

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. Very useful.
 2. There was quite a bit of redundancy. I'm not sure Gaskell was that useful. The Rota book was great.
 3. Yes, although providing PDFs of excerpts would be helpful and cost-effective. Likely fair-use?
 4. The pre-course readings provided a good foundation.
 5. The Rota text was the most useful.
 6. The Anthony Rota book was hard to find. I had to use ILL and the book was recalled twice.
 7. I forgot to read and felt terrible, then realized that I would be fine just referencing these texts later when making use of what the class covered.
 8. Apart from the Text was my favorite on the list and the most readable. The other books were helpful, but dense reading.
 9. Yes, if a bit repetitive. I would add some basic videos as preliminaries and spend less class time viewing video content.
 10. The readings were useful, but I had a hard time comprehending many aspects of the books until we talked about them in class. This might be related to my very limited knowledge of the topic. {private response}
 11. Yes, all of these books were very informational. A good amount of reading, but it was very useful. Having an ABC for Book Collectors around might be helpful for any unfamiliar terms.
 12. I would've appreciated readings that were shorter, since I do work full-time. I found it difficult to read three lengthy books. Would also have appreciated books that are all still in print and more affordable (under \$50).

- 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. Content-appropriate and useful and will continue to be useful—would have been nice to see how techniques in printing &c. were used by other cultures/groups of people.
 2. The workbook wasn't used much. I did glance through it, and it will serve as a good memory aid/reference in the future.
 3. I think the workbook will be more useful as a reference source in the future than perhaps it was in class.
 4. Teaching material was appropriate; videos and diagrams were extra helpful.
 5. Yes, they were useful in class and will continue to be after the course.
 6. Excellent, useful materials.

7. I am most eager to get the slides to use in my teaching. These materials are wonderful!
 8. The workbook was helpful, as were the slides and other web resources.
 9. Graphic material of workbook (which constituted most of it) was useful, especially to have on hand to annotate in class.
 10. We didn't use our workbook much in class, but it includes a lot of images from presentations and explanations that I think will be very useful when I return home. Also, the examples we had access to were truly amazing. These were wonderful to use and see and really helped enforce what we were learning.
 11. Lots of good pictures, but not so much accompanying text. Might be good to bind in the PowerPoint slides.
 12. Course was much more focused on technology than I thought was necessary. Workbook was filled with pictures of presses and machines with no explanatory text. Did not cover all topics discussed (e.g., paperbacks, livre d'artiste, artists' books, &c.)
- 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 plan to use the skills and knowledge acquired through this course to help me understand my collection better and build it accordingly.
 2. Will be very useful in teaching with students. There were excellent explanations of technological innovation/processes that I'm finally starting to feel like I can keep straight, such as linotype, offset lithography, &c.
 3. More confidence in teaching the book as an object. Lots of ideas for potential collection development.
 4. I plan to use what I learned to select new material from our collection for teaching, and I may propose an exhibition at my institution.
 5. This course gave me both context and pedagogical examples that I can use to help share my institution's collections. It gave me new ways to examine our collection and helped me discover some hidden gems of publishing history that I had overlooked before this course. I will use some of the hands-on teaching methods that I learned to make my sessions more engaging.
 6. This course helped me form a more solid impression of what books are and how very much they have changed in 200 years. This perspective is helpful for understanding how authors' experiences and expectations of books as physical objects have influenced their writing.
 7. Yes! Much better understanding of materials I've been studying for years. I also have big ideas about incorporating bits and pieces into undergraduate literature courses.
 8. I will use what I learned to teach students, create exhibitions, and assist researchers. I have a much better understanding of the topic, printed books since 1800, and the survey helped me think about overall trends, &c. to explore further.
 9. {no response}
 10. I am hoping to better evaluate/describe my institution's special collections books. I think I had several "aha" moments and many more ideas on how to move forward. I feel very confident that I'll have a better understanding and appreciation for our collection and some of the things that make it special.
 11. I understand much better how all the various printing presses worked, as well as

image printing. I have some insight into the publishing business as well.

12. Unfortunately, I did not walk away with many “aha” moments. While it was fabulous to acquire so much technical knowledge, I was hoping for more of the hands-on experience for which RBS is known. I now know how to identify differences between printed images, so that will be useful. While I understand and recognize that this is a survey course, I wanted more depth for looking at a vast array of examples that was not just the elite book production. For example, wanted to touch on comic book production, the rise of the zine, &c.

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, and yes.
2. Yes!
3. Yes.
4. I learned what I had hoped to learn and more.
5. Yes. The content was as advertised, and I had ample opportunity to ask questions.
6. I did, and then some. This course was wildly varied and informative.
7. Yes.
8. Yes, the course content matched the course description.
9. Yes. We could have seen more follow-up on questions returned to/answered later that the instructor could not answer immediately.
10. We definitely didn't cover everything, but that might be impossible in a week. I feel like I got a good overview of the subject with sufficient detail to feel much more comfortable. {private response}
11. Yes, there was quite a good deal of focus on “non-fine press books” that is exactly what I hoped for.
12. I had hoped to have hands-on experience, perhaps with the presses at RBS or a deeper dive into the materials that RBS has. I was not terribly happy that I had only touched five or six books by the time the week was finished. Class was roughly 85% lecture and 15% experience, was hoping for 50/50.

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

1. It would be nice to see how other countries in the West, besides the US, UK and Germany used printing techniques. It would also be interesting to take a closer look at other economic classes' relationship to the book.
2. I would have liked more on the book trade. I also would have liked more time to handle and study materials in small groups. That could be better integrated with lectures. The “exercises” at the end of the day were fun and useful. I wish we had more of those, perhaps in a more limited way. {private response}
3. I wish some time on distribution, readership, and design movements could be covered in addition to the technological advancements, but understand this might be tricky.
4. More diverse offerings (some examples from other countries and in other languages).
5. {no response}
6. I only wish we could have ten more hours to enjoy special collections and examples EH chose to share with us.

7. The best part was working with materials and trying to apply materials that were introduced through slides/lectures. I think the show-and-tell bits with more protected materials could be handled more in this way: “What do you think was used here? What do you observe?”
8. N/A
9. It could have been more intense, with a more fulsome use of class time. I would have liked to handle more materials that we were only shown. Perhaps less time watching video and more with original objects.
10. {private response}
11. We jumped around a lot in time and space, so maybe a timeline handout?
12. Would’ve loved demos on the rolling press, common press, and iron press since they had been discussed. Would’ve been great exercise to figure out how images and text had been laid out in a print shop—especially for those in the class who knew nothing about book history. Also, would’ve been great to have more show-and-tell aspects to the class (on a table) where students could train their eyes. Also, more diversity of material. Doesn’t matter that we don’t speak certain languages—bring in Italian, French, Spanish and German material.

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

1. Anyone interested in history and books.
2. Teachers, librarians. Someone with general knowledge, but not a specialist. Would describe this as an intermediate-level course.
3. Graduate students, librarians who teach, catalogers, faculty.
4. People who study or teach modern printing and book production processes or do acquisitions in modern books, fine press or artists’ books.
5. {no response}
6. Those whose work involves understanding and describing books after 1800, and who want to animate these books for others.
7. All sorts of people—hard to think of a category listed above that wouldn’t benefit.
8. Very good for anyone working in repository that has a wide range of printed books in the collection.
9. Anyone looking for an introduction, either on its own or as a preliminary to a course or courses, or anyone looking to better understand standards of cataloging and description.
10. Someone who wants to know more about the history of printing. I do think this was a good introductory class if you aren’t very knowledgeable already. I absolutely have a better sense of how books are made.
11. People wanting to do more in-depth cataloging and description. People interested in image and printing history.
12. People who’ve never had a book history class and want a very traditional canon.

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

1. Yes, and yes.
2. As always!
3. Yes. Yes.
4. I do, and I would.

5. Yes, and yes.
6. I would absolutely recommend this course, and don't know why literary scholars aren't required to take one like it in undergrad.
7. Yes, absolutely!
8. Yes, and yes.
9. Yes. Yes.
10. Yes to both. Having taken this one class, I am encouraged to take more.
11. Yes, you can cover a great deal of information. A good crash course!
12. No. I would only recommend the course to those who truly know nothing about book history.

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

1. The Jane Eyre class in Lower Tibet was definitely time well spent.
2. Yes. Barbara Heritage's presentation of Jane Eyre was great, but a bit long. I would have liked more time to interact with the materials.
3. Yes. However, some special collections visits—both in “Lower Tibet” and in class—were a bit whirlwind in nature. I think students can learn more when there are fewer items to dig in to—not an abundance.
4. Our day in the library basement was instructive.
5. {private response}
6. N/A
7. N/A
8. Books from SC/Jane Eyre talk was very good.
9. If the junket to the sub-basement of Alderman for Barbara Heritage on Jane Eyre counts, then yes—time well spent and a highlight.
10. {no response}
11. We went to see the Jane Eyre collection—very neat! We also looked at various editions of an art book to see the evolution of printing approaches.
12. Jane Eyre talk was great. Janson books were okay, but discussion of processes could've been done in class when discussing these types of printing techniques.

9) *Do you have any additional thoughts or advice for anyone considering taking this course in a future year?*

1. No.
2. They should know that this is a very technology—focused course.
3. Know that it is heavily focused on the book as a technology.
4. It can help solidify your understanding of modern print technology with the help of examples.
5. Read Rota first—it provides a good foundation for the other texts. Skim the descriptions of the more complex printing processes.
6. Bring a phone or camera, so your notes can be illustrated. Some of this is difficult to capture in words.
7. Prepare yourself for an intensive week and take advantage of downtime (breaks, lunch, and evenings) to rest and recharge.
8. A very helpful survey course, especially if you are a generalist in a repository with a varied collection.

9. {no response}
 10. Don't be overwhelmed; the class for the most part builds on itself. It is rather technical, but connections and similarities start to appear as you go along.
 11. Be sure to start your reading early, and review technical book terms.
 12. The course was more basic than I had hoped it would be and EH seemed to rely too heavily on his notes. Would've liked more time for class to interact as a group. Plus more information. There was a lot of dead time when EH was hunting for materials. Followers could've helped set things out during breaks to save time. Fewer lectures, more stuff.
- 10) *If you had to sum up your RBS experience with a single sentence, phrase, or haiku, what would you say?*
1. Excellent, expansive and edifying.
 2. Faster, better, cheaper.
 3. My time at RBS has laid the groundwork for me to be a more confident curator, teacher, and steward of rare books.
 4. Eric Holzenberg
was an excellent teacher
I would recommend.
 5. Focused, enriching, and empowering.
 6. Always a full fifteen-week semester's learning paced into thirty hours' time!
 7. Once you look under a loupe, you'll never be without one again. Once you explore the technologies used to produce books at RBS, you'll never be able to leave them out of your interpretive practices. Thank you, RBS!
 8. A great experience with passionate bibliophile colleagues.
 9. The RBS experience is always exhilarating and sometimes magical.
 10. Great, I learned a lot. Thanks!
 11. When at Rare Book School
Eat at that one dumpling shop
Trust me it is good.
(Seriously though, RBS is a very good way to learn a lot in one week and the staff take good care of you!)
 12. {no response}

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: 8 (66.67%)

My institution/employer did not give me professional leave; I used paid or vacation days: 2 (16.67%)

I am self-employed, and can arrange my own schedule: 4 (33.33%)

Who paid your RBS tuition costs?

I paid 100% myself: 1 (8.33%)
My institution/employer paid 100%: 6 (50%)
I used a scholarship/fellowship to pay/waive 100%: 3 (25%)
1 (8.33%)
I exchanged goods or services in lieu of tuition: 1 (8.33%)

Who paid your RBS housing expenses?

I paid 100% myself: 2 (16.67%)
My institution/employer paid 100%: 6 (50%)
My institution/employer paid part; I paid the rest: 1 (8.33%)
I used a scholarship/fellowship to cover 100%: 1 (8.33%)
I stayed with friends/family, or stayed in my own home and commuted: 2 (16.67%)

Who paid your RBS travel expenses?

I paid 100% myself: 2 (16.67%)
My institution/employer paid 100%: 6 (50%)
My institution/employer paid part; I paid the rest: 1 (8.33%)
I used a scholarship/fellowship to cover 100%: 1 (8.33%)
I live locally, and had no travel expenses: 2 (16.67%)

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

Library disciplines:

Archivist: 2 (16.67%)
Curator: 1 (8.33%)
Library administrator: 3 (25%)
Special collections librarian: 1 (8.33%)
Other: 1 (8.33%)

Student working toward a/n:

Ph.D./D.Phil: 1 (8.33%)

Professional educator:

Assistant professor: 1 (8.33%)
Associate professor: 1 (8.33%)
College/university administrator: 1 (8.33%)