

## **Narrative Evaluations**

- 1) *Do you have any practical suggestions for improvements to RBS's online logistics?*
  1. I think the online logistics were excellent. The orientation session for Zoom and Gather.Town was excellent. Also, having an RBS staff person in each class session was helpful in keeping the class running smoothly.
  2. I appreciated the opportunity for an RBS course this summer, as well as the effort RBS made to build a virtual gathering space.
  3. The use of technology for online socializing left me very flat. I didn't attend. I would have enjoyed, however, a more sharing approach to community building. Sharing ideas and research, working on a question together and sharing, &c. I do not think that the way community and socializing was encouraged was very welcoming (it took time I didn't have to even understand it). I would have enjoyed more meetings throughout the day, interactive related activities.
  4. The RBS online aspect was pretty much as well organized as it could be in terms of orientations, etc. It was clear how we were meeting throughout the week.
  5. The only thing I would say is to have the reading list available beforehand
  6. Maybe offer more office hours at a later time in the day -- after class might be nice.
  7. No. I really liked how this course worked vis-a-vis logistics. The instructors held time at the close of sessions for questions, allowed the technical support to moderate and surface questions from the chat. This was efficient and productive, much more than the ad hoc way in which questions/discussions on the chat can manipulate or distract from discussion.
  8. Worked well for me.
  9. I thought the management of the virtual space and resources was excellent. Having spent a year and a half mostly on zoom I've got some comparative experience!
  10. {no response}
  11. Doing great
  12. The zoom interface worked well (or as well as a zoom interface can!). I wish there was a better way to meet with students from the class, outside of the class. Gathertown seemed like an interesting application, but I didn't use it beyond the Sunday welcome meeting. Perhaps designated "meeting" times for students in a specific class? I also found the "office hours" for the class immensely valuable; and even more designated out-out-class times to interact with the teachers could be helpful. In the end, though, I think the experience was probably as good as it could be!
  13. Nope--these were great.
  14. {no response}

15. I learned a lot and I am so happy there were these online opportunities. I would never have been able to attend this summer if they hadn't been online. The cost and distance and time off to attend has kept me from being able to do this for years. I did feel being very new to this that I did not know how to speak up or ask questions. But perhaps that will just come with time.... it might not have to do with the online logistics. Maybe some asynchronous communication options though? It just felt a little overwhelming in the midst of the lecture and Q&A to ask questions as a very junior attendee. That could just be my shyness though.
16. {no response}
17. {no response}

2) *How would you describe your encounters with RBS staff?*

1. Excellent. Very helpful.
2. Positive and professional
3. Very few interactions. Neal was helpful.
4. Everyone has been very friendly and helpful.
5. I really enjoyed the lecturers and found the technical help were really organized
6. Extremely helpful and professional
7. Excellent. Neal is great.
8. Pleasant, instructive, informative. Very easy to understand the logistics, the relationship between the course and RBS, and the structure of the course.
9. Excellent. Very informative and responsive.
10. Very positive.
11. Online
12. Welcoming, helpful, and otherwise first rate. What a great group of people.
13. The RBS staff helping this course was wonderful. I especially appreciated that he used the zoom chat to link us to the articles/archives mentioned in class.
14. {no response}
15. Good, very helpful.
16. {no response}
17. Everything was wonderful. If it weren't for the Virtual format, I'd never have considered applying. I am eager to take a second course in person in the future!

3) *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?*

1. I liked having the option of attending events outside the course. It made it feel more like a traditional RBS session rather than an online session.
2. I have a long commute and was not able to attend the lecture/s, and I appreciate that RBS made the Tuesday lecture recording available very quickly.
3. See note about this above.
4. N/A
5. NA
6. {no response}
7. N/A

8. Enjoyed the Tuesday evening lecture. Wish that there was a better structure than the Gathertown app for mingling. I know it is hard, but the Zoom Lounge works best if there is a group of people that you already know (then it is a real gas!). Perhaps some small random ice-breakers at the beginning of the week so that we can get to know: other people at RBS and other people in our class?
9. I couldn't, alas.
10. {no response}
11. Yes, but looking forward to next year
12. n/a
13. I was unable to attend the evening events.
14. {no response}
15. I was not able to attend the optional events.
16. {no response}
17. {no response}

4) *Were the pre-course reading assignments useful? Are there any readings that you would like to see added or removed in future years?*

1. Yes, the pre-course readings gave me background information for the class.
2. Pre-course readings were a useful review.
3. {deleted response}
4. Yes, the pre-course reading assignments were useful, though there should be more consistent messaging about what they entail and where they can be found. Some sources call them "required reading" while others call them "advance reading." Not everyone has easy access to these expensive volumes, so I think the course should supply PDFs of the 3 chapters like they do in other RBS courses.
5. For this class, the pre reading was pretty hefty. I was lucky that my colleagues already had the books to share
6. Extremely helpful. I loved the readings.
7. Yes, all useful -- and blissfully short given the short length of the course.
8. The pre-course reading assignment was extremely useful. It was essential prep for the week's lectures. And it expanded my horizon. As the prof. said in reply to my statement, "I never took the time to read this literature," he said that now I have it (in condensed and interpreted form). Very thankful.
9. Yes.
10. Yes!
11. Yes
12. Yes, the advance readings helped provide a large-scale frame and context for the specific topics of each class session. Reading them enabled us to do away with most of the basic questions and explanations that might have otherwise taken up our already too-limited time together.
13. Having access to those two volumes was wonderful.
14. {no response}
15. YES! very helpful/
16. {no response}
17. Yes, very.

5) *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. The additional readings will be helpful as I incorporate this new material into my teaching and research.
2. I'm looking forward to the deeper dive that the Dropbox materials will provide.
3. {deleted response}
4. There was no workbook, but the handouts were useful.
5. The teaching materials were great for illustrating points
6. Very helpful and useful. Incredibly enriching.
7. Excellent images were used to capture the heart of some of the lecture material. I think these things will be useful to me in the future.
8. The readings and additions during the week were very useful at the time, and they will be useful in the future.
9. Very good, extended the points Jim and Michael were making.
10. History of the Book in America is a great textbook to use. It appears on my comprehensive reading list and thus it was very useful to have the chance to read some of it for the course.
11. N/A
12. The materials made available were largely illustrations and example materials related to the topics of each session, and some I can certainly see myself using or referring to in the future. Particularly useful was the list of "Further Readings" that the teachers assembled--that one I know I will return to. Overall, the class seemed well organized and thought out, and the materials reflected that.
13. The distributed materials (articles/two volumes) were all wonderful resources. Especially helpful to come back to.
14. {no response}
15. N/A
16. {no response}
17. Absolutely.

6) *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'm still processing what I've learned this week, but I have some ideas how I might use this in my teaching and research.
2. The course re-inspired me to get back into past projects.
3. {deleted response}
4. I'll use what I learned about book history to help American literature come alive for my students, providing context for what we read in the classroom.
5. This will help me deal better with the library collection at my NPS site.
6. Yes, absolutely.
7. Absolutely -- I can see myself using a lot of this information in course lectures and some of the material was relevant in tangential or contextual ways for my research.

8. Plenty of "aha!" moments and lots to think about. I pledge to improve my reading in the long (textual analysis) and short (some fiction that I should have read) term.
  9. Definitely helpful with some research context, but also as an intro to RBS. I'll for sure sign up for another course as soon as possible.
  10. Yes! Learning about the small-scale platen jobber presses provided me with a research angle. I am interested in small presses in the c19 midwest.
  11. Buying books
  12. The class provided me with some very specific ideas and leads for a few of my current research projects; and conversations with the teachers not only pointed me in some very helpful directions, but also revealed to me research questions that I didn't previously know to ask. I feel excited and energized about carrying what I learned into my research, after the class. Also, the class itself filled in so many little gaps in my knowledge of 19th-century US book culture, and I can see using a lot of what I've learned (and resources that were provided) to shape and frame future early American literature courses that I will teach.
  13. This knowledge was helpful background information for my work in this field.
  14. {no response}
  15. This topic matter was so far outside of my usual research that it was almost all new information. I feel like I had a series of "aha" moments.
  16. {no response}
  17. {no response}
- 7) *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
  2. Yes
  3. {deleted response}
  4. Yes, they expertly taught the course.
  5. The course was an overview. I really appreciated what was covered with the time allowed
  6. The instructors were knowledgeable, gracious, and generous with their time.
  7. Yes, and more. This was an excellent course -- full of lucid explanations, helpful descriptions, and all done with serious intellectual rigor and good cheer.
  8. I learned about the information that interests researchers and scholars. I also learned how they interpret the raw material that I work with. I went into the course with no expectations, and came away with an appreciation of the scholars role in interpreting and presenting information about books, publishing, and the economics of the book trade.
  9. Yes.
  10. Yes.
  11. Yes and more. I thought both instructors did a great job.
  12. To be honest, I didn't quite have a clear idea of what I would learn from this class—we don't know what we don't know, right? But from the advance readings onward, my experience with this class exceeded anything that I'd hoped.

Moreover, what I did learn—which was exactly as promised, and more—opened up new ways of thinking about some current research projects, and that was one goal that I really had in mind.

13. I am new to materialist print culture methods so I wasn't exactly quite sure what I expected to learn. I did appreciate having been given access to a wealth of research material. But the lack of methodological training was frustrating.
14. {no response}
15. I almost think it could have been extended. Definitely learned a lot in a short period of time!
16. {no response}
17. I did, definitely. It was only a 6 hr course, so the instructors had to be quick yet comprehensive, detailed yet expansive. They did great! I truly enjoyed this and can apply it to my planning and curriculum design.

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

1. {no response}
2. The content and focus were perfect.
3. {deleted response}
4. The course was organized as a conference: presentation and Q&A. I think that format is difficult to sustain over long periods of time online. I'd suggest sharing a key image or paragraph, having people get into groups (Zoom breakout rooms), and then sharing their thoughts, or connecting a common text to one's research and sharing---something that gets people knowing each other.
5. NA
6. {no response}
7. N/A
8. Liked it just the way it was. Would have enjoyed more lectures. Would also have enjoyed opportunities to work with other students and learn about their research specialities and teaching background and expertise.
9. Not that I can think of. Jim and Michael's expertise is what made this invaluable.
10. Some more slides and interactive activities could help the online format go smoother.
11. {no response}
12. All week I longed that I was there, on site, in person--but that's not a flaw in the course itself. Given the virtual/online circumstances, it was about as good as a class could be.
13. A few things come to mind: 1. it would have been helpful if the instructors had had zoom training/experience before teaching this course. For example: when you interrupt someone on zoom it becomes impossible to hear either of the people speaking. This happened a lot. Only one person can speak at a time in zoom. Perhaps the instructors were unaware of these kinds of technical issues. 2. Content delivery isn't pedagogy. While I didn't know what to expect by way of learning content, I did expect to be taught, not just lectured at and then asked for questions. I could have gathered (and did gather much) of the lecture material by reading through the two book history volumes we were linked to. This feels like a

very outmoded and ineffective teaching style. While the instructors encouraged us to ask questions they didn't do enough to scaffold us towards asking questions. They just delivered information and expected that there would be questions on the other end. That's not quite how learning works--especially for people who don't have the shared research background. I would have appreciated some interactive group activities, some tasks with explicit learning goals, some kind of active learning, etc. Rather than giving us two broad volumes to look through, it would have been helpful if they assigned specific essays that gave us the information they delivered via lecture (an article on the trade fairs, another on the industrialization of the book, a third on Stowe), supplemented whatever the articles didn't provide with a course pack or handout, and used the in class time for in-depth activities. An example of one such activity: give us two images of book publishing/printing spaces from different eras, put us in groups, and have us meditate on the differences between the spaces, production, tech, laborers, etc. The articles we read for homework would have enabled this, and the exchange would have given us time to sit with what we've learned and digest it. It's possible to do this with zoom.

3. Somewhat related to the lack of active learning is that I don't think this course made sufficient use of the expertise in the room. What an incredible resource to have professors, librarians, curators, archivists, etc., in a single room! Why aren't we all learning from each other? Why are two older white male professors the ones delivering information and asking if we have questions for them?

4. These instructors took both their pedagogical and their research methods for granted. There was \*no discussion of method\*. This was striking, and for me, disappointing. Book history has historically been a very white field (from the people doing the research to the things they are researching), and this course didn't do much to disrupt that problem (or even acknowledge it!).

5. The content/methods used to teach this course (and the methods assumed by the researchers teaching the course) were really white. There were all kinds of ways that race could have been addressed--which felt especially significant given the time period. But race is more than just a book being about Black people or about anti-slavery (I'm thinking of the last day's engagement with Stowe). And yet I think that's the reductive approach to race that the course took. What does it mean to have a "key moment" in a white supremacist country's publishing history without discussing how that key moment was produced by white supremacy/antiblackness and helped maintain it? This is what I mean about the methodology being white--it neither address the structures that produce the absence of Black writers/publishers/books nor the structures that code \*white\* book history as Book History. I recognize that the zoom format presents teaching challenges--but collectively we've been at zoom teaching now for over a year. And a lot of my other concerns about the course have more to do with the instructor's (lack of) continuing education re: pedagogical and research methodologies. Both these Professors are clearly experts in their areas. There is absolutely no denying that. And from particular frameworks they have a wealth of information to give--but that's what research articles are for, not teaching spaces. This feedback isn't personal--I do not intend

to disrespect these two esteemed colleagues. I do think, however--especially given our political climate and the continuing spectacle of state-sponsored murder--that it's ethically imperative we update our methods and our approach to this work.

14. {no response}
15. {no response}
16. {no response}
17. {no response}

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

1. Anyone working on history in the antebellum period
2. {deleted response}
3. {deleted response}
4. Anyone interested in book history.
5. Anyone in a library, museum, or education profession
6. Anyone interested in Antebellum literature and culture would benefit.
7. Instructors teaching lit/history who want to buff up on book-historical contextual approaches. Researchers who want to learn more about the historical trades.
8. Anyone who is interested in: the early American book trade, the genesis of the American novel, the distribution of books in the first two-thirds of the 19th century.
9. {no response}
10. {no response}
11. People curious about early American commercial activity.
12. Scholars of early American literature and culture in particular; librarians and archivists with interests in the period
13. I suppose anyone wanting more information about this particular period of book/publishing history.
14. {no response}
15. {no response}
16. {no response}
17. {no response}

10) *Do you feel that you got your money's worth?*

1. Yes. I'm really glad I had the opportunity to take this course.
2. Yes
3. {deleted response}
4. N/A
5. Yes
6. Absolutely!
7. I didn't pay, but I would've felt that I got more than the worth, yes.
8. Absolutely!
9. Yes.
10. Yes
11. Yes

12. Yes
13. To be honest, no, because I feel that most of what I learned (resources excepted) could have been gleaned from reading the Book History volumes on my own.
14. {no response}
15. yes
16. {no response}
17. Absolutely.

11) *On a scale of 1–10 with 10 being most likely, how likely are you to recommend this course to others?*

1. 10
2. 8
3. 5
4. 7
5. 7
6. 10
7. 10
8. 10
9. 10
10. 5
11. 10
12. 10
13. 3
14. {no response}
15. 10
16. 10
17. 10

12) *If your course had any virtual field trips or guest speakers, do you feel that they were time well spent?*

1. n/a
2. n/a
3. None, sadly.
4. N/A
5. NA
6. {no response}
7. N/A
8. N/A
9. NA.
10. {no response}
11. N/A
12. n/a
13. n/a
14. {no response}
15. N/A

16. {no response}
17. {no response}

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

1. {no response}
2. I think the longer, in-person course would be the better option; however, I appreciated access to the course -- and to colleagues -- from afar.
3. No.
4. Take the course! You'll learn about book history from the scholars who wrote the book on it.
5. NA
6. {no response}
7. I suspect it'd be even better in person, but the online environment for this course worked really, really well.
8. Do the pre-course prep readings. The "text book" is very large, and it pays to have some familiarity with the subject, the players, and the field of scholarly research before you take the class.
9. Do the reading and take advantage of the instructors' expertise to ask questions.
10. {no response}
11. Do it
12. Take the time to do the advance readings--they were very helpful--and come to class with an open mind and a willingness to engage and ask questions!
13. See above.
14. {no response}
15. {no response}
16. {no response}
17. {no response}

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

1. Excellent professional development opportunity
2. As always, RBS provides a rich experience.
3. {deleted response}
4. Learn more about book history in 6 hours than you have your entire life.
5. Refreshing, educational, friendly
6. Much gratitude for the enriching experience; fascinating topic; clearly the instructors are passionate and deeply knowledgeable.
7. Learned and generous instructors, excellent classmates and questions, intellectually rigorous but not stifling.
8. Equal parts mem'ry / and then some new thoughts setup / new experience
9. {no response}
10. Rich in information.
11. Essential activity
12. Inspirational!

13. Content delivery isn't effective teaching.
14. {no response}
15. Taking a course that does not immediately seem to fit ones field of study is actually surprisingly beneficial.
16. Great as usual
17. "Haiku! Ha! Okay, how about a limerick? / I'd heard about RBS courses, / But thought I that had no resources. / Then, in virtual classes, / I learned how the masses / Bought books often carried by horses.

## **Student Data**

*Number of Respondents: 17 (of 21)*

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

1. My situation does not fit any of the options above.
2. My institution/employer gave me professional leave time.
3. My situation does not fit any of the options above.
4. I am a student or non-year-round employee, with a more flexible schedule.
5. My institution/employer gave me professional leave time.
6. My situation does not fit any of the options above.
7. My situation does not fit any of the options above.
8. My institution/employer gave me professional leave time.
9. My institution/employer gave me professional leave time.
10. I am a student or non-year-round employee, with a more flexible schedule.
11. I am self-employed, and can arrange my own schedule.
12. I am a student or non-year-round employee, with a more flexible schedule.
13. My situation does not fit any of the options above.
14. My situation does not fit any of the options above.
15. My situation does not fit any of the options above.
16. I am self-employed, and can arrange my own schedule.
17. My institution/employer did not give me professional leave; I used vacation or unpaid leave days.

*Who paid your RBS tuition costs?*

1. My institution/employer paid 100% of my tuition costs.
2. I paid 100% of my tuition costs myself.
3. My institution/employer paid 100% of my tuition costs.
4. I used a scholarship/fellowship to pay/waive all of my tuition expenses.
5. My institution/employer paid 100% of my tuition costs.
6. My institution/employer paid 100% of my tuition costs.
7. I used a scholarship/fellowship to pay/waive all of my tuition expenses.
8. My institution/employer paid 100% of my tuition costs.
9. I paid 100% of my tuition costs myself.
10. I used a scholarship/fellowship to pay/waive all of my tuition expenses.
11. I paid 100% of my tuition costs myself.

12. My institution/employer paid part of my tuition costs, and I paid the rest.
13. I used a scholarship/fellowship to pay/waive all of my tuition expenses.
14. My institution/employer paid part of my tuition costs, and I paid the rest.
15. I paid 100% of my tuition costs myself.
16. I paid 100% of my tuition costs myself.
17. My institution/employer paid 100% of my tuition costs.

*Not including this year, how many RBS courses have you attended?*

1. This is my first course.
2. 10+
3. This is my first course.
4. This is my first course.
5. This is my first course.
6. This is my first course.
7. This is my first course.
8. 3
9. This is my first course.
10. This is my first course.
11. 10+
12. This is my first course.
13. This is my first course.
14. This is my first course.
15. This is my first course.
16. 1
17. This is my first course.

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

1. Professional educator: Associate professor
2. Library discipline: Public services librarian
3. Professional educator: Other
4. Professional educator: Assistant professor
5. Library discipline: Curator
6. Professional educator: Full professor
7. Professional educator: Assistant professor
8. Library discipline: Cataloger/metadata librarian
9. Professional educator: Full professor
10. Student working towards a/an: Ph.D./D.Phil.
11. Book Trades: Antiquarian bookseller
12. Professional educator: Full professor
13. Professional educator: Assistant professor
14. Professional educator: Full professor
15. Library discipline: Public services librarian
16. Book Trades: Antiquarian bookseller
17. Professional educator: Full professor