

Nick Wilding
G-65: Forgeries, Facsimiles & Sophisticated Copies
29 July–3 August 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. {no response}
2. Best reading was the appendix of case studies in *The Restoration of Engravings, Drawings, Books, and Other Works on Paper*. McKittrick was generally interesting, but repetitive and not particularly applicable. Video was not my sort of thing. As Dick Allen said of artificial turf, “If a horse can’t eat it, I don’t want to play on it.” If it’s not on paper or parchment, I don’t really care.
3. Yes! I have to admit that I was unable to do all of them due to my own personal time constraints, but I wish I had, and now anticipate doing them after the fact.
4. Pre-course readings were all very helpful.
5. The reading assigned was useful, though I did not manage to complete all of the recommended reading. I do plan, however, to return to many of those unread items.
6. Very useful.
7. Pre-course reading highly useful, and sometimes revelatory.
8. {private response} In general, scholarly articles (case studies) through monographs.
9. The pre-course readings were just fine. My only complaint might be that the list wasn’t posted as quickly as I’d like. At least, I think. The readings were posted later than the course description and my acceptance into the class, I think.
10. Yes. I would probably recommend making more of the case studies mandatory, though.
11. The reading seemed voluminous, but it was so interesting it went quickly. I would even enjoy more—or at least a follow-up bibliography of more.

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. {no response}
2. Some of the longer readings in the workbook could have been made available earlier. To continue this course, RBS must build up its collections. It was frustrating and a waste of time for twelve people to be crowded around an engraved map that we were not allowed to touch (in SC) to try to determine its authenticity.
3. Yes! I wish we had more case studies to focus on! I anticipate furthering my career in discussing forgeries, and NW gave me a terrific base from which to identify sophisticated copies and forgeries. He also honed my critical eye to help me see parts of a book that I might not otherwise have seen.

4. Workbook was helpful.
5. Some of the materials in the workbook were poorly reproduced. We did not refer to the workbook very often during the course, but much of the material (including the list of items viewed) will be very useful in the future.
6. Content was appropriate!
7. Workbook is extremely useful and will get space on limited reference shelves. It will continue to be useful.
8. Yes. I think this will only improve over time, with further/better illustrative photographs, perhaps a bibliography, &c.
9. Yes, yes, and yes. I would have liked to create a photo-polymer plate myself.
10. It was appropriate and useful. To make it more useful for future reference, I would recommend adding a *little* contextual narrative to parts of it in the next iteration.
11. The workbook content was appropriate and useful. A few things (Columbus letter) might have been better in pre-course reading.

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

1. {no response}
2. Less structured, but more interesting.
3. NW is a fantastic instructor—extremely kind and encouraging. He is excellent at giving you his full attention when you speak, and never says anything that would discourage you from speaking again.
4. This was the second best class, in content and execution, that I've taken at RBS. {private response}
5. This was one of the better courses—its subject matter is extremely rich and provocative.
6. Never taken one before.
7. No previous courses.
8. More discussion, and anecdote-based (not a bad thing!).
9. This was, without a moment's hesitation, my favorite, and the best class I've ever taken at RBS!
10. It was the best course I've ever taken! It was exploratory, collegial, curious, and open to surprises. A fantastic, intellectual experience.
11. This was the BEST. Mind-blowingly thrilling.

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. {no response}
2. The reminder to be always vigilant was most important.
3. I thought it was extremely inspiring, insightful, and important for my future work. Again, I can't stress enough how important it was to train my eye to see what NW sees when he encounters a book in a library.
4. The emphasis on the differences between sophisticated copies, facsimiles, and forged copies.
5. The task of conceiving a hypothetical forgery was superb. I leave with many new insights and ideas.
6. This course has no doubt helped me develop ideas about directions I might take my dissertation in. Learning about the history of different processes for facsimile

making was IMMENSELY useful for thinking about what an eighteenth-century forger's relationship to his physical materials might have been. This course has changed the way I think about books as physical objects.

7. The exercises involving sophisticated copies and forgeries were highly relevant to me, and were challenging and full of insights. I'd like to think more of us left with "project plans." (wink)
 8. Hands-on activities with RBS materials—great and useful. Too many to list!
 9. The session on conceiving our own forgery was dynamite! More of that, if possible.
 10. The best parts were re-engineering, based on our theoretical knowledge, the process of forgery not only as a process of manufacture, but as a business, and how it is fueled by forces of desire and abetted by professional norms in the book trade and libraries.
 11. NW is very, very smart, frighteningly articulate, and interesting on any subject. He assembled a class with really diverse backgrounds and expertise who all contributed to the experience. The whole group "rocked."
- 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. The course was slow to get started. Introducing material could be more efficiently presented.
 3. He did help me acquire these, and I did learn what I had hoped.
 4. Like so much presented at RBS, this course delivered on the fundamentals, but I foresee honing these skills for the rest of my career.
 5. It was largely as expected; I would say I learned more than I had hoped to learn.
 6. NW really did a marvelous job. I can't imagine a better course on the topic.
 7. Yes! Nothing left out. Learned more than I'd ever have dared hope.
 8. Yes.
 9. NW was the {private response} BEST!
 10. Yes! No! Yes!
 11. Yes. My eyes hurt a little, but I'm finally beginning to know how to look at a suspect book. And when to suspect.

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

1. {no response}
2. Always look at things twice. And then again.
3. Every day. I can't look at books the same way.
4. To validate/authenticate what is in the collection in my care, and to help me select future acquisitions with greater scrutiny.
5. In both research and teaching, after a period of reflection and digestion of the very many interesting things and ideas encountered.
6. I'll use the knowledge I gained here to, hopefully, continue research that's attuned to the ways print technology overlaps with, and is informed by, a persisting manuscript culture. I want to go down the rabbit hole of pen facsimiles imitating relief printing!
7. Many insights on how to look at issues involving genuineness, and integrity of

- printed materials.
8. I feel like I have grown (tiny stumps of) the “antennae” needed to spot inconsistencies in printed works, and to otherwise approach books with a more critical eye, especially with regards to professed provenance.
 9. I now have an arsenal of skills to help me sniff out fakes and forgeries that will be incredibly useful in my work.
 10. Once again, I have learned to look at objects with new scrutiny—a whole new toolbox of lenses, if you will.
 11. Since I’m retired, this is all for personal edification.
- 7) *Please briefly describe the intellectual level of the course. What sort of person might benefit the most from taking it?*
1. Excellent and stimulating. The class make up is very important {illegible} be well composed of a diverse body of experience, professional interest, and expertise. Book dealers and collectors bring real world experience, academics and institutional people bring a standardized ethic and access to research, and students bring curiosity and fresh eyes where seasoned professionals may have more reserve. Security risk professionals may also benefit from a different mini-version of this workshop at other RBS campuses.
 2. I think there are really two courses here: “An Introduction to Forgeries, &c.” and “Advanced Seminar in Forgeries, &c.” They got mashed up here, but understandable since it had not been taught before. The sort of people who took the class would benefit: librarians, booksellers, collectors, conservators, scholars. Also forgers.
 3. Everyone. Seriously, everyone (who would be coming to RBS in the first place).
 4. A senior undergraduate or early graduate-level course in the university arena.
 5. The intellectual level of the course was high (though not forbidding). The course would honestly benefit interested parties from a range of bookish backgrounds and levels of experience.
 6. Very high. People newer to the topic, like myself (just starting dissertation), to experts who’ve dealt with forgeries and sophisticated copies in the book trade—all would benefit.
 7. I cannot imagine the course could have operated at a higher level.
 8. Must have some basic knowledge of book history and production. Could be quite useful for History or English scholars. Main audience is, I think, folks in the trade, conservators, special collections librarians (whether curators, catalogers, or reference staff).
 9. High-level, 3-D visualization. The class make up really helped balance the types of backgrounds and professions needed for this type of thinking.
 10. This was a group that wasn’t afraid to follow the open-ended questions. Anyone handling rare materials would benefit from participating in this kind of conversation.
 11. The instructor assumed that all were well-educated, intelligent professionals (true), and treated us as his peers (untrue). This is a course for those already comfortable with the book as a physical/cultural artifact.
- 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. Sophistication is an eye-opener—changing mores in book trade, and realizing that books may not be 100% contemporary aside from an obvious rebinding. This is true of conservation and restoration as well. It is worthwhile to consider a brief discussion on changing styles and practices over the centuries in both disciplines.
2. The class discussions were often illuminating. The course really found its stride in the last two days, which were most useful.
3. All of them. Except for facsimiles—could have done with a little less on them. But NW knows about this. Focus on the fact that this course was seriously terrific; NW, please write your book!
4. Not every corpse is a murder.
5. Too many to enumerate, though the unfamiliar perspectives of classmates from the book trades were powerful and eye-opening.
6. The whole time...I was a sponge the whole week...but especially when we tried to inhabit the mind of a forger.
7. NW’s insights into such things as Galileo and Columbus forgeries, and tampered-with copies were so full of “aha!” moments that it would take a course session to describe them.
8. {no response}
9. Again, the Thursday sessions where we “created,” intellectually, our own forgery—this was the best!
10. The hands-on parts, open discussion, and, notably, trying to get into the head of the forger/facsimilist.
11. The best time, by far, was our Thursday session spent planning our own putative forgery. It brought together all the strands in an amusing (but serious), enjoyable way.

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

1. {no response}
2. Better examples of sophisticated copies, with hands-on access to them.
3. NW ran this class like a graduate seminar, which I loved. But, I wanted to hear from NW more often than I wanted to hear from (some) of the book dealers. I also wanted NW’s definitive opinion on some terms. I know that they are nebulous terms, but having his expert opinion weighing in more or reigning in conversation would have helped.
4. By adding a part two.
5. Some discussion of legal definitions of types of forgery would provide useful context. Greater familiarity with collections material would also be beneficial.
6. Impossible, I think. Sorry I can’t be helpful here. I thought it was perfect.
7. {private response}
8. I think brief treatment of manuscript forgeries would not be amiss. Many printed forgeries are mixed print and manuscript, so a few case studies, if not discussion of, including paleography, &c., would be helpful.
9. Perhaps NW could see the materials first and guide us to forgeries/bad things in them. Would it be possible to produce a forgery from start to finish? That would be instructive as heck.

10. {private response}
11. Cut out some of the facsimile examination. Print session should work with text.
- 10) *Do you feel that you got your money's worth? Would you recommend the course to others?*
1. Very much so!
 2. Yes. Yes. I am sure that it will only get better. This was something of a "shakedown" it seems to me.
 3. Absolutely. I have already recommended it to others while taking it. I also anticipate going back to my home institution and asking if they can ask NW to give a guest lecture. He is so good. Make him sign a twenty-year contract now (if he wants).
 4. Yes.
 5. Yes, and yes!
 6. Yes. Yes. Yes. I'll recommend this to everyone I know.
 7. Absolutely, and I'll be wearing out friends and colleagues with my recommendations.
 8. Yes, I think the real effect on my day-to-day work will only become apparent over time.
 9. Oh God, yes! Without hesitation, I would recommend this course.
 10. YEEES!!
 11. Absolutely on both counts.
- 11) *If your course made any trips outside of the classroom, do you feel that they were time well spent?*
1. Does Alderman count? If so, yes!
 2. Trips to SC were not time well spent.
 3. The printing demo was fabulous, as was SC. I thought we could have had one session at SC because it was so mind alteringly wonderful. NW: if you do that again, can you reframe the class' minds by looking at a "normal" book? I wanted solid ground after that session.
 4. Yes.
 5. Yes; the printing demonstration was interesting, but perhaps could have been completed in a shorter time.
 6. Yes.
 7. Yes—UVA SC.
 8. {no response}
 9. Yes. You could probably do even more of this, especially if a ground-up forgery were being produced.
 10. We went to the print studio. Getting to try out the process you've been discussing takes you to a totally different level of understanding.
 11. To SC: so-so. Some good examples, but constrained in not being allowed to examine them ourselves.
- 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. All were perfectly applicable and an extra bonus for content that was not otherwise covered. I even added a bit of looking over the shoulder of “DesBib” students to see how they were getting on and what the course is like.
2. The two lectures, while very different, were both worthwhile.
3. Paper museum was great.
4. {no response}
5. Wednesday evening’s lecture was very pertinent to this class.
6. {no response}
7. Both lectures—on very different topics, and both to exceptionally high standards.
8. Loved Brian Cassidy’s lecture.
9. Yes, great stuff. Brian Cassidy’s work is intriguing and important. He’s on the cusp of a very large subject.
10. Both lectures and the paper museum fit seamlessly into our discussions and were perfectly complementary.
11. I enjoyed both lectures. I appreciate that they end early because I need my sleep when taking an RBS course.

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

1. For RBS to consider: is it possible or worthy to inquire of a basic background check, similar to that of any state employee employed in a public trust position, via UVA Library’s security office?
2. {no response}
3. Do it. It is a quintessential RBS course that has you reconsider all you thought you knew about book history.
4. {no response}
5. I expected some rough edges because this was the first offering of the course—and there were a few. Even with these, however, the course was excellent. I only expect it to improve in the years to come.
6. Best advice: take it. Don’t think, just take it. And be wowed. NW is a PHENOMENAL teacher.
7. Tighten your seat belts; you’re in for quite a ride.
8. {no response}
9. I really can’t think of anything.... I think a documentary of this week would have been excellent viewing for anyone with even a passing interest in forgery.
10. It is helpful (perhaps even necessary) to have some background in “DesBib” or history of the book, &c., to get the most out of this class.
11. DO IT. You will be lucky to get in.

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

1. Aun Aprendo! And looking forward to coming back, next time with a shorter span between courses!
2. It wasn’t really a cult, despite what I had heard.
3. Nick is awesome
Oh my God what the heck

- Nick is awesome
4. There's something akin to running a marathon and RBS. Lots of training, starting off strong, staying focused, and painful at times; but you (and perhaps the world) are all the better for it in the end.
 5. Alderman basement
Considering forgery
Wilding's eleven
 6. Fantastic.
 7. To quote Captain Picard, speaking to Data at the end of a *Star Trek: Next Generation* episode: "Nicely done!"
 8. Bindings watermarks
And effaced library stamps:
Wilding's eleven
 9. Best RBS week EVER! Yes, you heard me right. Beware, Wilding's Eleven!
 10. It's like taking your brain to the Caribbean for a week.
 11. It's awesome to think
That forgers and thieves alike
Are no match for Nick.

Student Data

Number of respondents: 11 (of 11)

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

My institution/employer gave me professional leave time: 7 (63.63%)

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:
2 (18.18%)

I am retired, and can arrange my own schedule: 1 (9.09%)

Who paid your RBS tuition costs?

I paid 100% myself: 3 (27.27%)

My institution/employer paid 100%: 4 (36.36%)

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

I exchanged goods or services in lieu of tuition: 1 (9.09%)

Who paid your RBS housing expenses?

I paid 100% myself: 3 (27.27%)

My institution/employer paid 100%: 4 (36.36%)

I stayed with friends/family, or stayed in my own home and commuted: 3 (27.27%)

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

Who paid your RBS travel expenses?

I paid 100% myself: 4 (36.36%)

My institution/employer paid 100%: 5 (45.45%)
I live locally, and had no travel expenses: 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%)
Conservator/binder/preservation librarian: 1 (9.09%)
Special collections librarian: 2 (18.18%)

Student working toward a/n:

M.L.I.S./M.L.S.: 1 (9.09%)
Ph.D./D.Phil: 1 (9.09%)

Professional educator:

Associate professor: 1 (9.09%)

Book trades:

Antiquarian bookseller: 2 (18.18%)
Auction house staff: 1 (9.09%)

Other occupations/vocations:

Retired: 1 (9.09%)