

David Whitesell
G-20: Printed Books to 1800: Description & Analysis
9–14 June 2019

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. The readings were useful. I couldn't find the time to do them all before class, but DW reiterated all of the necessary information, so it wasn't a problem.
 2. Yes, no need to change assignments themselves. That said, it might be nice to have the schedule of readings by course day in advance.
 3. Very useful and practical.
 4. Yes, I thought the readings were useful to give a grounding in the subjects discussed, and the videos made it easier to follow some of the procedures described.
 5. Yes.
 6. Yes, particularly Gaskell. Bowers really benefits from the actual performance of collation and I found less useful as a preliminary read.
 7. The readings were extremely useful; while it may seem like Bowers' and Gaskell's books are "a bit much," they truly provide a great foundation for the G-20 course.
 8. They were very good. Information-dense but not overwhelming. They provided a solid basis for the class to cover.
 9. The readings were useful—there is so much information to absorb in class it is very helpful to have background reading and some detailed information ahead of time. The time to practice folding facsimile sheets ahead of time helped.
 10. The reading assignments were very useful and helped prepare for the course.
 11. Yes, but there was a lot. I appreciated that DW gave us a reading schedule throughout the week, as it made it manageable.
 12. Yes, I learned a lot from Gaskell and Carter. I wasn't sure what I was supposed to do with the facsimiles before the course, though.

- 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 workbook is an excellent resource, which I'm sure I will refer to in the future. The collating worksheets were not used in class. They are fun to have but not an essential purchase and were also awkward to pack in my travel luggage.
 2. Everything distributed in class was really great (including workbook). It is clear that a lot of work has gone into making these materials comprehensive and comprehensible.
 3. Every bit of the course workbook was carefully curated and will be useful beyond the life of this course! The workbook has earned a place on the "ready reference" shelf in my workspace.
 4. I think the workbook was organized well and was very useful. I plan on keeping it in my office as a reference for when I need a refresher.

5. Very helpful to have an organized binder of materials, and I hope to use it in the future. It might be helpful to have space for notes throughout instead of a notepad at the end.
 6. I found most of the workbook relevant and helpful to the in-class exercises. I will definitely refer to it as I collate for work
 7. The course workbook was excellent. It made class lectures and activities easy to follow and gives me excellent resources to consult now that the course has concluded.
 8. It was of use during the class, but I'm more excited to use it at work. Lots of good reference images and explanations.
 9. Yes, and I will refer to the workbook often, alongside my notes, when I return to my institution.
 10. The course workbook is a gem—so detailed, clear, and comprehensive. I will definitely continue to consult it.
 11. Yes, all of these were helpful—even more so than the course textbooks.
 12. Absolutely. RBS's collection of teaching materials is quite impressive.
- 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. There were "aha!" moments every day. I will use all kinds of information I've learned in the university courses that I teach.
 2. I will certainly return to my institution with an eye toward using our special collections in more interactive and engaging ways (as seen in this course). I will also likely use collational formulas in my research notes.
 3. The primary application of the skills and knowledge acquired will be to instruct and to answer questions from reading room/other patrons. Secondary uses include consulting with colleagues in technical services, as well as producing exhibits of pre-1800 handpress period books in my institutional holdings.
 4. I plan on spending more time looking at the different kinds of evidence of provenance, printing history, and physical makeup to highlight more aspects of the book I come in contact within my records.
 5. I don't know yet because of my career stage, but I hope to teach with material from the handpress period, and this will help me help students navigate sources.
 6. I took the course to bolster my knowledge of book and printing history, as well as to learn the basics of collation. In all three areas I leave with a deeper understanding and more familiarity.
 7. I walked away with at least a dozen "aha!" moments—all of which will add new vigor to my dissertation project.
 8. The knowledge I gained is going to help me create vastly more descriptive catalog records.
 9. I will be able to do a better job identifying and describing the book features of interest to my library's users so they can find these books. I also have an interest now in pursuing some aspects of bibliography myself.
 10. The course material will help me more accurately describe the materials I study. I've come away with new insights into the fabrication histories of the books I work with and a comparative sense for European materials. I'm excited to look at my research with new eyes!
 11. The information I acquired will be very helpful for my research and teaching. Yes,

there were a number of “aha!” moments.

12. I'll be able to use these cataloging provenance. I'm particularly interested in applying what I've learned to a supposed pirated sixteenth-century copy of the Divine Comedy that my institution was recently gifted.

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. I learned what I hoped to learn, and more! I loved how many topics we touched upon, and each substantially enough not to feel artificial.
2. Yes, and yes. In fact, I got more out of this class than I had anticipated.
3. Absolutely. DW's lectures were very logical, thorough, and interesting! Hands-on opportunities to compose type, print, collate handpress books, and investigate provenance clues made for a very rich, practical experience to complement the bibliographic theory.
4. Yes; though the course covered many topics, it touched on key points of each of them.
5. Yes—DW was great, and content and skills acquired as expected.
6. {no response}
7. I learned what I had hoped to learn and more. The instructor's pacing was consistent and conducive to my learning experience.
8. I learned everything I wanted to and some more concepts that I wasn't previously aware of.
9. Yes.
10. Yes.
11. Yes.
12. Yes.

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

1. The World Cat Gutenberg Bible example could have been glossed on the first day and then returned to at the end of the week in order to better foreshadow the utility of all that would be covered in the course.
2. N/A
3. A small improvement could be made in the manner in which content was arranged—perhaps not spending as much time on illustration processes and more time on binding styles.
4. {no response}
5. I think we could have spent less time talking through basic collation formulas, as the advance reading covered it well, and gotten to the hands-on part sooner. Then we could perhaps have done without the evening session.
6. {no response}
7. This course was excellent, and I would change nothing about its delivery.
8. Given the time limits, I think it did everything it possibly could.
9. Maybe even more hands-on practice identifying features, and describing them in class, but I know we need time for presenting class content also!
10. {no response}
11. Less collating. We spent a lot of time doing formulas, and the other information was also interesting and important. If possible, more time to look at text related to

our own interests/fields.

12. I can't think of any. I really like how the course was structured so that lectures were broken up with practical demonstrations.

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

1. Cataloguers, Library Science folks, researchers utilizing books printed between 1400 and 1900.
2. Anyone who works with handpress books, who needs to describe them, frankly.
3. Catalogers, curators, outreach coordinators, archivists, and librarians.
4. Those who are looking to understand more about how books were physically constructed.
5. Scholars of the handpress period in any discipline, rare books librarians, instruction librarians at institutions with rare books.
6. {no response}
7. PhD students, and book lovers with limited to novice knowledge about book production would benefit the most.
8. Anyone with a base of rare book knowledge looking for the next step.
9. Anyone who wants to learn how books in the Western tradition came into being, whether for work with books of the handpress period or other cultural traditions comparatively.
10. Anyone who wants to be able to look at a printed book 1600–1800 and have a better understanding for how it was assembled and how it may have been modified throughout its history.
11. Rare Book libraries who work with European and American materials. Teachers who work with books and teach topics related to book history.
12. Catalogers, historians (of various disciplines) who are interested in the book as a physical object.

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

1. I would recommend this course based on its description to anyone interested in the topics covered.
2. Yes, and yes.
3. Yes.
4. Yes, I would, especially if they are looking to learn about many issues worthy of research and description in rare books. It would be especially helpful for those seeking examples of rare books.
5. Yes.
6. {no response}
7. Yes! I paid for this course alone and outright, but it was worth every penny.
8. Yes to both.
9. Yes, and yes.
10. Yes, definitely.
11. Yes.
12. Yes!

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

well spent?

1. Our visit to SC was lovely.
 2. Yes.
 3. The trip to SC was most interesting. I especially appreciate that the class was divided in half for this visit to give students more space and ability to view objects pulled more intimately.
 4. Yes, the printing demonstration put the diagrams in the reading into perspective, and we were able to see great examples related to our topics in the UVA SC.
 5. Yes.
 6. {no response}
 7. Yes—visits to SC and the print studio were excellent uses of our class time.
 8. Yes, the SC trip was well worth it.
 9. Yes, to the SC. {private response}
 10. Yes—we went to SC and it was a treat to see the books we looked at there, which were well selected to compliment the course material.
 11. Yes—SC was great.
 12. Yes.
- 9) *Do you have any additional thoughts or advice for anyone considering taking this course in a future year?*
1. Having two collation workshops in the evening was perhaps overkill. One would suffice. DW has an incredible wealth of knowledge. It was a privilege to be taught this material by him.
 2. This class will provide you with a vocabulary for describing the material characteristics of a book's facture. You will also learn methods for conveying this information. It is not a lightweight class, but you will feel fulfilled by the work.
 3. Do the reading in advance and watch Terry Belanger's lecture on YouTube!
 4. {no response}
 5. {Points to response on 4.7} While I think I chose the right course, it would be helpful to have more guidance regarding the "level" of the course when applying.
 6. {no response}
 7. Think deeply about whether descriptive bibliography is what you wish to pursue—analytical bibliography may be more useful to your interest.
 8. It's exhausting, but it's worth it.
 9. {no response}
 10. {no response}
 11. Make sure you get lots of sleep and eat on time. Make sure you get outside during lunchtime. There are long days inside.
 12. It's a bit of a tiring week, but it conveys A LOT of information very effectively.
- 10) *If you had to sum up your RBS experience with a single sentence, phrase, or haiku, what would you say?*
1. #Bowers4Hours
 2. Rigorous, dynamic, materially based.
 3. A treasure!
 4. It was definitely a packed week of learning, but one that will inform my work for years to come!

5. Intense week of engagement with books and book people.
6. {no response}
7. The experience of a lifetime.
8. Can't wait to come back next year.
9. Time well spent and enjoyed.
10. {no response}
11. Intensive, insightful, eye-opening about different fields of material processes and approaches to books.
12. Deep-dive into both unique features of individual books and larger practices in the production of handpress period books.

Student Data

Number of respondents: 12 (of 12)

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

My institution/employer gave me professional leave time: 4 (33.33%)

My institution/employer did not give me professional leave; I used paid or vacation days: 3. (25%)

I am a student or non-year-round employee, with a more flexible summer schedule: 5 (41.67%)

Who paid your RBS tuition costs?

I paid 100% myself: 3 (15%)

My institution/employer paid 100%: 2 (16.67%)

I used a scholarship/fellowship to pay/waive 100%: 6 (50%)

My situation does not fit any of the options above: 1 (8.33%)

Who paid your RBS housing expenses?

I paid 100% myself: 8 (66.67%)

My institution/employer paid 100%: 4 (33.33%)

Who paid your RBS travel expenses?

I paid 100% myself: 5 (41.67%)

My institution/employer paid 100%: 3 (25%)

My institution/employer paid part; I paid the rest: 1 (8.33%)

I used a scholarship/fellowship to cover 100%: 1 (8.33%)

I used a scholarship/fellowship to cover part; I paid the rest: 2 (16.67%)

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

Library disciplines:

Archivist: 2 (16.17%)

Cataloger/metadata librarian: 3 (25%)

Student working toward a/n:

Ph.D./D.Phil: 2 (16.67%)

Professional educator:

Lecturer/adjunct: 1 (8.33%)

Assistant professor: 3 (25%)

Associate professor: 1 (8.33%)