

Will Noel & Dot Porter
M-95: The Medieval Manuscript in the Twenty-First Century
10-14 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, the readings were very useful, and I felt I needed no additional preparation for my course.
2. Yes, I was grateful for the reading list's range and scope.
3. {private response}
4. I think they were useful in that they better informed me on the topics of the course, but we didn't refer to them much in class. I only had time to read a few of the required texts before class, though, so I can't speak to them very much. So sorry.
5. Yes, the pre-course reading was essential, especially to students less familiar with manuscript studies and codicology content.
6. Yes, there were pre-course reading assignments.
7. Yes, they were very useful. I re-read some of my personal books on codicology.
8. Readings were very useful; I did no other prep.
9. Yes, the prep reading was helpful in framing the digital humanities discussions.
10. We read a lot about OCR, and digital texts, but talked very little, if at all about this.
11. Yes. No. No. No.
12. The readings weren't heavily referenced in class, but were implicitly referenced, so they're very useful to get the most from the 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. The workbook was well-prepared, though I felt it would have been even better had the images been in color as opposed to black-and-white. The content was appropriate, and will continue to be useful for me well into the future.
2. Course workbook content was useful and thorough. I will definitely consult the articles after the course. I appreciated the inclusion of an article on digitizing Arabic manuscripts.
3. {no response}
4. Yes! Most useful, I think, will be the Google Docs handouts sent by DP, as they have links, instructions, PowerPoints, and exercises.
5. This workbook was extremely useful, but perhaps should have been sent earlier to students to allow them time to familiarize themselves with the software and programs with which we'd be engaging.
6. Very useful, hardly utilized.
7. Very nice to have it printed out. I will be referencing it later.

8. Workbook was not generally needed.
9. The workbook and teaching materials were all extremely helpful.
10. We could have made more use out of it, but it was very good.
11. I think it would be useful to have our class schedule for the week in there.
12. The workbook is great! In fact, I'd have loved to have the readings it included before the week of class. They were very informative. I'm already imagining how I can use its resources moving forward.

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

1. {no response}
2. This course met the high expectations I had from my previous RBS course.
3. N/A
4. N/A
5. N/A
6. 2/3
7. N/A
8. N/A
9. {no response}
10. This course was more directly relevant to my interests, but much more wide-ranging. The previous course was a TERRIFIC experience. This course also seems great, but I will have to see how it shapes my work.
11. Great.
12. 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. The close-knit classes and close consultation/Q&A with my instructors was the most relevant for me, for these allowed me to learn directly from experts in the field. I walked away from the course with many new insights, and the experience enriched my understanding of pre-1600 A.D. manuscripts.
2. The most relevant takeaway for me is a greater understanding of how digital technology interacts with medieval manuscripts to produce a final product. I will use this knowledge to design a digital project with my research assistant.
3. 80% of my dissertation research was based on early modern manuscripts in a variety of English, Scottish, and French hands, but I had never had the chance to take courses in codicology, paleography, medieval studies, &c. This class helped a lot in filling in gaps and correcting some misperceptions I had acquired along the way.
4. So much, it's hard to choose. Working with a manuscript hands-on every day and learning more about codicology was wonderful. I also now have many more digital tools in my repertoire that I can use for future projects.
5. The basic foundations of codicology and WN's presentation on paper were extremely formative for me. DP's lessons on Mirador and IIF were very impressive.
6. Movement away from content analysis of texts to physical construction of manuscripts, and what the construction can say about the text.
7. I really loved everything, but especially handling the manuscripts.

8. Hands-on experience designing digital manuscript displays.
 9. {private response} I'll be spending time working on personal research into witchcraft as portrayed in book design.
 10. Learning about IIF and Mirador. I learned a good deal of information about how to think materially about manuscripts, and I look forward to moving forward on a project editing and transcribing a work.
 11. Being able to handle and work directly with material. Would have liked to imagine a larger expansion of the project I ended up creating.
 12. The mix of codicological analysis and digital manipulation was most interesting. I'm walking away with a better idea of how to make the digital serve the material.
- 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. Yes. I didn't feel as though anything was left out, and I learned exactly the kinds of fascinating things I hoped to learn beforehand.
 2. WN and DP struck the perfect balance between strengthening our knowledge of the medieval books and learning about technology—some of it very new—for presenting the texts digitally. Their rapport is great, and it was always illuminating when one of them would add a point during the other's lecture.
 3. {no response}
 4. Yes, mostly. I would have enjoyed more theoretical discussion about the relationship between physical texts and digital ones, but overall the course was as I expected.
 5. Yes, with the limited time they were given, they helped us acquire a lot.
 6. Yes, and no. I was/or am probably too computer illiterate for the course—instructors realized that and made accommodation, for which I am grateful.
 7. Absolutely. I was very happy to learn a new digital platform and talk to the other students about the tech they were learning. WN and DP are brilliant, and taught so well.
 8. Would have enjoyed more time dedicated to hands-on experience with systems, e.g., TEI.
 9. The instructors were extremely helpful and patient, and I learned everything I thought I would.
 10. Yes, although we could have more directly addressed issues of digital surrogacy as a whole/as a class.
 11. Everything was great. At times, DP's computer-speak went a bit too quickly to follow along.
 12. Yes! I'd have enjoyed more theoretical engagement with our work, however.
- 6) *How do you plan to use the skills and knowledge acquired during your time here?*
1. I plan to apply them to independent studies of medieval manuscripts in the future and potentially to publishing original studies of those objects.
 2. I will use them to design a website to present a seventeenth-century manuscript in my library's special collections.
 3. I've already designed in my head some lessons for my survey medieval history course in the fall, based on the information, demonstrations, and resources we

- were given this week.
4. I'm not sure yet, to be honest, but I'm confident that I will use them.
 5. I plan to continue developing my skills in digital humanities and codicology, which I plan to incorporate into my doctoral research.
 6. I will be more aware of construction of manuscripts.
 7. I can definitely use the digital info learned in my current position.
 8. Fulfilling desire at home institution to develop a digital profile.
 9. By continuing to investigate the history of book publishing.
 10. {no response}
 11. Assessing appropriate methods for digital images in bookworks. NEEDHAM CALCULATOR!
 12. Most likely in future research projects, presentations, and in the classroom.
- 7) *Please briefly describe the intellectual level of the course. What sort of person might benefit the most from taking it?*
1. Anyone with a strong desire to learn codicology could succeed in the course, though people with a background in computer applications, library science, and medieval history may benefit the most from it.
 2. Intellectual level is high—course is suitable for grad students and faculty, librarians, and other professionals who work with books. Background knowledge of manuscript culture is helpful.
 3. I wish I had the funding and foresight to take RBS courses while I was a student. I developed certain kinds of paleographic skills by immersing myself in the archives, but surely could have gotten more out of my research if I'd had more formal training of this kind before heading in.
 4. I think everyone in the course—Ph.D. students, faculty, librarians, publishers, and a monk—benefitted and also added unique perspectives. I felt very intellectually challenged/stimulated, especially through dialog with my classmates.
 5. Late doctoral students are well-suited to the course.
 6. Medium level, mostly post-doc students would benefit the most.
 7. Extremely intellectual and someone who is interested in theory and practical hands-on knowledge would get the most out of it. Creative types would find multiple dimensions of learning.
 8. Any senior-level undergrad, grad student or faculty; any librarian/archivist, and book industry professionals.
 9. The type of person who would benefit from taking this course is someone interested in book materiality and how medieval manuscripts are interpreted in the modern world.
 10. This was a great class for researchers and librarians.
 11. Art historians, and those with coding experience. Actually, someone who knows coding tools would do really well.
 12. An ideal student has some knowledge of the language they're likely to encounter, but would appreciate a refresher in codicology and a fast-and-dirty exposure to a large number of digital tools.
- 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. I learned that electronic manuscripts can't fully substitute for the real thing.
2. Watching WN demonstrate his Needham Calculator; when DP showed us how to hack to download whole manuscripts. {The term "hack" in this context refers to a workaround tool introduced during class. RBS does not encourage or condone illegal activity.—RBS staff.}
3. Loved the individual presentations!
4. Collation and VisColl! Paper sizes/formats!
5. WN's paper presentation.
6. Notion of encoding applicable to both manuscripts and digital humanities.
7. WN's ability to guide and offer his expertise, but also guide us to our own discoveries was a real skill. I felt like my opinion was challenged and valued equally.
8. Recognizing the power of multiple digital frameworks combined (Mirador and IIIF + batch downloading).
9. Working with my own manuscript and learning its structure.
10. WN going through paper {illegible}, and DP showing how to use Mirador.
11. NEEDHAM CALCULATOR.
12. N/A

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

1. I can't think of ways the course could've been improved.
2. More discussion of manuscripts from other regions and languages. Islamic, Iberian, Byzantine, &c.
3. For me, because I have little digital humanities background, so I think it would have been more helpful to have the digital sessions presented as hands-on tutorials with the instructors leading from a laptop in real time, rather than lectures. But I'm sure other people came in better prepared than I did!
4. Use a document camera to show examples. It's hard to see when we all have to crowd around.
5. Less coffee breaks, more time to work.
6. Maybe break the class up into groups who would choose one of the presentation programs and learn how to work ONE of them.
7. Perhaps some discussion about the readings, or a forum where people could post about them if they chose to.
8. More options for platforms to use on digital projects.
9. {no response}
10. {no response}
11. It would be great if some of DP's Google Docs were printed out.
12. Software updates/downloads prior to class time.

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

1. I definitely feel I got my money's worth, and would recommend it to others.
2. RBS is costly, but definitely worth the money for scholars and professionals who can get some financial support, either from RBS or their institution.
3. Now that I have a steadier academic position, I am able to use institutional

funding to pay for courses like these. Out-of-pocket, it might have been a stretch (although still very beneficial!).

4. Yes to both.
5. Yes, absolutely.
6. Yes. Yes.
7. I got a scholarship, so absolutely. I would tell people they must take a course if they are able.
8. Yes, and yes.
9. Yes, I will absolutely recommend to others.
10. Yes, absolutely.
11. Yes. Coders who love books.
12. Yes. Yes!

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

1. {no response}
2. Yes! Seeing SCETI was really cool.
3. {no response}
4. Yes! Visiting the SCETI lab was fascinating, and exposed me to a side of digital humanities I often don't think about.
5. We could have spent more time learning about the digitizing lab.
6. Neither here, nor there.
7. Yes, it was great to visit the digitization lab.
8. N/A
9. Yes, absolutely.
10. We went to the scanning lab. It felt a bit disconnected, but was cool.
11. SCETI lab was great to see.
12. We went to SCETI and it was nice to see "behind the curtain" as it were.

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. {no response}
2. DP's lecture on Tuesday was informative and engaging!
3. {no response}
4. I enjoyed the printing press trip and DP's talk, mainly as a way to meet people and socialize.
5. Absolutely!
6. DP's talk was interesting and understandable.
7. I was not able to because of my train schedule.
8. DP's talk was very relevant to the course; a good complement.
9. Yes, absolutely—both highlighted what we were learning in class.
10. N/A
11. N/A
12. The lecture was great! But more important were the more casual meetups with colleagues/classmates.

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

1. I would recommend doing the readings carefully for those who've no experience in the types of topics covered in the course.
2. {no response}
3. {no response}
4. {no response}
5. Read more about {illegible}, {illegible}, TEI, and library {illegible} beforehand.
6. {no response}
7. Do it!
8. Time spent pre-planning small, individual digital humanities projects.
9. Do the reading. If you're coming from a non-manuscript background, order *Introduction to Manuscript Studies* and read that, too.
10. {no response}
11. Be familiar with some code.
12. Apply!

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

1. It was amazing and intellectually stimulating—I hope it's offered in subsequent years!
2. Summer camp for book nerds.
3. Thank you so much to our brilliant and hard-working instructors!
4. I'm so glad I came. Thank you!!!
5. LAYERS!
6. Great group of teachers and students.
7. "RBS classes are large, and contain multitudes."—Walt Whitman
8. A whirlwind.
9. Books, good people, and so much learning.
10. Much fun, very cool, good learning, nice friends.
11. Philly, your dorms are chilly.
12. {no response}

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: 2 (16.66%)

My institution/employer did not give me professional leave; I used paid or vacation days: 2 (16.66%)

I am self-employed, and can arrange my own schedule: 1 (8.33%)

I am a student or non-year-round employee, with a more flexible summer schedule: 7 (58.33%)

Who paid your RBS tuition costs?

I paid 100% myself: 4 (33.33%)
My institution/employer paid 100%: 5 (41.66%)
I used a scholarship/fellowship to pay/waive 100%: 3 (25%)

Who paid your RBS housing expenses?

I paid 100% myself: 5 (41.66%)
My institution/employer paid 100%: 4 (33.33%)
My institution/employer paid part; I paid the rest: 2 (16.66%)
I stayed with friends/family, or stayed in my own home and commuted: 1 (8.33%)

Who paid your RBS travel expenses?

I paid 100% myself: 8 (66.66%)
My institution/employer paid 100%: 4 (33.33%)

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

Student working toward a/n:

M.L.I.S./M.L.S.: 2 (16.66%)
Ph.D./D.Phil: 4 (33.33%)

Professional educator:

Lecturer/adjunct: 1 (8.33%)
Assistant professor: 2 (16.66%)
College/university administrator: 1 (8.33%)

Book trades:

Publisher: 2 (16.66%)