

Joel Silver
L-25: Reference Sources for Researching Rare Books
14-19 May 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. Yes, I have referred to a number of these in the past.
2. OK. A few more general periodical articles or bibliographies.
3. The reading assignments were useful and manageable.
4. All of the reading assignments were useful.
5. The pre-course reading assignments were informative.
6. All the reading was useful and not overwhelming.
7. Yes, was light but gave picture of upcoming content and style.
8. The pre-course reading assignments were useful and brief. I appreciated that I did not have to spend a great deal of time in preparation for the course.
9. Yes, very helpful.
10. All of the readings were useful and provided good background.
11. I'd encountered them or similar readings already, but I think they'd be helpful for someone who hadn't.
12. Yes. No additional reading around reference sources specifically.

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. Voluminous, but very helpful.
2. Good handout materials, excellent content.
3. Yes, I am a print person, so I enjoyed the hand-outs. I am more likely to return to them. They are easy to search through.
4. The materials were of great use, and were a framework for notes, and will be great for future use. {private response}
5. The course workbook will be useful in my future research. JS did a great job in providing essential resources for a number of subjects.
6. This is a great format, and I can see how they will be useful to me in the future.
7. Yes to all of the above. Excellent.
8. The workbook is a great tool that I plan to use routinely in my work henceforward. I see many of the resources it points to as valuable for potential future research.
9. It was thoughtfully put together and it was a lot of work putting it together, and I will bind it up as a syllabus.
10. Terrific. Lots of space provided to record notes, meaning I did not have to use the notebook I brought to class. Will be very useful in the future.
11. These materials are definitely going in a binder as soon as I'm home, and I'm sure will be used for years.
12. Good course pack. Will be helpful in the continuing exploration of the field as I

narrow down to the sources that will meet my needs.

- 3) *If you've taken previous RBS courses, how did this one compare?*
1. More relaxed, less student participation, but JS's lectures are concise and effective.
 2. One of the better ones.
 3. N/A
 4. N/A
 5. N/A
 6. The courses were very different, but both increased my knowledge of the field greatly.
 7. N/A
 8. This class required less pre-course preparation, which I appreciated. The degree of scholarship and attention to student needs/expectations was the same, and of high quality.
 9. The best I've had and all were good.
 10. N/A
 11. This is my first RBS course.
 12. 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. Bibliographies on art and art history, and military. Better ways to conduct research.
 2. JS's informal asides and professional stories were great.
 3. The Americana section and the Western Americana section.
 4. I learned how much I still do not know, but now have a greater grasp of basics.
 5. Historical Americana.
 6. The sections on Americana and other non-fiction areas were the most useful. I was clearly able to see how to apply these to projects in the near future.
 7. All reference book material to European incunables, sixteenth to eighteenth century. Very relevant.
 8. I was particularly interested in resources that would be helpful to me for cataloging and reference purposes in a research institution. The resources shared were extensive and I plan to do a great deal of research into many of them.
 9. 1) JS is knowledgeable, articulate, pleasant, and shares his knowledge well. 2) Lilly Library. 3) Breon Mitchell. 4) Bloomington.
 10. I discovered sources that were completely new to me. As for project plans: purchasing a lot of reference sources.
 11. The course was really helpful across the board. I wanted a refresher on things I knew, more ideas in the areas I work in, and a sense of other areas I could possibly explore, and I found all of that.
 12. Sources for early proofed books, book arts, printing, typography, bookbinding, and private press books, provenance, as well as general sources and the overview of the rest was helpful.
- 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, without a doubt on all counts.
2. Yes.
3. Yes (all of the above).
4. The teaching of the instructor was great. It helps with his phenomenal knowledge of the topic. I was unsure what I would learn, but feel I am leaving with more knowledge.
5. The course was as described and I don't feel anything was left out. Additionally, JS gave me a short list of reference materials for New York City which was not in the workbook.
6. {no response}
7. Yes—I know well Hebrew and Yiddish languages. Came to learn general historic reference. Excelled.
8. I was very pleased with the amount of information I acquired this week. In some cases I think I may have liked learning more about specific resources that addressed particular research/collecting areas, but JS gave us the tools to search for them and that is even better.
9. I expected to learn a lot and I did. Aside from nametags I would change nothing.
10. Everything was great. Truly. If I could make one suggestion: perhaps a few more sources on African-American reference sources. Having said that, I realize JS has to leave out a lot of areas to make this manageable.
11. Yes, the course was everything I expected and more.
12. Everything was very satisfactory.

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

1. More efficient cataloging and researching.
2. Personal pleasure and enrichment.
3. In my catalog descriptions.
4. Organize the collection where I work and get more reference books.
5. I will primarily use the reference sources in personal and academic research.
6. I work in a library setting and I am hoping to use these resources as I begin an assessment of our rare books collection.
7. Book dealing; scholarship and writing; library-building.
8. I believe I will regularly reference the materials JS covered in my work.
9. It will increase my pleasure in {illegible}.
10. Perhaps exploring new areas of collecting. But also I feel more confident in accurately cataloging books and finding necessary reference sources.
11. I plan to do better research in the areas my store currently deals in, and to use these references to expand my personal specializations.
12. Evaluate the reference library resources at work, and try to improve them based on institutional and staff needs.

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

1. Definitely requires a bookish mind. A beginning understanding of descriptive

- bibliography would help.
2. Professionals in the book field and high level collectors and booksellers.
 3. High level. However, everything was explained in clear terms.
 4. The intellectual level of the course was high and requires concentration. Anybody interested in more information on books would find this extremely useful.
 5. Intermediate—a basic knowledge of reference sources and terminology is needed.
 6. Rare books or special collections librarians, archivists, collectors, booksellers.
 7. Ph.D. level in my opinion.
 8. The intellectual level of the course was moderate: our class had attendees with varying experience and knowledge in the book trade or in disciplines related to books. Any English-speaking person beyond high school education with interest might take it.
 9. Anyone interested in books and people will love it.
 10. Fine for everyone. Or at least anyone with an interest in books. Especially good for bookseller who may not be aware of various resources.
 11. Really anyone interested in books at any level, so long as they have an interest in research as well.
 12. Adequate for all levels—those new to the field will have ample opportunity to ask questions and clarify doubts or unfamiliar terms, &c. Useful for everyone working with rare books, collectors, and enthusiasts.
- 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. {no response}
 2. See Q4.4.
 3. The vault and Breon Mitchell.
 4. The class itself was an “aha” moment.
 5. Using catalogs of personal collecting as research material.
 6. {no response}
 7. Dictionary literary biography.
 8. JS provided many anecdotes and background stories that really fleshed out his explanations of the resources. I will remember these and take them forward in my understanding of the materials.
 9. Aside from my experience as an intern and house officer in the hospital at the University of Pennsylvania, I can’t think of a five-day period that taught me so much.
 10. Too many to mention. I learned so much that every day presented new revelations.
 11. The course was sort of a steady inspiration. I did find a few areas of interest I hadn’t considered but am excited to explore.
 12. {private response}
- 9) *How could the course have been improved?*
1. Not sure where the time for this would be possible, but demonstration of using certain databases.
 2. {private response}
 3. Given the five-day time period, the course was very well done.

4. {private response}
5. N/A
6. {no response}
7. Air conditioning and perhaps a microphone.
8. {no response}
9. Name tags.
10. {no response}
11. {no response}
12. {no response}

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

1. Yes, and yes!
2. Yes! Yes.
3. Yes, and yes.
4. More than my money's worth and would of course recommend to others.
5. Yes, and yes.
6. Yes. Yes.
7. Yes.
8. Absolutely.
9. I wonder if it should be more.
10. Yes, definitely on all counts.
11. Definitely on both counts.
12. Yes, and 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. Would have liked more. Vault visit was spectacular!
3. N/A
4. N/A
5. Yes! The vault and stacks were a privilege to visit.
6. {no response}
7. Yes.
8. We took visits to the library stacks and vault that really supplemented our class time.
9. Listening to JS's skillful interview of Breon Mitchell was {illegible}. The accompanist did not overwhelm the {illegible}. This takes skill.
10. Loved the visit to the vault.
11. The tour of the vault was pretty mind-blowing.
12. 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. A nice, casual conversation between JS and Breon Mitchell was interesting.

2. Great time at all.
3. They were all worthwhile.
4. {private response}
5. Yes, they were a good use of my time.
6. {no response}
7. Great networking and schmoozing.
8. The extra activities provided social, educational, and networking opportunities that really enhanced the course and the experience.
9. {no response}
10. Enjoyed the talk with Breon Mitchell. And good to get together for dinner with the class, and with JS and colleagues.
11. Yes, and I enjoyed learning more about the Lilly and its history while here.
12. There were. Time well spent. Informal interview with Breon Mitchell.

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

1. Be familiar with certain reference books and be ready to compare strengths and weaknesses with works seen in the class. Ask JS questions; he really knows everything about these works.
2. Only for the bibliographically committed.
3. {no response}
4. Do the readings.
5. N/A
6. {no response}
7. Read a little, but relax first.
8. {no response}
9. Sign up early.
10. Just do it.
11. Get ready to want to spend a ton of money on all the reference books!
12. You won't regret it.

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

1. JS can diagnose any and all of your bibliographic ills.
2. Satisfying.
3. Very enlightening.
4. Great location and surroundings. Benefitting from great knowledge.
5. This course is giving me a head start to my MLS!
6. {no response}
7. It'll be a fantastic summer.
8. {no response}
9. A magical experience.
10. A fantastic experience—I'm sorry the week had to end.
11. Until we live in the Matrix and can upload the Joel Silver Memory Palace Expansion Pack into our own brains, this course is the best you can get!
12. Bibliographic.

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: 6 (50%)

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

I am self-employed, and can arrange my own schedule: 1 (8.33%)

I am a student or non-year-round employee, with a more flexible summer schedule:
1 (8.33%)

I am retired, and can arrange my own schedule: 2 (16.67%)

My situation does not fit any of the options above: 1 (8.33%)

Who paid your RBS tuition costs?

I paid 100% myself: 6 (50%)

My institution/employer paid 100%: 5 (41.67%)

My situation does not fit any of the options above: 1 (8.33%)

Who paid your RBS housing expenses?

I paid 100% myself: 7 (58.33%)

My institution/employer paid 100%: 5 (41.67%)

Who paid your RBS travel expenses?

I paid 100% myself: 6 (50%)

My institution/employer paid 100%: 5 (41.67%)

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

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

Library disciplines:

Archivist: 1 (8.33%)

Cataloger/metadata librarian: 1 (8.33%)

Special collections librarian: 1 (8.33%)

Student working toward a/n:

B.A./B.S.: 1 (8.33%)

M.L.I.S./M.L.S.: 1 (8.33%)

Book trades:

Antiquarian bookseller: 4 (33.33%)

Other occupations/vocations:

Book collector: 1 (8.33%)

Independent scholar: 1 (8.33%)

Retired: 1 (8.33%)