

James N. Green & Michael Winship
H-135: The History of the Book in Antebellum America
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. Both useful and applicable; I read the required books, plus two optional books. The course makes me want to read the others.
2. Extremely useful, and I appreciated the groupings into categories of required/recommended because the total set was quite voluminous, so I'll be finishing some of the merely "recommended" after the course has been completed.
3. Yes, they were useful—we covered much of the same material in class discussions, but it made much more sense having already encountered it in the readings. Anecdotes about particular printers/publishers also crystalized certain general ideas for me.
4. I thought the pre-course assignments were useful, and I appreciated the pointer towards which chapters to focus on, especially given the length of the books. They are the foundational surveys for the field, and seem exactly right, with the supplemental readings pointing us toward more narrow monographs.
5. Yes, very useful. I knew about *The History of the Book in America* before this class and was excited to learn from contributors!
6. There were several choices. The three that I used all provided good insights into a portion of the course.
7. I really appreciated all the readings—I did the required reading before the course, and found it very helpful. And I'm glad to have more reading for the future.
8. The readings were useful background; it was especially helpful that the instructors identified particular chapters to read with care. One thing that could be helpful to add: a more detailed list of topics and questions to be discussed in the course, which would give students a more focused sense of what to expect.
9. Yes, the readings were useful. I read about half of the additional/suggested readings.
10. The pre-course readings were useful and the reading load was extremely manageable.
11. {no response}
12. Great.

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. Yes—interesting and useful content I will apply in my teaching.
2. Though I'm not very savvy with DropBox, it seems to be an efficient way of organizing and sharing the materials. Still I rather miss the days of printed workbooks because they are easier to manage, and to save and annotate.

3. Yes, and yes—*The History of the Book in America* volumes will continue to be reference tools for me in the coming year.
4. I liked it, and I liked the flexibility of the DropBox style. Additionally, I appreciate the mix of primary sources and articles that I can look at later.
5. Yes, I value the primary source materials, which helped me understand the types of sources that exist for this topic.
6. We used DropBox which was flexible and useful.
7. The DropBox materials—pictures, links, book suggestions—are excellent, and I appreciated them a lot. I plan to download and use the material.
8. The teaching materials—primarily images, with a few texts and secondary sources—were helpful as examples that anchored the in-class content.
9. The DropBox was great. I loved the way MW and JG used it in class, but also used it in the evenings. I will borrow from it for my own class.
10. We used DropBox during the course and it was very helpful. The instructors uploaded relevant diagrams and students uploaded display material.
11. {no response}
12. Thank you for the resources we can download from DropBox!

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

1. N/A
2. As excellent an experience as any.
3. My experience at this RBS course was superior to my previous one—it seemed much better managed by the staff, and the classroom was livelier and more engaged.
4. They both involved seeing a lot of materials and were very good. They're different enough that direct comparison is hard. This one was team taught, which worked well. {private response}
5. N/A
6. This course is closely aligned with my particular interests so that I found it quite useful. It also built on knowledge I acquired from previous classes.
7. This course was more narrowly focused than a previous course I took, and in some ways it felt more intense.
8. N/A
9. I took MW's course last year {"H-50: The American Book in the Industrial Era, 1820-1940"}, so there was some overlap. Both were excellent, though.
10. N/A
11. {no response}
12. Great.

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. The lecture and show/tell sessions were useful, as were discussions with colleagues. I left with many new insights to apply to my writing.
2. I very much enjoyed all of the reading and discussion on the history of trade. It's helped my understanding, not only of book history, but also of business, legal, and political history, as well (which better helps to contextualize book history).
3. I was most interested in the connections between periodical and book printing in

- this period, and I have much more to say about the roles that periodicals played in the book market in this period.
4. I liked the museums and afternoon discussions a lot, where we just got to look at materials, and chat and synthesize. {private response}
 5. A) Loved the “show-n-tells” in Alderman and SC. Valuable to have so many books to handle, examine, and compare; B) Using a printing press! Binding pages with thread!
 6. 1820–1860 was a time of great changes in publishing, readership, and authorship. The study of the dynamic nature of this period is of great interest to me.
 7. I really got a lot out of the material dealing with production and distribution, and I especially enjoyed the pictures of presses, publishing outfits, and book shops.
 8. Most interesting to me was developing a better sense of the range of antebellum print—not just “periodicals,” but many categories of periodicals—and learning more about the technology of papermaking and printing which has re-shifted some assumptions in my project.
 9. I don’t think I can completely answer this yet! But these courses help me ask better questions, and point me toward a methodology to find the answers. I am going to collaborate with several other academics in the class soon, though.
 10. Learning about manufacturing processes for books during this period was incredibly helpful and will surely strengthen my material analysis of texts. I received wonderful feedback on my current project.
 11. {no response}
 12. Thank you for the focus on African-American print culture.
- 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 don’t know what I hoped to learn, but I did learn an enormous amount. The material processes of printing and bookmaking are much clearer to me now.
 2. Yes, extremely helpful and nothing that I can think of was left out. JG and MW complement each other very well and make a great teaching team.
 3. Yes—and the hands-on printing exercise was particularly instructive!
 4. Yes. I would like to have played with/talked about printing processes more (although I think that might be another course!). I did really like the printing and pamphlet sewing exercises. {private response}
 5. Yes, we learned about the development of the publishing industry—a whole world that I had always wanted to know more about. I use historical books as sources all the time and now have context for understanding how these objects came to exist in particular forms.
 6. Yes.
 7. This course covered a lot of material and was very thorough and detailed. I am very interested in production and so could have listened to even more about that, but I do think I got a great background in the period through this course.
 8. I feel that the course helped me develop a much stronger background and vocabulary for discussing print during this period—as advertised!
 9. YES! No. Yes.
 10. Yes, the instructors used multiple means to help me acquire the information in the course description. The visits to the Alderman Collection were especially useful.

11. {no response}
12. Yes, it was great!

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

1. Research and teaching. The general knowledge will undergird my writing, and some specific images/ideas will be central to future teaching.
2. In developing my plans for teaching book history.
3. As I go on the job market, I am much more comfortable with the idea of taking myself seriously as a book historian (albeit one who still has much to learn). My dissertation will be impacted by these course materials.
4. {no response}
5. Will inform my dissertation and future work in material culture.
6. I will use it to guide some of my future research and collecting.
7. I'm planning mainly to use it for curriculum development—though perhaps also for future research projects.
8. Will use in my teaching and research.
9. Outside of my own research, I'd like to develop a history of the book course at my institution. Also, see Q4.
10. I will use this information in my teaching and research.
11. {no response}
12. In my research and teaching.

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

1. It was great for a Ph.D. in English, but anyone with great interest and background knowledge would benefit.
2. The course made itself available on multiple levels which made it accessible for a variety of purposes. In our group we had a large number of academics, but also non-academic professionals, and even non-professional collectors. It felt like each of us benefitted in our own disparate ways.
3. The course was ideal for people who were very interested in the technicalities of printing technology, and the economics of the trade, but who had little knowledge of industry-specific terminology. JG and MW skillfully increased the amount of technical references over the course of the week, so I never felt clueless.
4. {private response}
5. Pitched just right for our group, which was mainly academics, but would be of interest to anyone engaged with this topic.
6. High. Useful for scholars and collectors of the period.
7. This course felt like a graduate seminar to me—high intellectual level, and specialized. I think scholars of the period, as well as librarians working in relevant collections would benefit most.
8. This was a “survey” course in the sense that a high level of prior knowledge was not assumed. However, most students were familiar with book history, and many people's projects center on it—having a relevant project and associated questions would be beneficial for future students.
9. Someone with a fairly good understanding of/background in American history.
10. Scholars, students, history buffs, and collectors would all benefit from this course.

11. I would describe it as nitty gritty information about the publishing industry, which was very helpful. Often the lectures paralleled *The History of the Book in America Vols. 2 and 3*, but they also went beyond the books and made the books clearer.
12. Intellectually curious with a bit of background in book history.

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 of the items I saw (Walker’s *Appeal*) were remarkable artifacts; the discussions of book prices and costs was particularly edifying, too.
2. Rather than a single “aha,” it felt like an awakening, as a new view and understanding of history gradually but surely revealed itself as the week went on. I did enjoy the binding exercise, which did give a lightbulb moment as I finally could understand how binding structures were constructed.
3. Printing on the Washington press—seeing the process explained it to me, without any terminology.
4. {no response}
5. The idea that expensive books and cheap print were different business models—from Europe vs. the U.S.—and the idea that “the book trade” was such a discrete group of participants. I had no idea!
6. I’m starting to fit “courtesy of the trade” into my thoughts on this period in a more meaningful way.
7. I loved the museum sessions. It was wonderful to have time to look at and handle materials. I also enjoyed the images of book shops immensely.
8. Seeing images of nineteenth-century book stores.
9. The bridge between the first two decades of the nineteenth century and the rest (Carey>Harper, Ticknor/Fields, &c.). I never got that.
10. I was amazed by the way political and economic changes affected the material quality of antebellum books.
11. The top moment among many was MW’s gallery of bookstore interiors. While not 100% reliable, those pictures in the aggregate gave a strong feeling of the book industry at the consumer end.
12. The presentations were key, not only because we heard from each other, but also because we could get feedback from our instructors.

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

1. Better balance between instructors; MW and JG are both wonderful teachers and generous souls...I just wanted more JG!
2. I’m going to throw in my recommendation for having printed workbooks rather than just digital, which I think would have helped my note taking and record keeping. That said, I plan on printing much of the DropBox content so I can still keep and record.
3. A little less elaboration of the materials laid out in the afternoon museums—since these materials relate to what we discussed earlier in the day, I think it’d be enjoyable for students to examine the objects themselves first, and then ask questions/make observations to MW and JG. Otherwise, I was very pleased with everything about this course.

4. {private response}
5. Perhaps time for questions and comments could have been built into the lecture sessions instead of added at the end of the day. {private response}
6. This was the first time through. Early on a bit too much standing. The course morphed from the plan, usually in helpful ways.
7. I think breaking up the sessions and alternating between lectures and “show-n-tell” might be helpful. Three hours of lecture is a lot to process at once.
8. The purpose/narrative of the show and tell sections could have been more focused for some of the days—I think the cheap print day was most successful.
9. {no response}
10. There could have been more balance between the lecture time allotted to each instructor.
11. Sometimes it did seem as though one professor did most of the talking and I wondered whether that was agreeable to the other. However, they have been friends for a long time, so it was probably fine.
12. Selfishly, I’d like to see more from the earlier period, but that’s where my interests lie.

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

1. Yes, and yes. I wish lecture and show-and-tell were more integrated instead of completely separate.
2. Yes, most definitely on both fronts.
3. Yes, and yes—a strong yes to both.
4. Yes, and yes.
5. Absolutely, on both counts. JG and MW are full of knowledge—it is a privilege to learn from them.
6. Yes.
7. Yes. Yes.
8. Yes!
9. Yes. Yes. I LOVE the show-n-tells and the museums. Also, great partnership between MW and JG.
10. I would absolutely recommend this course.
11. Yes, and yes.
12. Yes! Yes!

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

1. Most definitely—Krystal Appiah and David Whitesell did a fine job presenting to us. MW and JG interpreted the material in more detail.
2. Yes, we had a great variety of activities with multiple trips to SC and the “museum” activities in a separate class group. This gave us nice changes and fresh experiences all week long.
3. The SC visits, the printing demonstration, and the afternoon museums were all essential complements to our discussions.
4. To SC, and yes.
5. Yes, SC had a trove of illustrative materials.

6. N/A
7. I loved printing on the press and the trip to SC to view African-American printed materials.
8. Yes—our visits to SC were illuminating and helped concretize ideas discussed in class.
9. {no response}
10. Yes, I highly enjoyed our time at the Alderman Collection.
11. Yes, trips to SC were excellent.
12. 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. I mostly kept to myself in the evenings.
2. Yes, I very much enjoyed the lecture night.
3. The evening talk wasn't in my field; the trip to the rare booksellers was enjoyable.
4. Yes, I felt like they were a good use of time.
5. Yes, the Ogden lecture—interesting to learn about a different time period and style of book!
6. The lecture was interesting.
7. {no response}
8. N/A
9. {no response}
10. N/A
11. I attended the Amy Ogden lecture and found it very interesting.
12. {no response}

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

1. {no response}
2. Read as much of the advance reading as you can (in advance); it will help inform the classroom learning significantly.
3. Do the reading beforehand (as I did) to maximize your benefits from the classes. It really did help.
4. {no response}
5. If you want to know about books in the antebellum period, this is a fantastic opportunity. Take it!
6. {no response}
7. This is a very fun course. But it is a lot of material, and it's a lot of work, so you should stay hydrated.
8. I would recommend this class for anyone whose project touches this historical period—it will help you develop new questions and re-examine assumptions you didn't even know you were making.
9. {no response}
10. Dig in.
11. It would help to have a good working knowledge of the history of this period, and of the chief works of literature; the emphasis on African-American literature was

welcome, and this course is not much about the old American Renaissance canon.
12. {no response}

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

1. Cheap print and book stores
Michael, Jim, Sir Walter Scott
Antebellum book trade
Thank you! I'll be back....
2. Aun Aprendo! (Or... "I'm still learning" in Spanish?)
3. MW and JG were a great team who slowly built on what we learned throughout the week so that by the end, I felt like I was learning by applying new knowledge—a very instructive method. Thanks!
4. {no response}
5. Beautiful days of books, learning, and fellowship that I wish could go on forever.
6. How sweet to be in this community.
7. I learned a lot and met wonderful people, and I'm grateful for the experience.
8. There's more to see.
9. So much more to learn!
10. Aun Aprendo?
11. This course puts you right on the scene in the antebellum United States.
12. Thank you, JG and MW, for a great experience!

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: 3 (25%)

My institution/employer did not give me professional leave; I used paid or vacation days:
2 (16.67%)

I am a student or non-year-round employee, with a more flexible summer schedule:
6 (50%)

I am retired, and can arrange my own schedule: 1 (8.33%)

Who paid your RBS tuition costs?

I paid 100% myself: 2 (16.67%)

My institution/employer paid 100%: 6 (50%)

My institution/employer paid part; I paid the rest: 1 (8.33%)

I used a scholarship/fellowship to pay/waive 100%: 3 (25%)

Who paid your RBS housing expenses?

I paid 100% myself: 4 (33.33%)

My institution/employer paid 100%: 4 (33.33%)

I used a scholarship/fellowship to cover 100%: 2 (16.67%)

I stayed with friends/family, or stayed in my own home and commuted: 2 (16.67%)

Who paid your RBS travel expenses?

I paid 100% myself: 5 (41.67%)

My institution/employer paid 100%: 4 (33.33%)

I used a scholarship/fellowship to cover 100%: 2 (16.67%)

I live locally, and had no travel expenses: 1 (8.33%)

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

Library disciplines:

Cataloger/metadata librarian: 1 (8.33%)

Student working toward a/n:

Ph.D./D.Phil: 3 (25%)

Professional educator:

Assistant professor: 1 (8.33%)

Associate professor: 3 (25%)

Full professor: 1 (8.33%)

College/university administrator: 1 (8.33%)

Other occupations/vocations:

Book collector: 1 (8.33%)

Retired: 1 (8.33%)