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H-165: Book History, Bibliography, and Humanities Teaching  
31 July – 5 August in Charlottesville, VA

## **Narrative Course Evaluations**

1) *Were the pre-course reading assignments useful? Are there any readings that you would like to see added or removed in future years?*

1. Yes, but it would be really helpful to get some order in which to read or clustering of readings (e.g. books that are good for teaching, books you must know, &c). Alphabetical listing was not only daunting but unhelpful. Mole's "The Secret Life of Books" wasn't useful. Houtson and Werner are great teaching tools.
2. Yes, readings were very useful!
3. Readings were well selected and provided good coverage. It may be difficult to fit more, but discussions of diversifying book history and incorporating the digital would be anchored by a reading in advance.
4. The readings were extremely useful. Most were exceptional. Personally I did not get much from Mole's "The Secret Life of Books."
5. Although numerous, all were very helpful to provide foundational knowledge. It would have been helpful to have them listed in a suggested reading order—some build on others and I missed some of that.
6. Excellent (if intensive) selection.
7. The pre-course readings were well chosen, interesting, and informative but prohibitively expensive (\$200+ for all 11 books). Fewer books and/or use of PDFs would help.
8. Add a global history reading to the syllabus's required readings.
9. Yes. Would have enjoyed the opportunity to discuss Tanselle.
10. {private response} They will be great resources for me in the future.

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. Yes!!
2. Since this was a class focused on teaching book history, I'm very excited to have a digital folder full of examples of exercises, syllabi, &c. to bring home and explore. It will certainly be useful to me in working with students.
3. Course Google Drive will be tremendously useful. I really appreciate that we can add to it.
4. Wonderful resources to which the instructor (and students) kept adding all week—I'll spend the next few months going through all the great resources provided.
5. So much useful information in the class folder that I know I will refer to for years.
6. {no response}

7. Class materials (posted to a class folder) were and are fantastically helpful for teaching. {private response}
8. The content was helpful for networking with Lang fellows, though it seemed to emphasize the curricular or pedagogical, not curatorial side of the subjects.
9. Very useful. I'm still organizing and working to understand the flood of material.
10. The copious materials in the online folder are great—they will certainly help me plan my future teaching.

3) *How do you plan to use the skills and knowledge acquired during your RBS course? Did you walk away with any “aha!” moments, new ideas, or project plans?*

1. This course is so fantastic. I was panicked at the thought of teaching at a place where I have virtually no special collections. MFS helped me see how I could overcome that. MFS and the fellowship's funding support.
2. I don't have a defined project plan—yet! As a librarian, I am most excited about returning to my institution to look again at my collection with fresh eyes, and to begin conversations with faculty about how we can build book historical culture on campus.
3. I am retooling my book history syllabi and making plans for campus events and collections acquisitions. I also feel like I am now embedded in a generous collaborative network.
4. Planning to use the knowledge and methods gained in this course to revise my book history courses (and my other courses). Future collaborations with other RBS students.
5. I came away from this class with so much more confidence in my abilities to teach this material.
6. The finger painting exercise was quite something. The Walt Whitman editions and the Pope editions “presentations” were illuminating.
7. I intend to propose a new book history course at my institution and will work to grow our teaching collection—I also feel much more confident using the techniques of bibliographical analysis.
8. The many classroom exercises and book projects (e.g. book cover art) were very helpful.
9. Lots—am busily reworking my syllabus and have ambitious further plans.
10. The course affirmed my commitment to hands-on teaching with books. I will use some of the ideas/skills in my class on medieval manuscripts, and I plan to develop a new course on book history in the age of print.

4) *Did the instructors help you to acquire all the skills and information promised in the course description? Did you learn what you had hoped to learn?*

1. Absolutely—and more. MFS is soooooo widely read and so knowledgeable. With each book and artifact, I learned a ton.
2. Yes! I learned a tremendous amount.
3. Yes. {private response}
4. Yes—the instructor offered an enormous amount of information. My one hope is that future RBS courses will allow me to gain more skills.

5. I expected a bit more pedagogical content.
6. Yes. And a lot more.
7. Yes, I learned what I hoped to learn and acquired a wide variety of ideas and resources to use in my teaching. I was disappointed, however, that we had few opportunities for firsthand observation of books (as opposed to their presentation).
8. Yes, the instructor was very well prepared and engaged at multiple levels with the students.
9. Very useful, both for the material and carefully modeled pedagogy.
10. Yes! MFS is a gifted teacher and the class discussions were also edifying. The frequent changes of pace were well-timed and kept things moving well.

5) *Are there other ways in which the course could have been improved?*

1. Honestly, I have very few suggestions. If anything, a bit less time on the early periods (only because those are resources we don't have) and more, if possible, on the "book" in places other than Euro-America.
2. {private response}
3. {private response}
4. Perhaps exposure to more of the RBS collections (and SC) and more time with these materials.
5. I think a closer balance in the numbers of librarians versus teaching faculty would benefit the class. {private response} The class would also benefit from a more culturally diverse group of students.
6. Maybe additional in-class exercises.
7. More use of non-Western and nineteenth-century books overall would be very welcome.
8. Incorporate examples from global and indigenous histories from the first class onward—don't leave for the last period.
9. Very difficult to see how outside tiny details given the ambitious scope.
10. {private response}

6) *Who might benefit the most from taking this RBS course?*

1. Anyone trying to learn how to develop a History of the Book course(s).
2. Faculty and librarians who have started the journey of teaching with books as objects, but want to deepen their understanding of book history and how to introduce it to students.
3. I think the Lang program is well-designed to reach faculty who can have a maximal impact on student exposure to book history.
4. Librarians, archivists, university faculty from any (all?) disciplines?
5. This course was a great way to reinvigorate how I feel about teaching. It would be great for someone looking to re-examine how they do what they do and come away with new tools.
6. Any instructor who wants to add a quintessential and historically relevant dimension to their courses.
7. I think that book designers and book artists (artists and designers) would be interesting to have in the class. This course benefits those at teaching-oriented institutions most.
8. Humanists unfamiliar with the book as a material object.

9. Course well targeted to chosen fellows.
10. Anyone whose work involves instructing undergraduates about books.

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

1. Definitely and definitely.
2. Well, it was a fellowship, so yes, but I would say it is most definitely worth the investment of time (time reading/preparing/time away from work)--it will have a great payoff for me at my institution.
3. {private response}
4. Yes and yes.
5. Obviously not my money, but I do feel like this course is accomplishing Mr. Lang's goal. It was also well worth my time investment.
6. 100%
7. Yes.
8. Yes, as an introduction that covered the vast expanse of book history, this would be recommended to beginners.
9. I would, even if I had paid for it.
10. Yes--this was great! I would recommend applying for the Lang fellowship to many friends.

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

1. We had SC come to use and that was a tremendous way to augment RBS's holdings.
2. N/A
3. N/A
4. N/A
5. N/A
6. {no response}
7. N/A
8. The "trips" to SC were very well thought out to elicit good discussion and reinforce previously covered topics.
9. Lunch was nice!
10. N/A

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

1. Do the required readings. Give yourself time and do them (even if you've read them before).
2. {no response}
3. This program is tremendously valuable and inspiring--I would encourage everyone to apply.
4. This was my first course, so I'd prefer to take more courses before answering this question.
5. Pace yourself with the readings! They are worth the time, and it was obvious that some of the people had not read.
6. {no response}

7. {no response}
8. The starting bibliography of class readings could be less lengthy and intimidating.
9. The preparatory reading is worth it, but heavy. Take careful notes or expect to forget things.
10. Do as much of the reading in advance as you can, but don't worry if you can't get through all of it.

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

1. Lower-case-b biblical!
2. Invigorating!
3. Validating of my pedagogical goods and energizing for the upcoming year.
4. The joy of books and community!
5. {no response}
6. "... and what is the use of a book," thought Alice, "without pictures or conversations."
7. A richly rewarding (and vigorous) experience. Thank you!
8. Revelatory / Bibliophilic / Scholastic
9. "No Persian carpets spread th'imperial way / But scatter'd limbs of of mangled poets lay: / From dusty shops neglected authors come, / Martyrs of pies, and reliques of the bum."
10. Stimulating and edifying.