

Martin Antonetti  
H-30: The Printed Book in the West to 1800  
4-9 June 2017

**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, the pre-course reading assignments served as a good introduction.
2. I completed all of the assigned readings for the course. The two books complemented each other well, with Chappell providing an effective overview and Carter providing definitions of specific terminology.
3. The required readings were perfect. *ABC for Book Collectors* is useful for nearly all RBS classes and a great resource for anyone in tech services or in library work. Chappell is also a vital text and was not only informative, but enjoyable.
4. Readings were useful as a foundation, though both were texts that would not have conveyed the information in a way that might stick if it were not for revisiting the material during the course. I actually would have been able to do more reading, so perhaps an additional text would be welcome.
5. The readings were very appropriate. The technical aspects in Chappell were especially helpful.
6. The reading assignments gave me a good sense of what kind of info would be covered in the class. However, the lectures, demonstrations, and SC visits brought the info to life that the readings did not.
7. I found the pre-course reading to be rather dry and overly specific, but I don't know what else is out there that can provide a similar foundation.
8. I found the pre-course reading material useful, however I found *ABC for Book Collectors* a little bit harder to get through outside the context of the class. Otherwise, I found both books assigned to be more than adequate.
9. The assignments were useful, however given the variety of backgrounds in the class, I suspect that not all were equally useful to all class members. I also started to read some suggested post-class readings and found *The History of Reading* to be very uneven in its usefulness.
10. I thought the reading assignments were a very good foundation for the course.
11. Although I was not eager to read through a dictionary, *ABC for Book Collectors* helped me comprehend more throughout the week. The reading load ahead of time was quite manageable.

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 was helpful. I will definitely refer back to it for exact spellings and dates, to facilitate future reading and research.
2. The course workbook provided detailed lists of the key individuals, book titles, and concepts presented during our discussions. A supplemental section contained

- reference materials concerning the parts of a printing press, terminology associated with the description of typefaces, and additional primary source documents. It was an invaluable resource this week, and I expect it will remain useful in the future.
3. I thought the workbook was fine, and the appendix had good stuff I will refer to...the rest of the book helped me follow the lecture and left room for notes along the way. Great.
  4. Course workbook was an excellent way to frame class notes, and I'm sure I will further investigate the people/ideas outlined. More space for notes could be helpful as I often had to take extra notes in my notebook even though they were conceptually linked to my notes in the workbooks.
  5. The course workbook will certainly continue to be of use after. All of the names will be useful for determining further readings.
  6. Course workbook broke down, by days and periods, how info would be shared and that was quite useful. I was inspired via the course to go back through some info and explore deeper—on my own time. So, I can see myself using the workbook.
  7. The notebook was helpful for taking notes, though, that said, I'm of two minds about notetaking when I won't be regurgitating information back in papers of exams. It may be useful later on...but maybe not.
  8. I found the course workbook at times hard to follow, since we skipped a few things and went out of order sometimes. I will return to the book to read about those topics we didn't have a chance to go over in depth.
  9. Given the sheer amount of material covered, the workbook was most helpful in providing names, dates, &c., in accurate form, that didn't need to be repeated in my notes. My only comment is that more room might be useful after workbook items so I could consolidate material now split between my workbook and my notebook.
  10. I really appreciated the outlines of the lectures, and that relevant names/further sources were written down in advance. It will serve as a very helpful guide for further study when combined with the notes I took myself.
  11. The appendices include really useful information, some of which was not highlighted in class. Generally, the titles of lectures and references were helpful. A bibliography of secondary sources would be a helpful addition.

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

1. N/A
2. N/A
3. This course was more lecture and discussion where my other class had tons of exercises and desk work and we had to work with others. Just a personal preference, I really like lectures.
4. N/A
5. Of the courses, this has been the most illuminating.
6. N/A
7. N/A
8. This was my first course.
9. N/A
10. This was my first RBS course.
11. 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. The course was so interesting and relevant for me that it's impossible to capture all of the new insights and ideas with brevity. I would just add the instructor, MA, is superb—generous, extremely knowledgeable, and kept the class engaged throughout.
  2. The library where I work is committed to serving as a repository for print materials. I have gained a renewed appreciation of the scholarly value of books as a physical artifact.
  3. Well, I'd love to write a novel or screenplay about a sixteenth-century printing house and all its interesting characters, but aside from that I was taken with the idea that architecture, anthropology, and archaeology are so closely related to the history of the printed book. I will focus on that going forward.
  4. Discussions of paratext and social elements were particularly exciting, while discussions on technique and practice are very applicable towards my understanding of the object. I feel inspired to try letterpress printing.
  5. The printing and binding demos were of great relevance. Both really helped solidify my understanding of the processes.
  6. Thinking back to MFS's talk on Sunday, I came away with a greater appreciation for why the history of the book matters "for civilization in centuries to come," an awareness of the rich historical evidence, and what it tells us about people's cultures from the past, and what we can learn about ours here today.
  7. I loved examining the actual books in person, and think the way such examinations were interspersed with lectures to be a useful way to do this. Watching demonstrations of bookbinding, actually printing pages...now I'm more confused than ever about what I want to do!
  8. As someone relatively new to the field, I'm walking away excited and inspired to keep learning. I've been looking at archival management programs as a focus for my pending MLIS studies, and now I will go back to consider those programs that have a stronger focus on the history of the book and just rare books in general.
  9. I particularly appreciated seeing ways in which book history and book culture could be applied to understanding and analyzing subjects that are of interest to me.
  10. Learning to understand the printing and manufacturing processes was most helpful for me, and will really enable me to engage more fully with the items in our collections.
  11. For me, learning about the production processes (of paper, type, printing, and bookbinding) was most helpful, and I appreciated that these were spread across different days. I'm impressed with how vividly I understand those processes now.
- 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 am very satisfied with the range of material—literally and figuratively—that we were able to cover in this course.
  2. {private response}
  3. Yes, I got a bit weary of studying page after page of very similar texts, but I have an

- entirely new appreciation for everything it took to bring books to the masses. From paper and ink, to type and bindings, this class was very comprehensive.
4. Very much so, and more. I was concerned that I had made the wrong choice and that the book history course (“H-10: The History of the Book, 200–2000”) would have been better, but I ended up being extremely excited about the information offered.
  5. The course was what I expected.
  6. Because I came to the class as someone not exposed to book history, I had vague expectations, but those expectations were not negative. The vagueness left me open to listen and be attentive.
  7. I learned what I hoped to learn. I think we didn’t get to a few things, but that was because an engaging discussion kept us on other topics, so it was a worthwhile tradeoff.
  8. I really appreciated MA’s teaching approach: it was the right mix of lecture and demonstration. I found his lectures to be very profound and thorough. I learned everything I hoped to learn.
  9. I was most impressed with the instructor’s combination of depth and breadth of knowledge. I was left wanting more only in the sense that the more that was provided, the more I became excited about the information. However, the course provided everything I expected—and more.
  10. I don’t think anything was underdeveloped, but a few things were a bit rushed. That was probably because we as a class were so engaged in the material.
  11. I think the scope of this introductory course was ideal. Even if I already knew more about the importance of the book culturally and intellectually, their presence in the class was really important and balanced the technical aspects.
- 6) *How do you plan to use the skills and knowledge acquired during your time here?*
1. I plan to use what I’ve learned in the course both professionally, in my work with scholars of the hand-press period, and creatively as a writer and book artist.
  2. I plan to use these skills in collection development discussions, rare book acquisitions, and pedagogy (class visits, VIP tours, &c.).
  3. I will use it every day in my work describing collections, bindings, provenance, and I hope in the future to be able to extend my career toward curation, so I will use the vocabulary and knowledge I have learned here going well into the future.
  4. Professionally, with the collection I currently work with, and seeking future special collections jobs.
  5. The knowledge will be useful in exhibition work with rare materials at my institution.
  6. For my work in raising support for RBS, and in my own life as a writer and reader. It opens the door to further exploration.
  7. I’m still in library school, hoping to work with rare books and special collections. I want my RBS classes to give me the special knowledge I need to do that, as well as an additional accreditation, so to speak.
  8. In general, I will approach the book with a new eye. Not only will I look out for those characteristics that are explicit, as in the physical nature of the book, but I look forward to denoting the implicit and paratextual.
  9. I took this course for personal development and the joy of learning. Therefore, I won’t be using the course in any specific project or activity, but shall incorporate it

- broadly in my reading and thinking.
10. I hope to use my new skills in examining and interacting with our collections. I also hope this will aid my own personal study and enrichment.
  11. I will use much of this information directly in my teaching about literature and the history of the book.
- 7) *Please briefly describe the intellectual level of the course. What sort of person might benefit the most from taking it?*
1. {private response}
  2. The course was intellectually rigorous without being overwhelming. Based on in-class conversations, it clearly benefitted people from all walks of life—librarians, administrators, &c.
  3. Within the field of library work or conservation, this class is for beginners. However, someone who never worked with special collections materials before may feel it is closer to a 201 course than a 101 course.
  4. Librarians and budding book scholars, but also artists interested in printing and print culture would likely find it an exciting topic.
  5. Very high. Anyone with an interest in book history would benefit. It provided an excellent basis for further study.
  6. It was definitely introductory. But it also seemed to be appropriate for people with more knowledge.
  7. It struck me as a good upper level undergraduate course.
  8. This course promoted itself as being for beginners, and as a beginner myself, I found the course to be faithful to that caliber.
  9. Generally, it was a graduate-level course, although some of the historical background provided (necessary for some class members) struck me as undergraduate level.
  10. I think it is a great level for beginners, as it goes through all the basics while bringing up important concepts and issues in the discipline in a thoughtful way.
  11. This is an introductory course that presumes few skills and little knowledge of its students. That seemed appropriate to the course title and aims. I'm glad I didn't take this type of course in my area of research.
- 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. I loved seeing the early illustrated scientific book, Diderot's "Encyclopedie," and a reindeer skin from Lappland! The theoretical discussions and questions raised were also important and thought-provoking.
  2. {private response}
  3. When MA explained on day one that the history of the printed book lies in our everyday rituals and what people do, the traces we leave behind, how and why things happened when they did...that was my "aha!" moment.
  4. The section on paratext and censorship felt very prescient and necessary with the current political climate, but the information about printing has truly changed the way I will look at books from this era.
  5. The binding demo was especially useful.

6. The richness of the info conveyed in the lectures were accentuated by the viewing and discussions focused on the SC books and other artifacts.
7. {no response}
8. {no response}
9. The concept of paratext was powerful in offering that “aha moment.”
10. I’m not sure if there were any particular moments for me that were especially powerful, but I had a lot of fun!
11. Actually using the printing press made a big impact.

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

1. N/A
2. It would have been nice if students had at least a few opportunities to actually handle the rare books. Although our instructor did a fine job modeling effective rare book pedagogy, there were times where I would have enjoyed the chance to engage with the materials more directly.
3. Possibly add one assignment or one exercise?
4. The only thing I could say is that sometimes we brought the conversation too far away from the intended topic. Though this was often elucidating, it was occasionally frustrating when a student voice dominated the conversation for too long.
5. {no response}
6. It was perfect...for me.
7. Sometimes I thought we spent a little too long on printing and fonts, and not enough on social context. This was minor, though.
8. {no response}
9. I can’t think of improvements other than the fact that I want more and more. And that goes beyond a single course, doesn’t it?
10. Perhaps there could have been a way to fit in all the information in a way where we felt less squeezed for time, but I know that is a difficult thing and was overall handled very well.
11. {private response}

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

1. Yes, I absolutely would recommend the course to others.
2. Yes, on both counts.
3. Yes. Brilliant opportunity to learn from a great instructor and a thoughtful person.
4. Yes, but my institution paid. It may be prohibitively expensive for me to return out of pocket, but I will look into scholarship opportunities.
5. I would certainly recommend the course.
6. Highly recommend.
7. Yes, and yes.
8. Definitely.
9. Absolutely, yes to both!
10. I would recommend this to others. So much time is spent well and they really pack in as much as possible without it being too overwhelming.
11. Yes, and yes.

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

1. N/A
2. Yes, I particularly enjoyed the printing press demonstration.
3. Printing day was a bonus!
4. Demonstration of the hand press was excellent. It was wonderful to experience what we discussed in a tactile manner.
5. Absolutely. The printing demo was exceptionally instructive.
6. {no response}
7. {no response}
8. {no response}
9. N/A
10. We stayed in the classroom, but it was a nice combination between lecture and working with actual books.
11. {private response}

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. The Monday lecture was worthwhile for seeing some of the concepts we had discussed being used by a scholar in practice.
2. I attended all of the evening events and found them all enriching to varying degrees. If asked to rank them, I would probably say I enjoyed the guided tour of the Faulkner exhibit the most. The curator provided a fun and accessible introduction to the exhibition without oversimplifying the social and literary aspects of Faulkner's career.
3. N/A
4. I enjoyed all of them, but none felt revelatory. That said, all were good opportunities to get to better know our cohort.
5. I attended all of the evening events. I found that even if the subject of the evening is not always in my wheelhouse, the evenings will always be interesting and wonderful social events.
6. I attended the tour of the Faulkner exhibit and thought having the opportunity to experience Molly Schwartzburg's perspective was amazing.
7. To be honest, at the end of my last class every day, I was tired and felt the evening events to be more of an obligation than not.
8. {no response}
9. I missed one evening event, but enjoyed the others as they made RBS such a comprehensive experience.
10. I really enjoyed all the evening events. They were fun and added more opportunity to interact with and get to know others in my cohort.
11. The medieval lecture was a nice contrast to my introductory class, since it was pitched to a scholarly audience. The Faulkner exhibit was quite engaging as well.

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

1. Get enough sleep or drink enough coffee—you won't want to miss anything!
2. I can imagine no more effective means of gaining such a comprehensive introduction to the history of the book in so short a time. This course is wonderful and I highly recommend it.
3. Be sure to do the reading. Also read the class reviews for anything you consider taking. They are quite helpful.
4. For those like myself who are not experts in European history or Classics, there were moments in which I felt I was missing part of the puzzle. Perhaps some suggested readings could be offered.
5. {no response}
6. {no response}
7. I signed up for this particular course because I wanted a broad foundation before I started specializing. I think it worked quite well that way, and would suggest other students use the same approach.
8. {no response}
9. I think that this course should be considered not just as personal enrichment, but personal/intellectual as well.
10. Do the reading carefully, and come to class ready to engage with the material, the books, the instructor, and other students.
11. This is a great class for getting to know subject matter that would be relatively new to you.

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

1. An exciting, engaging, and inspiring week of learning that I can't imagine experiencing elsewhere.
2. A wonderful week-long bibliographical binge at Mr. Jefferson's university.
3. A golden opportunity!
4. It was the fastest slowest week of my life.
5. Stimulating.
6. A+
7. {no response}
8. {no response}
9. I described this course to one of my classmates as "candy." That may sound frivolous, but I was trying to convey what a treat and joy the experience was.
10. It was wonderful to be among other bibliophiles.
11. At RBS, you learn lots fast in a collegial, enthusiastic community.

### **Student Data**

*Number of respondents:* 11 (of 11)

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

My institution/employer gave me professional leave time: 7 (63.64%)  
2 (18.18%)

I am a student or non-year-round employee, with a more flexible summer schedule: 1 (9.09%)

I am retired, and can arrange my own schedule: 1 (9.09%)

*Who paid your RBS tuition costs?*

I paid 100% myself: 3 (27.27%)

My institution/employer paid 100%: 7 (63.64%)

My institution/employer paid part; I paid the rest: 1 (9.09%)

*Who paid your RBS housing expenses?*

I paid 100% myself: 4 (36.36%)

My institution/employer paid 100%: 4 (36.36%)

I stayed with friends/family, or stayed in my own home and commuted: 1 (27.27%)

*Who paid your RBS travel expenses?*

I paid 100% myself: 3 (27.27%)

My institution/employer paid 100%: 5 (45.45%)

I live locally, and had no travel expenses: 3 (27.27%)

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

**Library disciplines:**

Archivist: 1 (9.09%)

Cataloger/metadata librarian: 1 (9.09%)

Digital collections librarian: 1 (9.09%)

Library administrator: 2 (18.18%)

Library assistant/clerk: 1 (9.09%)

**Student working toward a/n:**

M.L.I.S./M.L.S.: 1 (9.09%)

**Professional educator:**

Assistant professor: 1 (9.09%)

**Other occupations/vocations:**

Retired: 1 (9.09%)

Other: 1 (9.09%)