

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. I thoroughly enjoyed the assigned reads. Swanson and Duffy were excellent lead-ups to the instructor's own book, providing a context in which to understand the texts within their milieu. Duffy especially was a pleasure. I appreciated the additional reading suggestions and have looked at one of them.
2. Pre-course reading assignments were very informative and useful for this course. I didn't think it was necessary to bring my own "Modern Little Office of Mary" that was required.
3. The Swanson and Duffy books are a little redundant, so perhaps more focused selections from them would make sense.
4. Yes, useful.
5. All of the readings were useful and engaging. Having a reading specifically on saints/iconography would have been useful.
6. The readings were useful, but I wish I knew we wouldn't be using the books in class before I brought them with me—they are heavy!
7. Course readings were useful and engaging. The suggested "further readings" were also helpful and well chosen.
8. Useful, though I wish there had been more guidance on how to take them. Swanson is a bit controversial, for example.
9. Perhaps a bibliography of RW's other publications, especially articles and book chapters? (If not before, then perhaps as part of the packet?)
10. {private response}

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 course workbook was the sine qua non for navigating the complex and moving parts of the materials we were studying. The instructor mentioned expanding it, which would make it even more helpful. The selection of works from the collection that was shown were an extra treat.
2. The workbook was fantastic! Extremely useful and informative. It will continue to be useful in the future.
3. Yes, particularly the bibliography.
4. Yes, very useful.
5. We never needed to use our Latin/English editions of the "Little Blessed Hours of the Virgin Mary," despite being told to buy and bring it.
6. Fantastic! Yes.
7. Appropriate and useful.

8. The workbook was incredibly useful; a well-designed structural component to our hands-on work. I'll reference it often, I think.
9. Excellent—and updated throughout the week with additional handouts.
10. {private response}

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

1. The best yet!
2. This course was so educational, interesting, and fun! I very much enjoyed it, and I loved my previous RBS course too.
3. N/A
4. N/A
5. N/A
6. N/A
7. It was up to the generally high standards of previous classes I have taken at RBS.
8. {no response}
9. N/A
10. 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. Learning how to identify/recognize the different parts of the book and accompanying iconography was exciting and satisfying, and will help me bring much more to future exhibitions I will see.
2. I feel much more comfortable identifying and searching in Books of Hours. I am more comfortable finding the Latin prayers and have an easier time recognizing the pictures' subjects.
3. Everything was relevant, actually. I will certainly spend more time studying and enjoying Books of Hours.
4. Manuscripts.
5. I found the discussion of the relationship between the images and text to be very useful. In general, I feel like I am far more familiar with the content and structure of Books of Hours.
6. Learning how to identify the use and artistic styles; improving Latin and reading Gothic script; reading the calendars; learning more about iconography.
7. Learning to analyze a medieval manuscript via a methodical analysis of both text and image.
8. Getting more exposure to the art-historical rather than literary contexts of Books of Hours was fascinating. I'm full of eagerness to pursue the English/vernacular extensions of Books of Hours after having seen the French/Flemish treasures!
9. It was wonderful to have this immersive experience—I never could have learned this on my own. Having access to so many books, pages, and guides has really helped me train my eye in a short period of time.
10. {private response}

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. {no response}
2. Yes! I learned so much practical knowledge! I am so happy with the curriculum and course layout; it was wonderful.
3. Yes to the first question. As for the second, this topic could easily be a semester-long, so I feel we just scratched the surface. The most important thing is that I feel I've been given the tools and knowledge to approach and understand Books of Hours much more fully.
4. Yes. Yes.
5. Yes, I am very pleased with everything I've learned.
6. Yes. Yes.
7. Yes, in fact I can say that I learned more than I expected on the subject.
8. I had been intrigued by the request that we get hold of a pre-Vatican II "Office of the Virgin"—I assumed we'd be praying from it collectively (even if not "for real") to get inside the experience...so I was surprised that we didn't touch it once in class.
9. Yes.
10. {private response}

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

1. Further reading and exhibition-viewing.
2. I am building a specialization in Renaissance books and medieval studies, and this course was the perfect progression for me from the last course I took.
3. To better serve researchers of illuminated manuscripts and apply my greater appreciation and knowledge to acquisitions of secondary sources for our library collection.
4. Work.
5. In my job. I am working on creating a library guide for our Books of Hours. Additionally, my writing sample for Ph.D. applications features one of the manuscripts we looked at this week.
6. I plan to use them to help me become a rare book librarian or curator, help my knowledge of art history, and help in future RBS classes.
7. I do not work directly with medieval manuscripts, but I work in an institution that owns a considerable number of them, and this course has given me a far better understanding of this particular genre, as well as related types of religious texts.
8. Immediately, as a foundation for one wing of my early dissertation research.
9. I've been working with Books of Hours as part of a study of Middle English literary and liturgical cultures. Now I know what to look for when I encounter an unfamiliar manuscript. The course has given me a solid background in one major way that laypeople encountered liturgical texts, themes, and images—this will be valuable to me as I consider the influence of Books of Hours on a variety of literary genres.
10. {private response}

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

1. {no response}

2. I am a first-year master's student and I felt very comfortable with this curriculum. I think if you are interested in the subject matter, you could learn a lot.
3. Graduate-level and above.
4. Good for student.
5. I feel like the course would be beneficial for a variety of people. Having some knowledge of Books of Hours and Latin would be helpful but not necessary.
6. High intellectual level, but welcoming to beginners (with medieval or library background).
7. Graduate-level students in fields of study related to the study of medieval art, history, and culture. Museum or library professionals who work with medieval manuscripts or related materials.
8. A graduate student with expertise/exposure to a medieval language, and/or art history, and/or literary history, and/or rare books curation. I thought it was a handy blend of accessible-to-specialized units.
9. I can see why it attracts so many M.L.S. folks. I think professors like myself who work on devotional literature would really benefit from the course. I wish we'd had a couple more medievalists!
10. {private response}

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. {no response}
2. Many "aha" moments! Lots of instances of being confused but then finding a simple solution and it all working out. RW was fantastic and showed us so many amazing things!
3. The greatest "aha" moment was looking through images of Books of Hours one night after just two sessions and realizing how much I'd already learned.
4. Manuscripts.
5. I was really struck during the first lesson by RW's comment on the first-person narrative of a couple of the prayers and how that contrasted with the other texts. In general, RW's choice for us to catalog four manuscripts hands-on was great and very rewarding in terms of gaining knowledge.
6. I loved learning about the different Hours, devotion, iconography, art styles, patronage, identification, &c!
7. {no response}
8. Realizing that what unified several of my research sources—verse devotions, verse calendars, verse prayers and catechetical sequences, and verse gospels—now mostly surviving outside of Books of Hours, may have been their growth out of a Books of Hours context/tradition. Wow! Thanks.
9. Learning to navigate Books of Hours using the RW method! I loved the detective elements, and the calendar exercise—so much discovery built into the week. I appreciated RW's pedagogical creativity, and the way he built up to key moments/activities.
10. {private response}

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

1. Can't imagine it being any better—it was great! The instructor's enthusiasm and encyclopedic knowledge of the material made the sessions inspiring and exciting.
2. {no response}
3. Longer!
4. Longer.
5. N/A
6. More opportunities to take pictures for our notes.
7. {no response}
8. More secondary research bibliography handed out in/after class. And free study time with Morgan resources!!!!
9. {no response}
10. {private response}

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

1. In spades!
2. Yes! RBS is pricey, but I have now twice been very happy with the classes.
3. Yes.
4. {no response}
5. Yes, I feel like the course was worth it. Being able to learn from an expert in the field like RW was fantastic.
6. Yes, and yes.
7. The class is a rare opportunity to receive expert instruction from a distinguished scholar of medieval manuscripts, while actually examining original specimens of rare and unique material. What more can I say?
8. Absolutely. Though I hope RBS will change its policy of only offering scholarships for people who've already taken 1–2 courses. Not great! {RBS offers a variety of scholarships, including the Directors' Scholarship for first-time attendees.—RBS staff}
9. Yes.
10. {private response}

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

1. {no response}
2. N/A
3. N/A
4. {no response}
5. N/A
6. As a part of the class or personal?
7. N/A
8. N/A
9. N/A
10. N/A

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. N/A
3. N/A
4. {no response}
5. N/A
6. I feel like the mixers should have been held at the Morgan so we could mingle better.
7. N/A
8. The second event is too far away to get to with a suitcase and then get back in time to take the train to the airport in New York.
9. The opening Sunday reception wasn't very useful—there were two RBS folks there, but we never saw them again, and RW was unable to attend.
10. {private response}

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

1. {no response}
2. Highly recommended. An excellent teacher in a wonderful institution with perfect subject matter and relevant materials.
3. Take it!
4. Nope.
5. It is worth paying to stay at a hotel close to the class.
6. N/A
7. {no response}
8. {no response}
9. No need to bring RW's books with you or the pre-Vatican hours of the virgin. We never used them!
10. {private response}

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

1. {no response}
2. An incredible delve into medieval materials, both common in style, but spectacular with each individual manuscript.
3. Inspiring and happy.
4. Good.
5. It's a semester's-worth of learning condensed into a really great week!
6. I would say RBS gives you the opportunity to deepen your knowledge of and appreciation for rare books in fantastic, worthwhile ways!
7. {no response}
8. The highlight of this course was the time with RW, whose teaching seemed totally intertwined with his scholarly interests, human warmth, professional gossip, and truly infectious enthusiasm for these artifacts and the forms and practices of thought underlying them. What a treasure!
9. Immersive feast for the eyes.

10. {private response}

Student Data

Number of respondents: 10 (of 10)

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

My institution/employer gave me professional leave time: 3 (30%)

I am a student or non-year-round employee, with a more flexible summer schedule:
4 (40%)

I am retired, and can arrange my own schedule: 1 (10%)

My situation does not fit any of the options above: 2 (20%)

Who paid your RBS tuition costs?

I paid 100% myself: 5 (50%)

My institution/employer paid 100%: 3 (30%)

I used a scholarship/fellowship to pay/waive 100%: 1 (10%)

My situation does not fit any of the options above: 1 (10%)

Who paid your RBS housing expenses?

I paid 100% myself: 4 (40%)

My institution/employer paid 100%: 2 (20%)

I used a scholarship/fellowship to cover 100%: 1 (10%)

I stayed with friends/family, or stayed in my own home and commuted: 1 (10%)

My situation does not fit any of the options above: 2 (20%)

Who paid your RBS travel expenses?

I paid 100% myself: 5 (50%)

My institution/employer paid 100%: 2 (20%)

I used a scholarship/fellowship to cover part; I paid the rest: 1 (10%)

I live locally, and had no travel expenses: 2 (20%)

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

Library disciplines:

Cataloger/metadata librarian: 1 (10%)

Special collections librarian: 3 (30%)

Student working toward a/n:

M.A./M.S.: 2 (20%)

M.L.I.S./M.L.S.: 1 (10%)

Ph.D./D.Phil: 1 (10%)

Professional educator:

Associate professor: 1 (10%)

Other occupations/vocations:

Retired: 1 (10%)