

Nick Wilding  
G-65: Forgeries, Facsimiles & Sophisticated Copies  
7-12 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. They were useful and interesting.
  2. Yes, useful, but difficult or expensive to track some of them down. Having PDFs of the articles would have been helpful (even if just added to the course pack).
  3. Yes. If an overview of the history of forgery, and/or a more critical reflection on the definition of forgery exists, those would be welcome additions. {private response}
  4. Reading assignments all relevant to later class discussion.
  5. Yes, very.
  6. They were very useful; I don't have anything else I could add at this time.
  7. The list was long but useful, but the readings were not always used explicitly.
  8. I think they were very useful, although it was hard to track down the Schweidler.
  9. Always good preparation.
  10. Yes.
  11. Readings helpful. Include PDF link to ABC for Book Collectors. Links to more recent articles mentioned in class.
  12. Yes, they were important to have read.
  13. Essential.
  
- 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 content is useful and will continue to be, although some of the images are a little dark/unclear (photocopies of screenshots), reducing their usefulness. Perhaps color printing might have had better results.
  2. Would like to see content in workbook fleshed out more, especially the descriptions of items we saw in class. Also, better quality would help.
  3. The material in the course workbook is a useful reference, but it would be even better with higher-quality reproductions.
  4. Workbook worth keeping for later reference.
  5. Useful/useful/useful.
  6. Useful. I intend to refer to it in future.
  7. Very good. Maybe a glossary and bibliography could be useful to add.
  8. I'm not sure that it was super useful. The photocopy quality made some things difficult to see.
  9. Very good after.
  10. Workbook fine for the week, but it falls short of being a useful reference for future use, which, perhaps was understood going in.
  11. Workbook helpful. Exercises simple, relevant. Will be useful refresher after course.

12. Workbook was helpful, but I don't think it will be a resource in the future. But the book list that is promised to be emailed will be.
  13. Certainly helpful but not essential (for the most part). Many diagrams/pictures were too low quality to be really helpful.
- 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 leave with an even greater appreciation for intimate understanding of historical and contemporary printing processes and their identification. I also learned many key characteristics to look for when evaluating the authenticity of early printed books.
  2. Still assimilating, but it gave me lots of things to look for and/or be aware of.
  3. I'm not yet sure how I will use this knowledge, but the course gave me many new ideas about print, the material object, and the crucial role of social networks in constructing meaning and visibility.
  4. Aha-I can try my hand at forgeries! The kind of stuff I buy is not likely to be forged.
  5. Improves my appraisal practice.
  6. Still ruminating on this.
  7. There were many. This course will make a tremendous impact in my daily practice as a rare book curator.
  8. I don't have any specific plans, but I'll definitely approach the materials from a new perspective. Various resources mentioned are now on my "to read" list!
  9. My eyes were opened to the many possibilities of fraud—scary!
  10. The course has sharpened my eye and attuned my senses to pursue any "that looks wrong..." aspects of material I handle. Follow-up thoughts: acquire some additional printed references and tools of which I became aware during the course of the week.
  11. Useful for teaching exercises. Motivation for further research. Pen facsimiles and their existence, importance of signature and page measurements helpful.
  12. I plan to look with new eyes at the books in my collection, read dealer's offerings with more scrutiny, and examine possible purchases using some of the techniques shown.
  13. I have a number of items for which I now have a whole variety of techniques/approaches to use to authenticate them. Many "aha" moments. My favorite was "printers produce sheets not pages," and a myriad of things that implies.
- 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 very much about forgery and sophistication of early printed books, and this was absolutely wonderful.
  2. Yes, I think so?
  3. The course provided an excellent introduction to issues of identifying and making copies and variants.
  4. Yes, very much so.
  5. Yes/Yes and more.

6. I think so.
7. Yes, I would have loved to see/learn more about recognizing different reproduction styles.
8. NW is a wonderful instructor: engaging, witty, and clearly knowledgeable. The Thursday forgery exercise was fantastic!
9. And more.
10. Yes, most definitely, on both questions.
11. Examples and instruction helpful. Articulate, easy to follow examples.
12. Yes, but, as is common, I also learned how much more I need to know.
13. Yes. Yes.

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

1. I feel like the class could benefit from having a narrowed focus, or being broken into two separate courses, or perhaps from being co-taught by NW and a specialist in modern printing methods. The scope of this class was enormous, as the topic of fakes, forgeries, facsimiles, &c., &c., is.
2. {private response} I would like to see more focus on looking at stuff. Didn't get enough of that. Also, I think people need to come into this class with knowledge of printing processes, both for text and image—too much time spent on “what's a relief print, what's an intaglio print,” &c., that could have been better spent on other things. Also maybe focus course—just handpress, or something like that. I also assume the class will change as RBS acquires more materials for it.
3. I would have liked to spend more time hashing out definitions for the various kinds of copies we examined. It would also be great to trace the historical development of forgery as a practice and to contextualize book forgeries in a larger/longer history of other types of forgeries. It would also be fantastic to delve into some of the theoretical and epistemological problems posed to bibliography by forgery. {private response}
4. Please include in the online course description a sentence or two about bringing a book or document for class discussion.
5. No.
6. Not sure.
7. There were a lot of people in the course. More work in little groups could have made the course more interactive.
8. We pretty much never stuck to the syllabus. Doesn't bother me at all, but it might make some people a little twitchy.
9. {No response.}
10. {No response.}
11. More extensive bibliography that detailed case samples looked at.
12. I think more hands-on book examination with more introductions to each book of what to look for.
13. Many of the diagrams drawn in class would have better served the subject had they been drawn better/ahead of time. Certainly it was useful to see some of the diagrams being built-up. But this could be done with PowerPoint [?]/builds.

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

1. Anyone involved in libraries, conservation, or the book trade who has a firm

- understanding of papermaking and printmaking techniques.
2. Anyone and everyone, but people who encounter physical objects and need to know how to look at them in different ways.
  3. In its current iteration, I think this course is most useful to dealers and collectors. {private response}
  4. Wannabe forgers???—Collectors, dealers and librarians who need to know about the authenticity of materials and how to look for them.
  5. Most persons interested in and/or working with books, manuscripts, documents, &c.
  6. Anyone interested in starting a conversation with a book or other printed object that just doesn't "look" right.
  7. A lot of people: booksellers, curators, collectors with a substantial bibliographic basic knowledge.
  8. {No response.}
  9. Dealers, collectors, institutional staff that buy.
  10. Anyone handling material that may reasonably be expected to be a fake, forgery, or sophistication.
  11. Appraisers, questioned document examiners, rare book librarians, and catalogers.
  12. Students who have a grounding in printing history and are familiar with the vocabulary will get the most out of it.
  13. Archivists, librarians, collectors, curators.
- 7) *Do you feel that you got your money's worth? Would you recommend the course to others?*
1. I do and I would, but I do believe we would have been able to go deeper if all of the students had come with a more detailed understanding of how books and printed objects are (and have been) produced.
  2. Yes and yes.
  3. Yes, and yes.
  4. Yes; yes.
  5. Yes/yes.
  6. Yes, and double yes.
  7. Yes.
  8. Yes and yes!
  9. Yes, yes—already have.
  10. Absolutely. Already have. ☺
  11. Yes. Would recommend to others.
  12. Yes. 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. I enjoyed the printmaking activity, but it would have been nice to expand it to allow for more experimentation.
  2. Went to SC—size of room and group wasn't a good match. Hard to see things.
  3. Yes. I do think that it would be interesting to use the printing workshop as an opportunity to conduct a more focused attempt at really trying to replicate an

- original print.
4. Review and practice of printing on the Vandercook from a polymer plate was great.
  5. N/A
  6. I do.
  7. The print demo and visits to SC were not really essential.
  8. Not particularly: my classmates weren't very self-aware, so I spent a lot of time staring at the backs of their heads when they huddled around the books. Couldn't see much.
  9. SC library is lovely.
  10. Absolutely, love Michaels Bar and Taproom.
  11. SC, printing press demo helpful.
  12. N/A
  13. N/A
- 9) *Do you have any additional thoughts or advice for anyone considering taking this course in a future year?*
1. NW is wonderful. Learning about his work in person is a rare opportunity, and he was always generous and thoughtful with his students.
  2. Nope—just that it's really interesting, and I have a feeling it will improve as kinks get worked out.
  3. No.
  4. {No response.}
  5. Do all of the reading on the suggested list and then some.
  6. Not at this time.
  7. See 4.6
  8. {No response.}
  9. Truly a core course.
  10. Don't just think, do.
  11. Familiarize oneself with book terms, basic bibliographic description.
  12. Be sure to be completely familiar with the history of books in the handpress period and read as much of the recommended material as possible.
  13. Do a great deal of the suggested reading for class.
- 10) *If you had to sum up your RBS experience with a single sentence, phrase, or haiku, what would you say?*
1. Great people, intriguing content. {private response}
  2. {No response.}
  3. RBS is inimitable.
  4. Do it once a year—best form of mental stimulation and networking.
  5. The very best.
  6. Joyful satisfaction.
  7. {private response}
  8. In a heartbeat.
  9. Without RBS, my life/career would not have been the same. Thank you.
  10. No fake, Nick Wilding  
Sophisticated fellow

- forgery hero.
11. Don't underestimate the resourcefulness of forgers, but the chance of the perfect forgery is remote if one knows what to look for.
  12. Eye-opening.
  13. A rewarding, happy, stimulating week.

## **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: 6 (46.15%)  
I am self-employed, and can arrange my own schedule: 4 (30.76%)  
I am a student or non-year-round employee, with a more flexible summer schedule: 1 (7.69%)  
I am retired, and can arrange my own schedule: 2 (15.38%)

*Who paid your RBS tuition costs?*

- I paid 100% myself: 8 (61.53%)  
My institution/employer paid 100%: 4 (30.76%)  
I used a scholarship/fellowship to pay/waive 100%: 1 (7.69%)

*Who paid your RBS housing expenses?*

- I paid 100% myself: 9 (69.23%)  
My institution/employer paid 100%: 3 (23.07%)  
I used a scholarship/fellowship to cover 100%: 1 (7.69%)

*Who paid your RBS travel expenses?*

- I paid 100% myself: 9 (69.23%)  
My institution/employer paid 100%: 3 (23.07%)  
I used a scholarship/fellowship to cover part; I paid the rest: 1 (7.69%)

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

### **Library disciplines:**

- Cataloger/metadata librarian: 1 (7.69%)
- Conservator/binder/preservation librarian: 1 (7.69%)
- Curator: 1 (7.69%)
- Special collections librarian: 1 (7.69%)

### **Student working toward a/n:**

- Ph.D./D.Phil: 1 (7.69%)

**Professional educator:**

Lecturer/adjunct: 1 (7.69%)

**Book trades:**

Antiquarian bookseller: 3 (23.07%)

Appraiser: 1 (7.69%)

**Other occupations/vocations:**

Book collector: 3 (23.07%)