

Jim Green & Michael Winship
H-135: The History of the Book in Antebellum America
7–12 July 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. Start early; they're really dense but pretty much gold. I loved the required ones, and the four suggested ones I made it through (looking for the rest) were helpful for thinking about the subject and understanding how the books became what they did.
2. Yes, the required readings were useful. More specific direction than just read another ten optional books would be helpful.
3. The "A History of the Book in America" volumes made great introductions, and I was grateful that the instructors directed our attention to specific chapters because they were lengthy.
4. Readings are very useful. I recommend making the required chapters available in PDF for students who might have a hard time accessing a copy of both books.
5. Yes, I loved the set-up of class.
6. Useful.
7. Yes, very.
8. Yes.
9. Yes. The readings were helpful to establish a base context for what would be covered in detail.
10. Yes, very useful.
11. Yes—the readings were germane and helpful in laying the groundwork for the course.
12. The pre-course readings were extensive, but also very useful. I would have liked specific articles to focus on.
13. Readings gave me an excellent overview of the field. {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. Dropbox was a great way to do it, and I am pumped to read the articles that got added over the course of the week to reflect our questions.
2. The Dropbox folder was adaptable and easily accessible. I much prefer digital to printed.
3. I liked the use of Dropbox and plan to add the folder to my own account/files. I only wish we could have had more images—and maybe some Harper's Weekly. ;)
4. Content was appropriate and useful—would have liked to have seen more material.
5. This was dazzling material and I see lots of use for it in my future classes and research!
6. Dropbox method was convenient; I will probably save those documents for future

use.

7. JG & MW posted material to an online Dropbox folder and this worked very well.
8. Yes, will be useful for my own teaching. I liked having materials in Dropbox. I would have liked a bibliography for the two museum presentations by David Whitesell.
9. Dropbox for the course worked well, and the materials will help going forward.
10. We used an electronic folder instead of a printed workbook, and this seemed to go well.
11. The Dropbox was terrific—I'm grateful for all the links and readings. MW and JG were extremely generous in sharing those materials.
12. The Dropbox was particularly helpful.
13. Excellent materials. Helpful Dropbox.

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'm going to bore/educate everyone at my institution with random facts for months and might use some of these new sources for digital humanities projects—so many manuscripts collections to visit now!
2. I am working on a book project, and my RBS course is directly connected to me better understanding the larger context of books and printing in the antebellum period.
3. The knowledge I gained about antebellum publishing will contribute directly to my thesis this fall. I was grateful to gain a narrative that captured so much change over time. The questions MW raised about distribution and specific publications caused me to think of several new project ideas.
4. I gained important information about resources that will help me conduct research questions for my dissertation. The course workbooks provide clear examples I can use for teaching.
5. I cannot count anymore of the "aha" moments! What a stunning way to think about and discuss antebellum America-my mind is on fire!
6. Ideas for future research as I begin thinking about my dissertation.
7. Almost too many "aha" moments. The class will certainly help me make revisions to my book project and serve as a seedbed for other projects on nineteenth-century American literature and print culture.
8. In my research and in teaching book history. Several small "aha" moments and ideas for a talk I'm giving soon.
9. The course provided a really in-depth overview of the material and economic portions of the period-these will be really helpful as I finish the dissertation project.
10. It will help me better understand the book trade during this time period.
11. Yes! I plan to incorporate so much into my current project, and it's helped me to understand books and writers in new ways.
12. I have always been interested in bibliography, and this course has made me want to pursue that.
13. The course will enrich my approach to my current book project on African American poetry. I also got some great ideas for teaching the history of the book.

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'm not sure what I had hoped to learn, but it has really gotten me thinking about my collections/work in a different way.
2. Yes. Though it would have been great to have both JG and MW in person, the class was illuminating. It gave the broad spectrum of well-rounded insight that can only be learned over years.
3. I learned a greater level of detail than I ever could have hoped to gain.
4. I think I now have a clearer and broader understanding of the book trade system—the class definitely deepened and expanded my knowledge.
5. Yes—and I learned much more than I ever expected!
6. Yes.
7. Yes.
8. Yes. Not necessarily, simply because my interests are more in the earlier part of the time period, so I regretted JG was unable to teach in person.
9. Yes! I am astonished by the amount of information that was covered—well above what I thought we would learn.
10. Yes.
11. Yes and yes. I learned more than I expected, and I also have many references for further readings and study.
12. I learned more about how to read publishers' archives and other archival material. I have come across these materials in the past and have not known how to make sense of them.
13. MW has tremendous knowledge in this field, and he shared his expertise generously throughout the week.

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

1. {private response} Might be fun to look at stuff earlier in the morning and then talk about it instead of the other way around.
2. Two instructors.
3. Perhaps have us interact with a few books earlier on to get us excited right away.
4. More museum time.
5. I missed JG and would have loved to see MW and JG in dialogue, but enjoyed every minute of this class.
6. I think that it would have been even better and might have flowed a bit more smoothly had JG been able to co-teach, but MW did the best he could solo.
7. {No response.}
8. {No response.}
9. N/A
10. It was unfortunate that the second instructor was not able to be part of the class in person. Unfortunately, this could not be helped, but I think it would improve the class.
11. I would have liked to see what JG might have contributed.
12. I wish we looked at books more, and with more structured programming.
13. {private response}

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

1. Big-picture thinkers, those who hope to be able to bridge the gap from the colonial to the industrial.
 2. Professors, academics, librarians, curators.
 3. Those wanting details and an overview of publishing in the first half of the nineteenth century and those with specific questions for MW and JG.
 4. Grad students working on nineteenth-century America, faculty, librarians (special collections).
 5. Everybody who wants to understand antebellum America and its material history and contexts!
 6. People who are interested in literature and book history. This may not be a great course for straight historians without a strong background in nineteenth-century American literature.
 7. Anyone interested in early nineteenth-century American books.
 8. {No response.}
 9. Grad students working in material culture or those literature scholars who may need a firmer context of materiality of antebellum America.
 10. Anyone interested in the production and distribution of printed material during this time period.
 11. Anyone with an interest in American literature.
 12. A researcher/scholar, particularly early in their career.
 13. Nineteenth-century scholars, both faculty and advanced graduate students.
- 7) *Do you feel that you got your money's worth? Would you recommend the course to others?*
1. Yes, I now have new research ideas and ways to teach.
 2. Yes.
 3. I would recommend this course to all who can get the support they need to attend.
 4. Yes. Absolutely. Worth it just for MW's dramatic reading of a book ad.
 5. Absolutely.
 6. Yes; if they fit the profile described in 4.6.
 7. Yes.
 8. Yes.
 9. Yes squared.
 10. Yes and yes.
 11. Definitely. It was worth every penny—a great professional investment. I expect to recommend it to everyone.
 12. Yes!
 13. Definitely (although I could not have come without institutional support).
- 8) *If your course made any trips outside of the classroom, do you feel that they were time well spent?*
1. The visits by SC staff to the classroom were useful and having even more experts' perspectives was worthwhile.
 2. We had a number of fantastic visitors who came to us from SC and offered us a really brilliant look at their collection. The printing activity was fun and useful.
 3. SC came to us!
 4. Printing on the iron hand press was great. Wish there was a better space for that

- besides a hallway and there was more time/resources so students could get some experience typesetting.
5. Yes, I loved the printing exercise—it was fun and enlightening in a hands-on manner.
 6. N/A
 7. We saw a lot of SC, but the SC materials were brought to our classroom. We got to pull a Washington Press, which was a good experience.
 8. {No response.}
 9. N/A
 10. SC—very well spent.
 11. No trips outside the classroom, but the SC demonstrations were extraordinary.
 12. N/A
 13. Loved the fact that we did some printing and binding.
- 9) *Do you have any additional thoughts or advice for anyone considering taking this course in a future year?*
1. If you do the readings, it will make everything all the more enjoyable; be ready to wait for an official time for questions.
 2. There is a lifetime of lived experience in these professors—take advantage of the opportunity to learn from them.
 3. Come with questions and the stamina to take a lot of notes.
 4. Stay on the lawn for good after class/evening socializing with colleagues.
 5. MW is an absolutely amazing and stimulating thinker and so funny! I will miss this class and my fellow students—a real intellectual community!!
 6. Brush up on nineteenth-century literature and author biographies so that you have a strong frame of reference for what is being discussed.
 7. I'd recommend it.
 8. {No response.}
 9. Do the reading beforehand!
 10. Have specific questions you would like answered.
 11. Check to see if UVA has any SC materials relevant to your research and consider staying an extra day or two to do research.
 12. Come prepared with questions from the readings.
 13. I highly recommend this class and hope to take another class with MW.
- 10) *If you had to sum up your RBS experience with a single sentence, phrase, or haiku, what would you say?*
1. Better than I could have dreamed or thought to hope for.
 2. RBS crams an amazing amount of knowledge and experience into an intense and fruitful week.
 3. It was a privilege to learn from experts, a great time to talk with my peers working in the field, and a powerful way to come away with ample new ideas and information.
 4. Intense but fun, engaging, and energizing intellectually.
 5. Books come alive in this class!
 6. “Books are weird.”
 7. {private response}

8. {No response.}
9. "The best course and world event since the flood!"
10. Excellent.
11. MW is a national treasure.
12. Many doors have opened!
13. Thank you!

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: 5 (38.46%)

I am a student or non-year-round employee, with a more flexible summer schedule: 7 (53.84%)

My situation does not fit any of the options above: 1 (7.69%)

Who paid your RBS tuition costs?

I paid 100% myself: 2 (15.38%)

My institution/employer paid 100%: 6 (46.15%)

I used a scholarship/fellowship to pay/waive 100%: 3 (23.07%)

I had an RBS course tuition credit from a previous year: 1 (7.69%)

My situation does not fit any of the options above: 1 (7.69%)

Who paid your RBS housing expenses?

I paid 100% myself: 3 (23.07%)

My institution/employer paid 100%: 7 (53.84%)

My institution/employer paid part; I paid the rest: 2 (15.38%)

I used a scholarship/fellowship to cover 100%: 1 (7.69%)

Who paid your RBS travel expenses?

I paid 100% myself: 3 (23.07%)

My institution/employer paid 100%: 5 (38.46%)

My institution/employer paid part; I paid the rest: 3 (23.07%)

I used a scholarship/fellowship to cover 100%: 1 (7.69%)

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:

Conservator/binder/preservation librarian: 1 (7.69%)
Curator: 1 (7.69%)
Library assistant/clerk: 1 (7.69%)

Student working toward a/n:

M.A./M.S.: 1 (7.69%)
Ph.D./D.Phil: 3 (23.07%)

Professional educator:

Lecturer/adjunct: 1 (7.69%)
Assistant professor: 2 (15.38%)
Associate professor: 1 (7.69%)
Full professor: 2 (15.38%)