

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. Very useful.
2. Yes, pre-reading was helpful. To prepare otherwise, I consulted with my digital archivist colleague within my office to assess our particular concerns, interests.
3. The pre-course readings were valuable, and researched scholarly articles with diverse perspectives, and a very helpful foundation.
4. I believe all of the course materials were extremely useful. The compiled list was comprehensive and despite having worked in this field for the past year, I was exposed to new and informative readings.
5. Very useful and relevant reading list.
6. The pre-course readings were helpful and certainly a strong complement to the in-class discourse and lecture-based learning opportunities. I would ask for the finalized reading list to be distributed at least one month in advance of the course beginning.
7. Yes, but more recent publications would be particularly helpful. Most were from around 2010–2012 which was five years ago.
8. Yes, very useful for content, and discussion fodder.
9. The readings were useful and introduced the most relevant theme for the course. A pre-class introduction to some of the primary sources (e.g., “Waiting Time” would have helped speed up the beginning of the hex editor session).
10. The course was recently updated, so readings were fairly timely. Given a few topics of discussion, especially around social media and data, I would not mind an additional one or two readings more specifically related to these topics.
11. Yes, though some were a bit technical for me to fully appreciate. I plan to revisit some of the readings now that I have completed this course. I also spent some time looking at the previous work of MK and NN.

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. It was great to have everything in a Dropbox folder.
2. Great material! I will reference it in the future definitely.
3. {no response}
4. There is much follow-up work to be done once I get back to my institution. It’s good to know I can always refer back to this material.
5. Exercise handouts could have been cleaner.
6. Course readings and case studies provided an essential window into the larger universe of digital objects and their historic significance. The most useful exercises

- were those in which students had the opportunity to: 1) engage with vintage computers/e-book readers in order to understand the complexities behind preserving these machines as cultural artifacts while digesting the intellectual content and digital footprints contained therein to understand creative processes, and 2) downloading DOSBox, generating checksums, and using a hex editor to process and compare digital objects.
7. No workbook provided, but electronic resources via Dropbox were very useful in exercises. I also appreciate the availability of additional resources like non-required readings.
 8. Yes. Exercises were great and appropriate to leading into discussions that had relevance for the community of learning.
 9. The workbook could have directed the practical sessions further. In particular, the vintage computer and digital wills labs required further direction and support in order to maximize their use.
 10. The teaching materials for the course were excellent. The example images, software for emulation, and example documentation are items I will continue to use and refer back to in the future.
 11. The course exercises and associated content were very useful. Some of these materials I will definitely continue to consult in the future.

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

1. This is one of my top three—it was an excellent combo of theory, practice, lecture, discussion, hands-on, and philosophy.
2. N/A
3. N/A
4. This class was much more practical and useful.
5. N/A
6. Just as stellar.
7. I took another digital materials course, and each course had its own strengths. The other course had more step-by-step demonstrations, which I really enjoyed because I learned new hands-on skills. This one had more class discussions, so I got to learn more from my peers.
8. N/A
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. I have a much better sense of the materiality of digital objects, as well as the interplay between physical/digital in our current lives. Many ideas for conversations (internal/external). Any sense that the digital can't create the same "aha" moments that transform peoples' lives is gone.
2. Walking away with many new ideas, including a proposal to my director of a collecting initiative exclusively dedicated to digital-based artists' practices.
3. Everything was new and useful.
4. The notions of materiality (and immateriality), reading room access, retention

- policies, and everything in between was extremely enlightening.
5. Very much enjoyed the out-of-the-classroom sessions.
 6. The most interesting aspects of the course revolved around cultivating a deeper understanding of handling access to born-digital materials.
 7. I was very interested in hearing how other classmates approached born-digital materials. I also walked away with a better understanding of researchers' needs so that I could better collect and preserve this material.
 8. One-on-one and small group setting, and the opportunity to work with respected scholars in the field. Yes, really a very big positive effect on thinking through methodologies for research in the area.
 9. I have a greater insight into the perspective of librarians and archivists.
 10. I walked away with both pragmatic, easily implementable ideas as well as deeper philosophical and pedagogical ideas around working with digital objects. The best outcome possible.
 11. The exercises were particularly interesting. For the topic of the course, this type of hands-on experience is especially helpful—and memorable! I am definitely leaving the course with a higher level of comfort and familiarity regarding digital materials, which I know will be very useful as I return to practical projects in my every day work.
- 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. They did a great job of having the students teach each other and coming in and helping when all else failed. They did an amazing job of teaching to our wide level of skills and interests. I loved the diversity of perspectives—great job in class selection—one of the best groups I have been in.
 2. Yes. No. Yes.
 3. Course met my expectations.
 4. I believe I did.
 5. As a largely discussion based course, I felt the instructors delivered what was promised in the course description.
 6. Yes.
 7. Yes, though I wish we'd covered more about social media acquisition and preservation. We ran out of time.
 8. Yes. I think the only thing I felt missing was discussion around a variety of current approaches, and maybe more individual case studies from the field. Very helpful in conceptualizing and understanding other's case studies, however.
 9. The course would benefit from further hands-on experience, e.g., the "Waiting Time" task could have gone on for longer and allowed for a deeper dive into digital forensics.
 10. Yes—nothing was left out, but I would always love more vintage computer or emulation time!
 11. Yes. The instructors were fantastic, and complemented each other superbly. I would have liked to spend more time talking about the practical actions of processing born-digital materials, and perhaps some time working in BitCurator. But the discussion-based format of the course was really engaging and informative.

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

1. Planning new workflows; outreach and education; strategic decision-making.
2. I feel like I gained the tools to continue learning a language new to me. This will drastically improve my abilities to communicate between my non-expert donors and my very expert colleagues.
3. To inform my graduate research.
4. I hope to be able to directly apply what I learned at RBS to my current situation. It will certainly contribute to work.
5. {no response}
6. Skills and knowledge acquired will be most useful to me in talking with colleagues and donors.
7. They'll directly impact how I set up my institution's born-digital workflows. Thanks, NN and MK!
8. In jump-starting research, and I intend to look back on documents and discussions had here.
9. I'll use the vocabulary to collaborate with librarians.
10. I will use skills related to strategy and technical tools introduced immediately in my own workflows, and hope to also conduct research related to some course discussions and digital "gaps" identified during course discussions over the next year or two.
11. This course will help me as I perform functions in my daily work including processing born-digital materials, solving preservation issues, and assisting researchers.

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

1. One of the great parts of this course was the wide appeal: collectors, appraisers, practitioners, curators, administrators, reference and processing staffs, students, and professors.
2. High! I don't understand "sort of person"...anyone interested and curious I guess?
3. Highly intellectual. Any person interested in gaining new perspectives on how libraries and archives will meet the challenges of the digital world.
4. Anyone interested in the issues libraries/archives/institutions are currently facing with regard to born-digital materials would immediately benefit from the course.
5. Graduate school seminar level.
6. The course is certainly cerebral. Students interested in exploring philosophical aspects of the digital textual record, as well as the technical skills required to maintain it, will benefit most.
7. It was intellectually engaging enough to appeal to those better-versed in technical matters, while being fundamental enough to go over the basics. Part of this derives from the malleability of the curriculum, as well as the approachability of the instructors.
8. A variety, but I want to say administrators and scholars, though as a practitioner, important to have time to reflect.
9. The discussion was high-level and aimed at GLAM professionals {Galleries, Libraries, Archives, and Museums.—RBS Staff}.
10. Intellectual level was rigorous, but not impermeable. New professionals, mid-

- career librarians, dealers, literature faculty, and those interested in digital literature and objects would all enjoy and learn from this course.
11. This course is intended for individuals with some previous experience with the topic of born-digital materials, however, the instructors did a great job of making a complex topic accessible to less experienced members of the class.
- 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. There is loss in all preservation.
 2. So many “aha” moments! One major: becoming more familiar with FRED and disk imaging vs. logical copying. {Forensic Recovery of Evidence Device.—RBS Staff}
 3. {no response}
 4. Just knowing that my current work aligns well with the practices at UVA/Duke/University of Maryland and the greater profession is a relief.
 5. {no response}
 6. {no response}
 7. I love leather-bound eBooks!
 8. Thinking through the idea of researching production practice vs. archives practice was an “aha” moment.
 9. Understanding ethics in born-digital special collections.
 10. Digital materiality concepts and the concepts of rarity in the digital world were all very insightful and enlightening.
 11. MK’s lectures on digital materiality were great! I also really enjoyed the conversations about archiving social media and web content.
- 9) *How could the course have been improved?*
1. It was such a nice blend (as noted). MK’s a great lecturer; NN is so knowledgeable about the field. Maybe more concrete info regarding big data.
 2. I don’t know.
 3. {no response}
 4. Honestly, I don’t think it could be. However, it would be interesting to see an RBS class completely dedicated to working/becoming familiar with computers in a vintage computer lab.
 5. Lab sessions could be better organized with cleaner exercises.
 6. PowerPoint lectures containing bulleted text can be omitted in the future.
 7. {private response}
 8. Perhaps more case studies regarding community work, and research done with systems.
 9. More practical work.
 10. Maybe a bit of exercise or hands-on work related to data and social media tools for download and preservation would be useful.
 11. More on BitCurator, perhaps. More structured discussion around the readings, perhaps.
- 10) *Do you feel that you got your money’s worth? Would you recommend the course to*

others?

1. Yes to both!
2. Yes. Yes.
3. Yes, and yes.
4. Yes.
5. Yes, x2.
6. Absolutely!
7. Yes!
8. Yes. Yes.
9. Yes.
10. Absolutely would recommend. MK and NN are extremely knowledgeable and skilled lecturers and researchers, and the course work is enlightening, even for seasoned professionals.
11. Yes, I would definitely recommend this course.

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

1. Loved our site visits. Visit to the FRED could have been streamlined. {Forensic Recovery of Evidence Device.—RBS Staff}
2. Yes, absolutely.
3. Yes.
4. Yes.
5. Definitely.
6. Yes, the visit to the Scholar's Lab and with the curator of artists' books ("Bibliotheca Tweetiana") were highlights.
7. Yes, especially the 3-D lab and the forensics lab.
8. Yes, very useful. I am not as personally interested in CAD and 3D printing, so that may have been my least favorite point of course, but otherwise really great outings.
9. Yes.
10. Yes—the FRED visits and visit to curator Molly Schwartzburg's personal collections, as well as SC materials, were a fantastic component of the course. {Forensic Recovery of Evidence Device.—RBS Staff}
11. Yes. The trip to see Molly Schwartzburg's collection was especially great!

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. Molly Schwartzburg was so generous with her time. Monday evening lecture was lovely.
2. N/A
3. {no response}
4. Yes.
5. {no response}
6. {no response}
7. Seeing the "Bibliotheca Tweetiana" was a very insightful activity. Molly Schwartzburg also makes the most amazing oatmeal raisin cookies I've ever eaten.

8. N/A
9. N/A
10. Yes—see Q11 for Molly Schwartzburg’s personal collection of “Bibliotheca Tweetiana.” It was a great way to talk about digital materiality, social media, &c..
11. Yes.

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

1. Don’t be intimidated. Very welcoming.
2. Do your best to “clear the deck” as much as possible at your home office so you can focus.
3. {no response}
4. See Q9.
5. Take the time to do the readings.
6. Incorporate submission of a case study each student should bring.
7. Definitely do the readings and don’t leave them at home!
8. {no response}
9. N/A
10. Take this course even if you are a seasoned digital archives or preservation professional. You will learn many things and come away with new perspectives and ideas.
11. Take it!

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

1. There is loss in all preservation.
2. Rarity is false.
Born-digital is real stuff.
Rarity is true.
3. Digilicious!
4. {no response}
5. Engaging and energizing.
6. {no response}
7. {no response}
8. {no response}
9. As a singular course, well worth travelling for.
10. Wonderful world of digital just grew.
11. RBS has been a great experience, one I’m grateful to have had. Thanks all!

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: 9 (81.82%) I am a student or non-year-round employee, with a more flexible summer schedule: 2 (18.18%)

Who paid your RBS tuition costs?

My institution/employer paid 100%: 7 (63.64%)
I used a scholarship/fellowship to pay/waive 100%: 2 (18.18%)
I used a scholarship/fellowship to pay/waive part; I paid the rest: 1 (9.09%)
I used a scholarship/fellowship to pay/waive part; my institution/employer paid the rest:
1 (9.09%)

Who paid your RBS housing expenses?

I paid 100% myself: 2 (18.18%)
My institution/employer paid 100%: 4 (36.36%)
I used a scholarship/fellowship to cover part; my institution/employer paid the rest:
1 (9.09%)
I stayed with friends/family, or stayed in my own home and commuted: 4 (36.36%)

Who paid your RBS travel expenses?

I paid 100% myself: 3 (27.27%)
My institution/employer paid 100%: 4 (36.36%)
I used a scholarship/fellowship to cover part; my institution/employer paid the rest:
1 (9.09%)
I live locally, and had no travel expenses: 3 (27.27%)

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

Library disciplines:

Archivist: 2 (18.18%)
Conservator/binder/preservation librarian: 1 (9.09%)
Digital collections librarian: 2 (18.18%)
Special collections librarian: 2 (18.18%)
Other: 1 (9.09%)

Student working toward a/n:

M.L.I.S./M.L.S.: 1 (9.09%)
Ph.D./D.Phil: 1 (9.09%)

Professional educator:

Assistant professor: 1 (9.09%)