

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. Reading assignments were very useful even if only selected ones were read in depth.
2. I will continue to use this list for future reference going forward; I also intend to acquire personal copies of many of the readings.
3. Yes, the assignments were useful and very encompassing of the material.
4. Useful and very extensive. I plan to read more now that I have completed the course.
5. {private response}
6. Pre-course reading selection was superb—which makes it too bad that we had little time to discuss most of it.
7. Yes, they were useful, but some were hard to get without an institutional library at hand. Perhaps some journals/articles could be substituted in. Also, identifying specific articles or page ranges could be helpful.
8. RO repeatedly referred to the reading list as a “bibliography,” which speaks to the emphasis on those materials in class. The required/asterisked readings are phenomenal, though I would consider Parr/Badger an “after class” read, especially considering that there is much repetition across titles.
9. The course readings were useful. I am new to this subject, so they helped me understand the course over time. The instructor also mentioned many of them during the course, so I believe they can be used for future references.
10. Good overview, but could have been cut down some. However, post-course I am excited to have these to look back over and explore further.
11. I appreciated that a selection of the readings were suggested, with an asterisk for emphasis before the course, and found these texts quite useful. I look forward to working through the rest in the future. {private response}
12. The pre-course reading assignments included a number of books that are rare or out of print. ILL helped with some, but I think I might suggest that particular chapters/sections of books be distributed to students electronically in advance (in concert with respect to copyright/fair use).

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 the best of any course that I have taken. I will use the workbook along with my notes in times to come.
2. I found the notebook difficult to use; photograph comments found at the beginning of a given section. Would have been more useful to have the comments

- accompany their respective images.
3. I very much liked the workbook. Much easier to have all my notes directly in correlation with the subject matter going on in class at the time. Yes, the workbook will be used.
 4. The workbook was very comprehensive and well-organized. The bibliographies will serve as excellent references in the future.
 5. Workbook was very helpful.
 6. The workbook was most useful during our meetings. It would be even more so if printed on a color printer (many illustrations became illegible in black-and-white), and if full image captions appeared as part of each PowerPoint slide rather than on separate, hard-to-find pages.
 7. The slides could be distributed via Dropbox to save paper. I very much appreciated being able to have the slides after the class is over, but digital copies would be more convenient.
 8. The workbook, which is the PowerPoint slides, is huge! Nice to have and completely what I expected having read the 2017 evaluations.
 9. The slides and the workbook (the same slides and some space to take notes) helped me follow the course. Slides are relatively small to read the whole thing, but I plan to keep and use it for my further study.
 10. Loved the book to write notes; felt it was very useful for visual and info reference during and post-class.
 11. {private response} The extended bibliography, in particular, will be valuable in the future.
 12. The workbook consisted of a very bulky spiral-bound printout of PowerPoint slides with a brief bibliography at the end. I would encourage electronic distribution of the slides for the course in the future. The workbook was cumbersome and the content not worth toting on the airplane home. I recycled most of it!

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

1. This was one of the best.
2. One of the better ones for sure.
3. Both have been fantastic. I'm already planning my next set of courses.
4. This was one of the very best.
5. {no response}
6. N/A
7. This course was very enjoyable and very much on par with the high standard of RBS courses.
8. This was easily my second-favorite course. A well-prepared instructor, at ease with the material, and engaged with the students. More handling of materials can always be good.
9. This is my first class at RBS.
10. {no response}
11. N/A
12. This course was perhaps my least favorite of the RBS classes I've had the privilege to take. But the experience was nevertheless QUITE RICH!

- 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. This course will be of great use for me as a professional appraiser.
 2. The nineteenth-century photography: processes and the important photographers, and their seminal works.
 3. Talking about the materiality of the books was incredibly helpful. I have tons of new research projects to look forward to now.
 4. Most interesting was learning the relationship of images to text, and the enormous variety.
 5. Though I thought I knew quite a bit about the area to be studied, I found out how out of touch I had become in recent years, so I will have fun reconnecting with the field.
 6. Most valuable were discussions of photomechanical printing processes and segments of lectures touching on publishers' archives, &c.
 7. I very much enjoyed the parts of the course focusing on the latter half of the twentieth century, but was very happy to learn about the mid- to late nineteenth century, as much of that information was new to me.
 8. I have an increased interest in Draeger Frères printing in the 1930s, and I will return to my institution with a better understanding of American photographers. The most interesting parts were the review and understanding of printing types, and the connection to contemporary artists' books.
 9. This course allowed me to learn the history of photography and photo techniques. I did not know anything about these before, so it gave me new perspectives of the areas. The examples, the trip to LC, and the instructor's explanation made me have new insight and a desire to learn more about the subject.
 10. Loved comparing different editions of the same books or different books by the same photographers. It really gave a depth to viewings of materials. I'm leaving with a much stronger interest in photography, both professionally and personally.
 11. With a background in photography, I was particularly interested in the insights into the printing and trade of books, which is a field I am just beginning to explore. This course was a wonderful first step.
 12. Twentieth-century documentation of photo books; I learned a great deal about photographers and artists; who leveraged the photographically illustrated books as their medium; new insights and a deeper understanding of the copyright/ownership of intellectual property when collecting photo books/photos.
- 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 all that I had hoped and a great deal more.
 2. Yes. Not to my mind. Yes.
 3. Considering I came from a background which was related to but not at all immersed in the subject, having completed the course I now feel more confident and even included in the field. Though to quote, "Ancora Imparo."
 4. I now feel comfortable in identifying photographic processes, and in recognizing the culture-specific aesthetics of the photo book.
 5. Pretty good match for expectations.

6. Yes, indeed.
7. Yes. I would have liked a bit more class discussion on some of the material (i.e., if a book is successful or how it fits in a genre).
8. It's a bit focused on English photographers, but it speaks very well to the RBS collections. More Asian photo books would be nice, and it would be very useful to visit the UVA's Printing and Copying Services to see offset printing and non-letterpress, if possible.
9. The instructor helped me learn all skills throughout the course, and he handled everything in the syllabus. I learned more than I expected, so I am pretty much happy with the course.
10. Yes, I learned quite a lot! I wish we had also done a more close-up comparison of different printing methods, and testing our identification skills. {private response} However, we covered a tremendous amount of material and artists, and that gave a wonderful history of the photographic book.
11. The course provided a wonderful balance of the history of the production of photographically illustrated books, with a variety of case studies of individual photographers' works. I only wish we would have had twice as much time, and could have gone further into some of the nitty-gritty technical information, and identification of various printing processes.
12. {no response}

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

1. See Q4.
2. Will apply same in the course of my daily work of cataloging, and marketing these type volumes that I subsequently acquire.
3. In my student research and in my career in conservation.
4. I will apply this to cataloging my stock, and to improving descriptions of my books.
5. I plan to speak with friends interested in photo books, compare notes, and further explore those that interest me.
6. I hope to teach a course on photographic books in the future.
7. The knowledge I gained this week will certainly influence my educational and professional goals and interests.
8. I hope to use these skills to better advocate for new acquisitions, as inspiration for future research and writing, and to better serve my students.
9. I plan to learn the knowledge and skills further (either self-taught or certificates), and use them for my future research.
10. {private response}
11. I feel that I have a more nuanced understanding of the technical decisions photographers make in the production of books, and the resulting impact of those choices as experienced by the viewer, which will undoubtedly be valuable in the future.
12. I plan to capitalize on increased demand for undergraduate instruction and exposure to rare books, including those that are photographically illustrated.

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

1. Anyone interested in the genre would benefit, including archivists, collectors, dealers, and appraisers.
 2. Spot on from my perspective. I think the intended audience—those with diverse disciplines in the book world—all will equally benefit.
 3. Honestly, I think all ranges would benefit, though having a basic knowledge of photography is definitely useful.
 4. The level of the course is high—exemplified by the expertise of the instructor as well as by the varied careers of the students.
 5. The class included many students whose experience would enable them to teach the course. But things remained on a very cooperative, non-competitive level due to the outstanding people and intellectual skills of the instructor.
 6. Possibly collectors, dealers, and conservators? Our class was a varied group professionally, and I think we all benefited.
 7. Anybody with interest in the subject will benefit from the course.
 8. It is useful to know something about the following: book history, bookbinding, photography, and British and American history. No one in my class was new to the subject; basic understanding of and interest in photography is fine.
 9. Everybody can take it with some photographic history/technique background.
 10. Book people with an interest in the history of the photographic book and photographic processes. Technical understanding of photography would probably be helpful, but is not necessary.
 11. I think this course is slightly more geared towards book people with an interest in photographs, but as a photo person interested in books, I still found a wealth of information to absorb and digest.
 12. The intellectual level of the course was only semi-rigorous, and I imagine students at the undergraduate level would benefit. However, a certain base understanding of book history is helpful.
- 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 most powerful moments were when we looked at the example books both at RBS and, certainly, at LC.
 2. {no response}
 3. The trip to LC was fantastic! When we saw the books, not on the slides, but before us, the impact of their scale or design, or even their materiality, was brought home. Gave me goosebumps.
 4. The most memorable aspect of this course is the perfect balance between exposure to many artifacts and in-depth consideration of the context of the artifacts.
 5. Several times when I felt I should certainly look into an artist being discussed.
 6. Viewing the Japanese predecessor to Ruscha’s “Sunset Strip” book was marvelous, and the insider’s tour of Martin Parr’s Oxford book was most rewarding.
 7. Loved hearing about the FSA at LC, and the publication history of Oxford.
 8. The best thing was having moments of recognition of styles, binding, and motifs that were present elsewhere. Class discussion was enlightening, and insights came from multiple students.
 9. The field trip and looking at photographs helped a lot.
 10. LC trip! So many amazing and unique materials. Being able to self-identify

- printing methods. Exploring so many different artists, and learning about the social context of what was being produced.
11. I absolutely loved turning through the pages of two or more books by a photographer in parallel—we made connections I think I never would have found on my own.
 12. Visiting the LC Prints and Photographs division, and absorbing a mini-lecture on Dorothea Lange delivered by Beverly Brannan was incredibly powerful.
- 9) *How could the course have been improved?*
1. It would be hard to improve on any aspect of the course.
 2. Lots of standing around a given volume, flipping leaves...not sure that's the best method, but I honestly can't offer an alternative at the moment.
 3. {no response}
 4. It would be nice to have more space to move around the materials (larger room).
 5. Just about perfect.
 6. This course is marvelous, so this suggestion is not a criticism! I think our final session might have made a better introduction to the course than a conclusion. Also, more time for class discussion including everyone would be welcome.
 7. More class discussion and possibly a bit more social/critical context for some of the works. I recognize the continued building of RBS collections will make this course even better!
 8. Increase RBS holdings on example photo books, if possible; include printing demonstration; maybe don't go to Washington, DC.
 9. Can there be more time to have discussion?
 10. {private response}
 11. Depending on the balance of participants' backgrounds, a bit more of the technical printing/book information might be appreciated.
 12. A more culturally and socially conscious delivery of content is important if RBS is going to continue to offer opportunities for conversations and curriculum that are inclusive and representative. For example, within the scope of this subject, how can the silences and lack of representation (especially in the nineteenth century) be addressed? It will be important to be more deliberate in pointing out the purveyors and practitioners of early photographic production and publication—that we are aware of—are elite, well-resourced men. Here, one might balance the overabundance of content relating to Henry Fox Talbot (a man with easy access to the publishing world) with contributions of his contemporary, Anna Atkins.
- 10) *Do you feel that you got your money's worth? Would you recommend the course to others?*
1. More than the money paid; would highly recommend and will do so.
 2. Yes. Yes.
 3. Yes, and yes.
 4. Absolutely—highest level of enthusiasm!
 5. I plan to recommend it strongly to one friend.
 6. Yes, indeed.
 7. Yes! Yes!
 8. I always feel like it was worth it, but this class was immeasurably valuable. I would

- recommend.
9. Yes! Definitely!
 10. Very much so. RO is fantastic. I highly recommend the course.
 11. Absolutely!
 12. Yes!
- 11) *If your course made any trips outside of the classroom, do you feel that they were time well spent?*
1. Time spent extremely well even though the day was a long one.
 2. Went to LC, and while the books seen were impressive, the travel time, et. al., was considerable. On the fence as to whether the trip was worth the 17+ hour day: 5 a.m. to 10:30 p.m.
 3. See Q8.
 4. The trip to LC was unforgettable—treasures hand-picked and explained by RO as well as by LC staff.
 5. The prints visit was excellent; the visit to SC did not have enough to look at for the time spent.
 6. The visit to LC was arduous as an expedition, and extremely fulfilling as an experience.
 7. I do.
 8. The trip to DC was a very long day. I had seen most of the items already, and it was frustrating to be in a room with special collections professionals and not be able to touch anything. Still, to be able to get the expertise of LC professionals was fantastic.
 9. The field trip to LC was intense, but it was very worth doing it. The trips to the darkroom and SC were also very good.
 10. Yes. LC was incredible and the team there pulled some spectacular items, and added to the information we already had. Very cool to see so many rare books.
 11. Yes. While the trip to Washington, DC to visit LC was fairly exhausting, the treasure trove available there was well worth it! {private response}
 12. Absolutely! The visit to the photographic developing center and darkroom at UVA was a superior experience. And, of course, the day at LC was immeasurably valuable.
- 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 Monday night lecture was, in particular, time well spent.
 2. Went to the Monday night lecture and Booksellers' Night. Yes, to both, and I'm sure Mary Gilliam was pleased, too, as I bought a four-figure item.
 3. I did not attend. I was tired by the end of the day.
 4. Lectures were excellent.
 5. Enjoyed the Monday map lecture. Did not attend the other.
 6. The Monday evening lecture was very stimulating.
 7. The Tibetan wood block demo was wonderful!
 8. I wish we hadn't lost Wednesday with the rest of the RBS session cohort.
 9. Extra activities were helpful to explore other areas.

10. Booksellers' Night was great, and a good way to get off campus.
11. I'm afraid I did not participate in any of the evening events, but did enjoy taking the time to get to know others in the class (and beyond) outside of hours!
12. {no response}

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

1. Do as much of the suggested reading as possible.
2. {no response}
3. DO IT! You will not regret it.
4. I highly recommend this course for anyone working with, studying, or dealing in books with photographic illustrations.
5. Do read at least some of the suggested pre-readings before coming.
6. If you love photographic books, this course is for you!
7. Nope!
8. No thoughts other than please keep offering this course!
9. The readings were very helpful for this course.
10. {private response}
11. RO has a wealth of information to share, as did the other participants in the course, coming from a variety of backgrounds. The conversation was quite stimulating!
12. We had an incredible amount of course participation from students in my cohort who shared tremendous knowledge to supplement RO's own important contributions—keep the classes full of folks with a variety of expertise and backgrounds!

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

1. Time well spent, and time should always be well spent. Thank you, RBS, for being in existence.
2. See you next year!
3. Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious.
4. Enlightening and enriching. I was exposed to several works that I plan to acquire.
5. {no response}
6. It's both a privilege and a pleasure to attend RBS—this is a rare life experience which lives up to its glowing reputation in all particulars.
7. Wonderful.
8. Keep it up. Love you guys.
9. Awesome!
10. So many scholars, and students each bring their own unique knowledge together, into a shared working environment.
11. More, please!
12. RBS is not only nourishing to the intellect, the experience is also soul sustaining!

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: 4 (33.33%)

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: 2 (16.66%)

I am a student or non-year-round employee, with a more flexible summer schedule:
2 (16.66%)

I am retired, and can arrange my own schedule: 2 (16.66%)

Who paid your RBS tuition costs?

I paid 100% myself: 6 (50%)

My institution/employer paid 100%: 3 (25%)

I used a scholarship/fellowship to pay/waive 100%: 2 (16.66%)

I used a scholarship/fellowship to pay/waive part; I paid the rest: 1 (8.33%)

Who paid your RBS housing expenses?

I paid 100% myself: 7 (58.33%)

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

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: 7 (58.33%)

My institution/employer paid 100%: 3 (25%)

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

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

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

Library disciplines:

Archivist: 1 (8.33%)

Public services librarian: 1 (8.33%)

Student working toward a/n:

M.A./M.S.: 1 (8.33%)

M.L.I.S./M.L.S.: 2 (16.66%)

Ph.D./D.Phil: 1 (8.33%)

Professional educator:

Associate professor: 1 (8.33%)

Book trades:

Antiquarian bookseller: 2 (16.66%)

Appraiser: 1 (8.33%)

Auction house staff: 1 (8.33%)

Other occupations/vocations:

Retired: 1 (8.33%)