

Raymond Clemons
H-20: The Book in the Manuscript Era
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 helpful. I might have appreciated having them listed by area of concentration, but that's a pretty minor concern. RC also gave us a great group of additional texts. One idea for RBS: Have each instructor compile a list of five to ten texts, which would serve as the basis for a personal resource collection for that course. These might be broader texts, but such a list would be great.
 2. Optional reading on development of literacy? Pre-reading very useful, helped explain concepts before getting into the objects.
 3. Very useful, although the instructor seemed to assume that no one had read them. In general, I wish the course had assumed all of the readings as background and moved on from there.
 4. The pre-course readings were very helpful and extremely informative. They provide a solid foundation which I will be building upon in the future.
 5. Yes, in particular Clemens' book on manuscript studies.
 6. Yes they were useful, although some were harder to access.
 7. Yes./No.
 8. They were useful, although it was a lot of information to digest.
 9. Yes. They provided a good background even when not specifically addressing a curriculum element.
 10. The assignments were helpful—I found the Shailor catalogue to be a particularly useful introduction to the manuscript field.
 11. Yes, they were enjoyable in and of themselves. I appreciate the ordering, as they built upon each other.
 12. I thought the readings were very useful and really enjoyed them. {private response}. I know that I will be rereading and referring to them in the future.

- 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. Yes—the kits RC distributed were thoughtful, useful items. The course didn't have a workbook.
 2. Thanks much for Dropbox and for augmenting readings. Would be helpful to have as much as possible in advance.
 3. N/A
 4. The content was useful, and being able to interact with the manuscripts really helped with understanding the content.
 5. Yes, some essays will be useful for teaching.
 6. Very useful.

7. Maybe get out earlier if possible. I am a slow reader with a very packed schedule.
8. Yes, they were appropriate and useful. I will continue to read them.
9. There was not much of this unless you mean supplemental/additional readings in Dropbox. As a commuter, I wasn't having time to access this week, but will later on.
10. The materials viewed in the classroom were outstanding. Seeing so many examples up close was invaluable.
11. The syllabus was very detailed. The links to each of the books he examined are much appreciated. Also appreciate the flexibility as we went along to add/vary readings based on our discussion.
12. I liked that we were not inundated with materials as I felt it was more valuable to hear from RC directly and have time with the books. He did recommend several resources throughout that I will be looking into.

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 took this course to greater inform my work as a rare book librarian, and it continued to add to my skills, helping me be a better librarian and colleague. I do have some project ideas based on what I've seen. I leave with more questions for learning and research.
2. Plans for more work in LC conference work.
3. Seeing a wide variety of manuscript books gave me two definite ideas for future works. This was one of my goals for the course.
4. I will be walking away with several new research topics and two new projects. This course has really set me on the path to continue growing in my field.
5. Unlike the "Teaching the History of the Book" course and the "Bibles and Histories of Reading" course, this course was more useful in providing general background of context rather than specific teaching modules—although the class on rolls was a great addition.
6. I think this course gave me more insight into Medieval history and the transition to print, and I did have new ideas.
7. Practical level—loved the book futons. My book knowledge increased exponentially. Want to learn more. Not at point where I feel competent to publish anything yet.
8. I learned a lot about the construction of books. Also, it was a great refresher on medieval history.
9. Increase my understanding when visiting libraries and exhibitions and when reading about the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.
10. I think I will immediately bring more attention and knowledge to the books that I catalogue, and I plan to revisit several volumes and examine marginalia with what I think will be a more perceptive eye.
11. Pen knife! This course actually helped me to understand my own life and experience more fully. I will read some of the books RC suggested to help flesh out the fictive. I am quite inspired to make a plan to do research with original documents in this or in another avenue—and potentially commit to a Master's program in book arts. It increased my knowledge and my confidence.
12. The most valuable thing to me was getting hands-on experience so I won't be

scared to encounter rare/fragile manuscripts in the future. Also knowing not all rules or scholarship is hard and fast. There's a lot still to discover!

- 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, absolutely.
 2. Yes! I appreciate RC's intellectual generosity, and Chelsea was also wonderful to learn from.
 3. The course was far less substantial than I'd hoped. I assumed the extensive advance reading was all background and studied it accordingly.
 4. Yes and more.
 5. Yes.
 6. Yes.
 7. Yes and more than I could have ever imagined.
 8. Yes, it was a lot of information to absorb.
 9. Yes. The opportunity to handle, touch, feel these manuscripts was amazing, a great pleasure. Professor RC is warm, knowledgeable, charming, responsive—all in high measure!
 10. Yes—particularly in terms of understanding book construction and page layouts, two elements that I found somewhat obscure in the readings.
 11. Yes, and then some. Knowledgeable, enthusiastic, patient, and flexible. I've rarely had classroom time used as effectively.
 12. Yes, very much so and more. I feel like this course made things much more accessible.
- 5) *Are there other ways in which the course could have been improved?*
1. No, I can't imagine how.
 2. Nothing but more time.
 3. Time management was a general challenge in the courses. Also, the pigment/ink writing and binding sessions would be better if the presenters prepared a few slides rather than just talking to everyone standing around. It's hard to take notes that way. The binding expert's presentation was not well organized.
 4. Other than making the courses longer, I have no suggestions.
 5. Perhaps a dedicated session to study a particular book or to find a book in the collections.
 6. I especially enjoyed the focus on paleography in a variety of languages on the last day; perhaps this aspect could be expanded upon.
 7. No.
 8. I would have liked to learn more about cataloging rare books.
 9. Minorly, if the book slips had been more informative, it would be easier to coordinate one's notes and observations.
 10. I think the course struck a good balance between lectures and less-directed time with the books.
 11. A few timelines at the beginning would be so helpful in getting/staying oriented.
 12. Not that I can think of.

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

1. The people who were here: librarians, academics, interested “civilians,” students, and booksellers. A great mix!
2. Any medievalist who wants to work directly with materials, any book scholar interested in medieval studies, students deciding which materials to work on or which period to specialize in.
3. People extremely unfamiliar with/entirely new to medieval manuscripts.
4. Early career professionals in special collections and graduate students in medieval programs.
5. Someone interested in graduate school in book history, a graduate student, a faculty member preparing a course on book history.
6. Someone looking for a solid grounding in medieval manuscripts and to increase their knowledge about rare books.
7. Emerging professionals in my opinion. Lone arrangers/lone collections managers.
8. Anyone who has an interest in book history.
9. Book, medieval, art lovers.
10. I think anyone who works with—or who wants to work with—medieval manuscripts would benefit greatly.
11. We had a very diverse group and they all seemed engaged and happy.
12. Those who may have gotten more general knowledge in the fields associated and are looking for more focused or specialized knowledge. Also those coming from locations or institutions who would not normally have the access RBS gives to materials, objects, locations, and especially the instructors.

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

1. Yes, and yes. I even have an idea as to possible attendees.
2. Yes! Yes!
3. Course is a bit overpriced, considering the lack of any course materials.
4. I would recommend this course.
5. Yes.
6. Yes.
7. Yes and yes!
8. Yes to both.
9. Yes. Yes, unreservedly.
10. Yes. Enthusiastically.
11. Yes, and yes, enthusiastically.
12. Yes!

- 8) *If your course made any trips outside of the classroom, do you feel that they were time well spent?*
1. N/A
 2. Printing demo was great, yes.
 3. N/A
 4. No course trips.
 5. It might have been interesting to see other collections at Yale, such as the law library special collections or art museum.
 6. We had two labs that were very interesting.
 7. We really didn't.
 8. {no response}
 9. Our "trips" were during breaks and they were not entirely well spent. Our two labs—binding and inks—were a bit redundant. Binding one seems more necessary.
 10. The demonstration of the iron press was well worth the time.
 11. Yes—brief trip to the bibliographic print shop was relevant and fun.
 12. Yes, although I'm glad it was scheduled during non-class times. The class time was so valuable and it felt like we could spend so much more time talking and picking RC's brain.
- 9) *Do you have any additional thoughts or advice for anyone considering taking this course in a future year?*
1. {no response}
 2. Beinecke does not allow personal writing instruments. If one is uncomfortable with the girth of #2 pencils, bring a foam pencil guard if you wish to write notes in real time.
 3. Let the instructor know about your particular interests. He is very accommodating.
 4. Be prepared for a large amount of information to be relayed in a short amount of time.
 5. Read—general survey of medieval history.
 6. Be prepared to engage with the material.
 7. No additional advice. Would encourage them to.
 8. {no response}
 9. Do so. I had some advanced concerns, being an amateur, but there was so much information that was useful at all our different levels.
 10. Read as much as you can and remember to wash your hands.
 11. I was enchanted with the whole experience. If you are interested in Medievalism and books, this is fascinating. It is not a history course or an art course, although the material touches heartily on both.
 12. Definitely do it if it is available to you. The course exceeded my expectations with the caliber of content, resources, and instructor. I couldn't have asked for anything better.
- 10) *If you had to sum up your RBS experience with a single sentence, phrase, or haiku, what would you say?*

1. A tremendous week of learning and laughing in the magnificent Beinecke collection!
2. Library envy!
3. {no response}
4. The caliber of instruction, the quality of the content, and the interaction with the manuscripts make this course an exceptional experience.
5. {no response}
6. It was a very well thought-out class, which was reflected in my experience!
7. Rare Book School: Limitless, expanding, timeless—like the universe. No boundaries. Beautiful. Stunning. Exciting. A true gift.
8. This was a great introduction to the history of the book.
9. Is “thrilling” okay?
10. I’m so grateful that this institution exists.
11. It gave me joy. Special thanks to Chelsea and Laura for their cheerful facilitation and support. And to RC, who poured himself into every minute.
12. I was in heaven.

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: 5

My institution/employer did not give me professional leave; I used paid or vacation days: 4

I am self-employed, and can arrange my own schedule:

I am a student or non-year-round employee, with a more flexible summer schedule: 1

I am retired, and can arrange my own schedule: 2

My situation does not fit any of the options above:

Who paid your RBS tuition costs?

I paid 100% myself: 6

My institution/employer paid 100%: 4

My institution/employer paid part; I paid the rest: 1

I used a scholarship/fellowship to pay/waive 100%:

I used a scholarship/fellowship to pay/waive part; I paid the rest:

I used a scholarship/fellowship to pay/waive part; my institution/employer paid the rest:

I exchanged goods or services in lieu of tuition:

I had an RBS course tuition credit from a previous year:

My situation does not fit any of the options above: 1

Who paid your RBS housing expenses?

I paid 100% myself: 5
My institution/employer paid 100%: 2
My institution/employer paid part; I paid the rest: 1
I used a scholarship/fellowship to cover 100%:
I used a scholarship/fellowship to cover part; I paid the rest:
I used a scholarship/fellowship to cover part; my institution/employer paid the rest:
I stayed with friends/family, or stayed in my own home and commuted: 4
My situation does not fit any of the options above:

Who paid your RBS travel expenses?

I paid 100% myself: 4
My institution/employer paid 100%: 3
My institution/employer paid part; I paid the rest: 1
I used a scholarship/fellowship to cover 100%:
I used a scholarship/fellowship to cover part; I paid the rest:
I used a scholarship/fellowship to cover part; my institution/employer paid the rest:
I live locally, and had no travel expenses: 3
My situation does not fit any of the options above: 1

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

Library disciplines:

Archivist: 1 (8.33%)
Curator: 1 (8.33%)
Special collections librarian: 1 (8.33%)

Student working toward a/n:

M.L.I.S./M.L.S.: 1 (8.33%)

Professional educator:

Associate professor: 1 (8.33%)

Book trades:

Antiquarian bookseller: 1 (8.33%)
Book artist, artisan or printer: 1 (8.33%)

Other occupations/vocations:

Retired: 2 (16.67%)
Other: 3 (25%)