

Soren Edgren
H-85: The History of the Book in China
9-14 July 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. They were very useful.
2. Pre-course assignments were excellent though a bit repetitive. Perhaps some more in-depth selections, with a reading map of order?
3. The reading was helpful. No, I didn't do any additional prep.
4. Very useful. I tried to read all of the readings. It was helpful to have them via Dropbox.
5. Readings were quite good and helpful indeed. Would suggest a syllabus with relevant readings pointing toward the day the topic would be covered.
6. Yes, they are all very useful. Only suggestion: It would be very helpful if we could get readings (actual full text, especially book chapters) as early in Dropbox as possible. Articles are easy to retrieve via databases, but books or book chapters are not always available at home institutions.
7. They were incredibly useful, though the number that were classified as "required" made it a little daunting.
8. The pre-course assignments were useful and referenced in class. Knowing Chinese could help to a minor degree but isn't necessary in the least.
9. {private response} They will be useful to me in the future.

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, and yes.
2. Course workbook is excellent. PowerPoint was also very good. Will definitely save the workbook. I would love copies of the PowerPoint slides.
3. The workbook was very well organized and useful; good for future reference.
4. Course workbook is especially helpful; yes, it will be useful.
5. It really does need to be updated to correct some errors and missing characters. The summary narratives would be improved by length...they are often too short.
6. Yes, very useful, and will continue to be important reference works.
7. The workbook was very helpful not only during the course, but also as a reference book afterwards. It was well-balanced: not too much, but nothing missing either.
8. I thought it was great, and besides having my notes written in, I've used it to mark future reference works.
9. The pull/show lists in the workbook are great.

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. N/A
7. N/A
8. I haven't taken RBS courses before.
9. This one was just as good. It felt a little rushed, but that's because it attempts to cover the history of the book in China, that is, all of it, plus some Japan and Korea thrown in the mix. It's understandable.

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 just enjoyed seeing all of the rare material.
2. Very rich experience. Lots of new appreciation and inspiration for current and future work. Hard to pinpoint exactly what was most useful, as I learned so much.
3. The hands-on demo—being able to see the actual books discussed in the sessions.
4. Handling Chinese book materials was especially helpful.
5. The realia were WONDERFUL. The PowerPoint slides were on point and presented in a narrative style that would be hard to replicate by anyone less informed.
6. The instructor's personal/professional experience as a scholar and book collector, his rich knowledge in the subject, and as a practitioner.
7. I found myself learning a lot of new concepts and terminology which will serve me well in my field. In particular, I found it interesting how particular trends in bookbinding and other book-related technologies altered over time and in response to particular stimuli.
8. What was most interesting to me was learning about how early Chinese printing began.
9. I liked comparisons between Chinese, Japanese, and Korean books best because the three countries are so intertwined.

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. It was great.
2. Absolutely. This is a vast topic, and the instructor did an amazing job of providing a comprehensive survey. Perhaps the more commercial aspects of Chinese book history could have been added.
3. Yes. I think I'd be able to write better descriptions of Chinese rare books.
4. I learned what I hoped to learn, and more. Nothing was left out or undeveloped.
5. Really thorough and thoughtful treatment of every question. Learned more than expected about more topics than expected.
6. Yes, and of course I need more time to fully comprehend everything.
7. The instructor was very comprehensive and welcomed questions throughout so

- that nothing was missed or glossed over.
8. SE certainly communicated everything from the course description, and more besides.
 9. Yes. We ended up having to skip a few books on the show list, but there weren't many.
- 6) *How do you plan to use the skills and knowledge acquired during your time here?*
1. I'm not sure, as I am not on a career path yet.
 2. Will apply information/knowledge to current research project, and probably start collecting books.
 3. Will use it for the project of Chinese rare books at North American Libraries.
 4. Since I have a better understanding of these materials, I will be able to do a better job of conserving them. My institution has a significant collection of East Asian materials.
 5. Research, collecting, scholarship in general, and more pleasurable library and museum visits.
 6. For projects that are being carried out at work, such as a survey of Chinese, Japanese, and Korean rare books, and making descriptive catalogs for them, so as to make them more discoverable and accessible to our users.
 7. This is all directly relevant to my role. It will inform my documentation, description, and evaluation of material on a daily basis.
 8. I don't have any firm plans yet, but what I've learned might help me with plans in the future.
 9. I'll use this as well as the other RBS courses I've taken to add to my general knowledge on book history.
- 7) *Please briefly describe the intellectual level of the course. What sort of person might benefit the most from taking it?*
1. I think anyone could gain a lot.
 2. High, though perfectly accessible for those without East Asian language background.
 3. {no response}
 4. I think the intellectual level is high. A professional in the field (librarian, curator, conservator) will benefit the most.
 5. This course is for scholars, and furthermore for those familiar with the Chinese language. Resist the temptation to drive up enrollment...warn the uninitiated.
 6. People who have a certain understanding of history and cultures.
 7. I think some level of Chinese is helpful due to the amount of terminology and the opportunities for identifying particular features on the sample material. However, the class was arranged so that those with Chinese could assist those without.
 8. Those interested in the history of China, printed works, and graphic design (to some extent) would likely see some benefit to taking the course.
 9. The course is appropriate for people at all levels and with all language backgrounds. SE will teach according to the level of the students and is sure beginners are just as comfortable as near experts.

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. Everything was an “aha!” moment because it was my introduction.
2. I now understand how Chinese books are bound!
3. {no response}
4. Not specifically.
5. {no response}
6. Yes, quite a few of them.
7. SE’s anecdotes give the whole course a very personal and accessible feel. There were too many “aha” moments to count, as expectations were subverted on an almost daily basis.
8. SE’s stories and information behind the history of some of the books and material covered were great.
9. SE tells many good stories along the way about his very interesting life. Those were great to hear.

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

1. I don’t see how it could.
2. N/A
3. {no response}
4. Can’t think of anything.
5. Perhaps more structure...main topic, sub-topic, &c.. Plus, more narrative in the workbook as suggested in Q2.
6. More handouts outlining bullet points of each session, with brief narrative.
7. Though it pains me to say it, fewer items might help the course feel less rushed, without extending it to a two week course or longer!
8. Perhaps extending the length of the course or, much as I hate to say it, reducing the material covered so that there’s less urgency moving between topics.
9. Couldn’t’ve.

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

1. Yes!
2. Yes, absolutely.
3. {no response}
4. Yes, and yes.
5. Yep. Yep, aggressively.
6. Yes.
7. Definitely on both counts.
8. Yes to both questions.
9. Yes, and YES. Everyone, including and even especially those with a western focus, should take this course. It is beyond important that people learn book history not just through a western lens, and SE is great at teaching that.

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

1. N/A
2. N/A
3. {no response}
4. We didn't need to go out of the classroom.
5. N/A
6. Yes.
7. N/A
8. N/A
9. 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. Yes, the Sherlock Holmes lecture was fantastic.
2. N/A (Sorry, family obligations.)
3. {no response}
4. Yes, although maybe you could get better copies of the films.
5. Evening speakers were FANTASTIC, surprising in a delightful way. Tour of SC needs to be done by a librarian and focus on the collection.
6. Yes, papermaking techniques in the East and West.
7. The events were generally interesting though not necessarily directly relevant to me every time. However, I think it would be impossible to tailor them all to everyone, so RBS does very well under the circumstances.
8. Sadly, I didn't get a chance to attend any optional events.
9. I didn't go to any this week, but the lectures and other events are generally enjoyable.

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

1. Do the pre-readings!
2. N/A
3. {no response}
4. Doing the readings is helpful.
5. If you have even rudimentary Chinese...run, don't walk. If you don't have ANY Chinese, use careful judgement.
6. More preparations on pre-course readings.
7. It was an amazing opportunity—take it if you can!
8. Pack everything you think you might need, and budget your time well.
9. Take it and you will be a better asset to the book community as a whole.

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

1. Information overload in a great way.

2. Each book is an ocean.
3. {no response}
4. A good time was had by all.
5. Professional, passionate. Thank you.
6. Great, and great!
7. Book nerds rule!
8. Well worth the time.
9. Steamy Charlottesville.
Contemplating the rare books,
Strangers are like friends.
(This is totally not original—adapted from a Bashō one).

Student Data

Number of respondents: 9 (of 9)

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

My institution/employer gave me professional leave time: 5 (55.56%)

My institution/employer did not give me professional leave; I used paid or vacation days:
1 (11.11%)

I am a student or non-year-round employee, with a more flexible summer schedule:
2 (22.22%)

My situation does not fit any of the options above: 1 (11.11%)

Who paid your RBS tuition costs?

I paid 100% myself: 1 (11.11%)

My institution/employer paid 100%: 5 (55.56%)

I used a scholarship/fellowship to pay/waive part; my institution/employer paid the rest:
2 (22.22%)

My situation does not fit any of the options above: 1 (11.11%)

Who paid your RBS housing expenses?

I paid 100% myself: 3 (33.33%)

My institution/employer paid 100%: 4 (44.44%)

I stayed with friends/family, or stayed in my own home and commuted: 2 (22.22%)

Who paid your RBS travel expenses?

I paid 100% myself: 1 (11.11%)

My institution/employer paid 100%: 3 (33.33%)

I live locally, and had no travel expenses: 3 (33.33%)

My situation does not fit any of the options above: 2 (22.22%)

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

Library disciplines:

Conservator/binder/preservation librarian: 1 (11.11%)

Curator: 2 (22.22%)

Subject specialist/bibliographer: 1 (11.11%)

Student working toward a/n:

B.A./B.S.: 1 (11.11%)

Other: 1 (11.11%)

Professional educator:

Associate professor: 1 (11.11%)

College/university administrator: 1 (11.11%)

Other occupations/vocations:

Other: 1 (11.11%)