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H-165: Book History, Bibliography, and Humanities Teaching
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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. They were useful and plentiful. More readings focusing on the global development of book history and/or edited volumes that engage a range of geographic regions, time periods, &c.
2. The readings were quite useful in preparing for the course. I might consider adding a few more popular press books, such as *A Gentle Madness*.
3. Very useful for establishing key background information that the course reinforced. There is a good amount of repetition among the books, but that helped reinforce the knowledge.
4. The pre-course readings were plentiful, and I might have cut out one or two {private response} The readings were useful though and, I think, gave us a shared common language, and made sure that students entered the class with a similar foundation. We discussed the readings very little in class, but I thought that was fine, because I think there were better ways to spend our time than reviewing the readings. Also, given that there were Asian Studies scholars in the class, it might have been nice to have one or two readings on the structure of the book in East Asia, to help give all of us a better (more global) foundation.
5. Yes! The readings are extensive but manageable if one starts early and uses a service like interlibrary loan to reduce the cost. The readings were engaging and interesting, and prepared me very well for the course.
6. Yes, very useful. I would suggest a course pack be created where full text articles or book chapters be included in the course pack—bearing in mind compliance with copyright. I think a course pack would fall into the Fair Use clause.
7. Yes, they were very useful, although a bit intimidating in number/length, I will admit. I will be revisiting them all in future years and trying to figure out the best ways to use them.
8. I found the pre-course assignments useful to a certain extent. I had previous familiarity with several of the texts and a lot of the concepts they introduced, but they were good to review and provide a shared basis for understanding among the class. I would like to see a book added that takes either a more global perspective as its central thread, or a book that covers an area other than the history of the book in the West as its main focus, since that was a topic that came up many times in the course and would have

been new and of interest for me to engage with.

9. I appreciated the range of the pre-course readings. These books seem excellent starting places for learning about the methods and materials of printing, the principles and applications of bibliography, and most especially the contours and debates shaping the history of the book as a field. When ready to turn to my own course design, I feel like I can move forward with confidence. {private response}
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 work book and teaching materials were expansive and incredibly helpful. A great range of information for both research and teaching.
2. Very useful content with even more useful illustrations. I believe it will serve me well after the course. There are also lots of materials in our shared drive that I have not yet accessed.
3. Excellent resource, especially in terms of practical teaching materials. I plan to use this heavily.
4. The Google Drive folder is amazing, though I don't quite follow the organizational logic of the folder. It will definitely continue to be useful after the course. I also appreciated the teaching supplies that were shared, like examples of quarto/octavo format, &c.
5. The Google Drive folder is extensive and could be organized a bit better, but I am glad to have it. It is a valuable resource with solid resources. There are many things I will be able to share with colleagues and refer back to as I move forward.
6. I appreciate receiving more print outs of the course materials, especially when I am not able to access the Internet to refer to the course materials in the course folder on Google Drive.
7. All of the teaching materials were incredibly relevant—both the materials we looked at in class and the vast trove of materials MFS shared with us in the folder. I will be drawing on these for years, I am quite sure.
8. The content in the course workbook and other teaching materials were useful and I will continue to explore and use it after the course. I appreciated the paper teaching tools we received, the examples of toolkits we could create, and the various handouts on assignments and readings in the workbook were good. I am looking forward to continuing to review the supplemental materials.
9. I so appreciated the handouts that help visualize book format. The course folder is full of so many wonderful suggestions for demonstration videos, assignments, the elements of a teaching collection—and insights on how to acquire these. Thank you!
10. I very much appreciate the shared Google Drive folder and supplementary materials. I

do think they will be useful going forward.

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. I found the guided pedagogical exercises and the examples of how you would teach books and material texts from SC very helpful. Additionally, I appreciated the guidance and suggestions on how to build teaching collections in our own institutions.
2. I loved being challenged to think about literature in specific historical contexts that are connected to publication history and to the concrete appearance of specific editions.
3. I have a much clearer vocabulary for analyzing and describing the material elements of books. I also walked away with a lot of teaching ideas and excitement for developing new courses. This class has also inspired me to redesign my Fall capstone course with a book historical final project.
4. The overview of specific teaching exercises was very helpful, as well as the discussion on important points of bibliography to cover. Even things not helpful to my current position, might be helpful in the future. Watching MFS teach in SC with rare books helped give me new ideas as to how I might approach teaching with special collections materials (in both similar and different ways!) I also appreciated that MFS emphasized collaboration as part of the Lang Fellowship—between faculty and librarians, across campus, &c. The conversation on how we will transform book historical culture on our campus with the matching funds gave me ideas on both projects for how to spend the money, and who to approach as partners/collaborators.
5. As someone who was unfamiliar with book history, this course provided a good introduction and has made me want to learn more. It was a real joy working alongside fellow educators from liberal arts colleges who are committed to undergraduate experiences. I came away with new ideas for engaging with my colleagues and communicating the value of our institution's rare book collection.
6. Listening and watching the instructor talking and demonstrating these really fascinating items in the SC, and for the course. Discussions on pedagogy of humanities teaching. Practical advice and brain-storming on post-Lang Fellowship activity to promote book cultures locally and beyond. Final presentation/teaching demonstration.
7. I especially liked the teaching in pairs examples, and I really enjoyed the assignment to explore, research, and teach a book from the RBS collection. I definitely got new research ideas but even more new teaching ideas (unsurprisingly, given the topic of the class). I also was really pleased to get more ideas about program building and fundraising, which I hadn't anticipated but found very valuable. {private response}
8. Getting to watch demonstrations of more in-depth teaching exercises with SC materials was invaluable to me. It gave me perspective on how I currently operate my classes and inspired me to continue to shift, adapt, and grow my teaching. I was also

intrigued by other descriptions of assignments we didn't necessarily see modeled in class. I am definitely leaving the week with new ideas and energy on how to improve my instruction.

9. I especially benefited from thinking about samples.
10. I found the course to be informative and inspiring. I appreciated seeing physical examples of some of the printing techniques we read about and discussed in class. I also found our discussion of possible teaching assignments, especially teaching in-pairs, to be useful.

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, I learned a lot about book history and bibliographic methods. Even if the information didn't directly engage with my areas of research and teaching it offered a greater sense of breadth and depth to my understanding of global book history.
2. Yes, indeed. The course was what I thought it would be, even exceeding my expectations.
3. Yes, it matches the course description well. I wasn't sure what to expect in terms of how the days are structured, but it was a nice mix of discussion, lecture, hands on activities, student presentations, and SC visits. For many activities, each student had a book in front of them (or a tackle box of lead type) to walk through key concepts.
4. Yes, I think this was a good overview of teaching book history, both as a course and as a one shot session.
5. Yes. MFS is a very knowledgeable and engaging instructor who understands the needs of educators at a variety of institutions.
6. Yes.
7. Yes, definitely. The overall experience was very satisfying and generative.
8. Yes! This class has the two-fold benefit of being a chance to learn from an RBS faculty member and to learn from the other educators in the course simultaneously. I feel that MFS imparted a lot of information to us about how to teach, the importance of bibliographic and book historical approaches, and skills on how to leverage that knowledge to educate undergraduates. Additionally, this Lang cohort has been a really marvelous resource that I have felt forming over this week and that I look forward to continuing to rely on after this.
9. Absolutely. MFS is a gifted teacher: engaging, informative, responsive to the needs and interests of the students. I learned from him not just sample content and lesson design but also ways to interact with students to create community. He spoke often of the necessity to inculcate wonder and to foster the twin processes of knowing and loving. He embodies this himself in his deep knowledge and unadulterated joy in sharing this material with others. It was a privilege to be in his class.
10. Yes! This was a great course. I would recommend it wholeheartedly to others.

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

1. I hope to return to my home institution and develop new book history courses as well as build a teaching collection.
2. I shall continue to work with special collections at my institution. I will share what I have learned with them, and be a better collaborator because I have been in this seminar with librarians and curators. My research will also change as I consider more and more ways to engage creatively with the history of the book.
3. I'm going to reach out to our special collections librarian to begin talking about possible collaborations. I'm also redesigning my research capstone to include a book history project. In the longer term, I plan to develop a book history class for my department.
4. I plan to use the skills and knowledge I acquired in this course to better teach undergraduate students with rare books. It's helped me rethink how I frame instruction sessions with rare materials
5. I plan to engage faculty on my campus in activities that will bring them into closer contact with rare books through a series of events and conversations. My idea right now is to tap their collective expertise to build a teaching collection.
6. Programs, exhibitions, lectures, student centered learning activities of engaging with historical sources.
7. I will bring many of the techniques and resources from the class into my own classes, most directly; I'm also really excited to use some of the strategies we discussed for program- and community-building to strengthen the humanities at my institution.
8. I am hoping to continue to share our knowledge, skills, and ideas within our cohort group after this class ends. I am planning to use the knowledge and skills acquired during this course to shift how I approach my role as an instructor coming into a faculty member's course—allowing myself more agency to contribute to assignment creation and course instruction. I am planning to share information on teaching with objects with other members of my department, my library, and faculty I teach with regularly; that way, we can continue to adapt the knowledge learned here to our institution.
9. So many ideas! I am excited to strengthen some of my lessons involving book materials and to develop ways to incorporate rare books/book history into other courses. After this course I feel emboldened to develop a general history of the book course, spanning different time periods and regions, and push myself out of my safety zones of field and discipline.
10. I plan to develop course modules on the history of printing and book history on route to (hopefully!) a full course on the history of the book.

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

1. Faculty and librarians working at liberal arts colleges.
2. Faculty members who want to revive their teaching by using primary materials in the classroom.
3. Any educators at smaller colleges would benefit. Those who focus on Western literature or history during the hand-press era will particularly benefit, but I think everyone in the class got a lot out of it.
4. Rare Books instruction librarians, and faculty who work closely with their special collections departments.
5. Instructors, both faculty and librarians, at liberal arts colleges who wish to more fully engage students and develop new kinds of assignments that directly connect students with primary sources and artifacts.
6. Everybody, if possible, but especially library and information professionals, faculty, curator of museums and historical societies, students, independent scholars and practitioners of printing and papermaking.
7. Educators (in libraries or faculty roles) who want to learn good strategies and best practices for teaching with historical sources and getting students excited about them. I think some historical bibliographical knowledge is a useful prerequisite (though definitely not required) as it makes some of the denser readings and more specialized bibliographical topics less overwhelming.
8. I think that faculty who regularly teach the same texts but that want to bring a new perspective to the texts they teach would greatly benefit from taking this course. I think that librarians, especially those working in special collections, would benefit from this course as a chance to confer with colleagues about teaching practices and hone their skills.
9. I definitely recommend this class for those who work with undergraduates in instructional settings, whether as classroom teachers or instructional librarians. Some of us in the course had experience with incorporating special collections materials into our classes; others had aspirations but didn't know where to start. My impression is no matter where one falls upon that spectrum, you will find this class invigorating and useful.
10. Faculty, librarians, and archivists at teaching-first institutions.

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. The numerous pairing exercises of books and materials texts in the special collections were exciting and revelatory. I really enjoyed that aspect of the course. I also really enjoyed the opportunity for engaged and lively discussion with the faculty and students in the course. I learned so much from my fellow classmates.
2. Times spent in SC were marvelous. There is no substitute for direct access and the

wonders of discovery this facilitates.

3. I loved the activities where we all had a hand-press era book in front of us and MFS walked us through how to identify chain lines, how to collate, fingerprint, etc. I also thought that the Harlequin Romance activity was the perfect way to start and set a tone that made it immediately clear that you can teach book history even with limited resources.
4. "Squad of mendicant teachers"—in discussion of the Paris Bible. The idea of teaching books in pairs—I think this will help frame most of my future teaching. Staying away from the idea of teaching as "behold the old book" (I hope I wasn't doing this, but it's a good reminder).
5. I really enjoyed completing the book study assignment because it gave me some insight into how an undergraduate student would approach it, and it was a lot of fun to hear what everyone else found in their research. Everyone in the class brought a lot of creative, positive energy.
6. When the instructor talks and demos edition and forgery detection from their own experiences of research.
7. There were so many "aha!" moments that it's hard to think back on just one—a tiny but fascinating one for me was when we were learning about the process of casting lead type and got to see the samples with the jet still attached—something about that remnant of process (that usually you never see because the jet is always snapped off) really captured my imagination.
8. There were two diagrams shared on day one that I will continue to think about. One is the Venn diagram of the overlap between literary knowledge, bibliographic knowledge, and social codes in studying materiality and meaning. The other is the "sine curve of learning," which shows how to prepare for, conduct, reflect on, and build from a session teaching with objects. I will be thinking about a lot of things from this course for a long time, but those two stand out, especially the second for how we used it to discuss the "wonder business" of our work. Finally, the first edition of *Leaves of Grass* almost brought me to tears unexpectedly when seeing it, for no discernable reason. Just another case for the power of spending time with materials.
9. {no response}
10. I especially appreciated our discussions of teaching in pairs, e.g., seeing how pairing a romance novel with a manga/graphic novel could be an effective (and relatively inexpensive) way to help students start to think more deeply about "the book," broadly construed.

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

1. Perhaps sharing more examples of texts outside of Europe and the United States.
2. Perhaps discussing some of the readings we did pre-course in a more systematic fashion. I brought all my books but only used one in an independent project.

3. Frequency of breaks and snacks was perfect. Bookseller night was very cool. The small cohort of ten students worked really well to build community. Thank you for a great experience!
4. I was uncertain of the structure of the course, we never received a syllabus. It would have helped.
5. I would have liked to have seen more global representation in the examples we saw, so that I can understand book history from a more comparative perspective.
6. Handouts about the outline of contents to be covered for the day, with bibliographical information of the key works covered /reviewed, and key technical terms mentioned.
7. {private response}
8. I think a little more chance to introduce ourselves before the course might have been worthwhile.
9. {private response}
10. No, this course was thoughtfully designed and executed.

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. 10
3. 10
4. 10
5. 10
6. 10
7. 10
8. 10
9. 10
10. 10

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. N/A
2. Yes, indeed. The lectures were different but useful for thinking through course materials. We always followed up in class with a discussion of those experiences.
3. SC visits were really enlightening and exciting.
4. N/A
5. N/A
6. One of the speakers for the guest lectures attended our session in SC. It was nice to see

him there and to interact with him directly.

7. Absolutely, we made multiple visits to SC and they added a lot to the experience. I do think we could have still had a very successful class in our classroom alone, though, because there was such a wealth of material there (and I was very glad to have many things that we could handle since we weren't allowed to touch the SC materials).
8. Our course took trips to the UVA SC which were wonderful bonuses to the course experience.
9. {no response}
10. I very much appreciated visiting SC. I also enjoyed both guest speakers/evening lectures.

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

1. {no response}
2. I've been to many faculty summer seminars all over the country. RBS is the place where I've learned the most. I am now a different, more conscientious, reader of the entire book. This will revolutionize my work in print and in the classroom.
3. Do the reading, and get to know your classmates.
4. Give yourself enough time to do the reading, there's a lot, but it's worth taking the time.
5. The pre-reading list is long, and some of the readings are dense, but they really do enhance your experience and provide a deeper understanding of the material discussed in class.
6. {no response}
7. Take it if you can!
8. My advice would be to not to discount this course because you think you already know the material, either beforehand or when you arrive. This course has value for anyone who teaches with special collections, either as a starting point or as a refresher down the line.
9. If you are an introvert who worries that this will be a week of too much togetherness, don't be afraid! RBS does a marvelous job of fostering community.
10. I did not bring my laptop. I didn't realize I would have to give a presentation/do outside research. Normally, a tablet would have been fine but because my hotel's Wi-Fi was intermittent, it made the research portion of the class challenging. A laptop, because it has more functionality, might have made the "homework" easier.

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

1. It was a fantastic experience and I'm grateful for the wonderful community of scholars.
2. RBS is A++

3. Hands-on learning lingers longer; “look at this cool old book” lasts least.
4. Inspiring.
5. I filled an entire notebook with notes. And this is just the beginning.
6. It is a fascinating, eye-opening and mind-broadening experience!
7. intellectually stimulating and inspiring!
8. Squad of teachers becoming conveyors of wonder through experiencing it.
9. Inspiring.
10. Informative and inspiring!