

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, very useful. From the suggested readings, I recommend starting with the Allen & Gullans article, then Julia Miller, then the rest in any order. I wish the Comparato book wasn't such a slog to read.
2. Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes.
3. Well chosen. Well worth the effort to read a great deal of the recommended material. Nevertheless, the lectures were so good it was not absolutely necessary.
4. The bibliography was good, but difficult to track down some of the resources.
5. I read one half of the pre-course reading assignments, and found it put me mentally in the time period and context we would be studying. I was unable to locate a copy of *Onward & Downward* for free, so finally broke down and bought a copy. It was not available in the nearest university library.
6. Assignments were helpful, but a couple were difficult to locate.
7. Somewhat useful. Would have appreciated more articles, shorter reads with overview perspectives by decade or approximate period.
8. Honestly, I wasn't able to get through them owing to late admission. The ones I did skim were good.
9. Yes, extremely pertinent and useful. No suggestions for adding more material.
10. The reading assignments were helpful. It was also helpful to look online for examples.
11. The readings were good. There are so many good options, it would be impossible to second guess TP on this. I just appreciated seeing what he thought beginners in this field needed to know. Perhaps the addition of a simple "how a book is bound" to make in class demonstrations better understood.

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. Workbook is great. Looking forward to reading more things from the bibliography.
2. Workbook was a supplement, a reference, and appropriate. Didn't have much "design" material of covers. Will be great to refer back to in the future.
3. Helpful, appropriate, and useful. It will definitely go on my "books on books" shelf.
4. The workbook is great, and I would like to reread it now that I have completed the class and am more familiar with the subject and terminology. It will definitely be a resource for me on my professional bookshelf.
5. Love the glossary and bibliography. The course material will function (for me) as advice for remembering the material, rather than as a supplement to the lectures.

6. The course book will be mainly useful as a reference in the future.
7. Workbook is helpful and will be used after class, particularly the bibliography. Suggest the addition of a few pages for notes so notes can be saved with workbook.
8. Excellent—I will treasure it!
9. The workbook is well prepared—excellent summation of class which I will be using and referring to frequently.
10. All aspects of TP's course were useful beyond my expectations. He is an excellent teacher with deep and thorough expertise.
11. I admire the work that went into the workbook—I am certain I will use it and do some adding to share with my own students, giving TP credit, of course.

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

1. This is in my top two favorites.
2. N/A
3. N/A
4. This was my first course.
5. Equally useful.
6. I have taken seven. This, I think, will be about second in the way it shapes my perception of material objects, and the way I will look at books in the future.
7. Both courses covered broad periods and the instructors in both cases had invested considerable thought and preparation—a lot of work—which we benefitted from.
8. It was exceptional, much owing to the good graces and good will of the instructor. He is one of the most approachable RBS faculty members I've met.
9. N/A
10. This was my favorite.
11. Almost all the RBS courses I have taken have been very good and all the faculty have been knowledgeable and generally well prepared. That said, I believe TP is terrific teaching this class. I appreciate having a conservator's perspective—a maker's perspective—on this field!

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. Looking forward to sharing things I learned here with my colleagues.
2. Industrialization and changes to process, and inclusion of women in industry and their role. Structure and composition of the book, future resources. Yes, it builds on existing projects and opens up new ideas.
3. Technology and style as a dating tool/hint.
4. I was most interested in the book and binding conservation, and I feel much more knowledgeable about it now. I was surprised to learn how interesting the other aspects of the course were.
5. I wanted to learn about the structure of a book, and become more comfortable with the language for talking about it. The demos were invaluable. I'm hoping to identify and showcase sorts of bindings we already have, and look for ways to increase our inventory and sales.
6. It gave me an introduction to binding structure that I will need to improve on. It gave me a broad context on binding styles to place my own collection in. It will cause me to reevaluate many of my holdings to include binding tickets, binding

- signings, &c.
7. Deeper understanding of bindings from a binder's structural perspective. Ideas on conservation and plans to just continue to learn more, particularly about conservation.
 8. The relationships between book manufacturing techniques and labor were most interesting to me. I have gained a greater appreciation for and understanding of the nineteenth-century book trade than I ever imagined possible.
 9. The class directly, positively affected my professional work including insights, ideas, and project plans. It was invaluable.
 10. I learned so much, and am walking away with new insights, knowledge, awareness of resources, and several project plans.
 11. I was especially pleased that TP went beyond the book cover as an art form, to include in-depth information about structure—usually ignored—and did demonstrations of casing in, &c. Having AN, also a conservator, in class was also helpful as she contributed to the discussion of the structural elements.
- 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.
 2. Yes. Yes—period should cover 1820–1920, not 1800–1900. Yes.
 3. Yes. No. It would have been even more rewarding (for me) if the historical period covered extended up to 1920.
 4. TP went out of his way to help me with my specialized needs. I felt a little intimidated by my knowledgeable classmates, but TP was very patient with me and I never felt uncomfortable asking a question about something that I didn't understand.
 5. Yes. No. Yes.
 6. I was pleased with the information the course provided and intend to build upon it.
 7. YES! Another time it would be helpful to repeat this course from a decorative arts history perspective.
 8. Yes, absolutely! Nothing was missed, but at times we needed to push through as there is always so much to cover.
 9. Yes, to the highest degree. I hoped to learn the themes, constructions, manufacturing, and historical contexts of nineteenth-century bindings, which I learned 100%.
 10. Yes. This field is new to me and I learned more than promised in the class description. I am grateful.
 11. The class provided us (my volunteer researcher and I) with just what we needed to progress in our current project on our historical binding collection.
- 6) *How do you plan to use the skills and knowledge acquired during your time here?*
1. To better identify materials in our collection, and make them more accessible to our researchers.
 2. To help with improving online information about publishers' bindings.
 3. I have several books in my collection to examine again now with deeper

- knowledge.
4. In my post as an archivist examining books for potential item conservation grants. (I have to know how to describe them for condition reports.)
 5. Further develop our inventory of nineteenth-century publishers' bindings, share history and appreciation with my customers (and my business partner), and continue to learn more via resources in bibliography.
 6. I will use the knowledge to reevaluate my own holdings and will find it useful in making future purchasing decisions.
 7. Improve book repair efforts; focus collection and be more discerning in identification of rare objects.
 8. In my work as a book artist where I can now more accurately give historical context to my projects. In my work as an administrator in promoting classes on this and similar topics.
 9. I will directly apply the skills and knowledge I learned as professional goals to acquire material, and to help educate and share with our community of researchers.
 10. Professionally and personally.
 11. Teaching, project planning and execution, consultation with others.
- 7) *Please briefly describe the intellectual level of the course. What sort of person might benefit the most from taking it?*
1. {no response}
 2. Anyone interested in bindings—any bindings in the period from 1820–1920. WWI is true ending of this information.
 3. Anyone with a love of any kind of book and who can use or wants to know more knowledge about structure, appearance, and technology of bindings.
 4. A lot was new to me, but I did feel as though my background in conservation did make make me somewhat familiar with the subject. Rare book librarians and archivists, special collections staff where rare books are a collections strength.
 5. Moderately rigorous. I did not have an extensive bookbinding vocabulary to begin with, so had some catching up to do in the beginning. TP and my classmates were patient with questions and generous with their knowledge.
 6. I think one needs to be fully engaged to benefit from this course. Any person dealing with nineteenth-century books as a collector or curator can find this very helpful.
 7. This course is not appropriate for novices. Need some exposure to rare bindings and structure/production of bindings.
 8. Anyone who works with or is interested in working with nineteenth-century cultural heritage would gain a tremendous amount from this class.
 9. A professional in the conservation, library, collector, or university environments, as well as MLS students and passionate enthusiasts of books with some kind of demonstrated interest.
 10. The intellectual level was complex, meaningful, and opened new perspectives and opportunities for me. Anyone would benefit from this course, especially if working with books of this time period.
 11. I think anyone interested in the subject would benefit. TP was great at gearing the content to the interested beginner, but answered all questions in an appropriate manner to the level of question. He was great!

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. Love hearing TP tell the story of *Six Months in a Convent* (the story of the book, not the story in the book). Also, he walked us through signature folding more naturally and effortlessly than I’ve ever seen anyone else explain it.
2. Hands-on demonstrations. Real world examples. The books.
3. Societal impact on bookbinding, e.g., financial crisis, gold shortage, time and geographical movement of binding styles.
4. For me, again, the book construction, the demonstrations, such as stitching, &c..
5. I discovered I have a real affinity for artist-designed covers and look forward to learning more and seeking these out.
6. This was a good group experience. All of the participants were able to mesh with the instructor, and make it a rich experience.
7. For me, the identification of what was rare vs. mass produced. Also, the connection between binding materials and economics of binder and region.
8. The adhered boards versus attached boards differentiation was a useful distinction—it is something I’d not considered before.
9. How the manufacturing factories functioned, the publishers’ agendas, and how they sold books.
10. I experienced multiple “aha!” moments daily. I learned several applications I can implement at work, and have some knowledge of and great love for a new area of personal collecting.
11. Loved how many stripped bindings TP included!

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

1. Maybe work on timing a little bit. We weren’t very successful at stopping for breaks on time. The first day I sometimes felt like I wasn’t sure what aspect of the samples I was supposed to be studying. Possibly more clarity on that at the beginning.
2. A hands-on workshop, perhaps one evening, as an option. Change time period to end 1920.
3. More time. Being a little more didactic about what to look for in example books.
4. {no response}
5. Can’t think of a thing. The balance between lecture and slides, followed by hands-on examination of books was well designed.
6. Add an extra hour of class.
7. A hands-on binding workshop. We had demos, but do-it-yourself is best. Same with a few basic conservation techniques.
8. I think that the conveyor belt for showing books would do it! Actually, the second pair of hands for distributing the books is very important to make the most of the time available.
9. It was a superb class where I learned a tremendous amount from a caring, thoughtful, organized, and incredibly knowledgeable teacher. I have no improvements to suggest—not needed!
10. {private response}

11. I'd love it to be two weeks, or split 1780–1830, 1830–1880, 1880–1920.

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

1. Absolutely, to both questions.
2. Yes. Yes.
3. Unqualified yes.
4. Yes, absolutely.
5. Yes. Yes.
6. I was pleased with this course. I think it is a foundational area for anyone who wants to deal skillfully with nineteenth-century material.
7. Yes. Yes. Yes.
8. Yes, though my employer paid.
9. Yes, and I would highly recommend the course to others.
10. Yes! Yes, absolutely.
11. Absolutely!

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

1. Both sessions in the McGregor Room were fantastic. Wish we could have had one more hour in there just to look at more things. The visit to SC was also worthwhile.
2. Yes.
3. N/A
4. Yes.
5. Absolutely, especially to the McGregor Room, the free-form discussion was fun, and helped everyone get to know each other better.
6. N/A
7. We went to SC for dust jackets. Very interesting and time well spent.
8. Yes, the book jacket viewing in SC was useful.
9. Yes, all three trips were perfectly applicable and added to my knowledge and enhanced what I learned.
10. Yes!
11. Yes. The trips to the McGregor Room were a good addition.

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. Liked both lectures very much. Decided to skip movie night as I had seen one of them before, and figure I have a chance of seeing the other at some point in the future.
2. Yes. Yes—all provided good insight and information. {private response}
3. They were first rate! Complemented the course work well.
4. I enjoyed the first night sign up for dinner. It might not be a bad idea to offer that sign up option every night.
5. Yes. Both were relevant to our studies this week, and Glenn Miranker sat in on our

- class, so that was a treat. {N.B.: Mr. Miranker was a Rare Book School guest lecturer—RBS staff}
6. I enjoyed both lectures and Movie Night.
 7. Attended both lectures, both of which we discussed in class as very relevant to our subject.
 8. The lectures were enjoyable, thanks!
 9. The Monday night lecture was excellent. I did not attend Wednesday evening. I enjoyed Movie Night. If it is possible, please improve the volume of the equipment—the highest volume was too low.
 10. The lectures were and always are excellent. {private response}
 11. I attended all but one. Movie Night was unfortunate because the videos are old and not good resolution. The sound was too low and couldn't be turned up. I could have skipped that one.

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

1. Do all the readings, even though most are marked “suggested.” You will get much more out of the week if you do.
2. It is a wonderful course for beginners and advanced persons.
3. Do not consider it. DO IT.
4. {no response}
5. No.
6. {no response}
7. Know some decorative arts history and have some exposure to decorative bindings of the period.
8. It will turn you on to Publishers' Bookbindings—watch out!
9. I have no other thoughts. My experience was like no other—wonderful faculty, staff, and classmates. Wonderful, special camaraderie.
10. Do not hesitate to apply!
11. Do the reading and look at as many bindings as possible before you come.

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

1. “Summer Camp for Book Nerds” for the win!
2. RBS provides excellent comprehensive information in an inspirational and welcoming atmosphere.
3. Remarkable atmosphere of friendliness, excitement, and it's fantastic we are all learning and having a great time together.
4. Humm...pleasant, enjoyable, professional, and educating. As a newbie, I can't tell you how welcome everyone made me feel. It was a great experience. And, again, I very much appreciate the kindness and patience that TP showed with me. I very much appreciate his and everyone's efforts.
5. {no response}
6. I'm looking forward to next year.
7. Inspirational.
8. Selling our history
Manufactured by many hands

- Bindings we adore
9. Wonderful, rich, invigorating.
 10. This was the best RBS experience ever due to the TP and RBS infrastructure and staff.
 11. An enriching experience of wonderful books, and talented people in an inspiring environment. Thanks for being a source of nourishment!

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: 6 (54.55%)

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: 1 (9.09%)

I am retired, and can arrange my own schedule: 3 (27.27%)

Who paid your RBS tuition costs?

I paid 100% myself: 4 (36.36%)

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

My institution/employer paid part; I paid the rest: 1 (9.09%)

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

My situation does not fit any of the options above: 1 (9.09%)

Who paid your RBS housing expenses?

I paid 100% myself: 5 (45.45%)

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

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

My situation does not fit any of the options above: 1 (9.09%)

Who paid your RBS travel expenses?

I paid 100% myself: 5 (45.45%)

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

My institution/employer paid part; I paid the rest: 1 (9.09%)

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

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

Library disciplines:

Archivist: 1 (9.09%)

Cataloger/metadata librarian: 2 (18.18%)

Special collections librarian: 2 (18.18%)

Other: 1 (9.09%)

Book trades:

Antiquarian bookseller: 1 (9.09%)

Other occupations/vocations:

Book collector: 3 (27.27%)

Other: 1 (9.09%)