

David Whitesell
G-40: Physical Bibliography for Book Conservators
6–11 January 2019

Narrative Course Evaluations

1) *Were the pre-course reading assignments useful? Did you do any additional preparation for your course? Are there any books or articles that you would like to see included in future years? Any that you might suggest removing?*

1. Yes, but it was difficult/impossible to understand Bowers until the instructors walked us through it.
2. The reading was very useful, although long. I can't think of anything to remove.
3. {no response}
4. The books are rough to get through, but they teach you what you need to know so you can read for a general familiarity with the material.
5. I think it was helpful reading and definitely good to be introduced before class started. It helped my understanding to attempt Bowers before having DW explain it.
6. Yes.
7. The pre-course reading assignments were crucial to being able to hit the ground running on the first day of class. Having access to the course materials was very helpful!
8. Pre-course reading was helpful—I was able to navigate the books with more ease as they were referred to.
9. The selected required readings are carefully chosen. The subject of the course requires lots of expertise and understanding. The reading assignments are fundamental to the learning of the subject. I appreciate the categories of “required” and “recommended” resources, which include videos as well. Very efficient learning for visual learners.

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 workbook is very useful. Yes, I'll definitely need to use Bowers, Gaskell, and the workbook in the future.
2. The workbook was very useful.
3. {no response}
4. I love my workbook and handouts! I will definitely be referring to them in the future and likely sharing some of them with my colleagues.
5. These have absolutely been useful and I'm looking forward to using this technique in future treatment efforts.
6. The teaching materials are fabulous; every possible need was considered. (More citations for images would be appreciated, though.)
7. I thought it was a perfect mix of instruction and examples. It was also well-organized, so it was easy to navigate.
8. I will keep the workbook binder with me in my reference library—and am sure to

- use it moving forward. It was well-organized and with helpful examples.
9. Carefully organized, structured, and extremely well-prepared. I have learned so much from all the lectures and activities, including exhibitions and lab sessions. All the materials are presented in a very organized manner, and the knowledge is translated very effectively.
- 3) *If you've taken previous RBS courses, how did this one compare?*
1. N/A
 2. N/A
 3. {no response}
 4. N/A
 5. N/A
 6. {no response}
 7. N/A
 8. {no response}
 9. N/A
- 4) *Which aspects of the course were most interesting and relevant for you as an individual? Did you walk away with any new insights, ideas, or project plans?*
1. Provenance, every physical and material aspect of books and prints. Yes, it definitely gives me a new perspective.
 2. I learned new evidence to look for in books, and a lot more about the hand-press printing industry and techniques. This will help me decide on appropriate treatments.
 3. {no response}
 4. I think seeing the book and its physical evidence from a different profession's perspective is incredibly helpful for my own work.
 5. This opened my eyes to how unique books are. It's a good argument to preserve their details, and to document more thoroughly.
 6. I hope to apply bibliographical collation/pagination formulas in my own future work with books. I think this will help me organize data about book structures more efficiently.
 7. I gained a much better understanding of printing techniques and the usefulness of examining typography. I feel I have a much more complete view and method for examining books. Thank you!
 8. I enjoyed developing a better eye for observing hidden evidence and have a stronger understanding of printing processes for books. I am also excited to apply new knowledge to recent research projects and explore resources previously unknown to me.
 9. To be able to study the book as an object from a very systematic and scholarly/established rigorous approach. There are many variations of conservation training, and it is wonderful to learn about the bibliographer's approach. To be able to hear from a curator's perspective is always very valuable to conservators. I can see myself adopting some techniques and approaches in examining books in the future.

- 5) *Did the instructors help you to acquire all the skills and information promised in the course description? Was anything left out or undeveloped? Did you learn what you had hoped to learn?*
1. Yes, but bibliography definitely requires more practice later.
 2. Yes. I would have been interested in more discussion of advanced bibliography in lecture, but I guess that's what the next course is for!
 3. {no response}
 4. This was really an experiment for all of us I think, so I am unsure of how to answer this question directly. I can say that I am happy I was able to take this course.
 5. I think the instructors have been great. They've been good at explaining things and being patient.
 6. Yes, I feel that I learned what I hoped to learn.
 7. Yes—I think this far exceeded my expectations.
 8. I learned what I hoped to and more. For details/rules in collation, I may have missed or not comprehended fully, I learned the type of logic Bowers intended, and so have the tools and resources I need to ask the right kind of questions to navigate my way through bibliography.
 9. While the course is a required component for all LACE fellows, I was very open to learning any subjects selected and to learning from the teacher's expertise. This has broadened my knowledge in the examination of books and placed the physical evidence observed into historical context.
- 6) *How do you plan to use the skills and knowledge acquired during your time here?*
1. Examine the book more thoroughly when treating them in conservation.
 2. Collation formulas will be very useful for {illegible} describing books in condition reports.
 3. {no response}
 4. Honestly, I'm not completely sure, but I plan on paying attention to what I do end up using from this course over the next year or so, and reporting back. Also, for me, seeing more examples of books is always good exposure.
 5. I hope to use this training to better skim bibliographical records, and to have conversations with library professionals. I think having a better understanding of a librarian's role, and communicating this (even if this method isn't practiced much) is important for these relationships.
 6. To examine books with more sensitivity and appreciation, especially for structural and provenance clues.
 7. I plan to incorporate my bibliography note-taking into my normal book structure examination. It will also be incredibly helpful while examining catalog records for research projects.
 8. Writing collation as needed for particular conservation treatments, and for making appropriate decisions in treatments.
 9. The workbook is definitely a valuable resource to have. I see myself referring to the workbook in the future. The reference list (exit list) is wonderful to have. The knowledge and skills attained are very relevant, and I will adopt them in examining and documentation of books.

7) *Please briefly describe the intellectual level of the course. What sort of person might benefit the most from taking it?*

1. Bibliographer, book dealer, librarian, or book conservator.
2. I think it is very useful for anyone interested in interpreting books' histories. It was very useful as a conservation grad student.
3. Graduate level or above. Training or professional conservators.
4. You have to want to learn and work to accomplish those goals.
5. I think anyone who's interested? Maybe people with a little background in books (librarians, conservators, makers)?
6. Book conservators, special collection librarians, curators, and researchers.
7. Very high-level. Students should have knowledge of book structure, and be able to interpret the density that is Bowers.
8. Someone with a general understanding of paper, printing, and book production/history, and critical thinking skills.
9. The content is carefully selected, so there is not much repeated information that conservators already know. Any conservation students will benefit extremely from taking the class.

8) *If applicable, what were the most original, powerful, or otherwise noteworthy educational moments in the course? Were there any "aha!" moments you'd like to share?*

1. How books/booksheets were looked at in the eyes of the printer and the bookbinder. How people "correct" the content after the books are published.
2. Format! I had never understood this, and after the reading, lecture, and practice with homework, I feel confident now.
3. Learning collation equations and provenance were my favorite parts of this course.
4. This was not an "aha" moment, but I feel much more confident in determining format, which is really helpful for me.
5. When I realized that the "ideal copy" is not the unique copy I have been taught to preserve in conservation.
6. {no response}
7. Learning about the physical evidence of the printing process like gripper marks and pin holes. The reviews of our homework and seeing how we all interpret the same book differently.
8. Several "ahas!" Seeing the physical examples of terminology I had read about—learning to see physical evidence from printing processes, and how it relates to format (i.e., gripper marks).
9. Isaac Newton's marking. Museum printing: seeing the copper plate and print side-by-side. Back marks.

9) *How could the course have been improved?*

1. I liked the homework discussion lesson to be the first thing in the morning—keep it this way!
2. More review and examples of descriptive bibliography in lecture. We all came in with different levels, but for me there was some review of printing/book history. {private response}

3. While the museums were well-exhibited, the amount of content was overwhelming.
4. I personally would have loved more lab time, going over our homework. That is where I felt like I learned the most about collation, which is the thing I knew nothing about coming into this course.
5. {no response}
6. We need more time to cover everything!
7. We just need more hours in the day, or nap times.
8. Shorter homework sessions, or maybe interweaving time for collation between lectures.
9. I can see all the decisions made for the course are carefully chosen and well thought-out. Right amount of push. Although challenging, it is a very satisfactory learning experience.

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

1. Yes, and yes!
2. {private response} Yes, and yes.
3. The combination of small class size, homework monitors/lab instructors, a greatly knowledgeable instructor, and an endless supply of food—yes, and yes.
4. I am in a lucky position since I am here on a grant/fellowship money, but I would say yes.
5. Yes. Yes.
6. Yes, absolutely.
7. Absolutely. I hope this becomes a staple for LACE students. So valuable. {LACE is an acronym for Library and Archives Conservation Education.—RBS Staff}
8. Most definitely! So glad I was able to participate in this course—I will be looking at books in a new way! DW, James Ascher, and Devin Fitzgerald are superb teachers!
9. Definitely!

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

1. {no response}
2. The trip to the archive was great. We saw wonderful and unique examples of books.
3. We went to the SC reading room to look at examples of printing and it was a great experience.
4. The arranged “museums” were a nice break in the day and a form of self-learning and discovery. It was also nice to have the option of seeing exhibits that were happening at the same time, though I personally could not go.
5. Yes.
6. Yes, our trip to the UVA SC was amazing.
7. Yes, we visited SC—it's always nice to have a new setting to energize you.
8. {no response}
9. Totally! Right amount of lecture time and other activities.

12) *If you attended any of our optional evening events, do you feel that they were a good use of your time? Were there any that were particularly important to your RBS experience? Any that you could have done without?*

1. {no response}
2. {private response}
3. {private response} I wish I had time to experience more events!
4. The ice cream night was something to look forward to, but we were here doing homework anyway.
5. {no response}
6. {no response}
7. We were here every night so things like the ice cream social were very welcome.
8. {no response}
9. N/A

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

1. Be prepared for a long day every day and make sure you are fueled with food! AND, don't stress out for not getting collation 100% right! Relax and make mistakes!
2. {private response}
3. You have to care about books to get the full effect of RBS and the courses offered.
4. As a conservation student, I am interested in other conservation labs and professionals. We arranged a visit on our own to see UVA's, but it might have been nice to have that built in. Also, more graph paper!!
5. There are snack breaks throughout the day, and nightly homework sessions. Don't rent an Airbnb with a kitchen; you won't have time to use it.
6. {no response}
7. Start reading Bowers early. Get good sleep. Plan a day before or after class happens to see the sights around Charlottesville.
8. {no response}
9. Be prepared! The course requires lots of attention and energy, but it is a fantastic learning experience.

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

1. Books are more than more!
2. I learned a lot, ate a lot of bagels, I'm exhausted, and I can't wait to come back again!
3. Tiring, but educational.
4. Come hungry and really do try to "keep calm and collate on."
5. Time well spent.
6. Exhaustingly fun.
7. Bodaciously Bibliographic.
8. Brilliant.
9. Fabulous! I will come back!

Student Data

Number of respondents: 9 (of 9)

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

My institution/employer gave me professional leave time: 1 (11.11%)

I am self-employed, and can arrange my own schedule: 1 (11.11%)

I am a student or non-year-round employee, with a more flexible summer schedule: 6 (66.66%)

My situation does not fit any of the options above: 1 (11.11%)

Who paid your RBS tuition costs?

I paid 100% myself: 4 (44.44%)

My institution/employer paid 100%: 1 (11.11%)

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

I used a scholarship/fellowship to pay/waive 100%: 4 (44.44%)

Who paid your RBS housing expenses?

I paid 100% myself: 2 (22.22%)

My institution/employer paid 100%: 3 (33.33%)

I used a scholarship/fellowship to cover 100%: 4 (44.44%)

Who paid your RBS travel expenses?

I paid 100% myself: 2 (22.22%)

My institution/employer paid 100%: 3 (33.33%)

I used a scholarship/fellowship to cover 100%: 4 (44.44%)

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

Library disciplines:

Conservator/binder/preservation librarian: 1 (11.11%)

Student working toward a/n:

M.A./M.S.: 8 (88.88%)