

John Kristensen and Katherine Ruffin
T-60: The History of 19th- and 20th-Century Typography & Printing
July 28–August 2

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. Readings began to feel repetitive after a while—perhaps direct attention to specific chapters and/or passages would be a better use of readers’ energies?
 2. Yes, they were a good starting point for the week’s discussions.
 3. I thought the pre-course reading assignments were useful and manageable. I did wonder if there could be an essay that provided a historical overview of some of the ideological aspects of printing and typography.
 4. The readings could be reduced. The Chappell was too general and yet provided too much information. I enjoyed Bringhurst. I found the Art of the Printed Book difficult to read on its own. The Updike was very useful. The De Vinne should be required reading.
 5. The reading assignments were very helpful in providing a foundation for our work during the week. They also got me excited about the course. I also plan to go back to some of the suggested reading I didn’t get to, since I focused on the required reading.
 6. I think the readings are necessary to understand the lectures.
 7. Yes, I’d love to have non-Western typography/printing added to the list.
 8. Yes. Useful. There was some overlap and some of the terms/ideas were overwhelming, but it was helpful to have read and then reencounter the info during the week where I could ask questions.
 9. The pre-course readings were quite useful. {private response}
 10. I liked the reading, and might actually go back to some of it now that I have more practical knowledge.
 11. I enjoyed all of the readings, particularly Bringhurst’s The Elements of Typographic Style, which provided practical terminology, philosophy, and history. I would like to read a perspective in favor of experimental twentieth-century typefaces.
 12. To an extent, yes. There was significant repetition of a very specific history’s approach to the subject. I was quite surprised that, by my count, not any of the readings referenced non-Western histories of print or seminal avant-garde figures like Mallarmé, Marinetti, or Zdanevich.

- 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. Very much liked the binder format. Type 10 materials were great. Would be great to have a bibliography of the RBS materials/packets used in class to aid in finding some materials later.
 2. Very helpful for following along in with class/supplemental reading. I will continue to use mine for artmaking references.

3. The workbook and handouts were all useful—both informational and manageable.
 4. All workbook and teaching materials were thoughtful and useful, simplifying some of the woolier aspects of the readings.
 5. The workbook and materials will be great references, and I appreciated the mix of printing, lectures, visits to Special Collections, and the field trip to the printers on campus.
 6. The notebook will be useful in evaluating typographic examples. The bibliography will be useful for further readings.
 7. Yes!
 8. Yes! Great workbook. I wanted some more type specimens during the type quiz, but I understood that above the number we were given could seem overwhelming and/or unhelpful.
 9. The binder will be so helpful after the course. {private response}
 10. The workbook was a great help, especially for type description and identification.
 11. Yes, I especially like the type samples and identification guides.
 12. These are useful reference materials that I anticipate I will continue to consult.
- 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. Developed greater familiarity with press work, which will help as I try to get SMU to reopen their press. Helped me reorient my thinking around my research so that I started thinking about print’s influence on handwork as much as handwork’s influence on print.
 2. The course was all an “Aha!” moment. Exceptional and fun introduction to typography that I will use to inform fine art projects, specifically the use of text in future work and type-based making, as well as printmaking.
 3. I intend to discuss in more detail the complexity of letterpress printing, especially in relation to broadside and chapbook practice production. Long term, I would love to introduce some hands-on component. The hands-on process from start to finish was consistently eye-opening and thought-provoking.
 4. The course will greatly enhance my appreciation of my personal collection. It less directly addresses my research, which is not focused on Western traditions.
 5. I learned how to properly compose type and plan to work on my own print projects.
 6. Developing a disciplined way of evaluating distinguishing elements of a typeface will be useful. The hands-on printing is useful to me.
 7. Yes! I am going to include several sessions on typography and printing in my courses on media analysis at Baruch and in the next year or so, I’m going to try to teach a course on book history. I got several ideas for new research projects on typography in Indonesia!
 8. Yes, I’ll incorporate the knowledge into my current research. I definitely had an “aha!” moment in which I realized how much the typography on the items I am studying communicates.
 9. RBS is a life-changing experience. I am leaving with a detailed plan for a new project and confidence in typography. I came in a curious book scholar and left having emerged as a confident historian.
 10. I am working on a project on nineteenth-century periodicals, and this course will help that project very significantly!

11. I plan to take up calligraphy, inspired by manuscripts and typefaces we studied.
12. I developed some technical knowledge that I expect will inform my further research and writing. The course was helpful in articulating the vocabulary for formulating certain questions. I will pursue, though the materials we looked at in the class were largely outside of what interests me (i.e., Anglophone fine print books).

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. Type discipline is still a work in progress, but I really appreciated JK and KR's ability to recommend further reading off-hand. Their knowledge of the literature appears almost encyclopedic!
2. Absolutely, and more. Hoped to learn about type and how it can be applied to art, as well as design conventions.
3. Both JK and KR were helpful, knowledgeable, and skilled. I learned an enormous amount. As well as thanking and praising JK and KR for a wonderful experience, I want to thank Rebecca and Suzanne, who were also fantastic.
4. YES—amazing instructors who somehow become more amazing with each day!
5. Absolutely. Some of the material I had been presented with before, but the instructors did a great job of making that material more accessible.
6. Yes. Two instructors who work well together sharing their experiences, and who allow occasional breakdowns in smaller groups.
7. Yes, I learned more than what I expected—both theory and practice.
8. Yes! My group was slower setting type, so we didn't get to see how to justify a line, but I learned what was promised.
9. The course write-up nicely outlines the material covered, but what I learned far exceeded my initial hopes. This course is truly stellar.
10. I learned some type identification—enough that I can continue to learn—and my understanding of the history and mechanics of printing has improved enormously. Exactly as I hoped.
11. Yes, I appreciate the balance of technical skills and historic context.
12. I felt that I did learn a lot or was directed to resources that could be of help. I would have liked to spend more time on photochemical print processes personally.

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

1. At times the lecture portion of the course felt a bit too much like a list of one technological development after another. Once we started discussing, we began to synthesize and notice trends, however, so I wonder if more time can be found for seminar-style discussion?
2. No, it was excellent.
3. {private response}
4. Mainly the pre-course readings—perhaps consider tightening the focus? Elevate to De Vinne, which had the clearest explanation of punch-cutting I have encountered.
5. I liked it as it was taught. JK and KR are a great team.
6. {no response}
7. Can we have 1-2 readings on how typography analysis is put into practice to

explain a historical (political) question? In other words, how have (non-book history) scholars incorporated this analysis into their research?

8. {private response}
9. Maybe omit the “19th- and 20th Century” from the title? Day 1 really sweeps over history from Guttenberg on.
10. I would have liked a little type description exercise and a type identification exercise early in the week, maybe in pairs, so I felt better prepared for Friday. I always want more type in the printing office, of course! ☺
11. It could be improved by adding readings from diverse philosophical and artistic perspectives.
12. Again, more attention to non-Western/non-Anglo print traditions would be welcome. A look at other print technologies like Xerox and Risograph printing—or a new course on this topic would be nice. Additionally, a look at magazines and ephemera would be welcome. In general, a more democratic approach to print history.

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

1. Good for students of 19th/20th-century history, but perhaps too basic for those with really solid, practical knowledge of letterpress printing.
2. Anyone! Those with interest in type as it may inform another project, such as further understanding printed matter, as well as artists with interest in print and text/text usage.
3. Anyone who is interested in how letterpress printing works and its history and evolution.
4. Book collectors will gravitate towards this course, but, really, anyone working in literary studies should take it.
5. Lots of folks. People interested in learning more about the history of printing and typography, of course. Librarians, instructors, makers, etc.
6. Those who want to make serious improvements in their knowledge of this area.
7. Academics, printers, IT/coders, collectors, librarians
8. See Q5.8.
9. A beginner to intermediate typography student. Someone curious about the evolution of typeface and print culture.
10. I am a literary (and media) historian, so I can confidently say that anyone working with literature, and interested in its design and business, would benefit. Also designers, artists, media historians, and librarians.
11. Anyone looking for hands-on experience with printing presses and who is interested in design.
12. {no response}

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

1. Yes!
2. Yes! To both.
3. YES and yes.
4. YES! My favorite course of the three courses I have taken at RBS. (And I enjoyed the previous courses.)

5. While I received a scholarship, the course seems very worthwhile even if you are paying your own way.
 6. Yes, yes.
 7. Yes, absolutely. JK is a connoisseur in types and typography. It's infectious to listen to both JK and KR share their expertise with such enthusiasm. You can tell their dedication to the field, and there's no better way to learn typography. I'm hooked and want to learn more.
 8. The courses are expensive. I used all my professional development funds for a year plus some for next year. I'm thrilled to be here, but it's tough to imagine being able to take another course any time soon, and I'm sure the tuition is prohibitive for many.
 9. Absolutely, and I will most definitely recommend RBS to others.
 10. It was wonderful; I will urge everyone to attend this course!
 11. Yes, the instructors shaped an engaging learning experience that was very fun!
 12. I am grateful to have had a scholarship that covered tuition.
- 8) *If your course made any trips outside of the classroom, do you feel that they were time well spent?*
1. The trip to UVA Print was illuminating and really put into perspective the technological evolution we were learning about in lecture and the physical labor we were performing in the press room.
 2. Yes!
 3. We went to the UVA press, which was helpful and thought-provoking.
 4. Yes—very eye-opening, and not a little depressing.
 5. Yes! A trip to the campus printing office was great.
 6. We made a trip to University Printing Services to see some examples of larger scale printing equipment and techniques. I think this is a useful supplement to working on the Vandercook.
 7. Yes, it is very helpful to see how printing industry has evolved.
 8. Yes. I thought UVA Print Services was fascinating, though I'd wondered if it would be a bit lame.
 9. Yes, only I wish we could have stayed even longer at UVA Printing.
 10. Our trip to the university Print Services brought our knowledge up to the present day, which we cannot afford to ignore, so it was very worthwhile.
 11. Yes, Josef Beery at the UVA print shop did a wonderful job connecting class material to the functioning press.
 12. To some extent, yes, and the field trip was nicely paced. I felt there was a missed opportunity in SC to look at a greater diversity of print materials—beyond the book and beyond the Western world. On either end, I felt the pre-nineteenth-century books visit and the UVA Printing Services visit, while interesting, were not in themselves ample to cover histories not otherwise touched upon in the course and could be spent otherwise.
- 9) *Do you have any additional thoughts or advice for anyone considering taking this course in a future year?*
1. N/A
 2. Please take this course. KR and JK are amazing talents and have so much quality

- information, expertise, and experience to share.
3. Take it!
 4. No.
 5. If you like print and book history and hands-on activities, this is for you.
 6. {no response}
 7. Just like many aspects of scholarship in book history, this class is not free from a Eurocentric bias. But, you will learn from the best experts in the field and can use the knowledge you gain to explore the field more.
 8. The actual printing is so fun!!
 9. Come ready to get a little dirty, you will get ink under your fingernails.
 10. Typefaces are fascinating, and more important to communication than most people realize. You might want to become a book collector after taking this course because types are also beautiful.
 11. {no response}
 12. {private response}

10) *If you had to sum up your RBS experience with a single sentence, phrase, or haiku, what would you say?*

1. {no response}
2. {no response}
3. Inspiring. It provides “pleasing thoughts”
That in this moment there is life and food
For future years.”
4. LOVE
5. Lovely. Thank you!
6. RBS is the chance to meet others of similar interests in an intense instructional environment with really high-level teachers.
7. Dedication, discipline, enthusiasm, and so much fun! Thanks, RBS, you rock!
8. Very worthwhile!
9. Rare Book School was one of the most educationally rewarding experiences of my life. I learned from masters at their craft.
10. Nicholas Jenson’s first Humanist typeface is a marvel.
11. My head swells with knowledge,
My heart with new friends,
My pockets with souvenirs.
12. Thank you.

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: 1 (8.33%)

My institution/employer did not give me professional leave; I used paid or vacation days:
3 (33.33%)

I am a student or non-year-round employee, with a more flexible summer schedule: 5 (41.67%)

I am retired, and can arrange my own schedule: 1 (8.33%)

My situation does not fit any of the options above: 1 (8.33%)

No Response: 1 (8.33%)

Who paid your RBS tuition costs?

I paid 100% myself: 2 (16.67%)

My institution/employer paid 100%: 3 (25%)

I used a scholarship/fellowship to pay/waive 100%: 5 (41.67%)

My situation does not fit any of the options above: 1 (8.33%)

No Response: 1 (8.33%)

Who paid your RBS housing expenses?

I paid 100% myself: 4 (33.33%)

My institution/employer paid 100%: 1 (8.33%)

I used a scholarship/fellowship to cover 100%: 2 (16.67%)

I stayed with friends/family, or stayed in my own home and commuted: 3 (25%)

My situation does not fit any of the options above: 1 (8.33%)

No Response: 1 (8.33%)

Who paid your RBS travel expenses?

I paid 100% myself: 3 (25%)

My institution/employer paid 100%: 3 (25%)

I used a scholarship/fellowship to cover 100%: 2 (26.67%)

I live locally, and had no travel expenses: 3 (25%)

No Response: 1 (8.33%)

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

Library disciplines:

Other: Retired 1 (8.33%)

Student working toward a/n:

B.A./B.S.: 1 (8.33%)

Professional educator:

Lecturer/adjunct: 2 (16.67%)

Assistant professor: 2 (16.67%)

Associate professor: 2 (16.67%)

Other: Teaching fellow 1 (8.33%)

Recent graduate 1 (8.33%)

Other occupations/vocations:

Post-doctoral fellow/researcher/scholar: 1 (8.33%)

Other: Fine artist 1 (8.33%)