

Jan Storm van Leeuwen
B-10 (I): Introduction to the History of Bookbinding
23–28 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. I particularly enjoyed the readings on trade bindings and the Pickwood article.
2. Yes, although there was a lot—would have been helpful to know what to prioritize.
3. Very useful, very thorough.
4. There were a lot! I really liked the Goldschmidt title.
5. Yes, very grateful for the course packet being sent out ahead of time. I am fortunate to be in a city with libraries that have all of the books on the reading list.
6. Absolutely. The list was daunting, but I found that at least skimming them to familiarize myself with names and terminology was super helpful.
7. The reading list is extensive with many titles difficult to find (as admitted by the instructor). The books I read were excellent.
8. I admittedly could have looked through the material more thoroughly beforehand, but did find the books and workbook to be very informative.
9. Yes, very much so. Reading ahead as many of the recommended readings possible is definitely helpful in relating to the course and some of the examples used.
10. The list was extensive and very helpful. I wasn't able to read everything prior to the course, but it is a resource I will continue to use.
11. I was mostly unable to gain access to the reading list books; however, JSvL's workbook was great, which was out in advance of the course beginning.
12. Very useful, but the list was very expansive, so I could borrow only about half. I ended up picking the eras I was already interested in.

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. Great, especially the bibliography with descriptions of each resource. I anticipate using it in the future.
2. Yes, useful and appropriate. Will likely refer to it, especially the bibliography and resources listed.
3. It will definitely be used again with my notes from class added in!
4. {no response}
5. The workbook is wonderful and will be an essential resource.
6. Yes! And yes! Sending a digital copy a week prior was 100%.
7. The workbook is comprehensive and well-illustrated. The color PDF file sent in advance was most helpful.
8. The workbook was useful and will be great to refer to after the course.
9. The course workbook was very helpful, and I will definitely be referring to it after the course.

10. The workbook will also serve as an amazing reference. I also appreciate JSvL's willingness to share it digitally prior to the course starting.
11. See Q1, and yes.
12. The workbook has some interesting notes and pictures of bindings. The timeline of binders and the guide to different types of leather were useful, but otherwise specialist books will help me more.

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

1. Excellent, as expected!
2. Very different, not really comparable.
3. Also excellent—that said, JSvL is a joy.
4. Just as wonderful.
5. I found this to be the best representation of an RBS course...perfect mix of lecture, discussion, and hands-on museums.
6. N/A
7. This course maintained the very high standard of the other courses I have taken.
8. N/A
9. Just as good. The RBS and UVA SC materials we got to view really enhanced the learning.
10. N/A
11. N/A
12. This one was much more of a survey with fewer specifics. In some ways I learned more details about some specifics like book cloth grain in "DesBib."

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. For me, the most useful part was seeing the evolution of structure and decoration techniques. I began to see trends instead of stacks of pretty things!
2. Whole thing was good—would maybe cut course into two? Lots to cover in one class, when looking at structural, stylistic, and thematic developments across many countries over many years.
3. I enjoyed the complete focus on one aspect of the book. It will certainly alter how I look at all books moving forward.
4. I loved seeing the decorated end papers and periods associated with them, as well as some of the other dating clues. I'll definitely incorporate that into fuller binding descriptions.
5. Pre-1900 bindings, especially trade bindings. Yes, this has given me important instruction about how to date and identify bindings.
6. So many ideas, projects, and brainstorms! My brain is bursting with info and I love it. Still so much to learn and digest, but seeing originals during museum time was a priceless experience.
7. JSvL is clearly a leading scholar in the field. He has unbridled enthusiasm for fine bindings, and embellishes talks with wonderful anecdotes.
8. I enjoyed seeing the nuance of all the binding styles and how they changed over time, but also the overarching themes of how it all connects and relates to history.
9. I came away with a far deeper appreciation and admiration for the bookbinders, toolers, and engravers from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

10. My number one take-away was the transition time from block tooling to the use of rolls. JSvL's extensive knowledge on book decoration really helped me to see changes over time in tooling.
 11. The material and design aspects of the course; the stylistic changes and the manifestation of these in different countries; and the many techniques covered. Yes, much history of binding inspires creative projects in book art, where the book art can be materially connected to bookbinding's past.
 12. I am particularly interested in paper and "temporary" bindings so learning about their history on the continent was particularly helpful. I walked away excited to go home and bind more books!
- 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. There is always more to know, but this was a terrific way to experience a historical survey and identify the areas I want to explore further.
 2. I think it was okay for a survey—almost all could be developed further, but at a loss to something else.
 3. Yes, I learned what I had hoped and am deeply inspired to continue to build my knowledge of bindings once I go home.
 4. Course did exactly what it said it would, but definitely was a lot of information. Bibliography and advance reading will likely make even more sense and be reinforced by a re-reading.
 5. Yes, very happy!
 6. Absolutely! It was A LOT, but considering the amount covered in just a few days, I thought it was a well-planned and executed lesson plan.
 7. This course exceeds its promises, providing not only a comprehensive knowledge of the sequence and geography of the bindings, but a framework to compare them.
 8. Yes! I definitely learned what I hoped to learn.
 9. Yes, very much so.
 10. YES! The course was wonderful. I learned tons of new information and gained confidence in my ability to place bindings in time and place.
 11. Yes.
 12. Yes, the course description is accurate. I was expecting to learn more specifics.
- 6) *How do you plan to use the skills and knowledge acquired during your time here?*
1. I plan to apply this knowledge when examining and describing books in my institution's collections.
 2. Will likely apply knowledge in cataloging tasks, I hope.
 3. As I am still a student, I am building a body of knowledge in all matters of bibliography which I hope to use in a career in special collections.
 4. To improve binding descriptions in a closed stacks collection.
 5. Spotting special and unique bindings and feeling confident about my ability to describe them properly.
 6. I'm going to finally process my institution's bindings collection, and then apply to bookbinding school!
 7. I will use the knowledge in my scholarship and in describing books in my

- antiquarian bookshop.
8. This will be helpful in my work as a conservator because I will be able to better recognize styles, materials, &c., and how to properly treat them—or send them over to special collections, and out of circulation!
 9. I will be utilizing them in better and more accurate binding descriptions in cataloging records.
 10. The information I learned will inform my treatment decisions as I conserve rare books, and will allow me to describe materials in a consistent way.
 11. See second part of Q4.
 12. Useful background for writing treatment proposals.
- 7) *Please briefly describe the intellectual level of the course. What sort of person might benefit the most from taking it?*
1. Anyone with serious interest might benefit, but definitely read what you can of the readings to get the most out of it.
 2. Sophisticated but not difficult. Need a solid grounding in timelines of European and U.S. history. Anyone interested in history of bookbinding.
 3. A level of general history helps, but JSvL is very generous to explain and build his class around the rich history that has created these books.
 4. Quite high—good for anyone with a strong background in European history, especially art history, and for folks who have already seen a lot of bindings.
 5. A good, basic grasp of book history would be important, and, to a lesser degree, art history.
 6. Anyone with an interest in bindings, but especially book binders and librarians—the creators and the catalogers.
 7. The course is directed at the graduate level.
 8. This course seems accessible to most everyone, but a basic understanding of bookbinding is helpful.
 9. Anyone with an interest in the history of the book or in building a collection. Having some knowledge of art history would be helpful, as JSvL draws very much from his art history background in teaching this course.
 10. Anyone wishing to learn more about how bindings change over time would benefit.
 11. Persons in the position of needing to identify/date bindings. JSvL is part detective.
 12. It felt like more of an introductory and less technical course than others I've taken at RBS, so very easy to follow along. Catalogers, librarians, private sellers, and bookbinders would benefit most I think.
- 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. I loved the examination of “identical” publishers' bindings.
 2. Loved having the museums—very helpful to learn from more than just the slides.
 3. {no response}
 4. {no response}
 5. JSvL's collection of “Mame” books shows how anything can be collected.
 6. JSvL's anecdotes and stories were amazing. He is so smart and funny, and I could

- listen to him for hours.
7. For me the greatest revelation was the importance of Islamic design in over a millennium of design.
 8. The evolution of materials used in bindings is really amazing, and JSvL knows so much about it.
 9. {no response}
 10. Yes, the introduction of the roll was an “aha moment” for me.
 11. Really, at each clear shift in style, and for me as an artist, there were many moments of real inspiration.
 12. Learning more about bookbinding on the continent was great. Having so many copies of a single edition to compare bindings was very useful.

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

1. More time with the books—I would sacrifice more lunch or break time. Maybe a brief discussion of how one might approach creating a binding description?
2. Possibly cover a shorter period?
3. {no response}
4. {no response}
5. Can't think of anything.
6. Another week! Otherwise, not applicable.
7. Perhaps more formal time for discussion and fewer examples of each binding design.
8. N/A—JSvL is great.
9. Alas, if we could have more time!
10. I loved seeing so many binding examples, however, I wish I would have had more time to study them.
11. {private response}
12. More time for students to handle books in the museum instead of only JSvL's show-and-tell.

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

1. Yes, recommended!
2. Yes, and yes.
3. Yes.
4. Yes, and yes.
5. Without a doubt. Would recommend 100%!
6. Yes! Yes!
7. Well worth the money. Highly recommended.
8. Yes. Yes.
9. Yes, definitely.
10. Yes!
11. Yes.
12. I was exposed to less new material than I was expecting, but still enjoyed it a lot. I would very much recommend it. JSvL is delightful, and the European perspective really expands the scope of the course.

- 11) *If your course made any trips outside of the classroom, do you feel that they were time well spent?*
1. Trip to SC was a wonderful opportunity. Thank you to SC staff!
 2. One trip to SC display was fun.
 3. Yes, the SC at UVA are wonderful, and I would have been sorry not to make at least one visit.
 4. Yes.
 5. The visit to UVA SC allowed us to see a whole different level of bindings in person.
 6. SC once, and yes.
 7. SC was spectacular as always.
 8. Yes—we visited SC, and it was great!
 9. The opportunities to view examples from SC was invaluable.
 10. Yes, seeing the materials in SC was wonderful.
 11. Yes.
 12. Trip to SC was very useful.
- 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. Lecture was great, movies were fun, Ornament Night was absolutely amazing.
 2. First night dinner was a great idea.
 3. I enjoyed them all. Thank you for making such a variety.
 4. Yes.
 5. N/A
 6. I appreciated the variety, and that everything was optional. Ornament Night was great, but I felt somewhat rushed and very crowded.
 7. {no response}
 8. I attended most evening events and enjoyed them all, but I also enjoyed socializing, so that's probably why.
 9. Yes. I especially enjoyed Ornament Night.
 10. Ornament Night was a fun way to get to know other students, and made me really want to apply for "T-60: The History of 19th- & 20th-Century Typography & Printing" the next time it is offered.
 11. I only attended one. Very good speaker.
 12. I attended the lecture, Ornament Night, and Movie Night. Loved Ornament Night—what a treat.
- 13) *Do you have any additional thoughts or advice for anyone considering taking this course in a future year?*
1. Focus on the historical survey readings, and then pick and choose according to your interests.
 2. Just be prepared to take in A LOT of information.
 3. Do not hesitate.
 4. Do the advance readings, as much as you can, and start as soon as possible.
 5. Take it; do not hesitate!
 6. Take it!

7. {no response}
8. No.
9. Get an early start on the recommended readings.
10. It's amazing...you should go.
11. {no response}
12. Even if you know a lot about bookbinding, you will still learn a lot and get new perspectives.

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

1. Enlightening.
2. {no response}
3. {no response}
4. {no response}
5. Start writing application for JSvL's advanced bookbinding seminar...
6. This place is magic.
7. Total immersion in and out of the book.
8. "I am 74, I have lots of fun, because I love books."—JSvL
9. Again, simply awesome!
10. This was my first course at RBS, and it met and exceeded my expectations. Thank you for a fantastic week!
11. Never the word "weird"
more charming than when uttered
by JSvL
(This does not sum up my experience, but I couldn't resist.)
12. "I thought that Boniface was a young man and he goes to convert the Fries Flanders and he is killed—done—not so!"—JSvL

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%)

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

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: 1 (8.33%)

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

Who paid your RBS tuition costs?

I paid 100% myself: 4 (33.33%)

My institution/employer paid 100%: 4 (33.33%)

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

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

I used a scholarship/fellowship to pay/waive part; my institution/employer paid the rest:
1 (8.33%)

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

Who paid your RBS housing 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 stayed with friends/family, or stayed in my own home and commuted: 3 (25%)

Who paid your RBS travel expenses?

I paid 100% myself: 6 (50%)

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

My institution/employer paid part; I paid the rest: 2 (16.67%)

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: 3 (25%)

Conservator/binder/preservation librarian: 3 (25%)

Special collections librarian: 2 (16.67%)

Student working toward a/n:

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

Professional educator:

Full professor: 1 (8.33%)

Book trades:

Antiquarian bookseller: 1 (8.33%)

Book artist, artisan or printer: 1 (8.33%)