

David Pearson
B-65: English Bookbindings, 1450-1850: Identification and Interpretation
July 28–August 2

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, very useful. David Pearson's books were especially helpful for getting a handle on terminology.
 2. Somewhat, but not necessary. Familiarity with English Bookbinding Styles was helpful.
 3. Yes—reading David Pearson's book ahead of time provided a framework for the class.
 4. I am very glad I read David's book before class. It was a lot of information to absorb, and I will be referring to it again. I had a difficult time finding and finishing some of the other works before class. I am glad they were only suggested.
 5. Yes, wish I'd had time to memorize the Pearson book.
 6. The pre-course reading was optional but definitely helpful as a refresher or as an introduction to someone who is entirely new to the subject. I highly recommend the reference book by M. Cook.
 7. Yes. David called this course the "movie version" of his book, so reading that cover to cover will really set you up for this course (though not strictly necessary). He could suggest going to libraries and looking at bindings so people have a frame of reference when beginning.
 8. Yes, directly relevant since the main and best one was written by the instructor.
 9. Yes.
 10. Readings useful, but not a substitute for seeing the bindings.
 11. Yes—David's book.
 12. I couldn't get through the whole reading list, but what I read was useful.
 13. Very useful.
- 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 found all materials very useful, and especially appropriate was the extensive bibliography in the workbook for our future reference.
 2. Workbook was excellent and provided the perfect amount of structure for note-taking. Other handouts were great as well. I will certainly reference in the future.
 3. The workbook was amazingly helpful because it was so thorough. {private response}
 4. I love the materials. I took a number of pictures and will be putting all of them together with notes to refer to later and to train staff.
 5. While recognizing the technical challenge, I'd prefer the illustrations to be incorporated with the chronological centers.
 6. Very well organized and systematic, which I found very useful for annotating and

- for following along during lectures/discussions. I will definitely be referring to the workbook often in future.
7. Yes, absolutely! The coursebook was basically the notes for David's PowerPoint slides, so I didn't need to furiously take notes the whole time and could pay attention (especially to the pictures because they're important) and annotate as necessary.
 8. Excellent and extremely useful. Will be very helpful for future reference.
 9. Great trip to Folger. Lots of books to see. ☺
 10. Appropriate and useful. Will become a part of my reference library.
 11. Beautiful color photos—I will continue to consult.
 12. Yes to all, and the visuals will be particularly helpful in the future. I will definitely be referring to the workbook.
 13. Very useful. I will keep the workbook near my desk so that I can refer to it when needed.
- 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. I have already incorporated some of the knowledge gleaned here into a recent dissertation chapter. And I look forward to using it to help make me more conversant in archival scenes.
 2. Information will be valuable in conversations with colleagues as we make decisions about collection materials with high artifactual value, and will help to preserve this value.
 3. I hope to be able to incorporate knowledge of historical bindings into my future academic work on manuscripts.
 4. I am very excited to use my knowledge and have a number of potential projects upcoming where it will be very helpful. My next step will be to look into some Italian bindings and compare them.
 5. I shall try to be a better cataloger. Would love to see some DH analysis of stylistic tool shapes.
 6. The course has provided me with a solid foundation in understanding and appreciating the various design elements and their changes over time. I came away with a greater appreciation of changes in binding practices as more of a continuum.
 7. This course provides a great base for binding identification and what that might tell you about the book but you still need to go away and look at lots of bindings to really get it and make it stick. I hope to start with a spreadsheet of info describing early bindings in my library, perhaps incorporating into the catalog.
 8. Will try to use the info in my research on surviving copies of a particular book.
 9. Yes, improve my web descriptions.
 10. Useful for understanding my collection.
 11. I will emphasize the material culture more in teaching. I will ask myself harder questions in the archives.
 12. I have an interest in material practice in my degree that will certainly be served by the course. It reinforced McLuhan's assertion that "the medium is the message" to a degree and depth that I've never experienced before. It was so enriching.
 13. I hope to start incorporating binding descriptions into my catalog records when appropriate.

- 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! Only positive things to say about David who was clear, thorough, funny, and approachable.
 2. Yes!
 3. Yes, and more!
 4. Yes, I feel like I've learned a great deal. I hope RBS will continue to offer this course.
 5. Absolutely, well, if I were smarter.
 6. Yes, very much so.
 7. Generally yes. I don't think anyone is walking away with the ability to instantly date any binding, but you need to develop a sense of changing styles over time based on the skills gained in this class.
 8. Yes, through varied approaches—lectures with PowerPoint, actual examples, and direct hands-on examination.
 9. Yes and more.
 10. Yes.
 11. More than I hoped.
 12. Yes, and more.
 13. Yes. Yes.
- 5) *Are there other ways in which the course could have been improved?*
1. Perhaps more practice—this sort of skill clearly takes lots of drilling!
 2. This is very basic, but I find it difficult to toggle between ways of describing dates, i.e. converting “mid 16th century” to “1550's.” Not sure if there is a way around this, but sometimes felt it was hard to keep up with the discussion as a result.
 3. I found the course very well organized and well-paced. The tooling demos and the Folger trip were terrific additions to lecture.
 4. With so many dates being thrown around, especially when I am tired at the end of the day, I begin to mix up centuries. A nice timeline would be helpful to visualize the progression more clearly.
 5. Would only suggest brief mini-quizzes after each section to help us remember.
 6. Perhaps a section on tools and tool shapes would be helpful.
 7. Wouldn't mind a little more on binding structure.
 8. The books we saw at the Folger had excellent descriptions in the workbook, but there were so many that I need to go back over them—so, thumb-nail photos with the description would be helpful for later study.
 9. More pre-course references.
 10. I feel I have learned to identify historic binding styles. I can attach the style to a date range from the late 17th century on. Need to get more comfortable dating earlier styles.
 11. None.
 12. N/A
 13. No.
- 6) *Who might benefit the most from taking this RBS course?*

1. Anyone who works directly with English books from 1400–1800. Especially librarians and scholars.
 2. Binding historians, conservators, catalogers. The class had a variety of students, and it was great to hear the different perspectives.
 3. Anyone with an interest and preferably some experience on pre-industrial books. Having seen a number of such bindings before the course really helps contextualize what we learn.
 4. Anyone who works with bindings from this period or who has an interest in the evolution of craft and ornament.
 5. Anyone who handles books in a substantive way. Bindings so often aren't contemporary to imprint, and one can learn a lot by the differences.
 6. Anyone interested in historic bindings and in identifying them.
 7. Anyone who wants to learn more about English bindings, especially decoration/styles. Probably best if you have practical application of working with these bindings (the knowledge is probably use it or lose it).
 8. Conservators, catalogers, bibliographers and historians.
 9. Dealers, librarians.
 10. {no response}
 11. Any faculty—like me—will benefit from David's teaching style he models.
 12. I personally think everyone would, but particularly those who work directly with cataloging/identifying/researching rare books.
 13. Those who work with English bookbindings from 1450–1840.
- 7) *Do you feel that you got your money's worth? Would you recommend the course to others?*
1. Yes, without reservation!
 2. Yes!
 3. Absolutely. A delightful as well as useful experience.
 4. Yes!
 5. If you want to learn about binding, this is the course for you!
 6. Yes, absolutely to both questions.
 7. Yes, absolutely!
 8. Yes, absolutely.
 9. Yes.
 10. Yes.
 11. Absolutely.
 12. Yes!
 13. Yes. Yes.
- 8) *If your course made any trips outside of the classroom, do you feel that they were time well spent?*
1. Yes—our trip to the Folger provided the most hand's-on learning of any day of the week. No substitute for just seeing tons of books!
 2. Yes!
 3. Definitely. The Folger trip helped solidify our learning by showing us a number of examples, all in chronological order, that RBS doesn't independently have access

- to.
4. Yes! The Folger is wonderful.
 5. The trip to the Folger makes for a long day but it is well worth the effort.
 6. The field trip to the Folger was well worth it. The examples we were able to view and examine were superb.
 7. Yes, the trip to the Folger was great! It is really helpful just to hear David describe bindings and the Folger has a collection worthy of his expertise. Also, I'd never been and it's wonderful (and we stopped for ice cream on the way back!).
 8. Yes, the Folger's collections were an excellent resource!
 9. Yes, Folger
 10. I was initially concerned that the Folger visit would not be worth the driving time. I was wrong—it was definitely worthwhile to take advantage of their collection.
 11. Folger Library = filled me with awe. Also loved connecting with classmates at the Moo-Thru.
 12. Definitely—the Folger was amazing.
 13. Yes.
- 9) *Do you have any additional thoughts or advice for anyone considering taking this course in a future year?*
1. {no response}
 2. {no response}
 3. Reviewing the workbook for the upcoming lecture before class would be very useful preparation.
 4. Do it!
 5. Don't wait. Decorative vocabularies are complex and take time to master. The earlier one begins, the better.
 6. Fully expect to participate and learn from the instructor and others in the class.
 7. IF you have the ability, inclination, and use for an RBS course, do one! It's exhausting but completely worth it. Drink coffee and take breaks from people when you need to. Also, bring an umbrella!
 8. Do the reading in advance!
 9. Always look at recommended reading as a reference.
 10. {no response}
 11. David not only teaches a detailed historical overview of bindings, he fosters rigorous thinking, how to identify relevant questions, how to access the soundness of your claims, and how to revise in response to criticism. Do not miss this deep, challenging, beautiful experience.
 12. N/A
 13. It's a great course, and David is a wonderful instructor who really knows the material.
- 10) *If you had to sum up your RBS experience with a single sentence, phrase, or haiku, what would you say?*
1. From novice to skilled bookbinding identifier in only five days' time!
 2. {no response}
 3. Rolls, fleurons, and straps.

- Cambridge Panels, Cottage roofs.
 Bindings all week long!
4. A lovely week away from normal life to learn with others with similar interests.
 5. Knowledge is love, yes!
 While learning is difficult,
 We yearn for the goal.
 6. Bravo!
 7. Wonderful!
 8. Please, sir, I want some more!
 9. Brilliance as a way of life.
 10. {no response}
 11. {no response}
 12. Absolutely fascinating and inspiring; I can't wait to return to RBS.
 13. Great, as always.

Student Data

Number of respondents: 13 (of 13)

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

- My institution/employer gave me professional leave time: 7 (53.85%)
 I am self-employed, and can arrange my own schedule: 2 (15.38%)
 I am a student or non-year-round employee, with a more flexible summer schedule: 3 (23.08%)
 I am retired, and can arrange my own schedule: 1 (7.69%)

Who paid your RBS tuition costs?

- I paid 100% myself: 4 (30.77%)
 My institution/employer paid 100%: 7 (53.85%)
 I used a scholarship/fellowship to pay/waive 100%: 1 (7.69%)
 I exchanged goods or services in lieu of tuition: 1 (7.69%)

Who paid your RBS housing expenses?

- I paid 100% myself: 7 (53.85%)
 My institution/employer paid 100%: 2 (15.38%)
 My institution/employer paid part; I paid the rest: 2 (15.38%)
 I stayed with friends/family, or stayed in my own home and commuted: 1 (7.69%)
 My situation does not fit any of the options above: 1 (7.69%)

Who paid your RBS travel expenses?

- I paid 100% myself: 9 (69.23%)
 My institution/employer paid 100%: 1 (7.69%)

My institution/employer paid part; I paid the rest: 2 (15.38%)
My situation does not fit any of the options above: 1 (7.69%)

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

Library disciplines:

Cataloger/metadata librarian: 3 (23.08%)
Conservator/binder/preservation librarian: 2 (7.69%)
Special collections librarian: 2 (7.69%)

Student working toward a/n:

B.A./B.S.: 1 (7.69%)
Ph.D./D.Phil: 1 (7.69%)

Professional educator:

Assistant professor: 2 (15.38%)

Book trades:

Antiquarian bookseller: 1 (7.69%)

Other occupations/vocations:

Independent scholar: 1 (7.69%)