

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. No. No. No. The assignments were, in some cases, deeply intellectual and difficult to read, especially for students not versed in even a general understanding of the subject.
2. As the instructors were new to this class, I think they built a comprehensive reading list, and it was very extensive. Some topics, such as black press publications, seemed to have been covered by multiple sources, so perhaps the list could be reduced by one or two entries.
3. I did find the readings useful, and furthermore they were extremely convenient to access through Dropbox. I also appreciated having an outline of the class sessions beforehand.
4. There was a lot of pre-reading for the course which was very helpful for the presentations and discussions in class.
5. The reading assignments are a useful bibliography for the course. I read these with an eye toward my interests before the class, but I think they will often be even more useful, now that we've discussed key ideas and looked at relevant physical objects.
6. Yes. Read some additional materials. No. No.
7. Not only were they useful, they were necessary to be able to participate as the class was primarily conducted in a seminar format.
8. Yes. Assignments were good and comprehensive.
9. An excellent, well-selected variety of articles was provided prior to class, and adequate time for reading and understanding the material. The readings provide a solid foundation for the topics in this class, especially due to the extensive topic. So much to cover in a week, yet everything held together thanks to the initial foundation material.
10. I absolutely recommend doing all the reading to get the most out of the course. It's a lot, but well worth the time, so start early and take notes on the main arguments.
11. The reading was necessary for me to derive as much as possible from the class. More experienced students may not need all the readings.

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. Yes, very helpful.
2. The workbook was helpful and provided a guide for the sequence of readings. I will retain it for future reference.
3. I will keep the handouts for reference, and I appreciate that they were formatted

- to allow space for notes in the margins or on the back.
4. The content distributed in class was appropriate and useful. I know I will continue to reference some of this material as my own work continues.
 5. Course workbook is useful, with clearly defined expectations and good further reading (and videos!). Teaching materials used during class were helpful, too, in facilitating discussion, since giving us worksheets/guided questions allowed us to consider key points and notice particular aspects of rare books or materials.
 6. Workbook outlined each period. List of resources most useful.
 7. I would have liked to receive a summary handout at the end of each session or at the end of the course.
 8. Content was excellent. The only challenge was that the scans were too small to be readable when printed on 8.5 x 11" paper. One article had a lot of toner in the gutter and I had to make a new image on our library's scanner from the original publication.
 9. So much material, so wonderful to be able to see specific, and excellent, examples of the items we were discussing. Of course more are wished for, but then we would need to be here two weeks, not one!
 10. I really like the worksheets we used for the discussion and analysis of the various source materials/artifacts we examined. I am sure I will come back to these when doing similar exercises with students.
 11. SC and JG were meticulously prepared. The teaching materials were extremely helpful, judiciously interspersed with other activities, and terribly interesting.

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

1. A sense of humor is always helpful to lighten the mood. Our instructors were very willing to lighten their subject with interjections of humor, received from the students as well. Makes for a more collegial atmosphere.
2. N/A
3. It was very different from "DesBib" last year, where the physical book was the focus, but the quality was just as high. I don't have as much time as I would like to consider the world in which a physical book existed, and this course gave me necessary context to do so, and suggested numerous avenues for inquiry I had not considered.
4. This course was outstanding.
5. N/A
6. The last course I take is always the best.
7. Every bit as good as the best of them.
8. This format was excellent—really ideal. The right mix between lecture and hands-on exploration. We covered a lot of ground in five days. The hands-on sessions were a lot of fun and we got to see an amazing array of material.
9. This is not a fair question. Are apples and bananas comparable? Not really. This was a well-organized, focused, and well-presented course, but so was my previous course.
10. It was right up there with my previous RBS class experiences. I learned a tremendous amount and am inspired to continue to build on it. It was an incredibly enriching experience.
11. This is my third class. They get better every 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. Yes, more of a grounding as related to many parts of my occupation.
 2. From a practical standpoint, the strictly historical content will be most useful to me, while the analytical historiography portion may not. However, the insights gained by the analytical aspects of the course will guide future self-study in the subject area.
 3. There are more new insights than I can enumerate, but overall I believe I have a much greater understanding of the historical places of books I had encountered many times before.
 4. The course provided me with a better context for understanding and interpreting the collections in my care.
 5. I found the beginning of the course—and its framework—most interesting and relevant. Considering what an “American” book is and—what a “book” even is—pushed me further in my thinking about print culture in America.
 6. Reading list, artifacts, and printing demonstrations.
 7. The focus on the history of the book as a process rather than simply a progressive display/explanation of artifacts.
 8. Getting to print on the common press and the iron press is fantastic. I will definitely be thinking about how to incorporate printing history into my teaching sessions during the next year.
 9. Many terms I’ve heard or read we made much clearer. Having a variety of examples printed has been very helpful. Discussion into how to look and know what you are looking at has been most helpful.
 10. I enjoyed the entire week and gained insights into nineteenth- and twentieth-century book history that will inform future acquisition decisions and also influence how I approach my own instruction of American History classes.
 11. Faculty gently prodding class discourse created an atmosphere of genuine respect and learning. I have tons of ideas based on my experience this week.
- 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. The course met my expectations; it would be difficult to include more content in a one-week format.
 3. I learned what I had hoped to learn, and in a more deeply relevant way than I had expected. There are several types of books that I thought I knew well that I now understand with much more depth.
 4. The course and the instructors delivered as advertised. I did learn what I had hoped to learn.
 5. This course fits its description. I hoped for a broad overview of print culture in America, and I got that with various specific details and insights. In-class discussions stuck to the broad developments and narrative, but I feel I also have the tools to go more deeply into my specific areas of interest now.
 6. I came with no expectations and was not disappointed.
 7. Yes. Just what I was hoping for.

8. Yes.
9. All I anticipated, and many more that I did not know—until this course—I needed! Thank you.
10. Absolutely—the course went beyond what I expected. I don't think anything more could have been packed into the week. It was an amazing course!
11. SC and JG are excellent teachers, period.

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

1. In general, they will assist job knowledge.
2. Professionally, I will use the knowledge gained here in the performance of my work almost daily. Personally, I will be able to use it to build a better understanding of my profession and how it relates to the wider world.
3. I expect to be able to contribute much more frequently and in greater depth to a customer/collector's understanding of the cultural context of an item I offer.
4. Having a better understanding of the book in America will assist my efforts to improve access to the collections in my care, and better place materials into the hands of students and faculty at my institution.
5. I plan to refer to these materials in my later work and keep the history of print/written communication in mind even when working with modern/contemporary items or texts.
6. I will be able to use much of what was presented in my work.
7. In better understanding the context of the things that I sell.
8. I will be leading professional development workshops for my colleagues based on this course. I will also work to incorporate this content into our undergraduate and graduate courses.
9. To assist me in my writing of historical materials.
10. I take away ideas, skills, and knowledge to incorporate in my own work with undergraduate students at my home institution. Furthermore, I will better be able to work on exhibits of our collection materials and make collection development decisions.
11. I'm afraid I'll have to assess. I have a very specific idea for research that had never crystalized for me before. This week's total experience has pushed me to clarity.

7) *Please briefly describe the intellectual level of the course. What sort of person might benefit the most from taking it?*

1. Directed to graduate level plus. Maybe more useful to students already working for some years in related fields.
2. I was both challenged and inspired by the intellectual level of the course. The general nature of the topic would make it beneficial to anyone interested in rare books.
3. Not having much of an academic background, I was somewhat anxious about this course—I tend to prefer more practical subjects than theoretical ones. But, both instructors provided an atmosphere where I was comfortable contributing.
4. Graduate students, curators, librarians, archivists, and booksellers.
5. This course is accessible yet interesting! It seems best for those who are entirely new to the field of American book history.
6. We had a well-diversified class. Each member brought a valuable perspective.

7. This course requires a synthesis of the reading materials before attending to get the most out of it. If you don't want to do the extensive reading, I would not recommend you sign up for the course.
 8. We had a range of participants including book dealers, auction house specialists, grad students, special collections librarians, museum curators, and artists. We all contributed to the conversations and got a great deal out of the class.
 9. An active learner course—college level, perhaps. One must have a love for this material.
 10. The readings were academic in nature, some harder than others. But, I think that anyone who is considering taking the class will be a good fit!
 11. I'm a part-timer in the book world as I still own and run a company. This was a challenging class, but I would not have missed it for the world.
- 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 am not a library person and know next to nothing about book terminology, history, and uses. I am very familiar with printing technology, but not necessarily practices. The class was certainly an awakening for me regarding components of the above.
 2. There were several moments in which I began to think in new ways about books and printed culture, which I will still be thinking about for weeks or even years to come.
 3. One was seeing how many advertisements had been stripped from issues of *Harper's Magazine* when they were bound in book form. Such a contrast between the ephemeral issue and the permanent book!
 4. Pulling a common press and later an iron hand press gave me a wonderful connection to the trade that I didn't have before.
 5. I especially appreciated how the hands-on activities allowed me to accumulate knowledge about how books are printed and made. I noticed myself building off past sessions and making connections I couldn't have made a day before.
 6. No reply.
 7. Finding out about *The Publishers' Trade List Annual*.
 8. "Aha!" moment = color lithography. Forty-four plates for one image!!!
 9. Learning about the difference between wood carving and wood engravings! Like a light turned on.
 10. I love that seminar-style discussion is mixed in with short lectures. It's a great mix.
 11. {no response}
- 9) *How could the course have been improved?*
1. It may assist all RBS parties to have a slightly shorter day. By the end of most days there is definitely the sense that both instructors and students are drifting a little.
 2. A little more structure to lessons, as this was a first time offering.
 3. Perhaps a few more outline handouts to supplement discussions and lab sessions.
 4. {no response}
 5. The readings are relatively numerous for the time spent in class—I'd suggest choosing 60% of these to assign in the future.

6. The course developed as the instructors planned as indicated by the suggested readings.
7. Perhaps a little more PowerPoint or workbook bullets/outlines.
8. It's terrific the way it is. I liked the session on "pesky questions"—keep that, too.
9. So much covered, well-paced—can always be tweaked—but very well done!
10. Can't think of anything!
11. I honestly do not have a single suggestion for improvement.

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

1. Yes. Yes.
2. Yes, on both counts.
3. Yes, x2!
4. Yes, I would strongly recommend this course.
5. Yes, and yes!
6. I always receive my money's worth from an RBS experience. Some persons will benefit more than others.
7. Definitely. Yes.
8. Yes.
9. 100% yes.
10. Absolutely—and yes, if you have any interest in American book history, you will enjoy the class.
11. Yes. 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. Very much so—printing press demonstrations.
3. Both printing demonstrations were indispensable to my understanding of the printing methods of different time periods.
4. The experiences with the common press and the iron hand press were very useful.
5. We experienced two printing demonstrations; these were informative and a good change of pace.
6. N/A
7. Yes, the printing demos were valuable.
8. N/A
9. Two printing demonstrations added to the understanding of the material in a positive way.
10. Printing press demonstrations and hands-on experience. I would highly recommend it.
11. Yes.

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. Yes.

2. I attended all but one lecture, and enjoyed everything that I took part in.
3. Yes—especially Dr. Maddock’s lecture on the Irish Parliament bindings.
4. I enjoyed both lectures thoroughly, though they were beyond the scope of my course. Movie Night selections were fun additions to my class.
5. I enjoyed the time with others after the class sessions, and lectures provided a way to do this. This function was more important to me than their content.
6. The two speakers were outstanding.
7. N/A
8. Yes.
9. Two lectures, both good events. Nice to change gears, relax, and be exposed to related, but not the same, material.
10. I was only able to attend one of the lectures and, as always, enjoyed it very much. I hope the lectures will continue.
11. I always enjoy the lectures. They’re an interesting additional perspective to our week. Thank you for arranging.

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

1. Do it! The entire experience leaves one with a sense of accomplishment, generally, and it’s an opportunity to meet new people with similar interests, promote the general book arts cause, and acquire new/different knowledge.
2. If waitlisted for the course, immediately email the teachers to ask for course materials so that you can begin preparing in case you are admitted to the course at the last minute.
3. If someone is unsure about which course to take, ask a member of the RBS staff, and read the course evaluations.
4. Though the reading may be daunting, even a cursory familiarity with the essays can make the class discussions more meaningful. Hands-on experiences in class using original items were especially helpful and interesting!
5. The course is excellent for a broad understanding of the history of the book in America, but be prepared to find more specific answers to your research questions or interests in the resources provided. Also, the class atmosphere was wonderful—very collegial and laid back.
6. No answer.
7. Do the readings and be prepared to discuss them.
8. Do as much reading as you can before the course starts as you will not have much time in the evening to do the readings.
9. Be sure to read all the material before you come, and do not be shy about discussing how you understood the material. The instructors were great, but the additional student exchange was/is invaluable.
10. To get the most out of this or any other RBS class, the more you prepare, the more you get out of it!
11. {no response}

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

1. {no response}

2. I want more.
3. No art, just a thank you.
4. Absolutely great—I hope I can come back!
5. Wash your hands! (Protect the books!)
6. Always an outstanding experience.
7. Enjoyable and worthwhile.
8. Collegial, engaging, and rewarding.
9. An excellent opportunity to further develop in your field while networking with others—so necessary!
10. Thought provoking, stimulating, energizing—there is really no other place for this kind of learning and exchange of ideas. Thank you!
11. RBS continues to be one of the most important experiences in my life.

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: 5 (45.45%)

My institution/employer did not give me professional leave; I used paid or vacation days: 1 (9.09%)

I am self-employed, and can arrange my own schedule: 3 (27.27%)

I am a student or non-year-round employee, with a more flexible summer schedule: 2 (18.18%)

Who paid your RBS tuition costs?

I paid 100% myself: 5 (45.45%)

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

I used a scholarship/fellowship to pay/waive 100%: 1 (9.09%)

I had an RBS course tuition credit from a previous year: 1 (9.09%)

Who paid your RBS housing expenses?

I paid 100% myself: 6 (54.55%)

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

I stayed with friends/family, or stayed in my own home and commuted: 1 (9.09%)

Who paid your RBS travel expenses?

I paid 100% myself: 6 (54.55%)

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

I live locally, and had no travel expenses: 1 (9.09%)

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

Library disciplines:

Archivist: 2 (18.18%)

Special collections librarian: 1 (9.09%)

Student working toward a/n:

Ph.D./D.Phil: 1 (9.09%)

Book trades:

Antiquarian bookseller: 2 (18.18%)

Appraiser: 1 (9.09%)

Auction house staff: 1 (9.09%)

Other occupations/vocations:

Independent Scholar: 1 (9.09%)

Post-doctoral fellow/researcher/scholar: 1 (9.09%)

Other: 1 (9.09%)