

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.
2. They were very useful for getting both background knowledge and a general understanding of things the course will be exploring. I outlined (briefly) the de Hamel book, but did no other additional preparation.
3. It would be useful to read/skim de Hamel's book, but since it's heavy and we did not refer to it, it could perhaps stay at home.
4. Pre-course readings were very helpful in setting the context. More articles would be welcomed.
5. Assignments were useful; I did about half the readings, but will definitely finish the readings now.
6. I did the required reading and brought it to class as instructed, but it was not actually used. I am glad I did the reading as it was useful background knowledge, but perhaps it should be listed as background reading, rather than listed as compulsory to bring to class each day.
7. {no response}
8. The prep material was very useful!
9. The assignments were both manageable and useful. They became important additions to my personal library.
10. In general the readings were useful. Would have been interesting to have some readings on transition from scroll to codex, the idea of the book as a sacred object, issues with translation, and to discuss the narrative of movement of the Bible from sacred to post-sacred book; Bible in digital age.
11. The readings were helpful and familiarized me with the main themes of 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. Excellent. PS was extremely generous in sharing all course materials for our own teaching and research.
2. The workbook included some of the required reading that I had already printed/annotated/read, but otherwise was full of useful materials. We couldn't possibly cover all of it, so it will continue to be useful for personal exploration after the course.
3. The workbook was excellent and included more than we could cover in class—there will be much to explore after the course.
4. Very helpful. I think they will continue to be of value—it's good when the

- workbook alone has value beyond the class.
5. Workbooks were useful, didn't get through all the material, so will continue to read and consult. Also have much material to share with colleagues.
 6. Yes, the workbooks were useful, but since they provided all the readings we needed, it wasn't necessary to bring other texts with me (see Q1). We did not cover all the material in the workbooks, and they are useful to take away, but might have been better used if read in advance (i.e., they could be emailed out before the course began).
 7. All appropriate, useful, and will endure.
 8. I cannot believe how generously PS distributes his PowerPoints and materials—fantastic workbook. I'll go home carrying treasures! Scattering and collating myself...
 9. Very useful. I definitely plan to consult the packet and reading lists in the future. They will certainly strengthen my teaching and scholarship.
 10. Very helpful for future teaching, particularly primary source selections and secondary articles, references, &c.
 11. I'm thrilled with the workbooks and PowerPoints I'm taking away from the course. I feel I was offered tons of material I will return to.

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

1. N/A
2. N/A
3. This course was looser and livelier than the previous ones (different energy, not a criticism) and made excellent use of the Penn collection.
4. This is right up there with the best one ("I-20: Book Illustration Processes to 1900" with Terry Belanger).
5. This course was busy, engaging, endlessly interesting, and the phenomenal instructors made time for discussion and ever-valuable digression.
6. N/A
7. No need to compare. Both addressed their subjects adequately.
8. N/A
9. N/A
10. Equal to MFS's course in interest and value.
11. 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 idea of discontinuous reading was helpful as I continue to ask what it means to read as a teacher and scholar.
2. In addition to knowledge about the Bible itself, PS and LF made sure we are all walking away with skills and tools for assessing texts we may come across in the future, whether those texts be bibles, paintings, etchings, &c.
3. I was not familiar with the ways one can study an early printed book, so there were several great opportunities to sample them here. Many new insights, and a better understanding of connections across centuries, and between manuscripts and printed books.
4. The most helpful was the bringing together of material culture and content. The

- unveiling of bible tradition and reading through the ages.
5. Aspects most interesting: the history of the bible coming together as a codex, and the early English bibles. I will take these observations and insights and apply them to books in my institution's collection.
 6. Yes, it gave me new ideas and insights. In that sense it had the desired outcome. The PowerPoint slides illustrating arguments and concepts were most interesting.
 7. The transcription exercises were particularly helpful and relevant.
 8. Many, many new insights! I loved the theological and visual discussions and close readings in class.
 9. The course's focus on the relationship between text and image and the materiality of biblical devotion were impactful. They inspired and supported my analysis of similar topics.
 10. The specific books used in class exercises were very interesting and helpful. They were excellent models for teaching. I also appreciated being exposed to the artistic traditions of biblical exegesis and representations of the book as image.
 11. Yes! Hard to say where to begin. Every session was rich with both thematic/theoretical suggestions/insights and some technical skills and knowledge I was lacking.
- 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. All the exercises were instrumental in training us how to conduct and teach book history.
 2. I feel I got what I signed up for, in addition to so much more.
 3. Absolutely; though there are many areas we might have spent more time on, we got a wonderful view of the Bible over time and more extensive explorations of some of the more distinctive developments in each era.
 4. Beyond.
 5. More time to examine books would have been good; but the work could expand to fill another week.
 6. I wanted more bibliographical, practical, and hands-on discussion of the books. I didn't have enough time to complete the tasks I was given with a specific book. There were great rare books on show, but we didn't explore them in enough detail individually.
 7. PS and LF delivered wonderful lectures and made them all the more vivid by showing excellent materials from the collections. All expectations exceeded!
 8. I learned so much more than I expected. This was an absolutely MAGICAL class. I so enjoyed PS's enthusiasm and passion for the material. THANK YOU!
 9. {private response}
 10. Yes.
 11. Yes—I learned so much more that I was expecting.
- 6) *How do you plan to use the skills and knowledge acquired during your time here?*
1. Incorporate more book history in my classroom and expand the archive in my own research.
 2. I am working towards a master's in book history and material culture, and intend

- to incorporate much of what I learned during this course into research for a dissertation.
3. The topics covered in the course will expand what I can offer students, and the visual material and exercises will be invaluable.
 4. I plan to incorporate what I have learned when presenting bibles to students and groups. I believe that this course will improve my presentations and excite the visitors.
 5. I will analyze titles in our collection and work on an article about them. Also, I am now aware of other resources to study, so my five-year plan will be to apply for research grants {private response}.
 6. Not sure yet.
 7. As I teach at London Rare Books School, and bibliography more generally, the exercises and structure of the course were helpful.
 8. I will use it in my teaching, but also for an article and my book!
 9. I think the course greatly impacted the ways I will teach the Bible or literature.
 10. To enhance my own teaching.
 11. It will help me to complete my dissertation. I hope to bring the historical knowledge into future teaching. I may also consider expanding my pedagogy to include more practical exercises, a possibility I hadn't considered before.
- 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 topic would benefit from this course. Knowledge of the Bible, history, paleography, and printing would be useful but is by no means necessary.
 2. Upper-level undergraduate work. Anyone with an interest or career working with material culture and/or biblical history would benefit from the course.
 3. {no response}
 4. This was a fantastic combination of analyzing bible content and material culture. The breadth and depth of the course is perfect for any academic or special collections librarian.
 5. Librarians, grad students, teaching faculty, and scholars of history, literature and art history.
 6. Post-grad/lecturer.
 7. {no response}
 8. Everybody interested in the history of reading.
 9. A scholar of early modern and medieval literature, history, and religion would gain invaluable insight into the biblical devotion and theologies of those periods.
 10. Very high but accessible. Undergraduate to active scholar.
 11. I actually thought the course was carefully aimed at both librarians and library scholars. I learned a lot from my classmates, and their responses to the materials, which were often different than mine.
- 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 idea of giving students transferable skills through practical exercises.

2. So much of what we did was hands-on with the materials from the collection... “aha” moments were very common as we physically investigated the claims that much scholarship made.
3. The course often veered into the history of religion, which was very useful in providing the background for various practical decisions made by bible commentators, designers, printers, salesmen, &c. There was plenty of material *on* materials, but it would have limited the course to stay with physical evidence alone and not consider history, theology, and political changes.
4. The bull and ass are God’s Parents, and Eat baby Jesus!
5. Reading the early English bibles.
6. Incredible images of three-headed trinity. Visit to the art museum.
7. PS’s exercises are exemplary for teaching “the book” as an object to just about any audience.
8. There were so, so many “aha” moments! My favorites were the paradox {illegible} of singing, and eating, and reading. The text as body and the body as text and the deep mysticism of Christian {illegible}.
9. PS’s emphasis of Christianity’s early maternalism during the Middle Ages and Renaissance can transform people’s preconceived notion of the topic.
10. Seeing a wide range of bibles, particularly the English bibles and the iconography of the title pages; instability/fluidity of English bible printed page; variety of exegetical tractions that deviated from the scriptural text.
11. So many. Perhaps the most important being the various ways that attention to material production of books deepened my linguistic/etymological knowledge. I found myself understanding printed texts as palimpsests, too.

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

1. N/A
2. More than a week to cover everything!!!
3. {no response}
4. I really don’t think it could have been.
5. Slightly bigger room for accommodation of book use.
6. Maybe more structure and sticking to the timetable. More time spent with the books themselves.
7. The Bible as a text cuts across so many different cultural and religious contexts—it could have been stretched to do so slightly further, perhaps by balancing course attention to the medieval and early modern period with a full day on post-1800 examples, rather than a single session.
8. {no response}
9. I loved all of it.
10. Perhaps a few larger thematic questions to organize the syllabus, with more of an emphasis on the Bible as object, rather than Christian theological questions. Workshop syllabi on the Bible.
11. N/A

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

1. Yes!

2. I was on a scholarship, so yes! Would certainly recommend.
3. Yes!
4. I would—all days weren't for me, but I do think that they were necessary.
5. Absolutely! Yes!
6. It was expensive and I paid my own money, so I'm not sure, but I would definitely recommend it to others who had a bursary or fellowship.
7. Yes, and yes.
8. Absolutely. I LOVED the class! This was brilliant teaching and exciting discussions—so sad the week is over!
9. Yes! Yes!
10. Yes!
11. I was on a scholarship, but yes.

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

1. Loved the time at the art museum.
2. We went to the Museum of Art which was hugely beneficial when it came to depictions/visualizations of what we had been studying during the week.
3. {no response}
4. Yes, Philadelphia Museum of Art.
5. Yes. {private response}
6. Yes—art museum was well worth the trip.
7. The trip to the art museum was fabulous.
8. The trip to the museum was my favorite moment in class! Thank you for bringing us!
9. Our Wednesday night visit to the Philadelphia Art Museum was informative and a great pleasure!
10. The trip to the museum was excellent. Given the other bible collections in Philadelphia, could have had another field trip to the Free Library or the Library Company.
11. I loved going to the Philadelphia Art Museum even though I was deliriously tired by that point in the week.

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 common press at Penn was a lot of fun.
2. I was (unfortunately) unable to attend the evening out.
3. {no response}
4. N/A
5. Lecture was pretty good, but more theoretical than I'd like.
6. Attended one lecture which was useful.
7. Neither of the optional events appealed to me, so neither were attended.
8. {no response}
9. N/A
10. Yes. Enjoyed making connections with the other participants.
11. I didn't attend, as I was so exhausted at the end of the day. I appreciated that the

option was there.

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

1. {no response}
2. Come ready to learn! If you only do one thing in preparation, then read de Hamel's book!
3. {no response}
4. Sleep. It's a dense, draining class.
5. {no response}
6. {no response}
7. There is a general lack of diversity/inclusivity in RBS that might be better addressed through course offerings and materials. This course deals with materials that are very inclusive, so I think the challenge is to advertise it and use it as a model for inclusivity. Ditto some other courses.
8. What a delight—my mind was on fire every evening when I walked home, exhausted but delighted!
9. {no response}
10. {no response}
11. {no response}

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

1. Try to comprehend the width and length and depth and height of PS's greatness—there is none like him.
2. Exhausting, but incredibly rewarding.
3. {no response}
4. {no response}
5. Life-changing.
6. The Bible is much weirder than you think.
7. {no response}
8. Absolutely MAGICAL!
9. It is a rare grace to spend an extended period of time with a brilliant instructor and co-participants, learning and reaching and thinking together.
10. {no response}
11. Wonderful. Thank you especially to the instructors. I couldn't believe their energy and unflagging enthusiasm.

Student Data

Number of respondents: 11 (of 12)

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

My institution/employer gave me professional leave time: 1 (9.09%)

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

4 (36.36%)

I am self-employed, and can arrange my own schedule: 1 (9.09%)

I am a student or non-year-round employee, with a more flexible summer schedule:
3 (27.27%)

My situation does not fit any of the options above: 2 (18.18%)

Who paid your RBS tuition costs?

I paid 100% myself: 3 (27.27%)

My institution/employer paid 100%: 2 (18.18%)

My institution/employer paid part; I paid the rest: 1 (9.09%)

I used a scholarship/fellowship to pay/waive 100%: 3 (27.27%)

I had an RBS course tuition credit from a previous year: 1 (9.09%)

My situation does not fit any of the options above: 1 (9.09%)

Who paid your RBS housing expenses?

I paid 100% myself: 4 (36.36%)

My institution/employer paid 100%: 1 (9.09%)

My institution/employer paid part; I paid the rest: 1 (9.09%)

I stayed with friends/family, or stayed in my own home and commuted: 4 (36.36%)

My situation does not fit any of the options above: 1 (9.09%)

Who paid your RBS travel expenses?

I paid 100% myself: 9 (81.81%)

My institution/employer paid 100%: 1 (9.09%)

My situation does not fit any of the options above: 1 (9.09%)

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

Library disciplines:

Cataloger/metadata librarian: 1 (9.09%)

Special collections librarian: 1 (9.09%)

Subject specialist/bibliographer: 1 (9.09%)

Student working toward a/n:

Ph.D./D.Phil: 2 (18.18%)

Professional educator:

Assistant professor: 2 (18.18%)

Associate professor: 2 (18.18%)

Unaffiliated instructor or teacher: 1 (9.09%)

Book trades:

Antiquarian bookseller: 1 (9.09%)