

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. The pre-course readings took forever to get through, but I think it was helpful. Don't panic about trying to remember it all—it is most helpful to get an overview.
2. {private response}
3. The Gaskell especially was helpful and good—really clicked once we could see the objects described in person. Bowers was good as a reference source.
4. They were useful. It was good to familiarize myself with some of the terminology. The main textbook (Gaskell) was difficult to understand, but it was good to grapple with it before class. I especially appreciated the two DVDs and the practice paper. They were a BIG help.
5. Very useful.
6. Yes, they were helpful.
7. The advance readings were very good. It took me longer to read Gaskell than I thought, so the other reading was a bit rushed. And even though it's only recommended, not required, I would de-emphasize Bowers. I feel like I spent too much time trying to dutifully plow through it when the time would have been better spent on the other readings.
8. Yes, the pre-course assignments were tremendously useful. Some of the most difficult ones (e.g., Bowers's and Gaskell's treatment of collation formulas) possibly most useful in that they made DW's explication a massive relief of, shall I say, "perfect clarity."
9. The pre-course reading is essential. Even if it doesn't make sense, read it again. You will regularly experience "aha moments" that will supplement the grins as fellow classmates experience the same thing.
10. The pre-course readings were very useful. Students should be advised to watch the DVD before reading Gaskell.
11. The pre-course reading assignments were on target, and complimentary to the in-class discussion. The DVDs were helpful, but in future years I'd recommend offering them if possible in a streaming format. Gaskell's *Printing House and Engraving Shop*—discussing the different ways text and illustration were produced—might be a nice addition.

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 is a fantastic reference—I'm sure I will go to it in the future.
2. DW's workbook is well documented, and I am sure that from now on I will use it as the critical bibliography "Bible." It would be useful to add in some blank pages

- after every topic to write down class notes.
3. Yes, now the readings will make full sense. Wish I'd had more time to spend with the optional readings beforehand, but the classwork now gives me a good handle for digging in.
 4. It was appropriate, useful and well-organized. The bibliography and explanations and examples in it will continue to be useful for my research after the course.
 5. Very useful, both in class and as a reference later.
 6. I think the course workbook will be very useful to me. I especially appreciated the lists of research resources and bibliographies of further reading.
 7. It's excellent, and I believe it will be useful in the future.
 8. I liked the workbook very much and will refer to it (and my material) frequently. I especially liked the color reproduction of binding. More room to write notes would be useful. And if economically feasible, more color on photo reproductions?
 9. The workbook is very useful, supplementing slides and hands-on work. I would recommend a notebook, or better yet, interleaved blank pages for various sections so notes/visuals stay together.
 10. DW did a magnificent job creating our workbook. Perhaps adding some blank sheets for those who like to take extra notes would be helpful. The workbook covers everything we will need.
 11. The workbook was extremely useful, and offered DW's clear synthesis of multiple references on bibliography. I will definitely be referring to this.

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

1. This course was more challenging, but just as helpful and interesting. Both courses are great fits for my work with rare books.
2. This is my first course.
3. N/A
4. N/A
5. Very well.
6. N/A
7. N/A
8. N/A
9. Excellent. This is my third course; coming back again!
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 enjoyed the hands-on workshops of setting type, printing, and observing the bookbinding techniques. The collation workshops were essential—I only wish there were no conflicts of interest time wise. So much to do here. I opted for Movie Night for a shorter collation and missed Booksellers' Night.
2. The practical classes such as printing, typography, and binding were eye-opening as I finally was able to understand the notions that we've been reading for the class. The visit to the RBS library and seeing the SC was also a highlight. I leave with new insights about the history of books, collation and description, how to differentiate the different use of materials in the production of books, &c..

3. Essentially every day was chock full of new insights and inspiration for future scholarly work. I have a handle on the processes of bibliography, and for those I won't use on a daily basis, I appreciate understanding their function and context.
 4. I think that in every section of the course I learned material that will help me to understand my research better. I learned several things that will help me in my research and one insight in particular that may change my project.
 5. Most useful to me was learning the vocabulary of descriptive bibliography—this will certainly be employed in a couple of current research papers.
 6. I'm leaving with a much better understanding of bibliographical vocabulary and of the possibilities of pre-1800 book creation. I came in with a better understanding than some students of how letterpress printing works (having done it before), and this class still made a huge difference in my understanding of its historical context. I feel much better prepared to do research about hand-press era books, and feel like I finally got a lot of the vocabulary I didn't understand before.
 7. Having in-person demonstrations and examples that illustrated the terminology that I see in catalog records and in Gaskell's text. I'm looking forward to enriching some of the catalog records for rare books at my institution.
 8. I wanted to learn about and to some extent enter the eighteenth-century printed page through the world of the compositor. I do have a glimpse. I loved the typesetting experience, and wish it had been a full period. But what would I cut? Nothing. I have a better book because of this course.
 9. My goal was to get my feet wet with hand-press era issues. It was excellent and accomplished that goal well.
 10. Paper, bookbinding, and bibliographical description was most interesting and most relevant. I especially found it useful when DW compared records of a particular item in Worldcat and other cataloging resources.
 11. Yes, absolutely. I have new ideas about the many, many applications of bibliography for book history, and have identified a few questions related to printing history I'd like to investigate. The workshops given by Amanda Nelsen and the printing press demonstration were especially eye-opening.
- 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. DW did a yeoman's job—he's a great teacher! Lovely sense of humor, very patient, accessible, obviously knows his stuff and is happy to share it.
 2. I learned way more than what I expected. I am impressed with DW's patience and knowledge, besides his love for books. I really appreciated his tips on how to distinguish different bindings, paper types, watermarks, and the after-hours workshops on description and collation. He is a very dedicated professor.
 3. Yes, most certainly I got what I hoped for, and more. DW is an excellent instructor—had down all the story beats for those "uh oh" moments when we come across something that perplexes the novice. Just an excellent pedagogical style to match the content.
 4. I think I did learn what I wanted to learn, which was to acquire a detailed vocabulary for describing and analyzing hand-press era books. There is always more to learn, but given our time limits, I thought DW did an admirable job covering topics broadly and evenly.

5. Yes.
6. I don't think anything was left out.
7. I definitely got what I had hoped to, and more. The instructor thoroughly covered all aspects of the course description.
8. I learned so much more than I'd hoped to learn, and to my surprise, I learned to enjoy the aspects I was less keen on and didn't personally need as much (e.g., collation)—but I feel as if I've learned a new language, a new skill, and an invitation to new micro- and macro-bibliographical worlds.
9. DW was exceptional, taking a difficult topic and wide background of students, and with humor and patience, working with us until we got it. Highly recommended.
10. Yes. Everything was thoroughly explained and DW very patiently answered all of our questions.
11. Yes. I'm surprised we were able to cover such a large amount of material in such a short time.

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

1. This will help me to understand the catalog records, perhaps write some collation myself, and there were so many little chestnuts that I hope to remember about the hand-press period.
2. I plan to use it in my own research, especially on archival work.
3. Inform my collection development practices, workshop ideas, and work on digital editions/scholarship.
4. I plan to use the skills and knowledge from this course for my second book manuscript project.
5. I hope to incorporate bibliographical topics into my teaching and research.
6. To do a better job of teaching undergraduates about rare books!
7. I will be applying this knowledge by cataloging with greater confidence, especially in describing binding and type.
8. I will be revising a book chapter with what I've learned here. I feel more confident about how to cast and support a particular typographical theory; and I want to buy myself a composition stick and Baskerville font! I want to collate and decipher every rare book I own!
9. To begin to work with hand-press era books (and fix some embarrassing catalog entries ASAP).
10. Once I get back to work, I will be cataloging Cuban rare books and manuscripts that will be digitized. I will reference the G-20 workbook and my notes to complete these records in OCLC (Worldcat).
11. I do a lot of teaching and instruction with our collections, and feel much better prepared to answer questions about printing processes and illustration technologies.

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

1. Booksellers, librarians, curators, conservators, &c. Anyone who wants to learn more about this time period.
2. The course was intense and demanding for someone who doesn't pertain to the libraries or literature world. However, it was wide open and intellectually

- stimulating. I would recommend it to any academic working in the humanities, book conservators, librarians, collectors, and book dealers.
3. High but accessible for those working with books. Would be doable, I think, for advanced undergrads of the right persuasion, while still being challenging and rewarding for those of use with humanities Ph.D.s.
 4. I thought it was entirely appropriate for where I am—a person with interest and experience in using rare books but having little or no formal training in the field. I am a Ph.D. in History about five years out of grad school.
 5. Very high, but also approachable. DW is very good about clearly and simply walking through difficult topics.
 6. It's hard for me to say. I lack the subject knowledge that a lot of people in the class have, but knew a little more about the processes involved (printing, papermaking). If you're at the point where books as physical objects intersect with your other interests, but you've hit a wall in terms of trying to teach yourself, it's probably a good class. I applied because I was trying to read Gaskell on my own and not quite getting it.
 7. People with some background in working with rare books as a dealer, librarian, or scholar.
 8. DW made everything so accessible and fascinating that I think a bibliophilic undergraduate could be interested; or groups of librarians, curators, conservators, booksellers, and professors seemed perfectly matched.
 9. It is a useful survey course that digs into many hand-press era issues. The collation/format work was a great intro for anyone who wants to learn more before jumping into the deep end.
 10. Someone who has some experience analyzing rare materials. This course is very detailed, so if a student hasn't had experience analyzing rare materials, the course might seem to drag.
 11. DW did a great job of teaching a class of twelve with different skill sets and goals. I think it's useful for booksellers, academics, librarians, and advanced humanities students.
- 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. Several, but I can't remember specifics at this moment.
 2. {no response}
 3. There were a succession of little "ahas:" when I saw the printing press work and could thus finally understand the different parts/functions, ditto for binding, when collation formulae, folding, and signatures "clicked" with practice, &c.
 4. DW showed us that sometimes a new "edition" of a book did not necessarily mean that the previous one had sold out. The publisher might just have had extra copies that needed to be sold and just put a new title page on the book! That had never occurred to me.
 5. Loved hearing about DW's research process on the last day of class—would've liked to hear even more about his diagnostic of the field of bibliography today.
 6. All of the examples we got to see—getting to work with a collection like RBS's that has so many books selected for their teaching value and the insight they give into book production—was really helpful. I'm grateful to DW and RBS staff members

- for the research and time spent pulling material that must go into that selection.
7. I really liked the way the collation/pagination workshop was set up, allowing time to try to apply what we learned and having really helpful answer sheets to compare with. “Aha:” DW’s concept of thinking about provenance in terms of how the book is transformed, rather than just the fact of ownership.
 8. Understanding the printing press, the work of the compositor, the raw labor of detail belonging to a single page of text; the anatomical and bibliographical fascination of collation, statement of signing, pagination. “The duplicity of duplicates.”
 9. Connecting the physicality of the pressroom to format and collation gave me a great model to think through the discovery process with a new book.
 10. Watching bookbinding take place. I cataloged a rare book with gold tooling about a year ago and didn’t really know what that meant until I saw it done by Amanda Nelsen. RBS’s hands-on approach of teaching creates many “aha” moments.
 11. Timothy Barrett’s lecture on papermaking was phenomenal, and so instructive; it made me think about this raw material in very different ways. Printing demos and binding demos were also very enlightening.

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

1. One more optional collation workshop, or offer them when there isn’t something else happening.
2. {no response}
3. {no response}
4. I thought it was an ideal balance of presentation by the instructor and questions/discussions. Also, I appreciated the balance between traditional classroom learning and more “practical” experience—setting type, printing, collating, &c.
5. I would like more time to handle the books.
6. I can’t think of anything I’d change...it was very well taught!
7. No suggestions other than the one I made above (Q4) about Bowers being unnecessary as an advance reading recommendation.
8. What??? Pppft. Unless perhaps starting at 9:00 and ending at 6:00.
9. {no response}
10. I can’t see any improvements that need to be done.
11. I would have loved a “show and tell” or behind the scenes visit to SC at UVA. We did look at collection materials, but viewing items in situ—perhaps with a chance to hear about them from other staff—would have been useful. This might make a good after class elective for future classes.

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

1. Yes, and yes!
2. Yes, definitely!
3. Yes, very much so. I think every humanities Ph.D. in the country should take a course like this.
4. ABSOLUTELY. Yes on both counts.
5. Yes, and yes.

6. I do! I would definitely recommend it.
7. Yes.
8. Yes. Yes.
9. Very much so, yes!
10. Yes, I would definitely recommend this course.
11. Yes, and yes.

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

1. To SC to see some beauties from the collection. Very nice.
2. We went to the Small library to see the gems of the SC. Definitely worth it.
3. Yes—rare books demonstration on bindings at the Rare Books Library was good.
4. Yes. They allowed us to learn in a different way and to break up the traditional classroom-style learning.
5. Very much enjoyed the SC session and would have loved more of the same.
6. Yes! Though we only went next door to SC, so travel time was not an issue.
7. Yes, the visits to the printing press, binding demo, &c., were very good.
8. Every one. Composing room, printing, binding, SC.
9. Yes, in each case.
10. Yes! We went to SC and got to see DW's favorite rare items, which he thoroughly explained.
11. Emphatically yes. So useful to have typesetting practice, exposure to the printing press, access to books in SC, and the bookbinding lesson.

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 enjoyed the papermaking videos, the Timothy Barrett lecture was excellent, and the popcorn munchies, wine and cheese receptions added a festivity and inspired social interactions.
2. Timothy Barrett's talk was insightful and the movies about paper as well.
3. I enjoyed them all—the lecture, Movie Night. I just didn't have quite enough time to visit all the booksellers I wanted to see.
4. I wished that I could have attended the lectures, but didn't because I was here with family. The collation session with DW was very helpful.
5. N/A
6. I'm sure the evening events were great, but between optional workshops for G-20, and needing to get sleep, I didn't make it to as many as I wanted to.
7. The lecture "Listening to Paper" was relevant and useful. The talk and exhibit in the Rotunda—well, I'm still not sure what that was about.
8. {no response}
9. Yes, time well spent.
10. I went to the paper lecture and it was great hearing about the papermaking process.
11. The lecture was wonderful. DW generously scheduled a practice workshop twice during the week at night, and these were invaluable. I would have liked to see the movies, but they conflicted with the required practice session.

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

1. I would've loved a tour of the conservation lab.
2. {no response}
3. If you don't understand something in the pre-class reading, just note it mentally and move on. DW does a wonderful job clarifying the confusing parts. He dispels the terror of collation with empathy and patience.
4. This course seems like an ideal introductory RBS course since it offers a bit of many fields—type, press, paper, illustration, binding, &c.
5. I think you will find this class useful and enjoyable. DW is a great teacher and it was a pleasure to learn from him and the other students in the class.
6. Expect some of the reading not to make sense. It's probably most helpful if you do it before and after.
7. This course is a great overview.
8. I didn't realize that such intellectual delight and energy could be sustained through five long, intense days.
9. Do it!
10. Read assigned readings, but don't be anxious if you don't understand. Read to acquaint yourself to the topic. DW does an excellent job explaining.
11. An excellent course, with a top-notch, thoughtful, entertaining professor with deep reserves of bibliographical knowledge. Highly recommended.

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

1. Sublime!
2. I will be back!
3. Warning: may inspire career shifts or cause feelings of regret that you didn't take RBS courses years ago.
4. DW is delightful! He is very learned in broad and deep ways. He's an ideal instructor for this course. I especially appreciated how flexible he was in taking questions and comments from students, yet still managed to cover everything. He is also genuinely excited about the material AND about taking questions. I think he smiled each time there was a question. He is great!
5. {no response}
6. My brain is still too busy absorbing information to write a haiku—sorry!
7. I feel armed with a greater understanding of how to approach my work.
8. Please see above. Or read, "BIBLIOGRAPHY; or, The Life and Adventures of a Book" by D.W., printed by C.W., Charlottesville, MMXVII. Thank you, David!
9. One of the few places in the world where you can study hard for a week and come out with more spring in your step, a renewed commitment to your craft, and new friends.
10. Hands-on teaching, lovely and knowledgeable people, bunnies, and fire flies makes Rare Book School in Virginia an amazing place!
11. Achieved Gaskell's "Perfect Clarity." (or almost!)

Student Data

Number of respondents: 11 (of 12)

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:
2 (18.18%)

I am self-employed, and can arrange my own schedule: 1 (9.09%)

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%: 4 (36.36%)

Who paid your RBS housing expenses?

I paid 100% myself: 3 (27.27%)

My institution/employer paid 100%: 6 (54.55%)

I used a scholarship/fellowship to cover 100%: 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: 2 (18.18%)

My institution/employer paid 100%: 6 (54.55%)

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

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

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

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

Library disciplines:

Archivist: 1 (9.09%)

Cataloger/metadata librarian: 2 (18.18%)

Conservator/binder/preservation librarian: 1 (9.09%)

Curator: 1 (9.09%)

Subject specialist/bibliographer: 1 (9.09%)

Student working toward a/n:

Ph.D./D.Phil: 2 (18.18%)

Professional educator:

Assistant professor: 1 (9.09%)

Full professor: 1 (9.09%)

Book trades:

Antiquarian bookseller: 1 (9.09%)