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H-30: The Printed Book in the West to 1800  
3–8 June 2018

**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. Useful. Would recommend including a few professional articles on the study of book history.
2. Very useful and topical, covered a wide aspect of topics that came up in class.
3. {private response}
4. No extra preparation. Reading assignments were helpful. I began to understand them better when we started class.
5. The pre-course reading {private response} was useful.
6. Yes. I read the required reading and some of the secondary—I appreciated the beach reading suggestions as well. Readings were very helpful and relevant.
7. Yes—but *ABC for Book Collectors* was hard because it's a dictionary! Perhaps some YouTube videos on vellum and paper making would be good.
8. Pre-course readings were useful. I did not do any additional preparation for the course.
9. Somewhat. The Warren Chappell book jumps about and does not give you a very developed history.
10. {private response} *A Short History of the Printed Word* was very beneficial in a brief background to this course.
11. The pre-course readings were extremely helpful. This was my first course in the history of the book and I found them to sufficient to catch me up so I never felt confused or behind during the course.
12. Yes. I read all the suggested materials ahead of time and they were really useful!

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. {no response}
2. Notebook: workbook could've used more citations of slide materials.
3. {no response}
4. The course workbook might have been a little more organized and reflective of the class discussion, particularly for our interactions with special materials (i.e. have the names of the day's materials included in the packet).
5. The teaching materials, particularly the in-class exercises, were extremely useful.
6. Yes—appropriate, useful, and of use for the future. I am grateful for the workbook. It will help me recall and look up things we covered.
7. Fabulous! Yes! Also, the paper folding was very helpful.
8. I greatly appreciated the course workbook—its content, both appropriate and useful, will continue to be useful beyond this course.

9. The workbook was very useful.
10. The course workbook was helpful because there were a lot of names, non-English, to keep up with and it was handy to not have to ask every 5 minutes how to spell. The format sheets were a great benefit to understanding how sheets were folded.
11. The workbook was very helpful with spellings, reference, and as a way to organize my notes. It was set up for lectures, so during my demonstrations, I found myself flipping around it. I plan on keeping it as a valuable reference with my notes.
12. The workbook was not particularly helpful as we tended to veer away from the PowerPoints a lot.

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

1. Best.
2. Definitely a survey, but MA is an excellent summarizer and I appreciated revisiting topics I'd encountered in other classes.
3. I took this same class twenty years ago with the same instructor, it has improved with experience, wisdom, and wit.
4. N/A
5. This was my first RBS course.
6. N/A
7. N/A
8. {no response}
9. {no response}
10. N/A
11. It was my first course.
12. Wonderful! I learned so much and the hands on work was so valuable.

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. Yes. Looking at the books themselves!
2. I realized I know nothing about typography—so much to learn! The history of literacy sections were very relevant for me.
3. {no response}
4. I have a greater appreciation for books and will never look at them the same. I hope to take my mom to a special collections place someday and share with her all that I've learned.
5. I leave this class with many new insights and a wealth of new knowledge. Prior to this course, I knew nothing about deciphering binding techniques or various styles of print.
6. All of the lectures were great, but I especially appreciated the coverage of book production—from paper, to type, to binding, to the material workings of the press, and the operations of shops. I am currently designing a book history curriculum, and this was invaluable for me.
7. I really enjoyed the book collectors' library development portion right at the end.
8. The entire course was of interest. The final lecture on paratext and the idea of the book beyond its publication proved particularly insightful and will likely lead to future projects.
9. Because of my printing background, I love the descriptions of print shops,

papermaking, etc. However, it is the social and political history that really holds my interest.

10. For me, the most beneficial were the typeface lectures and the bookbinding demonstration; I would like to format my own sampler for binding processes to show undergrads.
11. My research addresses readership and how information was applied and received. I received new outlooks on the book and how it affected readership in my period and place of study as well as questions to ask about readership and the book as an object and resource. It certainly framed some wider questions for me as a scholar.
12. I appreciated the demonstrations—using a hand press, seeing bookbinding. Also, MA's lectures are wonderful!

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! (to learning what I had hoped to learn)
2. Due to lack of time we didn't cover book illustration as much as I'd hoped.
3. {private response}
4. Our treatment of the social history of reading could have been expanded. Less about loaded British bibliophiles, more about actual people!
5. Yes, I learned exactly what I hoped to learn. When teaching from or examining rare materials, I now feel capable of discussing the materials in a sophisticated manner.
6. Yes. This course exceeded my expectations. I learned more than I thought possible in a week.
7. I would have enjoyed some more context, such as social networks and other quick historical facts (especially fifteenth-century through mid-sixteenth century).
8. Yes. The instructor helped me to acquire all skills and information promised. I learned more than what I had hoped to learn.
9. Yes, the class covered everything I hoped it would. Good combination of lecture and seeing the rare books!
10. I feel as though there was a bit more focus on fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in the lectures, not really the seventeenth and even less so the eighteenth century. Some of the material was familiar because of my previous experience with bibliography, but the info on the history of the book was thorough, especially printing and binding.
11. I did. As I stated above, the course highlighted new issues and questions that will absolutely shape my own scholarship in more exciting and effective ways.
12. Yes.

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

1. More personal enjoyment and enrichment (I am retired).
2. I plan to finish MA's "post course beach reading" suggestions and use that and the course knowledge in approaching using "books as objects" more critically when I teach.
3. I will enjoy thinking about it and discussing it with friends and others.
4. {no response}

5. I'll use the skills for teaching with archival sources, as well as for my own edification.
  6. Mainly in course development but perhaps as a foundation for new research in my own university's special collection library.
  7. This was partially for my education outside of work, but it will also help me get a handle on some of the rare materials we have. A great primer which will help in a multitude of ways.
  8. I plan to take into consideration the skills and knowledge acquired to guide future academic pursuits and research.
  9. I plan to do further reading on some of the historical characters and books mentioned.
  10. Much of this will go into my future research, as I do bibliographic work on seventeenth-century texts and editorial theory. Learning about typeface especially was new to me, and will be something I look at when I return home to my projects.
  11. As someone with no history of the book background working in the humanities, this course showed me how bibliography can be effectively employed in my own field and the most effective manners by which I can incorporate bibliography into my own research/writing/teaching.
  12. I will be managing our rare book room at my institution.
- 7) *Please briefly describe the intellectual level of the course. What sort of person might benefit the most from taking it?*

1. Hard for the educated lay person with an interest in fine books.
2. As stated on the course description this is definitely a survey course, best for beginners or people who need a refresher.
3. MA is the embodiment of an Enlightenment scholar. He takes nothing for granted or on slippery authority. He questions everything and encourages his students to do the same.
4. Very intellectual, perfect for advanced undergrad level and up.
5. This class is beneficial for those with limited to no knowledge of the printed book before 1800.
6. I think this is a good introductory course on the topic—really for anyone with an interest in book history who needs a sense of the scope of the field.
7. I feel like it's pretty accessible, but having a history background would definitely help!
8. The intellectual level was moderate, with familiarity of European History being necessary. As a general course, any person will greatly benefit from taking it.
9. It seems to fit any intelligent adult as well as graduate students.
10. I think the course would benefit MA/MS, higher-level instruction, or professionals with a few years of experience—undergrads might not appreciate it the same.
11. Anyone interested and with a background in Western history—particularly Western European history, especially cultural history.
12. All levels may find this course helpful, but especially beginners to the rare book world.

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 startling visual experiences with iconic books.
2. Linking the advancement of scientific knowledge, helped by the advance of the graphic arts, in our special collections session—wow.
3. Over and over in the blizzard of extraordinary rare books that were revealed without prior announcement, so all was fully unexpected.
4. When we touched the books.
5. N/A
6. The lecture on the history of typefaces was especially compelling for me. I also will always be grateful that I got to see Columbus’s first letter printed and Diderot’s *Encyclopédie* in person.
7. The paper folding! The printing demos. All the haptic units were excellent supplements.
8. The entire week was full of “AHA!” moments. The instructor was extremely thoughtful in his teaching approach.
9. MA’s lecture on the Horace book collection was brilliant, showing how to study the book as an artifact to gain understanding of our history and culture.
10. Learning that some typefaces were based on a specific scribal hand of a specific person.
11. The lectures on paratexts and especially the reception of texts.
12. Binding! I learned so much by watching a bookbinding demo.

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

1. Consistently take breaks on time.
2. Sources on the slides or listed in the workbook.
3. It is as close to perfect as possible.
4. Let us touch more books. If we can touch them in special collections, then we should be able to handle them here.
5. N/A
6. I don’t think it could be.
7. More book handling? A bit more social history.
8. {no response}
9. The course is excellent as it is.
10. I was expecting more hands-on with the books—I was a bit disappointed not to get to handle some of the books.
11. It is ambitious and not easy to go through so much information in a week (but not impossible). We did it, but we were sometimes behind schedule it seems. In fairness, the students were, fortunately, excitedly engaged and asked a lot of questions, so that could explain it.
12. It was excellent—perfect balance of lecture and demonstration.

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

1. Yes, yes.

2. Yes. Even though I had encountered a lot of the material before on a surface level revisiting it in a week with new insights and filling in some of the gaps in my knowledge was very useful. MA is a great, very engaging, speaker and his pulls from UVA libraries and the RBS collection were pertinent and amazing.
3. Yes, yes.
4. Yes, and yes.
5. Yes, and yes.
6. Yes—definitely. In fact, I have recommended it to friends already.
7. Yes, and yes.
8. I received a scholarship for this course. I would, however, recommend the course to others.
9. Yes.
10. Seeing the special collections made this worth it, but the instruction was helpful too.
11. I will absolutely recommend to others.
12. Yes!

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

1. The printing office visits were useful and enjoyable.
2. Special collections came to us! I liked that, it was much more comfortable to sit around a little table in our classroom than stand in the back of the auditorium. Also I loved the typesetting, seeing the rolling press, and using the common press.
3. {no response}
4. Printing demonstrations were enlightening.
5. Yes; the printing press and typesetting sessions were most applicable to the course content.
6. I loved our visits to the presses in the special collections library. So, yes—time well spent.
7. Yes! Incredibly useful addition.
8. {no response}
9. {no response}
10. I LOVED the demonstration of typesetting and the printing press—it was good to see and experience what we had heard in lecture and seen in diagrams.
11. We brought books to the classroom, and it was well worth it.
12. No outside trips.

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. No. Not really. Being constantly reminded of washing my hands.
2. Loved the ornament night! Great lecture, too.
3. {no response}
4. {no response}
5. The Monday night lecture was excellent.
6. Ornament night was fabulous! Thank you for that. Also, the Monday evening lecture was beautiful.

7. I went to them all, they're a nice way to meet people, etc.
8. I enjoyed the lecture (Monday) and type demonstration (Wednesday).
9. The Monday evening talk was on an important topic, but I don't think the speaker brought us along with her well enough. It was disjointed.
10. I've heard in the past sessions/years there was a movie night and a second lecture. The free night was nice, but I would have liked to see a video (I think the cataloging class saw one).
11. Yes, and yes. It was very helpful to meet people with so many academic and professional backgrounds. That was certainly a highlight of my experience.
12. Yes.

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

1. Bring your curiosity. Prepare to be in the presence of great books.
2. Be prepared to be wowed.
3. {no response}
4. See Q8 and Q9.
5. N/A
6. I think you should take the course. Bring a lot of pencils.
7. It's really hard not to Google to see how things all relate—resist! Write it down to Google later.
8. This course's application goes far beyond the history of the book—anyone with even the slightest interest should enroll.
9. {no response}
10. Even without the pre-readings, it was easily accessible and the instructor explained things clearly and simply.
11. Carefully consider how the course will help your career/research/interests before applying. This one works well with many of them, but the focus is western Europe.
12. Do the advance reading—it is an important foundation for class!

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

1. Thrilling.
2. Aún aprendo!
3. {no response}
4. Bibliography:  
New to me like spring flowers  
Picked, sniffed, and cherished
5. Worth the money!
6. This dorm is so cold.  
Good thing I'm not here that much,  
And class is awesome.
7. Intense but fun!
8. Reflecting on my RBS experience at the end of having studied nearly 400 years of the book in the western world, I feel confident that my studies will continue long after this week.
9. Thanks.

10. Book lovers connecting with other book lovers—paradise!
11. Refreshing, for my research, outlooks, and ability to meet people from different academic backgrounds.
12. Brilliant!

### **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: 4 (33.33%)  
I am a student or non-year-round employee, with a more flexible summer schedule:  
5 (41.67%)  
I am retired, and can arrange my own schedule: 3 (25%)

*Who paid your RBS tuition costs?*

I paid 100% myself: 4 (33.33%)  
My institution/employer paid 100%: 4 (33.33%)  
I used a scholarship/fellowship to pay/waive 100%: 4 (33.33%)

*Who paid your RBS housing expenses?*

I paid 100% myself: 7 (58.33%)  
My institution/employer paid 100%: 4 (33.33%)  
I stayed with friends/family, or stayed in my own home and commuted: 1 (8.33%)

*Who paid your RBS travel expenses?*

I paid 100% myself: 5 (41.67%)  
My institution/employer paid 100%: 4 (33.33%)  
I live locally, and had no travel expenses: 3 (25%)

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

### **Library disciplines:**

Conservator/binder/preservation librarian: 1 (8.33%)  
Public services librarian: 1 (8.33%)  
Subject specialist/bibliographer: 1 (8.33%)

### **Student working toward a/n:**

M.A./M.S.: 1 (8.33%)  
M.L.I.S./M.L.S.: 2 (16.67%)  
Ph.D./D.Phil: 1 (8.33%)

### **Professional educator:**

Assistant professor: 1 (8.33%)

Associate professor: 1 (8.33%)

**Other occupations/vocations:**

Book collector: 1 (8.33%)

Retired: 2 (16.67%)