank you for having the readings assembled in electronic format and made available in Google Docs.
3. The workbook is definitely something I will refer to in the future. Great tool to keep track of things. Truly appreciated having a checklist of all of the books. It will be great to look back at it and see all of my notes in the future.
4. {private response}
5. The workbook and site-based handouts were all helpful tools for the week of activities, though items were not always presented in the same order, class period, or day. I will definitely type, organize, and reference my notes and the included resources after the course.
6. Yes, yes, yes; very helpful!
7. Brilliant. So useful to have all the information in hand with space for comments.
8. Love the workbook; perfect amount of space for notes. Would be nice to have all the bibliographic information and a little image of the cover.
9. The Google Drive was not complete and it would have been helpful to know in advance that the readings would be shared with us in that way. I wish we had been able to visit an artist's studio.
10. Workbook was very helpful to save time not writing out titles—these appeared and we could just make notes. Also helps to have them organized by session.
11. This has been, and will continue to be, very useful.
12. Yes. Whether it will be useful in the future remains to be seen, but I am definitely glad to have it, should I need to rely on it.
13. Personally, I am not a fan of the plastic comb binding for RBS workbooks. But I did find the workbook for this course to be comprehensive—these notes will be useful as I look to integrate artists' books in my research.
14. Course workbook was essential for staying organized and keeping track of everything we saw. Most site visits gave us supplemental materials that were easy to fold into the workbook

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. I definitely walked away with new insights and projects on artists' books themselves. Having a place to start with understanding where to find artists' books and what might be applicable to my interests is very helpful. I do think the visits outside of the class were helpful to supplementing our in-class sessions, but they often ran a bit long.
2. Hands-on, tactile, creative opportunities and visits to the various locations in Manhattan.
3. All aspects of the course were significant for me. Getting to see and sometimes touch so many books was wonderful. As a newbie to the artists' books and artists' publishing world, I'm excited by all the new insight I gained. I hope to start researching and writing about this topic in the near future. I'm also inspired to take additional printing classes, the risograph workshop was life-changing.

4. I feel very inspired to create more zines and maybe even try my hand at an artists' book! I'm also feeling encouraged to seek out opportunities for printmaking resources—we learned a lot about how different artists worked collaboratively, or worked in communal art/printing spaces, sharing resources in order to reduce costs. Not that I wasn't aware of these kinds of spaces before, but I feel a renewed sense of possibility and want to be more proactive about finding ways to overcome financial barriers in making my own art. From a professional perspective, I have so many ideas for workshops and exhibits on zines, artists' books, artists' publishing, and printmaking in general, to potentially host at my institution! I also feel like I've gained a better understanding of these materials and have learned about a lot of resources to help in my role as cataloger of artists' books, zines, and other alternative publications.
5. I learned so much, and my brain is brimming, so it's difficult to distill at the moment! I think the overview of history/ies, formats, print methods, &c. provide relevant scholarly and artistic context for both my research and artmaking practice. I also made some exciting new connections that I hope to continue cultivating beyond the course.
6. So many insights, ideas, connections, and a powerful network of colleagues.
7. Yes! Ideas for improving how I show artists' books with readers at my home institution.
8. Everything! Risograph workshop was most intriguing because it's an emerging interest in my institution.
9. I loved the hands-on aspect of all of this, and I feel so inspired to pursue a course in photo-lithographic printing. I didn't even know that was an option. I also found many helpful resources for my current project and was able to identify several printing techniques that I was curious about in the collaborations I'm writing about.
10. My notebook was overflowing with ideas prompted by the examples. The instructor's curation of the materials we saw was so thoughtful and generative.
11. Our teacher greatly enhanced the course material by contextualizing how the worlds of artists' books work socially. He has done everything and knows everyone, and is no doubt the single best resource on artists' books.
12. I was very happy to get a sense of how other students/participants were involved in the same field and what they were doing to respond to the same issues—and it was helpful to get some guidance from the instructor, who was very knowledgeable about the issues at hand.
13. The site visits were a big selling point for me, and I found those units to be especially helpful, in so far as these collections (and study spaces!) did a lot to contextualize issues of production, distribution, and reception. I walked away with a deeper understanding of the affordances of bookworks.
14. The most intriguing aspect of the course was the introduction to such a wide variety of offset printed artists' books and their histories. I was more familiar with finely illustrated books and artists' books, so this really opened up the visual and graphic field of artists' books. I also was struck by the continually evolving terminology used in the field, both how that has shaped and continues to shape entire conversations today. I walk away with many new forms, structures, and designs to bring to my own artists' book practice. I also want to do further research into poetry chapbooks or literary folks collaborating on books to consider how and why it might be important to conceive of these more as artists' book than we did in this class.

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. In general, I learned what I had hoped to learn; more about artists' books and how best to study them. I do wish we had covered more detail about artists' book history in the class rather than just doing the reading beforehand. The instructor was extremely helpful in pinpointing where to find new information about artists' books.
2. Yes, it was a good in-depth survey.
3. Learned what I expected to, and so much more.
4. Yes!
5. Yes, I definitely got what I came for throughout this action-packed week! This is clearly the place and the expert for this course. TW's depth and breadth of knowledge is impressive, and he is an enthusiastic and personable guide through this collective journey. I will continue percolating on all the information, resources, and connections he curated and facilitated for the class.
6. Yes, and yes. The readings, visits, connections, and class meetings created a wonderful environment and amazing experience.
7. Yes! I was hoping to firm up on my background knowledge of the general history of artists' books and learned I have this and can continue to build on it!
8. YES! YES! And more!!
9. I do think the course title is a little misleading, the course was really from the 1970s and on and I work primarily in the 1950s and 60s. So, I would suggest changing that. At the same time, I feel like I learned so much. It would be helpful to have a conversation about how to identify apparent printmaking techniques on sight, rather than by relying on the colophon (but maybe I am in the minority here).
10. I came away with a far better understanding of the early history of artists' books, which was what I'd hoped for. I feel much more confident in advice I can now give at my institution.
11. I received answers to all the questions I had. I learned far more than I expected to learn.
12. I feel that the parameters of the course description were met, and in some cases exceeded. I did not learn everything I'd hoped I would, but I think that speaks more about my expectations than the context and/or quality of instruction.
13. Yes—the instructor does excellent work in unpacking the material affordances of artists' books and practical ways in which librarians/curators/et al. Can acquire collections. From this careful, fine-grained attention to the collection, a sociology of artists book emerges in view (vectors of artist, readers, collector, institutions, preservation, &c.).
14. Yes! I came into this course wanting to leave with a basic history of the field and critical discourse. I depart this evening with that knowledge.

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

1. From here, I plan to use my newly acquired skills and knowledge to develop a Ph.D. project at my local institution. I also plan on working more in zine culture.
2. Immediately upon return, I will share with colleagues library wide. I will give presentations and arrange for other staff to view materials in our collections that this course featured. In the future, I hope to use what I learned here in my cataloging and

in relationships with booksellers. There will be opportunities to share with readers/visitors as occasions arise.

3. Hopefully developing collections.
4. {private response}
5. I am working on a research project for which this provides valuable context and informs some unexpected areas for further exploration and future development. I also plan to share some relevant resources with other students, educators, and artists in my work as a teaching artist and cultural organizer.
6. Enriching my approach to collection development, exhibition, and teachings and to develop a richer history of contemporary context.
7. To develop the presentation I deliver with this material at my institution to include more general history and artists' information which I was previously less aware of.
8. I plan to use it to develop more precise support for people in my institution; try some inter-institution collaboration; try to create a workshop in my library that's open to all.
9. I plan to use these skills in my classroom. I am also hoping to teach some of these skills in my undergraduate class.
10. I plan to assist in a collections development plan for artists' books. I also intend to build on what I've learned in making artists' books.
11. 1. The knowledge I have acquired about artists' books will be passed directly to my students. 2. I am in the process of developing a scholarly essay about a body of artists' books that will be shaped by this course.
12. My experience gave me a combination of new perspectives and knowledge, while also validating some of the things I know but had been contested. I'll be taking these experiences into teaching, policy development, and acquisition.
13. I will use this course as a foundation for a dissertation chapter.
14. I'm going to use my new knowledge of the field to start generating some critical publications on how artists' books as praxis can be used in combination with traditional humanities scholarship/methods.

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

1. If you're at all interested in artists' books, I think you'll find value in this course. I do think that curators and art librarians will find the most value in this course.
2. I am relatively new to arts librarianship, and I felt that it was the right amount of new information for me.
3. People with prior or no knowledge of artists' books.
4. My classmates and I came from such varied backgrounds in libraries, museums, education, and research—I think anyone who wants to learn more about artists' books, zines, and alternative publications will benefit from this course, perhaps especially those involved in outreach, as this class provided so much information on ways to talk about, handle, and show artists' books.
5. Classmates ranged from library professionals, graduate students, artists/makers, and an independent researcher.
6. Anyone working in cataloguing, instruction, collection development, acquisition, SC and out noting.
7. Anyone working with artists' books! Super accessible, interesting, and dynamic.
8. Art librarians

9. Librarians, literary scholars, art historians, and curators.
10. Those who may view our institution's exhibits will benefit.
11. Collectors, special collections curators and librarians, art historians and critical theorists, and artists.
12. I don't know. There were a wide range of participants, and everyone seemed to think they got a lot out of it, which surprised me in some cases.
13. Librarians, art/literary historians (graduate students, faculty), collectors, bibliophiles, and artists.
14. Librarians at institutions with artists' book collections, book artists or printers, and humanities researchers interested in making and doing methods and/or Twentieth/Twenty-first century contemporary art and literature.

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. Learning how to operate a risograph machine had the biggest "aha!" moment for me. We had been reading about risographs and zines for so long, but being able to physically see and make one put all the theory into practice.
2. Everything we did in the risograph zine workshop.
3. The risograph workshop! I might start making zines after this.
4. I loved the risograph printing workshop! It was such a fun and inspiring opportunity to visit a printmaking studio and learn how to use the risograph machines. I also enjoyed all the field trips to visit various collections of artists' books around the city.
5. On the last day I encountered a regional example that I look forward to investigating further in my research.
6. There were so many, I don't even know where to begin! These ranged from formal course sessions, side conversations, site visits, looking at work, and outside readings.
7. Being able to see so much material from TW and about these big emotional collections really quickly joined dots for me in this area. Physicals risograph workshop was great to practically experience and understand that process.
8. Aha! Maybe Ed Runta doesn't have to be idolized for his artists' books because he doesn't seem to want to be.
9. I loved the book assignment. The risograph workshop was amazing. Visiting current collections and seeing so much material was a treat!
10. The creative challenges of making an altered book and presenting on a book we just met put the ideas into use and were very helpful in cementing concepts.
11. It was profoundly moving and illuminating to interact with a private collector primarily committed to collecting artists' books.
12. The site visits were helpful to understand other contexts where the same kind of collections are held and used. The assignments were not directly connected to course content but super helpful for context, engagements, and a positive group dynamic.
13. The in-class meetings had many noteworthy moments—especially when we were able to look at a book together and respond individually to the design, binding, and haptic surfaces.
14. The altered book and zine projects! Even as a book artist and printmaker, having to do collaborative and solo making assignments challenged me to think about objects viewed this week in this way.

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

1. I think adhering more strictly to the given schedule would be a good improvement for the course. There were often times that events went over by an hour or more.
2. I would like to have had an electronic version of all the titles lists, but that was mainly for catalog/web searching convenience.
3. A little less intensity would have been great, but other than that it was an amazing course.
4. {private response}
5. It would have been helpful to know that we would have access to a Google folder with collected required readings. I conducted extensive media archaeology to locate many of these obscure publications months prior to the course, which resulted in duplicated labor. I also would like to know about the possibility of chemical smells in book examples and at the printshop tour beforehand. I also didn't anticipate having field trips almost every day and was not prepared for the amount of energy and walking required. I would love to have time for formal introductions in person (or possibly a pre-course Zoom) to put names/backgrounds with faces, as well as more opportunities for interactive class discussion among participants. Finally, I was a little blindsided by the RBS tradition of taking the instructor out to lunch and was surprised by the swankiness of the establishment. I happened to have the budget for one fancy meal, but our table was forced to split the check evenly instead of letting us pay for what we ordered (cf. famous *Friends* episode). I am on medical disability and have a fixed income, so this could be an extremely uncomfortable and embarrassing situation for participants of more limited means and working-class backgrounds. My meal was superb, but it came at a high price financially and socially.
6. Perhaps more hands-on experience with artists' books?
7. Please make July less hot ;)
8. More BIPOC content, more hands-on manipulation, and maybe a Whatsapp group instead of Discord? Would've been nice to get in touch and share restaurant recommendations.
9. We really should have done introductions on the first day (I would have given up 10 minutes of my break to have everyone's names and disciplines). I do think we could have dug into the readings more. A less rushed, more conversational introductory lecture. I think we should have dug into the definition on an artists' book via examples and discussion.
10. I think the offsite visits, while logistically challenging, are essential and so helpful. It builds a sense that norms are in place across a host of different institutions, each with its own reasons for collecting.
11. To mitigate the exhaustion factor, please give back to students' personal time if a seminar goes long. For example, if a site visit gives until 7 p.m., do not begin the next morning visit until 10:30 a.m.
12. I would have liked to have more in-depth discussion on the nuts and bolts of artist books' policy (acquisitions, conservation), procedure, assessment, cultivation of user base, &c.
13. Nothing comes to mind here: granted, the course is intense, but that is part of the charm. This is a wonderful introduction (or re-introduction) to New York City and its collections.

14. Figuring out a way to incorporate super brief introductions on day one. Even if it's a one minute response from everyone to an icebreaker question. Doesn't need to be in the morning, just some time that day!

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. 8
2. 10
3. 10
4. 10
5. 9
6. 10
7. 10
8. 10
9. 8
10. 9
11. 10
12. 8
13. 10
14. 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. Our in-person field trips to a private collector and to various research collections were extremely valuable and helpful to understanding artists' books and their history. These were probably my favorite aspects of the course.
2. All the field trips made it absolutely worthwhile having the course in New York City. Otherwise, the location would just make a course like this unnecessarily pricey.
3. Yes, I would have loved more time at each visit!
4. Yes, the field trips definitely enhanced the experience. We were able to see a wider variety of books in several collecting scenarios (large public library, small research library, private collection). The print shop visit gave us valuable hands-on experience making our own zine so we could get a taste of the collaborative creation/production process.
5. N/A
6. Most definitely! I would not change that!
7. Yes! Thanks to them all. All very well selected to add another perspective to the whole course. Very well-curated program.
8. 100% yes.
9. They absolutely made the experience.
10. All of our trips enhanced the experience. Seeing other institutions is so helpful as well.
11. The field trip very much enhanced the experience. To make the risograph printing experience more meaningful, I recommend setting aside a full day to talk just about

printing methods, and situate risograph within that context. Discuss printing methods systematically rather than as additional information within other contexts.

12. Yes, definitely. The site visits helped improve my awareness of the broader community and context of artist philosophy.

13. Absolutely—those site visits are the heart and soul of the course. That, and the descriptive bibliography of individual books.

14. Absolutely! This course highly benefits from field trips; it enhances conversations about building collections and enables us to see a wider variety of materials.

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

1. Follow the recommendation to rest! By the end of the week, you will be tired!

2. Make no plans to do anything besides coursework in the evenings. Get accommodations as close to the Grolier Club as possible. Time will be a precious resource. Money as well, as lunch is really expensive in this area. Be in good shape to walk a lot and stand the heat.

3. Be open to each experience and you will enjoy the intensity of the course.

4. {no response}

5. Take the "bring good walking shoes" recommendation seriously! Also, there is a lot of information to process and manage, so having access to a non-phone device (e.g., laptop/tablet) is important even if you don't bring it to class.

6. Pace yourself on the readings and start early! Related to this, I would recommend that RBS let participants know what course readings will be provided as early as possible. I spent a lot of time with library learning materials that ended up being provided via Google Drive/PDFs.

7. Do the required reading so you can hit the course running! But TW has curated the week perfectly and it all comes together perfectly.

8. Really wonderful. I look forward to taking more classes!

9. Know that it is very hands-on and that you will be exposed to a ton of material (in a good way, just be ready).

10. I think this course is a fine-tuned machine and only likely to get better.

11. Study in advance the local lunch options, as this part of town is expensive. Consider bringing your lunch each day as there is a kitchen at the Grolier Club, and eat your lunch on site.

12. Come prepared, pace yourself, and come as you are—don't be intimidated—everyone has a way to contribute.

13. Wear comfortable walking shoes—you are going to need them!

14. It's an intense week with a lot of running around New York City, but completely worth it given the access to TW's wealth of knowledge combined with collections and knowledge of librarians at institutions across the city.

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

1. What's an artists' book?/It is hard to say, for sure./It's just what you feel.

2. Summer camp for artists' book nerds from 19 to 99.

3. Inspiring: five stars.

4. {no response}

5. TW's artists' book RBS course is an exciting, intensive, and interactive experience that I will remember and draw upon indefinitely!
6. An intense and highly rewarding experience.
7. Book bootcamp/in a New York heatwave/with TW/was/exceptional. I definitely attended this course at a perfect moment for me in my career. A colleague said the RBS papermaking history course he attended many years ago was life-changing for him...which I thought was a little dramatic. I'm leaving fizzing with ideas, excitement and hope to return to RBS (but are all the courses as amazing as this week with TW?!)
8. I feel more confident in my knowledge and how to approach the subject and artists' books. Thank you!
9. It is still possible/to make things/and love them. I wasn't expecting to feel artistically energized, but I do!
10. This was an introduction that was long overdue, and I feel grateful and privileged to have taken it.
11. My heart is full.
12. I heard many other participants say "life-changing"—for me it was "life affirming."
13. Not a sentence, but a poem—"Why I am not a Painter" by Frank O'Hara. O'Hara's playful poem somehow feels perfect here.
14. "Bliss"—Buzz Spector.