

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, they were useful. I read the book but had to do it in small doses...start early, a warning for next year's students.
2. The pre-course reading is vital. Take TB's advice and read Gascoigne thoroughly, at least twice, before attending. You'll probably want to read it afterwards once more as well! I'd love to see the 1971 Eppink {*101 Prints: The History and Techniques of Printmaking*—RBS Staff} included as a pre-reading suggestion—seems like a good Gascoigne accompaniment.
3. Gascoigne is essential (as TB's notes say), but can be rough going and even daunting. I'd recommend a short guide (such as *How Prints Look* as a supplement/intro if you're not too familiar with illustration processes.
4. I appreciated how streamlined the pre-course reading was—one book that is abundantly available, made it easy to prepare. I would have benefitted from pre-course readings with more historical context than Gascoigne provides.
5. I only read Gascoigne. It was a helpful prep for the class, and everything makes much more sense once lessons start!
6. It is essential for students to familiarize themselves with Gascoigne before the course begins. Its content is obviously central to the course, but its organizational structure as well.
7. Gascoigne is very thorough and excellent preparation as the course follows his organization and terminology so closely.
8. The pre-course reading was extremely helpful. It makes really no sense to attend this course without having read Gascoigne's book.
9. Yes, to an extent, but instruction from TB made most of it clear. Gascoigne is tough to read through and TB is understanding of this.
10. I found Gascoigne useful, but still somewhat hard to follow.
11. Yes. Gascoigne served as the common reference point for all other materials introduced during the course, so, rather than "useful," it would be more accurate to say that reading attentively through the book is absolutely necessary for the course.

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 workbook was helpful, especially the information on the handouts and future reading references. I'm sure I will refer to my workbook again, so yes, it was useful.
2. The packets were amazing, and obviously the course wouldn't be the same without it. The workbook should be reviewed—many of the images used were very, very

- blurry, to the point of obscuring the point they were being used to illustrate.
3. Extremely useful. Reading list and websites will be a great help. Packets are invaluable—truly a “life’s work.” Thanks for assembling!
 4. The packets were invaluable! I will hang on to the workbook for my own future study, though we tended to jump around in it in class. [Some images/pages are VERY low-res in the workbook.]
 5. The details of process markings were great. Some images were a bit pixelated. If a higher quality version of the chart was provided, that would be extremely helpful.
 6. I would have liked even more materials in the workbook. What is there will continue to be useful.
 7. The workbook was helpful, and the detailed exit reading list will be especially useful going forward. [Some of the images in the workbook are a little pixelated and difficult to make out.]
 8. The material is useful and I intend to use it when making my own research (and teaching).
 9. Will prove very useful down the road when I have to identify prints.
 10. Workbook is useful, especially the bibliography, which I’m sure I will use in the future.
 11. Both the workbook and the materials curated by TB were incredibly helpful, and will continue to be so for my coming research. That said two complaints: 1) despite the incredible utility of these materials, we spent very little class time discussing them, because TB lacks talent at facilitating discussion – he digresses on unrelated topics, and, in the little time left, gives relatively unhelpful answers to questions in a way dismissive of open dialogue; 2) TB should either allow the teaching collection to be digitized, or else demonstrate more tolerance toward those of us who would like to take multiple photographs of specimens for our later reference/consultation off-site.

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

1. This one was very intense. I think it will take some time to absorb all the material. The fantastic collection of packets was amazing!
2. This was of similarly high quality to the others I’ve taken.
3. All courses have been both a pleasure and a challenge; this perhaps most of both. The best course I’ve ever taken at RBS (which is really saying something, except maybe for “DesBib” taught by TB and RN).
4. It’s difficult to compare them.
5. I took “DesBib” last year, and I found both classes very demanding (in a good way).
6. This course was fantastic in terms of its informational/pedagogical content and engagement with packet (i.e., “primary”) materials. I would have liked more discussion.
7. N/A
8. N/A
9. A healthy dose of lecture supplemented by countless examples and then the practical component of printing were very different from the three courses I had taken before.
10. I feel a little less in control of the material after this one, but that is probably the nature of the subject.

11. While there were elements to this course that were quite useful, in terms of time and resources spent, this was the least successful of my RBS experiences. RG's class on scientific illustrations fostered critical, open-ended discussion; DesBib crammed years worth of knowledge into the space of a week. TB's course did neither: the amount of useful material could have been compressed into the space of three days by a more focused instructor (TB seemed more interested in telling personal anecdotes than talking about materials), and there was little if any classroom discussion. I'm glad that my tuition, owing to the auspices of the RBS-Mellon program, was waived; in that sense, the trip to Charlottesville thus represented an overall loss of time and money without intellectual compensation, but not a horrible one. But I would not recommend the course to anyone actually paying for it, and would still express reservations to those who had both tuition, transport, and room covered – there are better ways to spend one's time.

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 in-depth discussions on types of illustration processes were helpful, but seeing multiple examples was the most helpful. I plan on buying more prints in the future with more confidence and appreciation.
2. I've been itching to get back to my institution all week and look at things! I was actually dreading everything post-1700 as I'm an early modernist, and ended up falling in love with several post-1700 artists and processes. I'm excited to examine these more neglected items at my institution now.
3. Too many insights to list, but the hands-on exercises really gave me unique insights. So did TB's identification points to remember.
4. {no response}
5. I am interested in pedagogical approaches to book studies, and watching TB's process was extremely informative. Love the packets!
6. The discussions of the relationships between processes and visual characteristics of printed images were the most interesting and relevant for me. Yes, the course sparked several important ideas for my future projects.
7. The in-depth examination of so many examples!
8. The packets are wonderful!
9. Early illustrations which appear in books. Will make my life a lot easier when I try to describe items as accurately as possible.
10. Simply having exposure to and seeing examples of so many different processes was useful to me and will inform future work and the way I look at illustrations generally.
11. Sure – in four days time, it's hard not to gain at least a few ideas and insights. My point is that these ideas and insights were not proportional to the financial and temporal costs of investment in the course.

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. No. Yes.
2. Yes and no, but I think I have the skills to “fail better” as TB puts it. I can certainly

- identify much more than I could before the class, but I am still by no means an expert. I have the skills and questions and tools I need, which is all you can hope for while developing the experience.
3. Yes! TB's majestic knowledge and his willingness to answer all good questions. The combo of identification, focus on illustration and personal book history info was great, and again, unique.
 4. Yes, we received a thorough introduction to printed illustration processes to 1900. Since identification is so central to the class, it may have helped to have identification exercises at the end of each day to shore up our day's learning.
 5. Having more identification "walk throughs" would be helpful. Hearing how TB goes about interpreting a work was very informative.
 6. Yes!
 7. Yes, no, yes. I was very happy with the amount we covered.
 8. As far as I can remember, this has been the best course I have ever attended!
 9. Yes, Gascoigne will be there to remind me of things I have forgotten, but TB managed to cover everything except for one or two extremely uncommon methods.
 10. I am not as confident as I hoped I would be at the end of class.
 11. To an extent, yes. But TB seemed more interested either in recollecting RBS lore, or else pontificating on the meaning of life – and all this in the form of a monological discourse, rather than in conversation with the assembled group. One might say, therefore, all the skills and information I acquired were acquired in spite of TB, rather than on account of him.
- 6) *How do you plan to use the skills and knowledge acquired during your time here?*
1. I plan to have better bibliographical descriptions in the future.
 2. In the acquisition of new items for my collection, in teaching, in helping to plan exhibitions, and hopefully in identifying interesting outliers and anomalies. Also possibly pursuing some of the later artists I like so much now in a scholarly fashion.
 3. In my job, as soon as I get back, on a daily basis, and also in my own projects and research.
 4. I plan to better identify, describe, and analyze printed images when they crop up in my research.
 5. I am working on a history of the book project at my home institution, and I hope to use these skills to build our teaching collection.
 6. I will use them immediately in research library visits to reexamine material I've looked at before. This will push my current book project to the next stage.
 7. In identifying illustration processes used in the materials that I work with daily.
 8. Both in my own research and teaching.
 9. Accurate cataloging.
 10. To better understand and describe whatever comes my way.
 11. Toward my postdoctoral project.
- 7) *Please briefly describe the intellectual level of the course. What sort of person might benefit the most from taking it?*
1. Booksellers, Ph.D. or Masters students, rare book catalogers, curators, collectors, &c.—all would benefit.

2. A professional working with materials, either an advanced post-graduate student, a librarian working with special collections, or a professor or other professional teaching closely from primary sources.
3. High level, requiring diligence, perseverance (Gascoigne), and active thinking. But extremely rewarding.
4. The course assumes a basic working vocabulary, so it's important to read Gascoigne. Otherwise, it's a fine introduction, so anyone who wants to better identify and analyze book illustrations will come away better prepared to do so.
5. This was a challenging course. Personally I think anyone working with or studying the physical book would benefit. I could especially see the relevance for booksellers.
6. There is a real presumption of at least theoretical or terminological background knowledge. However, no practical illustration process identification skills are presumed.
7. Anyone who comes prepared and ready to look and learn will benefit.
8. It is adequate to anyone who has carefully read Gascoigne's book.
9. Certainly someone relatively familiar with books.
10. Someone with at least some previous experience in the subject. Ideally, probably at least one prior RBS class.
11. One would have to be clear about what is meant by "intellectual." RG's course was "intellectual" in an absolute sense. DesBib was "intellectual" insofar as it imparted a highly developed set of technical skills (thus, in the sense that a course in applied engineering is "intellectual"). I am sure that, for those interested in the history of collections, there were "intellectual" elements to TB's course. At least 50% of our time was consumed by "story time with {redacted for the web-RBS staff} TB," i.e., tales about TB's encounters with collectors, especially in reference to the creation of RBS, typically accompanied by unsolicited life advice. Some of this is interesting; had there been, say, an after-hours evening event, "TB Talks," I may have attended a few sessions. But this is definitively not what I signed up for. I went to Charlottesville hoping to learn a good deal about how to think about illustration processes, and identify them. I learned some about both these topics, but, again, not enough to warrant making the trip, and sitting from 8:30 to 5 or so in a basement classroom.

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. {no response}
2. Just developing a general understanding that processes I normally associate with particular periods developed and were used either slightly before then and/or continued long after.
3. Some real insights into processes, how to distinguish and what they entail, both to create and recognize.
4. The lab sections were invaluable. There are tacit knowledges that one can only learn by doing.
5. "Type comes from somewhere."
6. Too many to recapitulate here. I finally understand litho!
7. Having the practical lab sessions alongside examining the results of these

- processes was very helpful.
8. The packets! They were always a pleasant surprise!
 9. {no response}
 10. N/A
 11. If there was an 'aha!' moment, it could be described as follows: "Aha! – although I'm interested in the problems raised by the book as a form of historical evidence and as a cultural expression, I detest the cult of the book, the uncritical veneration lavished upon it by collector-acolytes."

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

1. I think doing two engravings instead of three. Less complicated engravings would allow enough time to learn the process and then spend more time on the printing part. Maybe a short video on the more complex photo processes demonstrated.
2. It would have been helpful to be able to compare different processes to one another, side-by-side, with the packets (i.e., wood engraving and wood cut, copper and steel). Also, as previously mentioned, the blurry course book photos.
3. Two weeks?
4. The extent to which the images were contextualized in terms of their market value was a bit much. There were also a great number of anecdotes about society families—are they necessary? A subtext of this class was that the book world is embedded in an elite class formation. This may be true, but do we need constant reminders of it?
5. [Not taking it in the middle of finals...]
6. I would have liked more time for discussion The anecdotes about the history of RBS collections acquisition are probably most interesting to the booksellers and perhaps curators, but not so much to everyone else.
7. I would have enjoyed seeing the plates being etched in the acid.
8. The course is already perfect! Perhaps we should look at two or three printed images at the end of each day with the purpose of identifying their process (as a daily review).
9. Can't think of anything.
10. I would have liked it if TB invited or encouraged questions more and left time for people to ask them. Also, reviewing some basic vocabulary at the beginning of class would be helpful.
11. We could actually spend time talking in greater detail about the history of illustration techniques, rather than the descendants of nineteenth-century robber barons who eventually donated to RBS.

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

1. Absolutely yes to both questions.
2. Yes, and yes.
3. Absolutely!
4. [I'd recommend the course to selective others. Personality is a factor.]
5. Absolutely.
6. Yes!
7. Yes, and yes.

8. I used a scholarship. Therefore, N/A. But it is worth it!
9. Yes, and yes.
10. Yes to both.
11. To the first question, no—absolutely not. Dorm and transport costs together, I spent a little over \$1000 on this trip. And the content was not worth that. To the second question: I would only recommend the course more to those who care about experiencing TB, than learning about illustration processes.

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, the work we did in the print shop really helped me understand the processes better, and recognize them.
3. Glad we didn't make trips—too much to cover and who needs trips with all TB's custom-built packets.
4. N/A
5. N/A
6. It wasn't exactly outside the classroom, but the time in the print shop was great.
7. N/A
8. N/A
9. {no response}
10. N/A
11. N/A

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. N/A
2. Yes, the lecture with TB was fabulous. Booksellers' Night is always fun.
3. Yes, lecture very worthwhile.
4. I attended the Monday lecture and it's a great way to share in a common intellectual experience with students from other classes. I like how it sets the intellectual tone for the week.
5. N/A
6. Booksellers' Night, sadly, is now a shadow of its former self. Too many Charlottesville bookshops have closed. At least one listed shop didn't bother to stay open past 5 p.m.
7. The lecture on Monday night was brilliant.
8. {no response}
9. TB's lecture was stellar. Didn't go to anything else.
10. N/A
11. Lectures can often be fun. While I didn't quite see the ultimate point of TB's talk, it was a pleasant preprandial exercise. Optional and sometimes fun is actually pretty high praise for a program, so, yes: I'm positive about evening events.

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

1. Do the advance reading ahead of time and look for online video demonstrations to help in sink in in advance. Know the terminology.
2. Don't be intimidated—this is a great course, and very worthwhile. TB knows so, so very much, and it's a pleasure to experience his teaching.
3. Be prepared to work hard and do advance reading. But, take heart, TB is not interested in quizzing you on Gascoigne—it's a basis for class and identification.
4. {no response}
5. When you come to RBS, just focus on RBS. This is an amazing opportunity with a fantastic instructor. Take advantage of it.
6. Read your Gascoigne and update your glasses lens prescription! There will be a lot of intense looking!
7. Read Gascoigne; be sure to keep up your caffeine levels.
8. {no response}
9. {no response}
10. Read as much of Gascoigne as possible, and don't assume everything in it will be reviewed or explained in class.
11. For other Mellon Fellows: don't take it. For all others: think of it as getting to know TB, rather than learning about illustration processes.

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

1. So much to see here.
Pictures and packets galore.
Great experience!
2. Community building.
3. TB is a force of nature, and an invaluable national treasure in terms of insight, knowledge, and infectious enthusiasm for book study in general, and illustration processes in particular. Thanks, TB!
4. Thank you, RBS! Faculty, followers, staff—all of you are wonderful!
5. I've never enjoyed running on four hours of sleep quite so much.
6. Look, touch, think, print.
7. Chromoxylograph?
Line block? Wood engraving? Re-
Life halftone? RELIEF.
8. Better than I thought!
9. Relief.
10. {no response}
11. Overall, my years with RBS have been really great. This experience with TB's course was an exception, and I remain incredibly thankful to and supportive of the RBS-Mellon program.

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:
- My institution/employer did not give me professional leave; I used paid or vacation days:
- I am self employed, and can arrange my own schedule:
- I am a student or non-year-round employee, with a more flexible summer schedule:
- I am retired, and can arrange my own schedule:
- My situation does not fit any of the options above:

Who paid your RBS tuition costs?

- I paid 100% myself:
- My institution/employer paid 100%:
- My institution/employer paid part; I paid the rest:
- I used a scholarship/fellowship to pay/waive 100%:
- I used a scholarship/fellowship to pay/waive part; I paid the rest:
- I used a scholarship/fellowship to pay/waive part; my institution/employer paid the rest:
- I exchanged goods or services in lieu of tuition:
- I had an RBS course tuition credit from a previous year:
- My situation does not fit any of the options above:

Who paid your RBS housing expenses?

- I paid 100% myself:
- My institution/employer paid 100%:
- My institution/employer paid part; I paid the rest:
- I used a scholarship/fellowship to cover 100%:
- I used a scholarship/fellowship to cover part; I paid the rest:
- I used a scholarship/fellowship to cover part; my institution/employer paid the rest:
- I stayed with friends/family, or stayed in my own home and commuted:
- My situation does not fit any of the options above:

Who paid your RBS travel expenses?

- I paid 100% myself:
- My institution/employer paid 100%:
- My institution/employer paid part; I paid the rest:
- I used a scholarship/fellowship to cover 100%:
- I used a scholarship/fellowship to cover part; I paid the rest:
- I used a scholarship/fellowship to cover part; my institution/employer paid the rest:
- I live locally, and had no travel expenses:
- My situation does not fit any of the options above:

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

Library disciplines:

Archivist:

Cataloger/metadata librarian:
Conservator/binder/preservation librarian:
Curator:
Digital collections librarian:
Library administrator:
Library assistant/clerk:
Public services librarian:
Special collections librarian:
Subject specialist/bibliographer:
Other:

Student working toward a/n:

B.A./B.S.:
M.A./M.S.:
M.F.A.:
M.L.I.S./M.L.S.:
Ph.D./D.Phil:
Professional degree (M.D., J.D., &c.):
Other:

Professional educator:

K-12 teacher:
Lecturer/adjunct:
Assistant professor:
Associate professor:
Full professor:
College/university administrator:
Unaffiliated instructor or teacher:
Other:

Book trades:

Antiquarian bookseller:
Appraiser:
Auction house staff:
Book artist, artisan or printer:
Publisher:
Other:

Other occupations/vocations:

Book collector:
Independent scholar:
Post-doctoral fellow/researcher/scholar:
Retired:
Other: