

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. It would be nice to exclude some of the less relevant readings which are not discussed in class, and add some more supplemental readings.
2. Yes, especially helpful to have downloads of readings. Two weeks before the course started was not much of a chance to truly appreciate the readings, but I was glad to have read them as the course referred to the ideas therein.
3. Yes, the readings were illuminating.
4. Readings were useful in general, but excessive in quantity. We actually refer to about 60% of them in class. I did devote time to prepare the reading, and yet I could not read everything beforehand. Had they told me to focus on some readings, I would have probably come more prepared. Also, some readings (indicated as “early modern texts” in the syllabus) were read thoroughly in class; that could have been mentioned so we would focus on the rest of them.
5. They were useful because they perfectly matched the contents of the class which was in its turn easier to follow thanks to these materials. The instructors did a great job selecting the materials and making them available to students.
6. The advance background readings and the course readings distributed before the course were essential to understanding the course lectures.
7. I always appreciate receiving PDFs of chapters, articles, &c., in my field so, in that respect, I found the readings very helpful. I was not able to complete all the readings simply due to time constraints, and the generosity of documents. Those I did read were useful, but it should be said the classroom lectures largely reiterated the content of those readings.
8. {no 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 booklet was great, especially the pictures of books.
2. Excellent to have listings of the exhibitions seen in class.
3. All of the content was appropriate and useful, and I will use it in my courses.
4. Some of the material handed out (loose pages) was already in the pre-assigned readings, so I ended up with two copies. The course pack was useful. I don't think I will use it again.
5. Very useful and thorough. They will continue to be useful to me in the future.
6. It would have been good to have the prose sections handed out during class actually in the workbook following the appropriate images of title pages instead of

- loose. The images were useful during the lectures, but I probably will not use them after the course.
7. I thought the workbook was very helpful during exhibitions and I do plan to refer to it in the coming months.
 8. I think they are useful as a bibliography to return to later after digesting the information given in the class.
- 3) *If you've taken previous RBS courses, how did this one compare?*
1. N/A
 2. They are all spectacularly different. This was more of an academic seminar, and we got to discuss not only the materiality but the ideas of early modern Europe and the present scholarship around it.
 3. {no response}
 4. {no response}
 5. They were all very good. Nonetheless, this last one was special for me since we look at many Spanish texts, something that I have missed in other courses.
 6. This course was more intense than some of the other RBS courses, and required more advance preparation.
 7. N/A
 8. {no response}
- 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! The information in this course introduced me to a new way of researching and thinking, which I will implement in my future papers and work. I honestly felt completely inspired after every class.
 2. The idea of multiple texts and an arc of production where there had been one text tied to author. It makes one look at the movement and emergence of ideas in an entirely new way.
 3. I enjoyed the unit on censorship the most, and will be using this history in my own research on literacy.
 4. In my case, it was mostly a review of many topics studied many years ago, and I considered that extremely useful. I have some new ideas for future research and teaching.
 5. Yes, I walked out full of new knowledge and ideas. All the course was very insightful for me.
 6. Montaigne's various essays. The sections on the transmission of texts from the European continent to the American colonies and to the Indies were interesting because I had never studied them before the course. It took me into new territory.
 7. I thought the most relevant and interesting aspects of the course were both the exhibitions of books from the collection and the discussions among classmates (both during class and during breaks). I did walk out with new insights.
 8. {no 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. The information presented was extremely helpful to those looking to write about book history. While it was often very dense, it was also extremely developed. It would be useful to unpack some concepts every now and then.
2. Both instructors were remarkably generous with time and knowledge, even during breaks and after class. There is never enough time to cover all that is relevant. I did get what I came for, and more over it.
3. Yes, the instructors were helpful in explaining concepts and showing us texts.
4. I believe the description was so general that actually one could not say something specific was left out, but anyway the course was not exactly what I expected (and that is not necessarily a critique). Even though there were some theoretical lectures by RC, a lot of time was devoted to close readings of literary texts. I enjoyed a lot of those parts of the class, but I don't think they are described in the course description or even in the syllabus.
5. Both the instructors were excellent.
6. The course description did not specifically talk about trans-Atlantic transmission of texts, so I thought that the coverage would be more European continent content.
7. I learned all I expected to learn, but there were two aspects I thought were left out. The first was a surprising lack of discussion about the technical manufacture of the books. The second was a methodology of book history with the concept of mobility in mind. Either or both of these topics would be a pleasant and useful addition to the course, I think.
8. {no response}

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

1. This information will help me rethink my theses by allowing me to incorporate concrete historical research about physical texts into my arguments about the ideologies expressed within different texts.
2. I have a new basis for analysis of the emergence of ideas crossing borders, and a new way to examine the physical form of those ideas.
3. I plan to use this material in teaching and research.
4. I will integrate some information and perspectives in my research and teaching.
5. I will apply them to my dissertation, classes, and future articles.
6. The course has inspired me to review Montaigne's essays, and to read Don Quixote for the first time.
7. Well, I plan to first complete the course reading. Then, I hope to think more internationally than perhaps I have previously done. Additionally, I was able to glean some very interesting knowledge from looking at some books I personally wanted to see. That knowledge will be immediately useful in my work.
8. I think a number of the concepts that we covered could be included in future library sessions that I lead concerning the history of the book.

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

1. Graduate students in history, literature, sociology, or anthropology; professors; book historians; undergraduates who have extensively studied the primary

resources.

2. This leaned into an academic graduate seminar, but anyone in the study of early modern Europe could benefit.
 3. This class was designed as a graduate level or advanced undergraduate course. I think it would be most useful for students who were unfamiliar with the literature.
 4. The course is suitable for people with little background on the issue. Graduate students and faculty might find some classes repetitive of the basic bibliography.
 5. The level was very high. I think a literary scholar would probably benefit from this course more than a librarian, or similar professional.
 6. This course is a graduate-level seminar. It would most benefit students of literature, social sciences such as anthropology, and cultural studies. It also could benefit anyone with adequate background and preparation for the topics to be covered.
 7. I would say the course is perfect for graduate students and faculty.
 8. This course is intellectually heavy, so someone who is prepared to be hit with a lot of information will do best.
- 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. Realizing that the physicality of a text can tell a story as epic as the written content of the book.
2. The text that we agree on in our study is subject to a number of forces in embodiment, translation, authorship, and mobility that we are confronted with an arc of permutations according to time and place. An original text might be unattainable, and what survives are echoes of the original communication.
3. {no response}
4. Definitely, when RC (and sometimes also JP) sat down to read a text or analyze a book and explain it almost word by word: Quixote, Franklin's Epitaph, Montaigne's Essay, and Cortegiano. Student presentations were also enjoyable.
5. {no response}
6. Censorship session and Petrarch presentation by Peter Stallybrass.
7. {no response}
8. {no response}

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

1. Have more discussions, more time for questions, and more time to do the pre-course reading.
2. It would have helped to have a microphone. The acoustics in the room were challenging.
3. The instructors could have better facilitated discussion of the assigned texts.
4. Better indications about how to proceed with the reading list. Better and more realistic schedule (many parts were left out because of lack of time).
5. {no response}
6. {private response}
7. As much as I enjoyed listening to RC's lectures, I think it would be useful to protect more vigorously the time allotted for group discussion. The graduate

seminar discussions that were promised in the syllabus never happened, and I feel those discussions would have been invaluable.

8. This course was almost constant lecture which was difficult to sit through by the end of the day. If the lectures could be more broken up with examinations of books, I think it would go a long way to make sure people are able to retain the most out of the excellent information they are being given.

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

1. It was well worth the grant!
2. Yes, and yes.
3. Yes.
4. Well, it was an expensive class, so the first question is hard. But I would recommend the course to others, no doubt.
5. Yes! Yes!
6. The course, participants, instructors, rare books, ambiance, and the Penn campus made this experience worth the cost of tuition and travel expense.
7. I definitely do and I already have!
8. I would recommend it.

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

1. N/A
2. {no response}
3. N/A
4. {no response}
5. {no response}
6. N/A
7. N/A
8. {no response}

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. The lecture was interesting. I wish there were more.
2. Got to the Tuesday evening lecture, which was interesting and useful.
3. N/A
4. I attended a lecture, not that good, and participated in a printing "practice" (only a taste of it). These kind of activities are very useful for socialization beyond the classroom.
5. {no response}
6. I usually very much enjoy the RBS evening events and lectures. This time they were so-so.
7. I did attend the lecture and thought it was fine. I almost wonder if there isn't a more dynamic option for an evening event. Perhaps a debate? A collaborative lecture across disciplines?

8. {no response}

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

1. Do it.
2. Do the readings. They are expansive, but referred to often. And bring a sweater and fingerless gloves. Although staff made a mighty effort, the classroom was drafty, as fitting for the early modern period.
3. {no response}
4. {no response}
5. {no response}
6. Completing the advance preparation is essential to getting much out of this course.
7. {no response}
8. This is a great course and I would very much recommend it to anyone with an interest in the subject. The teachers are complete experts, approachable, and thoughtful, so you will absolutely learn something new and interesting. However, it is very lecture-heavy and was, at times, tough to sit through lecture after lecture. This is something worth bearing in mind, although I do underline that the content is excellent.

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

1. Textual Mobilities: A word is worth a thousand words.
2. Illuminating!
3. It was a worthwhile experience.
4. Come and you will learn / if you read.
5. {no response}
6. Simply extraordinary.
7. I'd say that the RBS experience was invaluable to the extent that it put me in contact with books and histories I would otherwise never have encountered.
8. {no response}

Student Data

Number of respondents: 8 (of 13)

How did you arrange for time off to attend this course?

My institution/employer gave me professional leave time: 2 (25%)

My institution/employer did not give me professional leave; I used paid or vacation days:
1 (12.5%)

I am a student or non-year-round employee, with a more flexible summer schedule:
4 (50%)

I am retired, and can arrange my own schedule: 1 (12.5%)

Who paid your RBS tuition costs?

I paid 100% myself: 2 (25%)

My institution/employer paid 100%: 2 (25%)

I used a scholarship/fellowship to pay/waive 100%: 4 (50%)

Who paid your RBS housing expenses?

I paid 100% myself: 4 (50%)

My institution/employer paid 100%: 2 (25%)

My institution/employer paid part; I paid the rest: 1 (12.5%)

I used a scholarship/fellowship to cover part; I paid the rest: 1 (12.5%)

Who paid your RBS travel expenses?

I paid 100% myself: 3 (37.5%)

My institution/employer paid 100%: 2 (25%)

My institution/employer paid part; I paid the rest: 2 (25%)

I used a scholarship/fellowship to cover part; I paid the rest: 1 (12.5%)

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

Library disciplines:

Curator: 1 (12.5%)

Student working toward a/n:

Ph.D./D.Phil: 2 (25%)

Professional educator:

Lecturer/adjunct: 1 (12.5%)

Associate professor: 1 (12.5%)

Other occupations/vocations:

Independent scholar: 1 (12.5%)

Other: 1 (12.5%)

No response: 1 (12.5%)