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H-90 (II): Teaching the History of the Book  
22–27 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. Unable to access link prior to course. Provide hand list of books consulted before or during course?
2. I didn't find Nicole Howard's *The Book: The Life Story of a Technology* to be helpful and, in fact, I thought it was problematic.
3. {private response}
4. All the readings had a use. I found the Howsam book perhaps too "big picture;" Tanselle was a great resource for getting oriented to key works in the field.
5. Most/all of the readings were ones I have encountered/assigned to my students. I confess I didn't have time to read them again before the course. We {illegible} didn't refer to them during the course which indicated they perhaps weren't {illegible}.
6. I think they were useful. Some were familiar to me, so it was good to review, and I also appreciated the chance to spend time with an unfamiliar title.
7. Volume was a bit daunting. Perhaps a ranking or grounding in "essentiality."
8. The reading list is excellent. I appreciate that it's scaled (required, recommended, suggested). It's a list that will serve me far beyond the class. The amount of reading you choose to do will enrich and enhance your experience as you choose.
9. The reading list was very useful.
10. I wish we could have spent more time discussing these, and so it is hard to say. I would recommend Pamela Smith on her Making and Knowing project re: material culture and process for a perspective from art history.
11. Yes. I did the readings from the required list and a few from the recommended list. I found them all helpful except the book by Howsam.
12. They were very much there as background, and examples of approaches to the subject, rather than to be analyzed in class. It is not necessary to bring copies of the texts to class.
13. I appreciated the reading list for my own education, but the texts were not discussed in class. Again, I'm happy to have survived the pressure to read them, and sections of a couple would make lovely texts for my students in book history.
14. Readings were very helpful. Wish I would have studied them more, including the workbook.

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; some material seems dated.
2. Very helpful.

3. {private response}
4. I appreciate the generosity with which materials were shared; much of it is helpful and will be useful in course design.
5. The sample syllabi and sample course exercises will be of great future use. MFS obviously put a good deal of thought into their preparation.
6. Many things look useful—there is a wide range, so I may not need to use them all, but I believe I will return to it again in the future as my work develops.
7. It will be immeasurably useful as I review in order to consolidate what I have learned/heard.
8. Very useful. I'm excited to adapt these readings and exercises for my own classes. This is a priceless takeaway.
9. The workbook and teaching materials were valuable and appropriate. More instruction on precisely how to use the exercises might have been helpful.
10. I like the workbook, but especially like the guide on where to acquire teaching materials I will likely consult after class.
11. I have only scratched the surface of the workbook, but I imagine it will be very helpful.
12. The workbook, distributed electronically, is a vast and rich resource, very much intended for future use in developing our own ideas and resources.
13. Yes. I'm so happy to have this workbook/course materials for my own review, and for supplementing one-shot instruction sessions as well. I also appreciated hearing the purchasing suggestions of fellow practitioners for effectively searching eBay, or for what kind of magnifying glass.
14. Definitely will use them after the course.

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

1. Similar.
2. I learned again how much I have to learn!
3. N/A
4. N/A
5. The small course sizes are a hallmark of RBS. They mean that much constructive dialog can take place.
6. They were both useful, but this one took a much deeper dive into topics and was more participatory in some aspects, which was appreciated. It's a bit difficult to compare, actually.
7. This class was the most helpful.
8. Equally wonderful! Two very different courses, but I found both to be equally fruitful.
9. N/A
10. How does one actually compare, really? They are all pretty great.
11. Favorably.
12. {no response}
13. N/A
14. Less structured, but more involvement by participants.

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. Sample teaching exercises.
  2. Thematic angles for teaching book history.
  3. There was a wealth of valuable concrete exercises and comparisons that I cannot wait to incorporate.
  4. I benefitted from both the big picture and nitty-gritty aspects of class discussion. One useful insight was that books help constitute communities—interesting.
  5. Teaching with (only) two examples! Brilliant.
  6. Recommendations for readings and methods to deepen my understanding will be useful going forward, as will examples of different teaching styles and course/activity design.
  7. 1) Many bibliographical details. 2) How to read a book was a revelation. 3) The value/idea of thinking about a book as a social/communal endeavor.
  8. I came here primarily to listen to and be inspired by a great teacher, and my expectations were amply fulfilled. What I appreciate most was the balance of the aspirational (why do I teach?), and the very practical (how exactly do we teach?).
  9. The instructor's thoughts and advice on what works/doesn't work were very helpful.
  10. I liked preparing for the practicum, but wish it could have happened on Thursday to get more feedback on it. I thought this course could have helped me think through the specific challenges of teaching with a digital component, but that was balanced by multiple perspectives.
  11. I liked the periods spent looking at books. These helped to flesh out discussions on pedagogy.
  12. Seeing and discussing approaches to using rare books as part of courses. Gaining a (fairly painless) knowledge of the landscape of the subject, which I have not had to think about much before.
  13. Yes. I have new ideas for improving past sessions (two books, not twenty-two), and trying new exercises.
  14. New insights: compare two books at a time, use printing videos, contemporary books, RBS's sheets, find wonder for student, create passion by being joyful. Plans: use these ideas in a course that I teach.
- 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 would have loved to do group work with colleagues to learn from their deep expertise in more detail.
2. I am fully satisfied.
3. {private response}
4. I think the course functions well as an introduction to the pedagogy of book history. The only thing I might have appreciated was a more clear-cut history of the field, but I can locate that myself.
5. One week wasn't enough. Leaving feeling satisfied with the course.
6. I believe I got a good grounding as a launching point to take my skills and knowledge further.
7. Yes. Skills—yes. Digital was light.
8. I come away with a huge reading list, a bunch of activities to adapt for my classes, a new set of eyes when looking at books, and (something I didn't expect) a huge

new understanding and appreciation for the economics of book history and books as consumer objects.

9. I would have liked more technical work on teaching descriptive/analytic bibliography—walking us through an exercise where students might discover and construct a collation formula, for example. Some more precise work with us on constructing our own syllabi than was received was hoped for.
  10. I had hoped to have a better idea for scaffolding/{illegible} activities. MFS modeled excellent activities, but it would be good to do a sequence of two or three to practice how they might build on each other.
  11. Yes. It was a good balance of book history methodology, pedagogy, and playing with books. I was really sad that we ran out of time to look at all the SC books that had been pulled.
  12. Yes.
  13. I may have wrongly expected that educational psychology (the “why” you do it this way) would accompany the “what” we’re doing.
  14. I would like more analysis of pedagogical methods—pros and cons. Possibly things we should not do.
- 6) *How do you plan to use the skills and knowledge acquired during your time here?*
1. I am not sure yet, but time will tell. I am thinking about pitching an “archival work for students with disabilities” special edition at a journal.
  2. I plan to use them to excel in my career and continue my professional development.
  3. I would like to incorporate the “biography of a book” exercise along with the Harlequin romance demo, among other things.
  4. To develop and refine an undergraduate book history course.
  5. Directly with students in the classroom.
  6. I need some reflection time, but I’m making plans to change some of my planned fall semester instruction activities already.
  7. Be a better collector. Raise my book presentations to a new level of rigor.
  8. I will be significantly revising several course syllabi as well as adding new activities to my repertoire of teaching one-shot classes. I will also be passing on new skills and knowledge to my colleagues at home.
  9. I will use the advice I received to improve the syllabus and activities in the bibliography and research methods course I teach.
  10. To write a syllabus for a course I plan to teach in the spring (thanks!).
  11. In developing a semester-long course.
  12. This will very much inform the one-off teaching and engagement events I do; I gained many new ideas for presenting books for such occasions. It has given me a broader perspective on the specific book history module I am involved with, and it will be immeasurably useful in communicating with academic colleagues as that course develops in the future.
  13. I have ideas for grants to apply for at my institution to acquire a teaching collection for our library, as well as my own personal teaching collection. I also have a robust recommended reading list and a series of case studies I can draw on (and through-lines that I can apply to my own library’s holdings).
  14. Incorporate them into syllabi and student assignments. Take students on field trips.

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

1. High for me, the best person would be one unfamiliar with other fields.
2. I feel that someone taking the course should expect to use it as a jumping off point, or as the intensive beginning of a long journey, for it to be most useful and relevant.
3. {private response}
4. The intellectual level was reasonable for people with graduate-level preparation in a related academic field, or library and information science training. I think people interested in how to conceive and convey the big questions of book history in a careful, detailed manner would benefit.
5. Clearly most useful for people teaching history of the book courses, librarians, and professional educators/professors.
6. It seemed applicable to the wide range of attendees.
7. With some prep (as provided in the workbook), someone from any book discipline would benefit, provided they are truly enthused about the area.
8. Anyone who teaches with books in any way will benefit from this course. Anyone who talks or writes about books (hello booksellers!) may also benefit.
9. It was not as high of an intellectual level as I was expecting—could have been higher. I read all the “required” textbooks, but it turned out that I did not really need to—I would have preferred that the information in them had been engaged with more deeply. Almost anyone could benefit from this course, regardless of experience with bibliography.
10. I thought it was pretty accessible to folks of various professions and career stages.
11. High. Academics and librarians with teaching duties.
12. Advanced. Suitable for librarians with some teaching experience, and academics.
13. I’m grateful for the intellectual/learned rigor of the case studies, and MFS’s deep knowledge. I found myself copying down microhistories, cultural trends, and author biographies mentioned in passing that now seem integral to follow up on. At the same time, it seemed that our more learned members of the course also found takeaways and points of entry.
14. SC librarians with backgrounds in literature, history, &c. Academics that have used pedagogical methods.

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. Literature is a small percentage of book history!!!
2. The emphasis on building your own teaching collection was enlightening.
3. See Q6.
4. I liked the simplicity of breaking “the book” down into sets of overlapping codes (bibliographical, textual, and social). Simple, but it lends a great deal of clarity to the layout of a big, interdisciplinary field.
5. MFS’s sage advice and his parting admonition to share our joy.
6. {no response}
7. {no response}

8. SO MANY—every day! Just a few: resist making class sessions mere intellectual tourism; always consider the labor that goes into book production; pare down what you show in class, and make it meaningful; be unrelentingly unprofessional in your expression of the joy of books.
9. The instructor’s enthusiasm for the subject and his welcoming style of teaching were inspiring. I felt an “aha” moment when he showed us how to “fingerprint” a sheet.
10. {private response}
11. My big takeaway will be discussing books in pairs. Also, I kind of a little bit understand lithography.
12. The moment of realizing that there are many other people out there who are using books for teaching in very much the way I do. This is very affirming.
13. (As foolish and trivial as it sounds) equipping students with tools—cold lights, magnifiers, rulers, &c.—to demonstrate the kind of serious and worthy endeavor we are undertaking.
14. Watching video about papermaking and The Right Stuff.

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

1. More collaboration with colleagues.
2. Perhaps some small group activities or sharing? I also felt that the short presentations were too much to prepare in our short week; informal sharing might have been more productive.
3. No real ideas here.
4. More structured ways to learn from peers—through partner or small group work—would have been useful, at least once. I might change the Friday teaching demo to a lesson plan assignment—looking at {illegible} available materials—as being slightly more practical.
5. More time could have been spent on/with machine-era books. Most of MFS’s examples were from the hand-press period (with notable exceptions).
6. I’d have liked some “pair & share”-type moments to learn from other members of the class.
7. Time to consolidate (a bit) what we learned as we learned it.
8. It was a wonderful class. Can’t think of anything.
9. See Qs 4 and 7. A little more rigor.
10. We could talk more about pedagogical design and the instructor could make these choices more obvious—very good examples of activities, but I really wanted to know how he made decisions sometimes.
11. Maybe co-teaching it with someone with a very different area of specialization.
12. {no response}
13. {no response}
14. An advanced course for one-on-one help in teaching the history of the book.

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

1. Yes.
2. Yes.
3. Very much so.

4. Yes (easier to say when my institution covered most of my costs!).
5. Definitely.
6. Yes, and I will.
7. Yes. Yes.
8. Yes, absolutely.
9. Yes, the course was worth it, and I will recommend it.
10. Yes, and yes.
11. Yes. Yes.
12. Very much so. Will definitely go away enthusiastic and keen to share the experience.
13. I am wholeheartedly happy with my experience and hope to return for many more courses at RBS.
14. I got my money's worth. I would recommend taking other RBS courses and then taking this course again in five years.

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

1. N/A
2. N/A
3. N/A
4. N/A
5. N/A
6. {no response}
7. N/A
8. N/A
9. N/A
10. N/A
11. N/A
12. {no response}
13. {no response}
14. {no response}

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. Yes, the Tibetan block printing could have been paired with a more structured discussion.
2. Well-planned activities.
3. I enjoyed both lectures immensely.
4. They were all interesting (I attended 3/4).
5. Didn't attend the Wednesday lecture in order to work on the practicum project.
6. I enjoyed both speakers this week, as well as the printing workshop.
7. The maps lecture was unnecessarily academic in tone. The Japanese book talk was a delight.
8. The lectures this week were okay, but not as stimulating as class.
9. N/A
10. I loved Julie Davis's talk! Printing demo was fun too—thanks especially to AH for

that.

11. Yes. I liked that there were two lectures this week instead of just one.
12. The evening events added greatly to the overall experience: meeting and sharing ideas and experiences with those in other RBS courses is as important as the exchanges with one's own group.
13. I enjoyed both of the lectures. The Tibetan block printing was fun, but considering our class had a homework assignment due to present on Friday, I do feel as though I should have abstained.
14. I love to attend the evening lectures and learn more about book history. I have listened to some podcasts and hope to listen to more. Wish there was video with the podcasts.

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

1. Build in daily time to review notes—there were so many good take-aways.
2. {no response}
3. {no response}
4. It will allow you to expand upon your knowledge base about and confidence in teaching the field of book history.
5. Worthwhile for seasoned pros and those just starting out.
6. {no response}
7. {no response}
8. Don't hesitate! Take it! MFS is a magical, rare human being. Take the opportunity to spend a week with him.
9. N/A
10. Perhaps do some reading on pedagogical design in advance to supplement good examples of what to teach with.
11. Take advantage of social opportunities even when you feel there's a lot of work to do.
12. Come prepared for the whole experience, not just the class. The fellowship of the group is a vital part of the RBS experience.
13. {no response}
14. Read the readings more thoroughly. Read all of them—more than just the required titles. Digest them.

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

1. SPEED KILLS. STAY OFF THE GRASS. LEAVES OF GRASS. —SHOULDER—
2. Intensive degree.
3. I hope this will prove to be the first of many RBS experiences for me.
4. {no response}
5. It's the equivalent of a spiritual retreat for those who care about the book. {private response}
6. {no response}
7. Rewarding. I am now equipped to begin thinking about books in new ways. FUN.
8. MFS often ends his sentences with “and, and, and, and, ...” to indicate that there are so many more connections to make and ideas to pursue. It is a sign of his great

- intellectual joy, energy, and generosity. So my sentence is “AND, AND, AND, AND....”
9. Bigger books linger longer, little books last least.
  10. Lambs eat oats and does eat oats, and little lambs eat ivy?
  11. RBS is rigorous and intensive, but very welcoming.
  12. Summer school for book nerds!
  13. {no response}
  14. I have learned so much that it has been humbling. I want to go home and study more.

## **Student Data**

*Number of respondents:* 14 (of 14)

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

My institution/employer gave me professional leave time: 7 (50%)

I am a student or non-year-round employee, with a more flexible summer schedule:  
5 (35.71%)

I am retired, and can arrange my own schedule: 1 (7.14%)

My situation does not fit any of the options above: 1 (7.14%)

*Who paid your RBS tuition costs?*

I paid 100% myself: 1 (7.14%)

My institution/employer paid 100%: 8 (57.14%)

My institution/employer paid part; I paid the rest: 1 (7.14%)

I used a scholarship/fellowship to pay/waive 100%: 2 (14.28%)

I used a scholarship/fellowship to pay/waive part; I paid the rest: 1 (7.14%)

My situation does not fit any of the options above: 1 (7.14%)

*Who paid your RBS housing expenses?*

I paid 100% myself: 3 (21.42%)

My institution/employer paid 100%: 8 (57.14%)

My institution/employer paid part; I paid the rest: 2 (14.28%)

I used a scholarship/fellowship to cover 100%: 1 (7.14%)

*Who paid your RBS travel expenses?*

I paid 100% myself: 4 (28.57%)

My institution/employer paid 100%: 7 (50%)

My institution/employer paid part; I paid the rest: 2 (14.28%)

I used a scholarship/fellowship to cover 100%: 1 (7.14%)

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

**Library disciplines:**

Curator: 1 (7.14%)  
Library administrator: 1 (7.14%)  
Special collections librarian: 3 (21.42%)  
Subject specialist/bibliographer: 1 (7.14%)

**Student working toward a/n:**

Ph.D./D.Phil: 2 (14.28%)

**Professional educator:**

K-12 teacher:  
Lecturer/adjunct: 1 (7.14%)  
Assistant professor: 1 (7.14%)  
Associate professor: 2 (14.28%)

**Other occupations/vocations:**

Book collector: 1 (7.14%)  
Post-doctoral fellow/researcher/scholar: 1 (7.14%)