

John Buchtel & Mark Dimunation  
H-10: The History of the Book, 200–2000  
8–13 July 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. The readings were very helpful and good overviews as well as detailed examinations of more difficult elements. I had a hard time getting a few of the materials (further reading) because I only have access to the public library. I also watched medieval manuscript symposium lectures on YouTube.
2. Assignments were helpful and useful to prepare and provide background. No additional preparation.
3. I found some of the shorter readings (Pearson, de Hamel, and Twyman) to be slightly redundant. I greatly enjoyed the Chapell reading and was glad for the opportunity to revisit Eisenstein.
4. Pre-course reading assignments were very helpful. I would recommend reading as much of the suggested reading as possible.
5. {no response}
6. Yes. No. More books from children's literature during relevant time periods, please.
7. I thought the pre-class readings were very valuable (keep Eisenstein!). You might add Leah Price's recent *How To Do Things with Books in Victorian England* for recommended browsing.
8. Yes, but could be condensed—it was a lot to read.
9. The readings were useful. Perhaps more current readings.
10. The pre-course assignments were useful.
11. Remove *A Short History of the Printed Word*—it is dated, and the tone of the book is extremely off-putting. Can more shorter articles be assigned? Tanselle (recommended reading) offered an intro I wish I had read before Eisenstein. Also, including some videos on printing and illustration techniques might help. Perhaps refer to Johanna Drucker's online *History of the Book* (2018). Carter might also be a required text.

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. All material was beneficial. I really appreciate the lists of book names that we got to see in person so I did not have to scramble to copy it down.
2. Helpful. It would be useful to have a list of materials viewed with lines to add notes during the class.
3. The workbook has helpful diagrams and great appendices. I will definitely use the information in the workbook after the course.
4. The workbook was extremely helpful. It also helped to have the printed list of rare

- books we would view every day. I will use this after the course.
5. Surprisingly comprehensive and intuitive in directing future study.
  6. Great item to have at home for reference. Would have liked some sort of visual timeline of eras. More blank pages (one per day) for notes, please.
  7. Absolutely! I will be using the materials, rhetoric, and vocabulary for both my research and teaching.
  8. Workbook is a great resource and will be helpful to me going forward.
  9. Materials were all helpful.
  10. The workbook was a good source and will be valuable in the future.
  11. Extremely useful, especially with titles of everything we saw. It will be kept, and the further reading section will be used!

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

1. N/A
2. N/A
3. N/A
4. N/A
5. From three stars to five stars. MD is the Pavarotti of bibliophilia, and a renaissance man.
6. {no response}
7. N/A
8. N/A
9. {no response}
10. This course was the best one I've ever taken.
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 can't even begin to measure the vast knowledge I gained from the course. Additionally, the instructors encouraged dialog which helped me gain knowledge from my classmates as well.
2. I enjoyed the entire survey—it provided a comprehensive narrative for me to understand the book from clay tablets to twentieth-century fine art printing. The course helped to put the book in perspective, while also being able to see real examples of form and techniques discussed.
3. I found the discussion of how the component parts of early printed books were made (paper making, type casting, &c.) to be very interesting. I now have a greater appreciation for how rapidly information began to spread with the introduction of printing, and how that impacted the transmission of ideas.
4. The years of around 1400–1900 were personally useful, though info falling outside that timeframe was nevertheless fascinating. This course, more than anything, will help me better understand the collection I work with daily.
5. Dozens of leads on what I need to know more about. A round-the-world cruise in books, history, and literature.
6. Illuminated manuscripts, children's books, and artists' books.
7. The attention to the more complicated technical aspects of printing (i.e., how to identify different printing techniques) was valuable. The nineteenth-century

- materials were incredible and certainly spurred new research questions and leads. I'm interested now in how mid-Victorian authors played with the print market, i.e., how/why did George Eliot divide her novels into books rather than volumes?
8. All of it relates closely to my work in special collections.
  9. Field trip and hands-on were most relevant.
  10. The early incunabula taught me many things I didn't know and will be a good background in viewing them in the future.
  11. Printed books to 1800, especially the wonderful day at LC were unique experiences. Thank you! {private response}
- 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. I do not feel anything was left out. The course covered such a large amount of material in a short amount of time, but MD and JB did an amazing job helping us remember (for example, singing songs, reciting quotes), and reviewed vocabulary/concepts throughout the day, and at the end of the course.
  2. Yes, they were fantastic, and able to make it informative, exciting, and fun.
  3. JB and MD absolutely helped me acquire the information promised in the course description and more.
  4. We covered a massive amount of information in five days; the breadth of material we covered is a testament to MD and JB's deep knowledge of book history and the RBS collection; skill at communicating complicated and unfamiliar techniques in an accessible way; and synchronicity of co-instructors.
  5. Definitely.
  6. Yes, very supportive. Children's literature. Would love to have had thirty minutes on pre-200 C.E. just for reference. Yes.
  7. It surpassed my already high expectations—I learned new information, reviewed important terms, and handled materials I never thought I'd see.
  8. YES! They were wonderful!
  9. {no response}
  10. The instructors were outstanding and I learned so much.
  11. Yes. No. Yes.
- 6) *How do you plan to use the skills and knowledge acquired during your time here?*
1. I will certainly apply the knowledge I gained in my own medieval manuscript article publications. More directly, all information relating to prints and illustrations are applicable to my work caring for and exhibiting artworks at my museum.
  2. It will help inform how I view books in special collections and understand what I am seeing, and its impact on sharing and conveying knowledge along with artistic expression.
  3. I plan to use them to inform my scholarship and develop it in new ways.
  4. I will use them in my daily work at a rare book/special collections library.
  5. To apply to collections I am stewarding, and to share with others.
  6. I am writing a book on the history of the illustrated book for children and this course's sense of time era management is highly relevant to the organization of my

- book.
7. I will be using the knowledge and skills to aid my study for comprehensive exams and dissertation development, as well as for course development.
  8. Daily, in my work.
  9. Investigate my collection more, and continue to build printing artifact collection.
  10. For my own education and appreciation of the book.
  11. {private response}
- 7) *Please briefly describe the intellectual level of the course. What sort of person might benefit the most from taking it?*
1. I feel that this course could benefit anyone. Reading as much as possible of the recommended material really helps if you are not as familiar with the content.
  2. It is for those with an interest in engaging with material and others with a similar curiosity and interests.
  3. I think someone who is interested in the history of the book, but does not have a large amount of prior knowledge would benefit most.
  4. Intellectual level is beginner to advanced; everyone would benefit!
  5. Accessible at all levels, and a welcome challenge to the most agile, due to the brilliance of MD.
  6. University (undergrad) level? Those new to the world of the book, or wanting a survey course to provide context to highly focused classes.
  7. People either recently promoted or given new responsibilities in special collections, or scholars looking to expand their understanding of literature/print.
  8. Anyone—general interest to post-grad.
  9. {no response}
  10. The course is geared for professionals and collectors; will benefit both.
  11. This course could benefit anyone with a solid education who is interested in books. The professors were great at keeping things interesting and accessible without “dumbing it down.”
- 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. Seeing medical manuscripts at LC was very powerful for me as that is my research area.
  2. The trip to LC really showed me that each book is truly unique and has its own story. Every day was filled with many “aha” moments in understanding how automation changed everything.
  3. I suddenly realized how much printing impacted the rate at which information was transmitted and responded to when looking at Galileo’s *Sidereus Nuncius*, and then looking at Hevelius’s *Selenographia*. That completely changed how I’m thinking about early modern information exchange.
  4. MD and JB did a great job of pulling out themes throughout the history of the book—illuminating themes, techniques, or conventions used in medieval manuscripts that we also saw with seventeenth- or eighteenth-century printing, for example.
  5. The UVA collection of examples were as fascinating as those we saw at LC. These

encounters with legendary books were priceless.

6. “Out of sorts!” Learned I want my book to always be clear for the reader about the era being discussed—visual, chronological as needed.
7. Absolutely the trip to LC. Seeing Galileo’s fingerprints humanized the monumental names of the past in a way I’d never experienced.
8. The entire course was an “aha!” moment—truly.
9. So many “aha” moments!
10. Learning how to use the printing press.
11. The Enlightenment, and Jefferson and the American Revolution were high points.

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

1. No improvement needed. Amazing!
2. If an email could be sent before the course from the instructors just saying hello. I brought the books here from the reading list.... Perhaps just sharing a brief format for the course and mentioning there is no need to bring books.
3. It couldn’t have been improved. It was perfect!
4. I would have loved to see more examples from early Americas, especially South and Central America. What did printing in Mexico/New Spain look like, for example.
5. 99.9% PERFECT! Invite more observations from George Riser, the UVA SC employee. Shorten the final “editions of *Jane Eyre*” to 45 minutes.
6. The humor, singing, and light moments helped a huge amount. More!
7. I wonder if there are ways to incorporate racialized, gendered, and “othered” histories of printing...are there ways that non-mainstream printers/thinkers politicized print (although the examples that were given were impactful).
8. More breaks during the LC trip—it was a spectacular trip, but it required sitting for long periods of time.
9. {no response}
10. It was perfect the way it was.
11. No comment.

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

1. I would absolutely recommend this course. Just as it was recommended to me when I was in grad school.
2. Yes, this has been an experience I would highly recommend to others without any qualms.
3. Absolutely, and absolutely.
4. Yes, and yes!
5. Absolutely.
6. Yes. Yes.
7. I already have! I do—and I appreciate RBS’s generous scholarships.
8. YES!
9. Yes!
10. A definite yes!
11. Yes. Yes.

- 11) *If your course made any trips outside of the classroom, do you feel that they were time well spent?*
1. Our trip to LC was a once-in-a-lifetime experience.
  2. Yes, the trip was a highlight.
  3. The trip to LC brought about my “aha” moment of the week, so yes.
  4. Yes. We went to LC. Once-in-a-lifetime experience, and well worth the trip.
  5. Could not imagine a more generous overview of treasures of LC special collections.
  6. LC—you bet!
  7. The best day of the week was the trip to LC. It was well-planned and heightened our understanding of course content.
  8. YES!! Thank you so much for all the hard work put into the LC trip.
  9. Yes! DC is a bit of a long trip, but visiting LC was worth it.
  10. LC was a fabulous experience—not to be missed!
  11. 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. All the evening events gave me a chance to do professional networking and hear about others’ research and interests.
  2. I went to the talk and Booksellers’ Night events—it was a good supplement and added positively to the whole experience.
  3. I thought the lecture was interesting, and Booksellers’ Night was a great way to spend time with classmates and find some real treasures. The ice cream social didn’t really seem necessary.
  4. It was nice to have optional events outside of class hours. I think RBS should continue doing this.
  5. Would have liked a “panel of students” evening, drawing on expertise of the entire group. And a special Jefferson evening event.
  6. Didn’t attend many...as an introvert, I want to go home after a long day.
  7. The lecture was wonderful—perhaps SC exhibits could be better advertised as an outing.
  8. The guest lecture was nice, but a little too lofty and intellectual for someone who is not a French medieval scholar.
  9. {no response}
  10. {no response}
  11. I did enjoy the Tuesday lecture. {private response}
- 13) *Do you have any additional thoughts or advice for anyone considering taking this course in a future year?*
1. Do the additional readings, and spend time in the evenings during class reviewing vocabulary/persons discussed in class.
  2. Come prepared to jump right in. The readings are helpful for those from different backgrounds. Get plenty of sleep whenever you can.
  3. MD and JB are amazing teachers who invigorate their students with their deep love of the book, and of this course. They are knowledgeable, kind, and unfailingly

- entertaining. Do not miss the chance to take a course with them.
4. If you have a particular focus or interest, share that with JB and MD because they do make an effort to play off students' curiosity and strengths.
  5. {no response}
  6. {no response}
  7. Apply whether or not you have a specific project in mind—it's lifelong knowledge.
  8. Take this class!
  9. Worth the time, effort, and money!
  10. {no response}
  11. {no response}

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

1. This was truly an amazing experience!
2. MD and JB tell the history of the book with much fervor and gusto, and oftentimes break out in song and dance—truly an experience that cannot be missed.
3. The best kind of summer came for all the kids who spent their summers reading.  
{private response}
4. Soak up as much as you can. As MD said, “Don’t blink or you’ll miss the Renaissance!”
5. Above and beyond, a soaring and inspiring adventure.
6. JB’s meta messages on the importance of learning/helping to continue book culture now/in future gave overall perspective to the class.
7. RBS matching tattoos.
8. Incredible. THANK YOU, JB & MD.
9. An experience that I will keep reaping rewards from for years to come.
10. RBS has richly enhanced my life.
11. Enlightening, entertaining...and perhaps a bit exhausting, but well worth it!

### **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 (54.54%)

My institution/employer did not give me professional leave; I used paid or vacation days: 1 (9.09%)

I am self-employed, and can arrange my own schedule: 2 (18.18%)

I am a student or non-year-round employee, with a more flexible summer schedule: 1 (9.09%)

I am retired, and can arrange my own schedule: 1 (9.09%)

*Who paid your RBS tuition costs?*

I paid 100% myself: 3 (27.27%)

My institution/employer paid 100%: 3 (27.27%)  
My institution/employer paid part; I paid the rest: 1 (9.09%)  
I used a scholarship/fellowship to pay/waive 100%: 4 (36.36%)

*Who paid your RBS housing expenses?*

I paid 100% myself: 7 (63.63%)  
My institution/employer paid 100%: 3 (27.27%)  
My institution/employer paid part; I paid the rest: 1 (9.09%)

*Who paid your RBS travel expenses?*

I paid 100% myself: 7 (63.63%)  
My institution/employer paid 100%: 3 (27.27%)  
My institution/employer paid part; I paid the rest: 1 (9.09%)

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

**Library disciplines:**

Archivist: 1 (9.09%)  
Cataloger/metadata librarian: 1 (9.09%)  
Library administrator: 1 (9.09%)  
Special collections librarian: 1 (9.09%)  
Other: 1 (9.09%)

**Student working toward a/n:**

Ph.D./D.Phil: 1 (9.09%)

**Book trades:**

Antiquarian bookseller: 1 (9.09%)

**Other occupations/vocations:**

Book collector: 2 (18.18%)  
Other: 1 (9.09%)

**No Response:** 1 (9.09%)