

Raymond Clemens
H-20: The Book in the Manuscript Era
10–15 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. Yes, very helpful. Perhaps add the online resources before the class begins.
2. Pre-course reading was useful.
3. The suggested readings were apt, stimulating, and prepared me well for the course. No specific suggestions for addition or removal (though perhaps a short reading on “what is book history” may have worked).
4. The materials were both useful and enjoyable. I felt that the experience of this course really began with the readings and they contributed a lot to what I learned.
5. Essential to provide some foundational knowledge. Little additional preparation. Everything was well-planned.
6. They were all super useful. They were a great introduction to the field, and they made me feel considerably more prepared and able to appreciate our classroom work. We often reviewed the material in class, but without the reading, I would have been totally overwhelmed by too much new info during the week!
7. The pre-course reading assignments provided excellent preparation for the course. The student should start on them as soon as they have been accepted to allow plenty of time to absorb the material before attending.
8. I felt well prepared based on the reading I had done. The bibliographical info we got in class was also really helpful for further scholarship.
9. All the readings were super helpful to create a sort of foundation before class.
10. Yes! I really enjoyed the readings and found them very 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. I was delighted by all the materials. All were illustrative of the topic. RC also pulled any requests the students had.
2. It was all useful and I think it will be helpful. I doubt I will keep the quill pen.
3. The readings distributed online were stimulating.
4. They were all great. I’m leaving with many suggested readings for the future.
5. The workbook and teaching materials allowed us to make connections with other books we used in class, and benefited the overall learning experience. I am going home with a year’s worth of future reading materials.
6. All of the book titles, resources, and articles given to us were incredibly useful and I will certainly refer to them in the future.
7. The manuscripts that were displayed for each class period were both instructive and exciting to work with. The implements we were given (magnifier, light, &c.) will be very helpful for future work with manuscripts.

8. We didn't have a course workbook. See Q1. I will continue to use my tools (e.g., bone folder, light) to look at manuscripts when I return to school.
9. Very informative; they will be the basis of future, personal research.
10. {no response}

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

1. {no response}
2. N/A
3. The approach was more historical, asking what these books tell us about human history/experience. This was a refreshing change from previous, skills-based courses I've taken.
4. N/A
5. N/A
6. N/A
7. {no response}
8. N/A
9. N/A
10. {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. All was inspiring.
2. I liked the balance of discussion, lecture, labs, and hands-on time.
3. I'd certainly love to return to the Beinecke to do more work in/on their collections!
4. All of it was interesting and relevant. The content is all directly related to the work I do as a medievalist.
5. The introduction to manuscripts. Absolutely, I will use what I've learned and apply it to my work and my institution's manuscripts.
6. All of the parts of the course were super helpful in developing and defining my interest in the field. I certainly have plans to re-examine some of these manuscripts, and I have a newly developed interest in bookbinding!
7. There is nothing in this course that I did not find to be of interest. Hands-on experience with actual manuscripts was a delight, and the pigment and binding labs were stimulating.
8. I was most interested in the illuminations and also came away interested in parchment making. {private response} I plan to make my next dissertation notebook from what I learned about binding.
9. Everything! I was fairly new to manuscript studies as I was never professionally taught, but I didn't realize before the class how little I actually knew.
10. The hands-on exploration is such a fantastic experience.

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 learned more than the scope of the class description, mainly through interesting anecdotes and sidebars.

2. RC and Chelsea {course assistant –RBS Staff} provided a lot of information in an approachable way. The class could have easily been intimidating, but it wasn't and I really appreciate that.
3. The arc of the class was enormous, but it was always grounded (of course) in the granular and codicological.
4. Yes, I learned and encountered even more than I would have expected.
5. Yes, they were amazing! Learned much more than I could've imagined.
6. Yes, I definitely learned everything I hoped to learn and everything that was promised!
7. Yes—I have a much better understanding of the structures and uses of manuscripts.
8. I learned what I hoped to and then some. RC was kind and knew a lot, but was also willing to admit what he didn't know rather than make stuff up.
9. Absolutely! Between RC and his course assistant, Chelsea, we got pretty much everything covered. I enjoyed the addition of Byzantine manuscripts!
10. Yes! I thought the curriculum was well thought out and flowed well.

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

1. In my own book collecting and readings.
2. I really don't know yet.
3. I'm not sure, but since I'm working on a dissertation that deals a lot with codicological evidence, I believe this course will have sharpened my ability to relate that evidence to larger claims and arguments about literary history.
4. I will be working directly with manuscripts in the future including here at the Beinecke.
5. I think it's applicable to almost everything in libraries.
6. I hope to use them in my future graduate school research and later, both in the context of manuscript studies and library sciences.
7. I will be cataloging a collection of approximately five hundred western manuscripts at my home institution.
8. I want to continue to research manuscripts, but also got over the anxiety of going to an archive. I think I will look more into the visual aspects of my academic research. I also will look more seriously into making books.
9. I will be working (professionally) with manuscripts in the near future, and will hopefully move on to other manuscript courses, so this was a much needed foundation.
10. I'm starting a M.L.S. degree this fall, and this material is very relevant in my future studies.

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

1. All levels with at least a basic background in medieval history.
2. This was an intro course, but still engaging for someone with subject knowledge.
3. The course seems designed for people with limited/no exposure to the history of the book. But, the instructors were of course always ready to discuss more specific or nuanced issues.
4. The course seems directed toward those at a graduate level (post B.A.).

5. Someone involved in medieval studies, but also history, libraries, and every other discipline that deals with the humanities.
 6. It was pretty intellectual—you need to have an interest in looking at manuscripts six hours a day for five days and in learning about them in detail. Intellectual curiosity is more important than intellectual skill/experience.
 7. Some knowledge of European history, medieval culture or texts, or book history is helpful, but not required. Anyone interested in the history of manuscripts and their texts, particularly in medieval Europe, would benefit.
 8. Advanced undergrad/early graduate level. I think it would be best for people who don't know a lot about manuscripts and/or have never seen manuscripts in person. Lots of hands-on time—that was great.
 9. It is definitely a beginners' course, but catalogers, book collectors, and librarians, &c., that are familiar with manuscripts should not shy away from this course.
 10. This is a great companion to a history of the book course, but could be a beginner course, too.
- 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. Some comments about current scholarship trends. Many "aha" moments from physical contact with the books.
 2. That not everyone knows what the Cult of Mary is.
 3. I had always been confused about liturgical calendars, but I think I got the hang of it this week!
 4. Having the relevant manuscripts on the table in front of us as we discussed them made the experience direct and powerful.
 5. Commonplace books—looking into people's lives is surreal.
 6. There were so many "aha" moments that I'm having trouble remembering them all. The first manuscript I was able to read on my own, the first time I correctly identified the origin of a book...and so many others!
 7. {no response}
 8. I am the kind of person who won't get the significance of things until I recollect them in tranquility, but I did learn a lot and the hands-on experience clarified what I got from books.
 9. {no response}
 10. I loved looking over the historical material with RC or Chelsea with me; it was fun to explore and ask questions.
- 9) *How could the course have been improved?*
1. Don't know offhand.
 2. It would have been helpful to me to have some sort of visual timeline that I could reference from time to time.
 3. The "lab" exercises felt slightly juvenile. Perhaps design something a bit more challenging.
 4. N/A
 5. Details about optional events and breaks.
 6. N/A

7. {no response}
 8. More clarity on dates of innovations and manuscript composition.
 9. There is nothing I could think of that RC did not think of already. He is fantastic, and the collection is exquisite.
 10. It was great!
- 10) *Do you feel that you got your money's worth? Would you recommend the course to others?*
1. Yes, and yes.
 2. Yes. Yes.
 3. Yes, of course!
 4. Yes, and I have already recommended future courses to my friends and colleagues.
 5. Yes, 100%.
 6. Yes, and yes!
 7. Yes, and yes.
 8. Yes. I think I learned as much as I would in a normal semester, except that the manuscripts were better than at most universities.
 9. Absolutely!!
 10. Yes! RC and Chelsea were great and knowledgeable, the material was interesting, and the artifacts were fascinating.
- 11) *If your course made any trips outside of the classroom, do you feel that they were time well spent?*
1. The visit to the Reese bookshop was OK in that it had bookish continuity with the class, but the Reese collection didn't fit the manuscript context.
 2. Yes.
 3. N/A
 4. Yes, time in the ink and pigment, and finishing labs helped to solidify the understanding of what I saw in the manuscripts themselves.
 5. N/A
 6. N/A
 7. {no response}
 8. Enjoyed the binding and ink classes.
 9. N/A
 10. {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. As I said, the Reese visit was OK, the canapés good, and the conversation interesting.
 2. I wish that none of the activities were planned for the lunch hour.
 3. N/A
 4. I wasn't able to attend all because of commuting, but those I could attend were all worthwhile.
 5. Yes. Unique events that you might not experience otherwise.

6. Yes, they were very cool! I enjoyed the printing press, although I already knew much of the info. The dinner was a good chance to talk to new people.
7. {no response}
8. I really enjoyed William Reese Company, not just because of the great collection, but also because I got to network.
9. I wish they were encouraged much more, since nobody went to "Restaurant Night," but the one I went to was worth my time.
10. I really enjoyed the printing press demo!

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

1. Not really.
2. There will be reading during the week. Don't leave Friday if you can help it.
3. {no response}
4. Only that they should take the course.
5. It's truly a privilege to handle the materials, and I went home every day in a mentally-saturated, dreamlike state.
6. {no response}
7. {no response}
8. {no response}
9. Do it! RC is incredible! Hopefully you luck out and get Chelsea, too.
10. {no response}

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

1. A great adventure!
2. This is just the beginning.
3. RC and Chelsea make
A great team, they love old books
And now I do too.
4. Marvelous!
5. An unforgettable honor.
6. Amazing books!
7. Intense, stimulating, and worthwhile!
8. Curiosity-provoking, energizing, while also exhausting.
9. {no response}
10. Great introduction to the rare book field!

Student Data

Number of respondents: 10 (of 10)

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

My institution/employer gave me professional leave time: 2 (20%)

My institution/employer did not give me professional leave; I used paid or vacation days:

1 (10%)

I am self-employed, and can arrange my own schedule: 2 (20%)

I am a student or non-year-round employee, with a more flexible summer schedule:
5 (50%)

Who paid your RBS tuition costs?

I paid 100% myself: 3 (30%)

My institution/employer paid 100%: 3 (30%)

I used a scholarship/fellowship to pay/waive 100%: 1 (10%)

I used a scholarship/fellowship to pay/waive part; I paid the rest: 2 (20%)

My situation does not fit any of the options above: 1 (10%)

Who paid your RBS housing expenses?

I paid 100% myself: 4 (40%)

My institution/employer paid 100%: 4 (40%)

I stayed with friends/family, or stayed in my own home and commuted: 1 (10%)

My situation does not fit any of the options above: 1 (10%)

Who paid your RBS travel expenses?

I paid 100% myself: 5 (50%)

My institution/employer paid 100%: 1 (10%)

My institution/employer paid part; I paid the rest: 2 (20%)

I used a scholarship/fellowship to cover 100%: 1 (10%)

My situation does not fit any of the options above: 1 (10%)

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

Library disciplines:

Archivist: 1 (10%)

Cataloger/metadata librarian: 1 (10%)

Library assistant/clerk: 1 (10%)

Special collections librarian: 1 (10%)

Student working toward a/n:

M.A./M.S.: 1 (10%)

Ph.D./D.Phil: 4 (40%)

Other occupations/vocations:

Book collector: 1 (10%)