

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. Pre-course readings were very useful, and especially helpful that they are published on the web. I started reading immediately after applying and was able to read 2/3 of the material. I plan on finishing when I return home.
2. {no response}
3. {private response}
4. I was able to locate seven “preferred” books which was adequate prep.
5. I read the reader very well, and had a good look at most of the books on the literature list. That’s really necessary if you want to get the best of the course.
6. Honestly, it took me a while to get any of the books through ILL—I underestimated the time it would take and how soon the class was—so I didn’t do much pre-class reading.
7. It was useful, but it was a lot. This is probably normal across the board for RBS classes, but if the list got more specific, I think it would be less overwhelming, and students could absorb more information.
8. Perhaps fewer titles could be suggested as essential preliminary reading. But we covered a lot of ground in a short time. The longer bibliography suggested the full scope, and workbook’s fuller bibliography. Much appreciated.
9. I did not do any of the reading assignments before class. However, I checked out as many of them from the library as I could, and look forward to reading them when I get home. {private response}

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. The workbook, especially receiving it in color before class, was very helpful, especially when it came to terms used in class—I will refer to it in the future.
2. I really enjoyed the course workbook and was happy that it was given to us before the course started.
3. JSvL’s workbook is a great resource. I’m so glad to have a physical copy.
4. I printed in color from the advance link, and I am very glad that I had it, especially for the future.
5. The workbook is clear, and I will use it later for sure.
6. The workbook is fantastic. I wish I had spent more time going through it beforehand. I was able to follow along fine, but I think it would have been easier and I would have been able to make better notes if I spent more time with it beforehand.
7. The workbook is honestly the most important pre-class reading, perhaps because

- it came from JSvL directly.
8. Excellent coverage. That the presentations did not keep strictly to the same order was good—forced not to just follow the workbook.
 9. I am very glad to have a copy of the workbook, both digital and physical, that I can use as a reference book for cataloging in the future.
- 3) *If you've taken previous RBS courses, how did this one compare?*
1. N/A
 2. I'd rank this course third in the four courses I've taken (G-45: "Analytical Bibliography," G-10: "Introduction to the Principles of Descriptive Bibliography," B-10: "Introduction to the History of Bookbinding," and L-100: "Digital Approaches to Bibliography & Book History.")
 3. N/A
 4. N/A
 5. N/A
 6. They've all been A+.
 7. N/A
 8. Equally knowledgeable instructors. More hands-on projects in the other class, which I enjoyed. {private response}
 9. 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. Absolutely! I'd love to survey the rare books in our collections to see how many of the styles I learned about are present. I will be able to look at books with a better eye now. Book structure, and when and why they changed, has always been an interest.
 2. I found the parts of the course that focused on the historical contexts and practical use of the materials/bindings the most interesting. As a social historian, I'm not as drawn to luxury objects. But the discussions of the binder's trade, the practical/material conditions in which binders worked, and the guild system were all fascinating.
 3. I had very little experience with rare books and my new job requires that I handle them a lot. I feel much more knowledgeable and competent now.
 4. I am especially interested in the socio-economic influences upon the development of bookbinding.
 5. Although I already knew most of it, I learned many new details and the place the bindings get in history in general is very much clear through the comments and stories JSvL tells about them. Lots of new ideas!
 6. I want to look through the bindings in my home collection with my newly acquired knowledge fresh in my mind. I'd love to do an exhibit about some of our more interesting—as well as more typical—bindings.
 7. The teaching collection is amazing and it sounds like it's growing, which is good to hear.
 8. See Q6. Understanding of variants of binding was important.
 9. I loved looking closely at individual books and trying to figure out more about them, which is very good practice for me to have as an aspiring special collections

cataloger.

- 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. JSvL is very thorough! His enthusiasm is contagious, and his knowledge, which he thoroughly enjoys sharing, is astounding. He always provided historical context which helped my understanding of changes in style and structure.
 2. One of the things I have enjoyed most about RBS in the past are the hands-on laboratory settings in which students, for instance, set type and work on the common press. I would have liked to have had some similar hands-on experience in this course, say, with sewing the bindings or embossing leather/paper.
 3. I didn't know what this course would be like at all, and now I have a solid foundational knowledge about bookbinding which I am excited to expand upon.
 4. Yes! Nothing was underdeveloped, and I learned so much.
 5. I had no goal for certain knowledge, but I know a lot more, and learned it in a very pleasant way.
 6. Yes. No. Yes.
 7. We ran out of time a lot, but only because there was nothing our group didn't want to acquire. So, some topics got cut off, but I feel I still learned the important aspects.
 8. Excellent—just needed more time (not the instructor's fault!). I need to continue to use the experiences and materials to improve my skills. So much to learn.
 9. Yes! I started out knowing absolutely nothing about bindings and now I know significantly more than nothing. It was a great introduction, and I feel like I have a great framework to go forward and learn more on my own now.
- 6) *How do you plan to use the skills and knowledge acquired during your time here?*
1. I plan to use my knowledge and skills when writing condition reports, and in assessing treatment options. It will also help me engage more with the materials I work with.
 2. I think the bibliography and workbook will be extremely useful to my scholarly work on seventeenth-century pamphlets and books. I now know where to go when I have a question about the origins of a bound collection of pamphlets.
 3. They will allow me to do my job with so much more understanding.
 4. I will return to my institution and share this knowledge with staff and students.
 5. Reading more literature and making descriptions of bindings, and I plan to write some articles.
 6. Exhibits; more knowledgeable with answers to questions from students; more comfortable because of this new understanding that there are things about which even experts are unsure.
 7. Ohhhhhhh yes.
 8. I will return to my institutional collection with completely fresh insights. I may try to add notes to the cataloging info.
 9. Helping me understand more of what I read about bindings and book history in general in the future. Also in future employment.

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

1. All levels—anyone who is engaged in books will benefit. JSvL's delivery transcends; he's able to break it down and make it fun, but also delve deep.
2. This is not a course that demands a lot of critical thinking from the student. It is appropriate for a wide range of aptitudes and educational levels.
3. While it is an entry level course, I think any interested person could benefit from it. I didn't have any knowledge beforehand, but even fellow students who did seemed to gain a lot from JSvL.
4. I think professionals in the allied fields are the appropriate level.
5. The level is around academic, but everybody who is interested in the history of the book or deals with old books will strongly profit from it.
6. Seemed to me that it had a pretty broad appeal. I don't have much experience with bindings and was able to follow, but it seemed like more seasoned folks got a ton out of it too.
7. The information overall was easy enough to understand. The issue with bookbinding though is that it's partially visual learning, so we're shown things, but need refreshers. For instance, the demonstration with Amanda Nelsen was amazing, but I wish we received a print out of the steps for reference.
8. Professionals in libraries and researchers would find it most beneficial. Collectors and dealers, too.
9. I found it to be very intellectually stimulating, yet non-judgmental. I would recommend it to a person who is excited about bindings or who wants to take a class that will get them excited about bindings!

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. Rubbings!!
2. {no response}
3. {no response}
4. Connecting global trends of the subject really made an impression.
5. JSvL is very witty, and the way he talks about our bindings whilst showing them is catching and sometimes even emotional.
6. Loved learning about the fun—and tiny—places where a binders' signature might be hidden. And the decorated paper museum! Wow!!
7. Learning the process of handmade bindings to more machine-dependent bindings was fascinating.
8. Comparison of books at RBS with examples in my home institution, e.g., "Pompa Introitus" bindings individualized.
9. {private response}

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

1. {no response}
2. See Q5.
3. {no response}

4. Cannot think of one improvement!
5. {no response}
6. Having it last two weeks.
7. Better time management (I say with the most love possible).
8. Only more time (than one week!).
9. Less cutting into breaks with lecture time. {private response}

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

1. Absolutely. Absolutely.
2. Yes, and yes.
3. Yes. Yes.
4. Yes, and yes!
5. It was worth the money very much.
6. Yes, and yes!!
7. Yes, and yes.
8. Absolutely. Would definitely recommend.
9. Definitely!

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

1. Very much so. The trip to SC was very worthwhile; seeing rare treasures reinforces what we were learning in lectures, and we were able to appreciate the objects even more.
2. N/A
3. SC at UVA showed us some gorgeous things.
4. Very informative survey visit to SC.
5. N/A
6. Great trip to SC.
7. Yes, for the bindings we couldn't see here, it was nice to see them at UVA's SC.
8. Enjoyed the SC trip.
9. 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. I only attended one, the explanation of books about books. JSvL's overview of these reference books was very helpful—you can't exactly browse them online—and my Oak Knoll shopping list has grown.
2. I watch the papermaking film each time that I come to RBS. I always learn from it. I enjoyed the Monday night lecture on Photoshop collation, and I always enjoy meeting the UVA Ph.D. students and learning about their projects.
3. Booksellers' Night was quite interesting, and a nice chance to socialize.
4. I liked all the evening events and attended each one. Very useful.
5. The evening program was informative and very good to talk with other students and teachers.

6. I went to everything except the Monday talk because I was too pooped—oh, and I missed the film, too, because we were having too much fun at dinner! But our Wednesday “study session” and Booksellers’ Night were great.
7. If there’s a way to update the movie choices....
8. All brought opportunities to add to courses, plus time to meet and discuss with others outside the classroom.
9. {private response}

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

1. Do the readings and if you have a chance, pull some books from the time periods you’re reading about. It really helps your appreciation.
2. {no response}
3. {no response}
4. I recommend it very highly.
5. {no response}
6. Do it!
7. Don’t freak out about all the pre-course readings.
8. Plan wisely. Make sure you seize the opportunity to take a class as soon as possible!
9. {no response}

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

1. I didn’t want it to end, and can’t wait to come back!! Thank you, especially to RBS staff—you guys have done so much to make us feel at home this week.
2. {no response}
3. Enlightening!
4. Yes, I will return.
This has been a dream of mine,
And I cannot wait!
5. A perfect experience in an extremely inspiring environment.
6. JSvL + Charlottesville + RBS = best week ever. Thanks to all.
7. I can now see what all the hype is about.
8. A great week in my life. The instructor made it a terrific experience, as did fellow classmates.
9. BINDINGS ROCK (and so does JSvL).

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 self-employed, and can arrange my own schedule: 1 (11.11%)

I am a student or non-year-round employee, with a more flexible summer schedule:
1 (11.11%)

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

Who paid your RBS tuition costs?

I paid 100% myself: 4 (44.44%)

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

I used a scholarship/fellowship to pay/waive part; my institution/employer paid the rest:
1 (11.11%)

Who paid your RBS housing expenses?

I paid 100% myself: 4 (44.44%)

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

I stayed with friends/family, or stayed in my own home and commuted: 1 (11.11%)

Who paid your RBS travel expenses?

I paid 100% myself: 6 (66.67%)

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

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

Library disciplines:

Conservator/binder/preservation librarian: 2 (22.22%)

Special collections librarian: 1 (11.11%)

Subject specialist/bibliographer: 1 (11.11%)

Other: 2 (22.22%)

Student working toward a/n:

M.L.I.S./M.L.S.: 1 (11.11%)

Book trades:

Antiquarian bookseller: 1 (11.11%)

Other occupations/vocations:

Other: 1 (11.11%)