

Roger Gaskell
I-40: The Illustrated Scientific Book to 1800
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. Yes, it was good—I would have liked to have more recommended reading suggestions on origination and authorship (perhaps journal articles rather than books).
2. Yes, Gaskell is very good, and Griffiths also good. Gascoigne's *How to Identify Prints* could be a good intro. *Picturing the Book of Nature* seemed a little too dense and we covered a lot in the class. Gaskell is a must; the others weren't as necessary since we went over it in class.
3. The pre-course reading materials were insightful and contributed largely to the overall class experience.
4. The two required texts were very helpful.
5. Yes.
6. Quite useful.
7. Yes.
8. Yes, very useful and applicable; glad to have so many to refer to post-course as well.
9. I found the pre-course reading lucid and engaging.
10. Pre-course reading was necessary, even if read previously for another course.

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. Very helpful—the bibliography is fantastic. I think it would also be good to produce a list of the websites of all the main libraries and special collections mentioned during the course, and recommended digital resources.
2. Workbook with RG's notes about the books was very useful during sessions in SC.
3. I will continue to consult the workbook, both personally and in my profession.
4. The workbook was very helpful although I wasn't always sure during lectures what material was covered in the workbook.
5. Great!
6. Workbook was great! It was helpful to have the text-heavy slides in front of me for notes, &c.
7. The workbook was helpful and I will be referring to it in the future.
8. Yes; glad to have the bibliography and titles to refer to.
9. The workbook includes a fantastic bibliography of all the books we saw in class, plus tons of useful secondary information. It also includes some great schematics for thinking about illustrated scientific books, visual analysis, and bibliography.
10. The workbook was really helpful and well used during the week. I especially like

the listing of books we were seeing, organized by session.

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. N/A
6. Betta!
7. {no response}
8. N/A
9. N/A
10. Very high quality, as have been all the courses I've taken. Particularly well-organized.

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. Our class discussions on authorship, authorial context and origination have been particularly helpful to my own doctoral research. I found that the practical experience of printing and the production process helped me more fully cement my understanding of the printing process and book history more generally.
2. The library sessions, printmaking, and conversations (Q&A) with other students and RG were the most informative for me.
3. The range of knowledge in this class and the others is humbling. I am inspired to further my work and my own dissemination of knowledge, while simultaneously eager to learn more from the teachers and students alike.
4. I learned so much this week—and I have so much more to learn! This course changed the way I see books, literally. RG and CDM taught us to look, to interpret, and to analyze.
5. Learning about the book as a material “thing,” learning about printing processes and how to identify them, and learning about the general progression of scientific texts.
6. Understanding different image-making processes and how they were applied was most helpful.
7. The trip to DC was most interesting and relevant for me. I have come up with some clear ideas for my next chapter.
8. Natural history aspects; project plans for future exhibitions.
9. I really got a stronger vocabulary for talking about scientific image making from this course. This content will help me return to existing material culture threads in my research with new insights and has also sparked some new research plans.
10. The many books we saw and handled were a highlight. The common press and intaglio printing were important experiences as was the sewing of what we printed. Learning by doing really works.

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. {private response}
2. What I wanted more of was explanations of the layout and set up of the printing. I was also hoping for more about how the act of printing in a scientific genre influenced prints and images in books as a whole.
3. There could have been more development of how wood is cut, plates made, and type set, but I believe that that level of depth would require a longer course.
4. And so much more!
5. Definitely. Would have liked to learn more about/look at “popular” scientific texts.
6. {no response}
7. I learned more than I had hoped to!
8. Exceeded my expectations!! I thought this week was more valuable than all the courses in my MLIS combined.
9. For the most part, yes. I learned so much! I do think the course would have benefitted from a little more framework for thinking about science writing and aesthetics early on. There’s a huge amount of scholarship about this topic—having a stronger shared sense of how people talk about aesthetics in the history of science and what’s at stake ethically and politically in scientific images would have added richness to some aspect of our conversation.
10. Absolutely.

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

1. In my own doctoral research—it will help me finish restructuring and rewriting two of my main chapters, and also clarify my terminology and language. It has also helped me rethink the way that I look at preparatory drawings and proof prints.
2. I have a more complete understanding of the development of famous books.
3. The knowledge is to be shared.
4. I had expected this course to provide background information to deepen an academic project already underway—and it will. But I can also imagine the skills and knowledge I acquired here will influence my teaching, my scholarship, and my digital projects.
5. Apply it to my dissertation.
6. In my current job as a librarian.
7. I will apply them all to my dissertation and my teaching.
8. Continued inquiry and learning, e.g., other disciplines (astronomy, philosophy, &c.). The course got me excited about learning again.
9. A) Will contribute to current research; B) will inform future teaching in book history, material culture, science, and literature classes; C) will inform my experience in archives in future research; D) will inform my creative work in my community.
10. The knowledge about how images are made and printed, and the experience of guided looking at many examples will really help me make sense of books that I examine in the future. I believe I will see differently.

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

1. Medium—philosophical debate obviously depends on course participants!

2. Art historian, English and history students, collectors seeking knowledge about specific aspects of printing in their fields pre-1800.
 3. A person in library sciences would benefit from the hands-on printing, a printer would benefit from the bibliographic information.
 4. It's designed for people with general knowledge of books and book history who lack technical expertise.
 5. Graduate students! This is just the point in my academic career when I'm laying the foundations for future research, and what I learned will influence my methodology for years to come.
 6. I think it's mid-range for special collections. Some knowledge is required, but it's not too intense. It was great to have a diversity of students, too.
 7. Intellectual level is medium-low. I think anyone could get something out of this course.
 8. Rigorous—I felt like I have some catching up to do and I have a liberal arts education.
 9. N/A—many backgrounds and forms of engagement were present in our class.
 10. High level, but accessible to all. I believe all students' thoughts were valued by the instructors. Collectors, students, and those who are interested in visual images and how they fit into the making of a book, and book history would benefit.
- 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. The printing experience on the wooden rolling press was a highlight!
 2. Can't print a circular block because you can't lock it up!
Conversations/distinctions among "edition," "state," and "issue." Library sessions were incredible and I learned so much.
 3. Finding variations and anomalies in physical copies of old or rare books was a powerful experience.
 4. We had the opportunity to print and assemble our own books with relief and intaglio images. I believe it's the first time in this course. It wasn't perfect, and the first day we struggled a lot with the mechanics. I mean that in a good way. The difficulties we encountered made my understanding of print irregularities physical in a way that it couldn't have if it had worked "perfectly."
 5. Working the intaglio press!
 6. Printing and "binding" our own pamphlet was a great experience, and well worth the time and effort.
 7. {no response}
 8. Felt like a lot of concepts that had eluded me finally made sense, especially coupled with the hands-on press work.
 9. The detailed and careful account of printing practices and analysis of images was fantastic throughout. Our deeply knowledgeable instructors enlivened each image so much!
 10. Aha moments involved the printing and sewing of the printed matter into a "book."
- 9) *How could the course have been improved?*

1. CDM's presentation could have been on Monday or Tuesday.

2. Address what “stereotype” is since we saw a bit of it in examples; more on impact of scientific printing on other types; the lectures I wish had been more technical.
3. More time.
4. {no response}
5. A bit less on bibliographical code (interesting, but not as relevant to me), and more on popular texts.
6. {no response}
7. I think it’s aces as is.
8. Perhaps more access to historical objects, and tools of the trade?
9. See Q5.
10. {private response}

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

1. I think the cost is too high, but I would recommend it to others.
2. Hard question. I don’t think I learned what I thought I would learn, but I saw things I hadn’t seen before, and learned from my classmates and from library sessions. I have a lot of experience in printmaking, so it seemed at times very superficial, but I am glad I attended.
3. I would whole-heartedly recommend this course.
4. Yes, and yes!
5. I didn’t pay anything, but if I had, then yes. Already have!
6. {no response}
7. Yes, and yes.
8. Yes, and yes.
9. Yes, definitely.
10. Absolutely.

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

1. Excellent—well worth it!
2. Cullman and Dibner libraries were excellent. The trip was maybe too long of a day, though. The library visits were great, but the trip itself was exhausting. Plus I gave two students rides home because they were staying off-Grounds so there needs to be a way to help them get home in the future and make that clear.
3. The trip to the Smithsonian was invaluable.
4. Yes! Although it made for a very long day—I’m still exhausted.
5. Definitely.
6. {no response}
7. 100%.
8. Yes—wonderful day at the Smithsonian and the staff there were so knowledgeable and lovely.
9. Our trip to DC was extraordinary. We saw so much in so little time, as throughout the course! Thanks to all for the planning that made the trip so great.
10. The day trip to Washington, DC, was well worth the time spent due to the extraordinary books we examined at the Smithsonian libraries.

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 attended all of the optional events and they were amazing.
2. {no response}
3. N/A
4. {no response}
5. Loved Booksellers' Night and ice cream.
6. Restaurant night is very important for meeting others. There were only three places and that wasn't enough!
7. I did not attend.
8. Didn't attend.
9. N/A
10. {private response}

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

1. Do the advance reading! Come into it with set questions or goals that you want to answer or achieve.
2. Read P. Gaskell!
3. {no response}
4. {no response}
5. {no response}
6. RG and CDM readily shared their enthusiasm for the texts and images we studied, and their joy was infectious and, I would argue, enhanced the learning experience.
7. Be receptive and open to new ideas and new people. Enjoy the experience—it is as rare as the books that are studied!
8. WiFi here needs some serious improving. Very spotty....I have access to Eduroam {illegible} and it never worked.
9. Be prepared to want to look at all the objects again! This course moves across many books for a fantastic overview. I'll be returning to many of them digitally (and someday in person) to think more carefully and at greater length with individual books and images.
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. {no response}
2. Your classmates are also your teachers.
3. A blur of rare books
Imprinted on my poor brain
Now, decompression
4. I learned to look.
5. Being able to touch (and even reproduce) historical texts enabled me to learn so much more than I would have if I had simply researched this topic on my own.
6. {no response}

7. How do I like my books? Rare, please.
8. RG and CDM truly made the experience special—very accessible teachers. This week was like paradise on earth!
9. In this one week, I gained so much knowledge about illustrated scientific books and so many interlocutors for continuing this learning in the future!
10. RBS courses invariably give students a special look at the physical book.

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: 3 (30%)

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: 1 (10%)

I am a student or non-year-round employee, with a more flexible summer schedule: 4 (40%)

I am retired, and can arrange my own schedule: 1 (10%)

Who paid your RBS tuition costs?

I paid 100% myself: 1 (10%)

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

I used a scholarship/fellowship to pay/waive 100%: 5 (50%)

Who paid your RBS housing expenses?

I paid 100% myself: 5 (50%)

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

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

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

Who paid your RBS travel expenses?

I paid 100% myself: 5 (50%)

My institution/employer paid 100%: 2 (20%)

My institution/employer paid part; I paid the rest: 1 (10%)

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

I live locally, and had no travel expenses: 1 (10%)

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

Library disciplines:

Conservator/binder/preservation librarian: 1 (10%)

Public services librarian: 1 (10%)

Special collections librarian: 1 (10%)

Student working toward a/n:

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

Professional educator:

Lecturer/adjunct: 1 (10%)

Book trades:

Book artist, artisan or printer: 1 (10%)

Other occupations/vocations:

Book collector: 1 (10%)