

Cathleen Baker
G-75: Paper as Bibliographical Evidence
4–9 June, Charlottesville, Virginia

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.
2. The readings were a useful part of the course and helped me enter this week with a solid understanding of papermaking
3. I believe that the pre-course readings were probably very useful although I had forgotten to actually read them having been distracted by other life issues before attending RBS.
4. Everything was relevant, much of the reading was not broached in class (you'd need many weeks to do so) so perhaps a shorter annotated bibliography for the most important texts. Fortunately, I had read much of the advanced reading already.
5. The readings were somewhat great. It would be more helpful, though, to include the videos we watched in class of the paper making process in the pre-course assignments; the textual descriptions from the book were very dense and hard to follow; the visuals would have helped. {private response}
6. The readings were very useful.
7. Yes, the readings were a helpful start.
8. Yes.
9. CB's book is an essential read, definitely useful to read before class if you aren't familiar with western papers.
10. Yes, very useful, though I would've liked to see texts by other authors as well. Nevertheless, very informative.
11. The pre-course reading assignments were useful and directly related to the content covered in class.
12. The readings were an interesting and helpful background for the course. Links to videos of paper making would be a helpful addition to arrive ready to go.
13. Yes, necessary to begin the class promptly.

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. I think the course workbook was very helpful and I will use it to revise what I learned

after I leave.

2. The workbook was very helpful. It was nice to have the text of the lectures present in the workbook.
3. Yes. I think that the course workbook was well done and filled with useful information that I can use in the future for reference to quickly re-acquaint myself with the topic.
4. The workbook was pretty thorough but the images could have been larger. In addition, I was disappointed by the size of the projection during lectures, it was hard for me to see as I was in the back of the room but was able to sit up front for some lectures. The "Looking at Books" section was the meat of the course and was fantastic though a little chaotic at times. There was a lot of cross talk and it was sometimes hard to hear or concentrate. The papermaking session was fantastic; with the number of people in class, the space was cramped and perhaps the space could be better configured for our use of it. The instructor will work out problems with the pulp for next year. All content & activities are useful and added to my knowledge of paper. This was a GREAT class—I wish it could be two weeks. The "grain" direction task could be improved. I use a manual dexterity test for new student workers which includes testing for grain direction in a number of different papers and boards all cut to a square. This is something that would make grain perhaps easier to understand. My institution might be able to donate and cut some sample papers. I think more videos of hand and machine paper making would be useful for the class.
5. I liked having the slides printed out. The quality of the images (e.g. showing watermarks) could have been higher—as it was, they were all washed out. It would have also been helpful to have the slides from the Baskerville lecture included as well.
6. I found the workbook very useful and would definitely refer to it in my work.
7. Course workbook will continue to be helpful when I am back at work. A digital version would be helpful in order to zoom in on photos—but still a paper copy too.
8. Very useful.
9. Course workbook will be a great quick reference source outside of the class.
10. I appreciated how we worked straight through the workbook—it was effective and ensured that we all discussed everything in the workbook and didn't get lost.
11. I appreciated having all of the instructor's slides in printed form so that I could simply annotate the workbook in class. I expect to refer back to it in future.
12. Love the workbook—it's a perfect reference for future archive visits.
13. Yes, in particular the illustrations are important to clarify what to look for in paper.

3) *Which aspects of the course were most intriguing and relevant for you as an individual? Did you walk away with any new insights, ideas, or project plans?*

1. The most intriguing part of the course was the papermaking session. I think practical experience with making paper helped my understanding of the characteristics we were looking for in the paper.

2. I really enjoyed the papermaking workshop. Actually making paper ourselves was incredibly useful for understanding the processes. In addition, the detailed descriptions of the machine productions were incredibly helpful.
3. The most intriguing aspect of the course was the hands-on identification of paper using books. This has given me new insight into paper manufacturing techniques and characteristics. I will compare the list of books we used with my institution's holdings in order to have these on hand for bringing such identification to my library.
4. I brought a project to discuss with the instructor and we had a great discussion and ideas about future research and collaboration which I am looking forward to. This was a great opportunity.
5. The paper making exercise was a real highlight. I can immediately recognize laid vs. wove paper, although I still struggle with distinguishing machine made papers.
6. I discovered an appreciation for nineteenth-century paper and papermaking techniques. I can't wait to dive deeper into nineteenth-century material in my institution.
7. Looking at books and books and books!
8. Hands on papermaking.
9. Many new insights and ideas for research, even with a significant past working with paper history.
10. I'm mostly just excited to go back to my institution and look for some of the papers we saw in class on our shelves!
11. This course filled in many of the gaps in knowledge I had from other RBS courses—in particular, G-10.
12. The lectures and Q&A were most informative.
13. Making paper was important. While the experience was limited it is useful in making the concept meaningful.

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. Yes!
2. Yes, I learned the skills described in the course description.
3. Yes. I believe that I did learn what I came to learn.
4. Generally, yes. I hoped that we would discuss the chemistry of paper more but that is probably outside of what is possible in a week (let us do a two week course!)
5. Not as much as I hoped. Some aspects, like grain direction, will help with determining format. The description had advertised unbound artifacts and works on paper, such as maps, artwork, and manuscripts, but we did not discuss these at all. I wish we had covered writing paper vs. drawing paper vs. book paper. The focus was also very much on the U.S. & England, and did not talk about continental paper at all.
6. Yes, absolutely, and more.

7. Yes, although I wish I felt more confident. I would benefit from a second course.
8. Yes, and more.
9. {no response}
10. Yes! The hands-on papermaking sessions were especially helpful and enlightening, even if our pulp was less than ideal. CB is so knowledgeable, just listening to her talk and digress was always a treat.
11. The course met my expectations and trained my eye in ways I hadn't expected.
12. CB's willingness to answer any and all questions exceeded all expectations.
13. Yes.

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

1. I plan to use it in future work.
2. I leave this class with a much deeper understanding of paper manufacture and (hopefully) the skills to identify different types of paper.
3. As mentioned previously, I will use this knowledge to identify types of paper used in materials in my institution's collection and then perhaps educate others on this topic either through exhibits, talks, or hands-on activities.
4. I have always been interested in paper and learned about new ways to view paper. I will use that knowledge everyday in my work and my personal projects. I hope to pursue my research into a papermaker with the instructors help. I better understand paper and can better describe it and conserve it.
5. Mostly answering reference questions, although the focus wasn't as broad as it could have been.
6. I will use it in teaching and research.
7. To identify and describe archive items.
8. In my book business.
9. New eyes on old projects and thorough examinations of books and paper documents moving forward—nineteenth-century paper isn't boring!
10. It will significantly impact (and improve!) the sessions on paper during the history of the book course that I teach, and also help me to better describe and understand the books in my institutional collections.
11. I will use these skills in analyzing historical paper generally, but book paper in particular.
12. During future trips to archives/libraries.
13. It will become part of my "tool kit". As I look at a book it deepens the way I can evaluate unused material.

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

1. Everyone.

2. Anyone who deals with descriptive bibliography
3. Any special collections librarian or curator of paper-based materials.
4. Anyone interested in paper. The instructor's 2010 book was a revelation for me as a conservator and all this content is important and necessary for young conservators. Anyone dealing with books will find this course enlightening.
5. Booksellers, academics, curators. I think the topics were more suited towards beginners or those who haven't worked with paper in the past.
6. Librarians, booksellers, researchers of the book.
7. {no response}
8. Conservators.
9. Librarians, conservators, paper historians.
10. Conservators, binders, scholars, educators, and curators.
11. Anyone who left DesBib puzzled over how to make sense of paper in books from 1750 and beyond. Also anyone planning a survey project—the instructor's survey forms are quite fantastic to see as a model.
12. I'm not sure who else, but for a student of early American printing it was perfect!
13. Collectors, catalogers, and other book professionals.

7) *If applicable, what were the most powerful, or otherwise noteworthy educational moments in the course? Were there any "aha!" moments you'd like to share?*

1. There were a lot of educational moments. CB has a lot of knowledge to share.
2. Seeing paper where the rib shadows did not line up with the chain lines was incredibly enlightening.
3. The biggest "aha!" may have been learning that machine made paper was continuously molded and that lap marks can be seen where pieces join.
4. There were many and I cannot recall them now. But there were many and they will help me in the future.
5. I think I'm much better at distinguishing felt vs. wire side.
6. Seeing seams and wire repairs in nineteenth-century machine-made paper.
7. {no response}
8. History/changes in paper making.
9. {no response}
10. There were a number of "aha!" moments, which was a delight, but the hands-on paper making session was so vital and helpful—really made things click, and also helped me appreciate how much physical labor was involved!
11. Rope marks. How had I never heard of them before?!?
12. The pace from basic to complex information presented was perfect.
13. Handling and viewing enough material items that concepts become concrete.

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

1. I think having two review/answer sessions would benefit our ability to identify the type of paper. One at the end of our hand-press section and one at the end of the machine-made section.
2. {private response}
3. The only thing I can suggest is that perhaps the examples might be mixed up more by suppressing the publication dates which would make it more of a challenge perhaps to identify hand-made vs machine-made paper. Not sure?
4. I think the "format" section would be more illuminating if the RBS format sheets or perhaps a scaled down version of them were used in place of the "J. Whatman" sheets. The RBS set has deckles. Also, examining full sheets of handmade paper would be helpful to students without that experience. I don't think we saw a flat handmade sheet of paper in class. And perhaps a little more visual on how paper goes to print and gets made into books would be helpful to those who do not see the full picture.
5. The schedule could be improved. We were given four books to try to identify on the first day, spending only a minute with each. We then looked at dozens of other books on our own throughout the week, for four minutes each. Finally, we returned to the first four on the last day. First, this was not enough time to identify the paper making process. You simply do not have enough time to try to locate rope marks, stitching lines, &c. in one or even four minutes. Second, the books were random so some people were given four examples of antique laid, which was not useful. Third, there was not enough time to review all the books or receive feedback. A few ideas for improvement: the instructor should look at the books in advance and include page numbers for features we should notice; it would also help to review books as a class throughout the week. As it was, I have no idea how successful I was at the exercise. Perhaps an answer sheet could be distributed?
6. {private response}
7. I think it might be fun to have CB's answers written in for one book and we could look for the evidence that may have led her to that conclusion. Would have enjoyed CB looking over my shoulder for one book to confirm observations and guide to additional observations.
8. Looking forward to new facilities next year.
9. I think the paper making session could have been improved, it was pretty clear the pulp we used was not suitable. All my papers came out with no detail, it would have been nice to take a sample with each mold type home for reference—the pulp didn't allow for this. {private response}
10. I think the looking-at-books sessions could've been better organized/more efficient so we could all see every book (and avoid seeing the same book three times in some cases). Would've been nice to have had time to go through all of them during discussion, too. I want to know how many I got wrong!
11. I think some additional materials could have been helpful to have on hand—a binding

model that could be used to quickly show structure; a set of paper squares for the class to try the "tear test" on—e.g. origami or craft paper might be available to purchase in that format; a set of the facsimile sheets for format discussions. If other courses with printing demos are running in the same week, those would be worth a quick visit. I was also wondering if samples of wire mesh and a surface like Play-Doh might help with visualizing possible paper surface patterns.

12. I wish we could have reviewed together after each "looking-at-books" period to ensure we were all on the same page. It was hard to remember, on Friday, books from three or more days ago. The answer reviewing process was a bit frustrating/out of order.
13. Dividing the initial books for evaluations so that each person gets a distinct variety of different printing conditions.

9) *Do you feel that you got your money's worth? How likely are you to recommend this course to others? On a 1–10 scale, 1 would indicate that you disagree that you got your money's worth, 5 would indicate a neutral response, and 10 would indicate that you agree that you got your money's worth.*

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

10) *If your course made any (virtual) field trips outside of the classroom or had guest speakers, do you feel that they enhance the course experience?*

1. No, I think the experience is already rich in content from CB.
2. Yes! The papermaking workshop was wonderful!
3. Yes. Guest speakers added to the course.
4. We went to the papermaking studio which was essential to the class.
5. The paper making session was great! Definitely needed to visualize the process. {private response}
6. I very much enjoyed making paper. It gave me a much better understanding of—and

appreciation for—paper making by hand.

7. Paper making field trip was essential. Might mark felts for which vat as well as by person so we can see which mould made which paper.
8. Making paper.
9. {no response}
10. Again, the paper making experience was so helpful—and fun! I wish we could've done more and experimented more in the paper studio.
11. The papermaking lab was wonderful and a highlight of the course. Even when things went wrong, it was very much a learning experience.
12. Papermaking was fantastic! A note to bring water-friendly clothing pre-arrival to RBS would help, though.
13. N/A

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

1. I wouldn't hesitate to take this course, you will come out with a better understanding of identifying paper characteristics and how to talk about them.
2. Make sure to do the readings! They provide a very helpful introduction.
3. Not that I can think of, other than it was very enjoyable and a privilege to be here in the UVA setting for this course.
4. Probably more than I have shared but cannot recall anymore.
5. {no response}
6. I would recommend reading about format, collation, and imposition before taking the course.
7. {no response}
8. Do it.
9. If you stay in the dorm, bring your own bedding/sleeping bag.
10. Having some background or familiarity with format, imposition, and binding structure is helpful but not necessary.
11. The instructor's tremendous enthusiasm for the subject is the heart of this class. Her ability to guide the class toward what is knowable while acknowledging the possibility of error (and later discovery and correction) is perfect for working with this complex material.
12. Come ready to learn and ask questions!
13. {no response}

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

1. Wonderfully educational.

2. {no response}
3. Collegial.
4. This was the best week of my life since COVID!
5. {no response}
6. Always question other people's assumptions about paper.
7. Educational, challenging, fun.
8. Intense but fantastic.
9. {no response}
10. I've never been so happy to be so exhausted—I feel so full!
11. I feel so fortunate to have had the chance to study with one of the world's experts on historical paper!
12. The perfect way to learn a new topic in a friendly, productive environment.
13. Stimulating, satisfying.