

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. The reading list was daunting and some repetition of material. Considering the amount of reading, I found Eisenstein impenetrable and too scholarly. Some of the suggested reading was easier to digest, especially publisher's articles.
2. All were useful. *A Short History of the Printed Word* was probably the least useful. I'm going to look for better treatments of the subject (i.e., better written).
3. Yes, the readings were helpful, but I found it difficult to get to them all, much less any additional preparation.
4. Useful. I also watched videos online of printing processes.
5. All readings were relevant to the course. Having read all titles from the reading list provided a good basis of knowledge during classes. I doubt I would have been able to keep up with the pace of the class had I not read what was suggested.
6. The reading was very useful—surprised to have none on the discipline itself. Maybe Petrucci?
7. Yes, the pre-course reading provided a great groundwork for the information we learned in class. It helped me feel more comfortable with some of the topics I had no previous knowledge of, and those topics were reinforced and expounded on in class.
8. Yes. My own experience in media history and editing provided some useful overlap. I did feel somewhat ill-equipped to consider the historical/cultural contexts of most books we discussed. Perhaps impossible to prepare for efficiently, though.
9. The readings were appropriate, though a bit basic. I would've liked at least a suggestion of a chronological survey text prior to attending.
10. Yes.
11. The pre-course readings were exhaustive. Maybe too much. But, I'll re-read them.

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. While reference was made to the material, I expect to use it for additional content to my notes.
2. Very useful. Workbook needs to be updated a little bit.
3. The workbook is lovely, and I'm sure it will become a frequent reference for me in the future. I'm happy to have a useful record of things I learned in the course.
4. Yes.
5. I barely opened the notebook provided during class. I was too focused on being present during class time. The contents of the notebook merely outlined the days'

- topics. It wasn't particularly important.
6. Outstanding workbook. I especially appreciate lists of what we saw, and the further reading list is immensely helpful. Thanks for the care you took in this.
 7. Yes! I learned so much that will be useful for further study. Also, seeing much of the teaching material helped me understand processes much more effectively than simply hearing about them.
 8. I will certainly keep it. Having the SC lists is a very useful record of what we looked at.
 9. All appropriate and will be instrumental in further facilitating research.
 10. Workbook was helpful during the week and I imagine will continue to be so.
 11. I would add a researched timeline according to MD's and JB's teachings.

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

1. N/A
2. N/A
3. N/A
4. N/A
5. N/A
6. Another outstanding course.
7. N/A
8. Similar in rigor and quality. Different topic and scope altogether.
9. N/A
10. N/A
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 presentation of the historical one laid out was most relevant to me.
2. Trip to LC was the highlight.
3. The ability to take in this comprehensive survey of the history of the book in one week's time is challenging, yet satisfactory in that it makes sense from beginning to end, neither of which you have forgotten due to a broad time lapse between them! It helped to explain many lacunae in my education and was most welcome since I will be able to deploy virtually everything I learned here in my daily work with a broad range of materials from all times, and places, and in all techniques.
4. Very helpful to put my own special collections in context with others. This has left me with lots of information and ideas about how to use my rare book collection in teaching.
5. {no response}
6. Medieval/incunables—how transmission of ideas in text happened, physicality of the object. I will have new projects in knowledge categorization.
7. The early manuscripts, fine press books, and artist's books were most interesting and relevant to my work. I learned so much and this class helped me better place a historical and cultural context around the work of many eras.
8. I came for context and got it. Very useful as a foundation for my dissertation, with specific case studies to focus on.
9. Absolutely. Eisenstein's theories (and criticisms of her theories) will be

- incorporated into my work. I have a better foundation for my own area of focus, which is modern/contemporary art.
10. All overlap between RBS/UVA/LC collections and my home institution were obviously extraordinarily helpful and I have plenty of project and teaching ideas now.
 11. The teachers gave us a deep insight of the subject matter and a very comprehensive approach.
- 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. The skill I hope I have acquired is inspecting text and images to appreciate them more and help decide their age and technique. It is what I hoped to learn. I would have liked a bit more social context, especially in the nineteenth century and after.
 2. A very nutritious experience. I would suggest handing out a timeline with space for notes.
 3. Yes, they did. Perhaps a few things were “underdeveloped,” but I would challenge anyone to do it any better than they did with the time we had to do it in. I mean, we covered 2,000 years in 30 hours!
 4. Heavy on English/U.S. narrative, but can’t cover everything in such a short time. Good intro to technology. Helpful list for future reading.
 5. The instructors provided much more than that which was promised in any written description of the course. The course would not be as good as it is without MD and JB.
 6. Yes. Never enough time. Would have appreciated more on literacy and act of reading if suddenly more time was available.
 7. Yes, I learned all I could hope to learn and so much more!
 8. Yes. Personally, I would have liked more contemporary technologies and texts. The course is skewed to the more historical moments. Yes.
 9. Yes, my expectations were surpassed.
 10. Yes. Maybe a little more time on the twentieth century.
 11. I have learned beyond what I have hoped to do.
- 6) *How do you plan to use the skills and knowledge acquired during your time here?*
1. Dating material and noting techniques would be most helpful going forward.
 2. {no response}
 3. In every aspect of my work—from cataloging to interactions with researchers, historical understanding to support exhibition label copy, or acquisition proposals, &c., ad infinitum.
 4. See Q4. Also nice to get basic conservation information.
 5. All skills acquired will be employed daily in my duties as public services librarian.
 6. I will convey to my principals more about the world of the object, how text is transmitted, and hierarchy of knowledge.
 7. I will be using the knowledge I’ve gained in this course to better inform my thesis project. I am certain I will use it in many other ways as well.
 8. Straight to the dissertation. And in future media classes I teach.
 9. As a launching pad to continue researching the technical processes of print with

- social/cultural impact of print distribution.
10. What I learned at RBS will help my teaching and librarianship.
 11. In my daily job I will use the skills in cataloging and scouting new books to add to our inventory.
- 7) *Please briefly describe the intellectual level of the course. What sort of person might benefit the most from taking it?*
1. Anyone interested in the power of the book, reading, and communicating information would benefit. One need not be a scholar.
 2. {no response}
 3. It seems best for curious humanists of our age who are interested in comparative cultures as manifest through the history of books. Definitely requires post-grad understanding of history for a solid background of cultural references.
 4. It helps to be engaged in a related field of work or study. Doing the advance reading is really important. Part of the experience is hearing what fellow classmates bring to the table.
 5. As long as one is serious about learning book history, I think any adult interested in the subject will find the course fulfilling.
 6. Graduate level course. Any historian or reader with interest can benefit. Moves quickly, but teachers are clear in explanation.
 7. This course was a broad and very approachable overview that is a great starting point for a range of people. This class had a wide spectrum of applications and would benefit anyone interested in books.
 8. Anyone with a motivated curiosity about the subject.
 9. Someone brand new to the subject or looking for engagement with primary examples.
 10. Anyone interested in the history of the book—the course is rigorous, but presented well.
 11. This class has a high level that educated people should take.
- 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. The immediacy of handling or seeing original material was the most powerful.
 2. {no response}
 3. Every book is an “aha!” moment, it seems. It’s very helpful to see the videos, handle the printmaking hardware, and samples to understand the printing techniques.
 4. The day at LC. The breathtaking range of materials in the teaching collection.
 5. I like the scriptorium experience. It was dark and quiet.
 6. Galileo’s proof copy, Thomas Jefferson’s handwriting...teachers present remarkable moments in intellectual history.
 7. The field trip was incredible.
 8. Too many. But easy to see contemporary practices reflecting ancient roots now.
 9. Honestly, anything that was unusual or a joke became instantly memorable (like the Medieval scribe “demo”).
 10. The entire course was a prolonged “aha” moment, but the visit to LC was especially

powerful.

11. JB and MD make a special duo of teachers that make the lessons never boring. MD played a door-to-door bible seller. Hilarious!

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

1. The time was well used by the instructors. For my purposes, a bit less printing technique and more historical context would have been better.
2. {no response}
3. I don't know what that could be.
4. {no response}
5. {no response}
6. More time!
7. Make it longer!
8. For a survey, it's practically perfect.
9. I'm biased, but more structure and detail in the twentieth century would have helped me.
10. Ban cell phone/iPad cameras! A lot of time was spent dodging screens.
11. If it could last two weeks!

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

1. This course is exactly what I wanted.
2. Highly recommend.
3. Yes. Yes.
4. Yes.
5. This course is worth the cost. I will recommend it to others.
6. Yes, and more, yes.
7. Yes, and I will do so enthusiastically.
8. I attended on a scholarship. But, yes.
9. Yes.
10. Yes!
11. Definitely yes!

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

1. Our trip to the LC was exciting; being in its hallowed halls and being shown the books. However, the UVA books from SC were also exciting. DARWIN!!!
2. Definitely!
3. Absolutely.
4. Absolutely! What a fantastic opportunity to visit LC with MD.
5. The visit to LC is well worth the extra long day.
6. Yes. Trip was long, so preparation before should be made. Worth it in spades.
7. Yes!
8. LC—yes. Highlight of the week.
9. Yes, absolutely.
10. Yes!

11. Absolutely!

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. Timothy Barrett's papermaking talk was relevant, exciting, and inspiring. The exhibit on digital materials which needed hard copies for presentation was disappointing and not worth the time.
2. The Timothy Barrett talk was 100% relevant and perfect. Booksellers' Night was a bit disappointing, though it may have been that we got there too late (after 7 p.m.).
3. Yes. Timothy Barrett's lecture was great.
4. Exhibit tour didn't give enough context. Paper talk was interesting. I liked that these were not long events, as we had already spent the day in class.
5. It was nice to have related but diverting activities available after class, but they should remain optional, not become mandatory.
6. Yes, papermaking lecture was fascinating.
7. I enjoyed the evening lecture and Booksellers' Night.
8. N/A
9. The Booksellers' Night was nice!
10. Yes, the Monday lecture tied into the day's topic in a useful way.
11. Booksellers' Night was not so special as I expected.

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

1. My advice would be to read only one book in each subject, then choose one's own while keeping to the syllabus.
2. Read the required books/articles at least.
3. Take it seriously. As with all schooling, the more you put into it, the more you'll get out of it.
4. {no response}
5. Five long days of rigorous learning really does speed along faster than I thought it would.
6. Plan for 3+ hours in a bus—make sure you are comfortable. Your patience will be well-rewarded with the readings also.
7. Come ready to be inundated and overwhelmed with knowledge presented in very entertaining fashion.
8. MD and JB are generous and thoughtful. This is likely the best class of its kind.
9. Don't be intimidated, and bring sweaters.
10. Just take it!
11. Read the pre-readings and do not come tired!

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

1. This was an intensive course given to us with the obvious joy, love, passion and erudition of two great instructors! Thank you both!
2. Intense bibliographical orgy.

3. Shock and awe
I stand under
A waterfall of information
4. Enriching. It has helped me see the value of my own institution's collections, and how that value can be communicated. Very much appreciate MD and JB giving their time and expertise. They "left it all on the field."
5. Now I know.
6. Outstanding.
7. This was the best week of my summer!
8. Worth the effort.
9. MD and JB were born to teach (together).
10. Yipee-kay-yay!
11. An extraordinary learning experience in a special environment where you feel the love of the teachers for the books.

Student Data

Number of respondents: 11 (of 12)

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

My institution/employer gave me professional leave time: 4 (36.36%)
 My institution/employer did not give me professional leave; I used paid or vacation days: 2 (18.18%)
 I am a student or non-year-round employee, with a more flexible summer schedule: 2 (18.18%)
 I am retired, and can arrange my own schedule: 1 (36.36%)
 My situation does not fit any of the options above: 2 (18.18%)

Who paid your RBS tuition costs?

I paid 100% myself: 2 (18.18%)
 My institution/employer paid 100%: 3 (27.27%)
 I used a scholarship/fellowship to pay/waive 100%: 6 (54.55%)

Who paid your RBS housing expenses?

I paid 100% myself: 5 (45.45%)
 My institution/employer paid 100%: 5 (45.45%)
 I used a scholarship/fellowship to cover 100%: 1 (36.36%)

Who paid your RBS travel expenses?

I paid 100% myself: 4 (36.36%)
 My institution/employer paid 100%: 5 (45.45%)
 My institution/employer paid part; I paid the rest: 1 (9.09%)
 I used a scholarship/fellowship to cover 100%: 1 (9.09%)

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

Library disciplines:

Library administrator: 1 (9.09%)
Public services librarian: 1 (9.09%)
Special collections librarian: 1 (9.09%)
Other: 2 (18.18%)

Student working toward a/n:

M.F.A.: 1 (9.09%)
Ph.D./D.Phil: 2 (18.18%)

Book trades:

Antiquarian bookseller: 1 (9.09%)

Other occupations/vocations:

Book collector: 1 (9.09%)
Other: 1 (9.09%)