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H-20: The Book in the Manuscript Era  
11-16 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. Pre-course reading assignments were extremely helpful. I was already familiar with some concepts, but the recommended and assigned readings helped fill in knowledge gaps and were helpful as background for lecture.
2. They were very useful. I read the Barbara Shailor book and was glad to have an advance idea of the Beinecke's collections, and I read RC's own book, which was a very helpful orientation. I'm sure I'll go back to the other readings.
3. Yes.
4. The reading assignments were very helpful. The secondary reading list seemed unnecessary since we were not want for talking points. Western scripts seemed unnecessary since we did not spend much time on identification. Lisa Gitelman's *Paper Knowledge* might fit well, and one of the texts about reading silently.
5. I enjoyed the readings immensely. (I read the four required books and two of the three suggested ones.) Those most directly pertinent were Barbara Shailor's exhibition catalog and RC's marvelous and encyclopedic text, which was an exciting discovery for me. Because of my interest in paleography, I really enjoyed the Michelle Brown book, but anyone without Latin would have had a struggle.
6. The four chapters RC emailed and assigned were necessary and essential. The other readings were more background info for me (but I have an M.A. in medieval history).
7. They were excellent and gave me very helpful preparation for the course.
8. The advance reading was helpful, but I brought it with me and it was very heavy—I wasn't sure if we'd need the books in class or at Yale. Maybe advise future students to read them all, but only bring *Introduction to Manuscript Studies*.
9. {private response}
10. Yes.
11. The readings are essential, and it prepares you for what you will be handling. For someone who has no hands-on experience with these materials, I felt prepared to know what to expect.
12. The required book list was not as required as it was suggested. The RC book is essential to any book historian's bookshelf.

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. Teaching materials were useful. I greatly appreciated the offer to create additional teaching material (handouts) that reference discussion points made in class.
2. {no response}

3. Yes.
4. Very few handouts (labs only)—much relieved. I might try the quill out again!
5. We had two labs, one on ink/writing, the other on binding. Both were illuminating and well-presented. It's really something to have the experts in the field speak on these subjects and be available for questions!
6. The structure of the book handout was fabulous.
7. The handouts were great and I know I will refer to them in the future. We had difficulties accessing online readings that were assigned during the week. These readings were very helpful and informative also.
8. It was difficult to read the online material because it was photographed, not scanned or PDFed. In future, maybe have binders/print outs prepared for student's use during the week, take notes on them, then take home.
9. {private response}
10. {no response}
11. The course materials were both appropriate and useful.
12. The visits by Marie France Lemay and Yale's bookbinder, Karen Jutizi (along with the handouts) were a highlight.

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

1. One of the best I've taken so far.
2. Similar.
3. It was as good as my previous courses.
4. Good! Emphasis on materials, very responsive to questions, and particular interests. Very much a survey; intellectual instead of practical.
5. My other RBS course was "M-50: Introduction to Illuminated Manuscripts" taught at the Morgan Library in 2014 by Roger Wieck. It sparked my interest in further manuscript study, so this was the perfect complement.
6. N/A
7. N/A
8. Having taken two previous manuscript-related RBS sessions, the strength/outstanding feature of this one, compared to the UVA sessions, is the access to the Beinecke's collection and opportunity to hear the curator/expert (RC!), who knows the collection intimately, explain why he bought it, what makes it important, and his observations.
9. N/A
10. {no response}
11. Every course is more delightful than the last.
12. Both classes introduced key texts that will be great reference works. I enjoyed Yale more than UVA.

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. I enjoyed all aspects of the class, but particularly appreciated getting the opportunity to handle materials and ask questions. The labs were a bonus, especially "inks and pigments."
2. Plenty of time looking at great examples of particular kinds of books. A number of very helpful insights from things I saw and heard in class.

3. Viewing and discussing manuscript items.
  4. The disclosure and discussion of how this appeals for teaching and engaging students. Definitely want to survey our collection for fragments. Want to open up the medieval collection to more students.
  5. {no response}
  6. Learning about the structure of binding and the physical process of making parchment was great. The books of hours classes were most relevant to my research interests.
  7. I have a much deeper understanding of the various genres of medieval manuscripts and who was producing them at different historical periods.
  8. Gave me a better perspective on curatorial interactions with manuscripts, and has reinvigorated my interest in fragments. And, most importantly, gave me the opportunity to see materials I hope to work with in the future.
  9. {private response}
  10. Ability to handle and compare various manuscripts. Labs helpful to understanding processes.
  11. I took this course for personal enjoyment.
  12. The feather quill exercise was a highlight and I hope to introduce my own students to such an experience.
- 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 was definitely able to fill in some knowledge gaps I had regarding this period. The content fulfilled the course description; I wish we would have had time to discuss some content more thoroughly, but maybe that is just better saved for another class!
2. Yes—this was a balanced authoritative overview which gave us the overall contours of the subject in a reliable way, and made a great foundation for further work.
3. Yes.
4. We did not spend time on paleography, which I had expected (not that there is time for that). Latin was described as helpful, but was really unnecessary.
5. RC is the best instructor! Immensely learned, and wears his learning lightly. He was always accessible, listened to everyone, shared insights generously, and pulled additional materials the class was interested in. I would love to take another course with him.
6. Yes.
7. I was thinking I would come away with a more extensive experience working with different scripts. I know paleography would need to be a course all on its own, and is enormously complex, though.
8. Each session we could've easily spent at least a week on. I appreciated RC's insights and knowledge. I learned what I hoped to, but wish I could have a full semester course of it.
9. {private response}
10. Yes, emphasis on medieval material was excellent. The class went further into discussion of determining modern material and whether it falls into manuscript or printed categories.

11. Yes. RC is fantastic!
12. RC was filled with knowledge, experience, and good humor. He was the perfect model for sharing manuscripts with new students.

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

1. Will use info for daily work—presenting information to students, acquisition of material, &c.
2. Being less scared of medieval manuscripts! And, feeling more qualified to approach rather than avoid them.
3. Incorporate them into my knowledge of book history, my professional work.
4. Incorporate into teaching and projects. Immediate benefit in filling in subject knowledge lacking on my team.
5. Future enjoyment and better understanding of manuscript exhibitions. Further reading.
6. I teach/facilitate book history courses and special collections instruction at a state university. This knowledge is invaluable in shaping engaging instruction sessions.
7. I will take what I've learned back to my institution, to class sessions with students and in preparing exhibitions.
8. Developing the codicological side of my dissertation and becoming a better future manuscript librarian.
9. {private response}
10. {no response}
11. Unknown. This material is outside of my normal field of interest, but informs future encounters with medieval materials.
12. Actively in general book history classes, and to better review manuscripts as a collector.

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

1. Librarians, archivists, educators, collectors of the period.
2. Not too specialized. Someone wanting a general orientation.
3. Any person with an interest in medieval manuscripts.
4. Very introductory and comprehensive. A semester in five days. The advance reading is essential. Good for people who are normally generalists.
5. {no response}
6. It's a medieval survey. My background in medieval history meant that I had already read many of the readings, BUT the opportunity to handle the materials was worth it.
7. What I like about a course like this is its relevance to people from a variety of backgrounds.
8. Probably best for people with a background in some kind of medieval manuscript paleography/codicology since the course was more like a series of case studies with Beinecke material than an intro class to provide foundation.
9. I thought the content was at an accessible and non-intimidating level that allowed people of numerous backgrounds to benefit. RC's depth of knowledge is useful to people at all levels.
10. {no response}

11. This course relied upon the student being receptive to varied texts and willing to take the plunge—intellectually satisfying for this student.
12. The level was just right for an “intermediate” book person with some background. A complete novice might be at a disadvantage.

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. Enjoyed learning about the connections/correlations between the manuscript and print eras.
2. For me the takeaway was a general sense of ability and empowerment rather than particular instants.
3. Writing with a quill.
4. The idea that this material is so rare...the texts often have a lot happening, although an example of one trait.
5. {no response}
6. I cried seeing Abelard and Heloise’s letters. It was extremely generous of RC to bring out materials “by request.”
7. I was surprised by the whole area of forgeries, fakes, copies, and later embellishments to manuscripts that I hadn’t thought about before.
8. I liked seeing the value of forgeries and fakes. Good discussions about the cultural importance of these works. Exploring the concept of “what is a manuscript?”
9. {private response}
10. {no response}
11. Seeing the Voynich manuscript was more fun than anyone should be allowed to have in a classroom setting.
12. Seeing scrolls; papyrus; using a quill, and seeing the “portable scriptorium.”

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

1. Longer!
2. It was a really great course, especially given that this was the first time it was offered. Maybe some more concrete details in handouts...e.g., on Book of Hours. {private response}
3. Greater variety of materials.
4. A little paleography—maybe an assignment or presentation.
5. {no response}
6. Make the essential readings more clear before the course starts.
7. {no response}
8. Pre-printed packets. More Ray “tangents” (very informative). More time in pigment lab for using materials.
9. {private response}
10. {no response}
11. I don’t think so.
12. In general, I think RBS should offer shorter, more economical classes. There is certainly “fat” that could be trimmed.

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

*others?*

1. Yes, and definitely.
2. Yes.
3. Yes.
4. Yes—I feel like I got working knowledge (but not expertise).
5. Yes, in spades!
6. Yes, and yes!
7. Yes, and yes.
8. All the way. In fact, I think it's a course that could be valuable to re-take if the materials were different year-to-year. So good.
9. Yes! A print reader would have been extra handy if included in the price. Would recommend class to others.
10. Absolutely.
11. More than my money's worth; I would recommend this course.
12. Again, as in Q9, RBS spreads out topics over a week with long breaks and lunches, and room for "chattiness." Tightening things up might open RBS to a wider audience.

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

1. Yes. Would have been nice to have had a formal library tour (Sterling and Beinecke).
2. Yes, definitely. The sessions on pigments and on bindings were very good.
3. N/A
4. Labs were good, but maybe took up a bit too much time. Diverged from the text.
5. {no response}
6. Yes.
7. Yes! Our sessions with the conservators were time well spent.
8. I love the pigment lab! It's so helpful as a paleographer/student of the middle ages, to feel how the scribes formed letters by doing it with authentic stuff.
9. {private response}
10. N/A
11. Yes. We learned how ink was made for this period of study, learned to use quills, viewed a binding session, and saw various binding techniques.
12. The binding and conservation sessions were highlights.

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. All were enjoyable and enhanced the experience.
2. All good; none essential.
3. N/A
4. The reception was essential, and the dealer hosting was pleasant. Convenient that they were all nearby.
5. I attended both evening events, Kathryn James's very interesting talk, and Bill Reese's generous reception; both worthwhile in different ways.

6. I was unable to attend any optional events because of where I was staying.
7. The Shakespeare forgeries lecture was excellent.
8. Printing press was really neat.
9. {private response}
10. {private response}
11. I attended the Monday night lecture, which has inspired me to take the course associated with it next year. I also went to two afternoon excursions which were fun and informative.
12. The lecture and reception at Bill Reese's place were enjoyable.

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

1. RC was a fantastic instructor—knowledgeable, collegial, accommodating. Overall, just a fun instructor who excels at teaching this material.
2. {no response}
3. No.
4. You only get what you put in. The instructor is laid back and not forceful about the homework, but it is interesting and helpful.
5. {no response}
6. Take it!
7. Bring some pictures of features in manuscripts that you've worked with that you have questions about.
8. It was truly a privilege to be part of this class. I want to do it again.
9. Great program!
10. {no response}
11. Take this course, even if you have never seen a manuscript in your life—you will not regret it.
12. Do the reading/homework, and try to be a student! Don't compulsively check email; give in to the experience.

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

1. I've said this almost every year, but it's still applicable: It's an honor to be here. For this year I'd add: It's a delight to be here.
2. {no response}
3. Huzzah!
4. Medieval 101 in 5 short days.
5. A week like this is truly a privilege to savor and be grateful for!
6. The medieval book,  
I cried when I held  
Abelard and Heloise's letters.
7. Your eyes will get tired  
and your brain will too  
but you'll know a whole lot more  
when the week is through!
8. The Voynich is cool  
But there are better mysteries.

- I love manuscripts.
9. A beautiful, enriching experience with a fantastic instructor in a great environment.
  10. GREAT!
  11. The best fully immersive program you are ever likely to experience, in the company of book nerds, and generally great people.
  12. Thank you RC! You brought wisdom, erudition, and bon homie!

## **Student Data**

*Number of respondents:* 12 (of 12)

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

My institution/employer gave me professional leave time: 7 (58.33%)

My institution/employer did not give me professional leave; I used paid or vacation days: 1 (8.33%)

I am a student or non-year-round employee, with a more flexible summer schedule: 2 (33.33%)

I am retired, and can arrange my own schedule: 2 (33.33%)

*Who paid your RBS tuition costs?*

I paid 100% myself: 3 (25%)

My institution/employer paid 100%: 6 (50%)

My institution/employer paid part; I paid the rest: 1 (8.33%)

I used a scholarship/fellowship to pay/waive 100%: 2 (16.67%)

*Who paid your RBS housing expenses?*

I paid 100% myself: 6 (50%)

My institution/employer paid 100%: 2 (16.67%)

My institution/employer paid part; I paid the rest: 1 (8.33%)

I used a scholarship/fellowship to cover 100%: 1 (8.33%)

I stayed with friends/family, or stayed in my own home and commuted: 2 (16.67%)

*Who paid your RBS travel expenses?*

I paid 100% myself: 5 (41.67%)

My institution/employer paid 100%: 3 (25%)

My institution/employer paid part; I paid the rest: 1 (8.33%)

I used a scholarship/fellowship to cover 100%: 1 (8.33%)

I live locally, and had no travel expenses: 2 (16.67%)

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

**Library disciplines:**

Cataloger/metadata librarian: 2 (16.67%)

Curator: 1 (8.33%)

Public services librarian: 1 (8.33%)

Special collections librarian: 1 (8.33%)

**Student working toward a/n:**

Ph.D./D.Phil: 1 (8.33%)

**Professional educator:**

Assistant professor: 1 (8.33%)

College/university administrator: 1 (8.33%)

Other: 1 (8.33%)

**Book trades:**

Antiquarian bookseller: 1 (8.33%)

**Other occupations/vocations:**

Book collector: 1 (8.33%)

Retired: 1 (8.33%)