

Will Noel & Dot Porter
M-95: The Medieval Manuscript in the Twenty-First Century
23–28 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 for context, but we did not refer directly to them in class. Some background reading on TEI, XML, &c.—introductions, like what they are and basics of use—would have been helpful and saved time in class.
2. Yes. I especially liked Sian Echard's Printing in the Middle Ages. It might be interesting in the future to include a reading or two on the social impacts of the various technological processes.
3. Yes—fine.
4. The reading assignments were not particularly useful. For those who, like myself, were unfamiliar with all the digital platforms discussed in the course, prep time would have been better spent exploring the sites and explanatory materials.
5. {no response}
6. No, they weren't. It was written it's not necessary to bring a laptop, and it was. {The course description indicates that students should plan to bring a laptop with them.—RBS staff}
7. I didn't find them necessary because everything was covered in class by the instructors.
8. Take out Digital Mappa. Put in Omeka. Instead of the more theoretical readings, maybe give basic operating instructions to familiarize ourselves with before class.
9. They were interesting, but not very extensive and we didn't really refer to them. I wish we had been asked to install a few of the programs in advance.
10. Yes, but I used them mostly for review before and after class.

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, I will definitely refer back to the materials. I especially appreciate that we were emailed links and instructions/exercises that we used in class. I will definitely refer back to those as I reteach myself the platforms we were briefly introduced to.
2. Definitely. I didn't quite get the hang of batch image downloading, so still will continue to practice with the exercise material, because it will be a really useful skill.
3. We didn't use the workbook except for one of the lectures.
4. Because I was busy working on my project in the evenings, I did not have a chance to read the articles in the course booklet. They could perhaps be sent to us beforehand. In any case, they look interesting so I plan to read them when I get home.
5. The content was appropriate and useful. I will continue to use after RBS.

6. Very helpful.
7. Very helpful and manageable. Great resources for future reference.
8. Haven't looked through the printed material yet. All of DP's digitally distributed stuff will be an excellent reference/resource in the future.
9. We did not use the workbook much, but it will be a good resource later. DP's handouts are exceptionally valuable, and I will refer to them often.
10. Workbook was useful but it would be nice if it included medieval script guides for transliteration. WN was very helpful in giving us useful secondary sources for our manuscripts.

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. This is an excellent starting point for learning more about the digital humanities, and I will use most of the resources we have used in future research projects. I hope to incorporate them into my basic research procedures so they become habitual references.
2. I don't know that I came away with new project plans, but coming in I had a bit of experience with TEI, but came away with a much clearer idea of how to make effective use of it in an ongoing project.
3. I may use the method of downloading manuscript images in batches and the other digital tools demonstrated.
4. Some of the skills will definitely be useful; others I will need to work with a bit more before I am comfortable. It's hard to see how I would use some of the other technologies, but I'm glad I was exposed to them.
5. I will use the knowledge I gathered to better serve my patrons and scholars and will be more knowledgeable about what they are looking for.
6. A proper course for the 21st century.
7. To a future digitization project. "Aha!" moment: the Archimedes palimpsest!
8. IIF/DTM for my dissertation project. Hopefully TEI/EVT for projects at/with the Rylands.
9. I am currently developing DH components for multiple courses that I teach; the skills covered and the way that WN and DP taught them will be valuable. DP's instructions for harvesting data will revolutionize my research process.
10. WN's paper and collation discussions were very informative and clarifying. Enjoyed DP's hatching(?) digital collections demo and discussions of IIF.

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. For the most part. It was more hands-on than I was anticipating in terms of using the resources discussed, but that is a good thing. I was also expecting to talk more about how best to present manuscripts online to create the best experience for viewers—a lot of the stuff we touched on in day one, but more in depth!
2. Absolutely.
3. Yes to part of one question. I thought the course would be more DH-heavy but it turned out to be a nice balance of DH and traditional/analog methods.
4. The teachers were fantastic—patient with a beginner like me but also able to challenge those among us who came in at a higher skill level.

5. The instructors were so helpful and knowledgeable. They took the time and had the patience to deal with all questions.
6. They did their best.
7. Very skilled and experienced. The instructors gave me actually more information and skills than what I expected to gain.
8. I only wish I could take the full semester version.
9. Yes, but I wish we had gone further with TEI and with using parsing applications like EVT.
10. Yes, the instructors were excellent at providing us with general and tailored instruction to work with our materials. I learned exactly what I hoped to learn...and more.

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

1. I wish we had done some more of the intro conceptual computer stuff before the course. I also wish we had focused more on Omeka rather than Digital Mappa.
2. It wasn't totally clear to me what advantages Digital Mappa has as an interface; I would have liked to learn a bit more about some of the other possibilities out there, like Omeka.
3. I would have preferred more discussion, lecturing, and tool demos, plus more time with collections. At least 50% was independent work on one manuscript. I was curious about the rest of the collections, too. More time for asking questions and more theoretical discussion of implications and practices.
4. {no response}
5. I think web development tools for displaying the manuscripts could have been helpful.
6. It could be held for more than a week and somewhere closer to Europe.
7. What about having an RBS course in Europe?
8. It would be cool if each day DP taught a new plot form in the morning, and we used the afternoon, and WN's codicology to apply the platforms to our own manuscript, like with VisColl so we come out with four different platforms applied to one manuscript. This might also facilitate diversity in the final projects. Would've been helpful to see some previous final projects as well for inspiration.
9. Students started from very different points—and as a result our time was sometimes used inefficiently. Could there be different preparatory readings to address some basics of (e.g.) TEI or collation? We focused almost exclusively on the Western European book, but it would have been valuable (e.g. in WN's lecture on encoding) to talk more about the challenges with DH in non-Western scripts and non-codex book formats.
10. More technology support. Digital Mappa exercise at the beginning was useful but little tech support for projects not using Digital Mappa.

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

1. Librarians and scholars and students—it's definitely geared towards academia.
2. Really anyone—there are so many possible ways and different possibilities in terms of outcome.
3. People who need an introduction to DH or an introduction to close manuscript study/handling. People who are working on Western Latin manuscripts or

- Philadelphia-specific collectors.
4. See Q9.4.
 5. Scholars and digital humanists.
 6. Librarians and archivists.
 7. Archivists, librarians, digital humanities guys.
 8. Instructors and librarians wanting to know more re: uses of DH in research and research support settings.
 9. Grad students and early career faculty.
 10. Mostly geared towards medievalists, especially academics, but librarians or technologists with clearly defined project goals could also benefit.
- 7) *Do you feel that you got your money's worth? Would you recommend the course to others?*
1. Yes, definitely. Not the housing, though—an AirBnB would be better.
 2. Yes.
 3. Yes, for the people I think are in the group described in Q6.3. The Archimedes lecture was brilliant. The codicology and collation questions were my favorite and were very useful.
 4. Yes, absolutely. This is one of the best short courses I have ever taken.
 5. Yes.
 6. From someone who is employed it's affordable, but for a student it is not.
 7. Yes, totally.
 8. Of course.
 9. Absolutely!
 10. Yes, this was a good investment of time and money. Would definitely recommend.
- 8) *If your course made any trips outside of the classroom, do you feel that they were time well spent?*
1. Our trip to the digital imaging lab was definitely useful and very interesting.
 2. Yes.
 3. Common press demo was very cool. So was the digitization lab.
 4. {no response}
 5. Yes, definitely.
 6. N/A
 7. N/A
 8. {no response}
 9. The trip to the digitization lab wasn't hands-on enough to give me skills to take with me.
 10. Loved the trip to the digitization lab.
- 9) *Do you have any additional thoughts or advice for anyone considering taking this course in a future year?*
1. The more experience you have with computers, the better.
 2. {no response}
 3. Don't stay in the dorms. Come with some introductory paleography skills in hand. No DH prior experience needed.

4. I'd just underscore that—as in previous years—we have attendees from a wide range of backgrounds and skill levels. There was something here for everyone. Anyone who wants to become more familiar with digital humanities-or further develop their competencies—and who loves working with medieval manuscripts would find this course to be very valuable.
 5. {no response}
 6. N/A
 7. N/A
 8. An excellent capstone experience—works well if you've taken other foundational RBS sessions.
 9. Arrive well-rested. Despite what you see in your email, don't plan to have time to do any other manuscript work at Penn.
 10. Review medieval scripts and basic codicology before attending.
- 10) *If you had to sum up your RBS experience with a single sentence, phrase, or haiku, what would you say?*
1. Fascinating manuscripts and lovely community!
 2. {no response}
 3. Dot and Will make a complementary team and were very helpful—medieval manuscripts are layered objects!
 4. Inspiring.
 5. It is truly an amazing experience with wonderful instructors and fellow students.
 6. Brilliant instructors.
 7. Fascinating, mind-blowing experience with brilliant instructors.
 8. Thank you, DP! Thank you, WN!
 9. Visualization is cool and intellectually generative.
 10. How to tell medieval stories with digital technology.

Student Data

Number of respondents: 10 (of 10)

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

My institution/employer gave me professional leave time: 4 (40%)

My institution/employer did not give me professional leave; I used paid or vacation days: 1 (10%)

I am a student or non-year-round employee, with a more flexible summer schedule: 4 (40%)

I am retired, and can arrange my own schedule: 1 (10%)

Who paid your RBS tuition costs?

I paid 100% myself: 3 (30%)

My institution/employer paid 100%: 4 (40%)

My institution/employer paid part; I paid the rest: 1 (10%)

I used a scholarship/fellowship to pay/waive 100%: 2 (20%)

Who paid your RBS housing expenses?

I paid 100% myself: 5 (50%)

My institution/employer paid 100%: 4 (40%)

I used a scholarship/fellowship to cover part; I paid the rest: 1 (10%)

Who paid your RBS travel expenses?

I paid 100% myself: 4 (40%)

My institution/employer paid 100%: 4 (40%)

I used a scholarship/fellowship to cover part; I paid the rest: 2 (20%)

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

Library disciplines:

Cataloger/metadata librarian: 1 (10%)

Digital collections librarian: 1 (10%)

Library administrator: 1 (10%)

Student working toward a/n:

Ph.D./D.Phil: 2 (20%)

Professional degree (M.D., J.D., &c.): 1 (10%)

Professional educator:

Assistant professor: 1 (10%)

Associate professor: 1 (10%)

Other occupations/vocations:

Independent scholar: 1 (10%)

Other: 1 (10%)