

Raymond Clemens & Richard Hark
L-125v: Scientific Analysis of the Book
12 – 17 June ONLINE ONLY

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. The course readings were excellent—I really enjoyed them and, for the most part, found them all very useful.
2. They were useful in orientating myself with the course topics.
3. Yes! The readings were incredibly informative and supplemented the course material well.
4. The pre-course reading assignments were very useful in preparing me for this subject; one which is outside my normal area of expertise and interest. Several of the recommended texts are now a permanent part of my reference library.
5. {no response}
6. Very helpful.
7. Yes, very useful.
8. I really enjoyed the pre-course readings. Especially Raymond's book, *Introduction to Manuscript Studies*, and 2 of the others, *Condition: The Ageing of Art*, and *Understanding Illuminated Manuscripts: A Guide to Technical Terms. Scientific Investigation of Copies, Fakes and Forgeries* and the other more scientific journal pieces were admittedly a bit over my head, but that's to be expected.
9. I found the reading assignments very useful. Because of the scientific nature of the course, I'm sure updated information or articles about the analytical techniques used will need to be added.
10. {no response}
11. {no response}
12. Yes, it was. The reading gave me the basic knowledge and terminology to better understand the course. I need to study a little more to be able to recommend any reading.

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. I would have liked to have had an additional annotated bibliography of books and articles for deeper reading, but I recognize that compiling something like that is a huge task.
2. They were useful! I will certainly refer back to them as there was a lot of information to take in during the course.
3. The slides were great. The demos were also really useful.
4. In this course, the various presentation slides were provided after each day, not in advance. The recommended daily reading materials were extremely useful for preparing for lively

discussion. The slides were very useful for review preparing for the next day. The presenters and RBS staff were very generous with providing additional materials relevant to some of the wide-ranging and fascinating discussions generated by the student participation.

5. Wonderful, varied readings that I thoroughly enjoyed. I wish we had more time so that we could discuss them in depth. We did apply the principles from the readings in our virtual labs, which was excellent.
6. They were very appropriate and useful.
7. Yes to all questions.
8. There were times when the readings on the syllabus didn't quite match what was in the folders and it was a bit confusing. Still, all content was useful in understanding the day's topic, and I will definitely keep all of my reading material for further consultation.
9. The course materials were very helpful!
10. {no response}
11. {no response}
12. The teaching materials and the readings given during class were appropriate and useful and related with the contents of each class. It was a good idea to have the images after classes as they are valuable material for further study and consultation.

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'm going to set aside dedicated time to narrow down my new project ideas. This course is already changing the way I'm approaching the collection I work with—I really do feel that I now have a much better sense of what my options are in terms of applying the techniques we discussed in class. I think it quite literally delivered exactly what I asked for—I'm almost overwhelmed with project options now!
2. I am hoping to bring ideas to my workplace about what we can include and offer, or partnerships we can create.
3. Something unrelated to the main purpose which I found useful was a discussion of facsimiles available for class demonstration. As a professor this is useful information to have!
4. I took the course to complement my standard bibliographic education. Although I have no project plans at present, I am sure the skills and knowledge have added to the depth and breadth of my understanding of the book and how booksellers, institutions, researchers can engage in the future.
5. {no response}
6. Absolutely. I already have a research project in mind and will begin that process soon. I will also apply everything I learned in class I am teaching in spring 2023.
7. Certainly the knowledge and skills gained will be a new resource for me. The course material validated the need for continued collaboration between conservators and scientists. I feel more apt to reaching out to other analytical labs on campus to begin to use these tools to answer specific questions for conservation treatment.
8. I will use this knowledge to better understand some of the work of my conservation scientist

colleagues. I now have the vocabulary and basic understanding of some of their useful procedures, and I can be a part of those conversations. In the future, I may be able to take samples for certain testing, and be helpful in that way.

9. I have several ideas for potential projects and am looking forward to working within my institution to move these forward.
10. {no response}
11. {no response}
12. I have some ideas about the use of this knowledge for the study of the printed books' bindings. I am now curious about the availability of this technology in my country and the possibilities to reach it.

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. Absolutely, and they left open the possibility of asking questions in the future. I think I have a grounding in the basics now and I feel comfortable reaching out with more technical questions in the future. I also appreciated that this course had a very practical focus—the discussion of how to initiate collaboration with scientists was really thoughtful and useful.
2. Yes! I learned far more than I hoped to learn. It was a lot to take in but very informational and beneficial.
3. Yes!!! I learned so much more than I hoped!
4. The course delivered on every aspect of the course.
5. Yes, this was the thorough introduction to a variety of technologies for better understanding physical materials that I was looking for!
6. I absolutely did. I was not disappointed at all. It was such an honor to be part of this course.
7. Yes, it was a good general overview of techniques being used today, which could certainly not be exhaustive. In understanding methods better, I realized there are most likely techniques out there waiting to be useful to conservators. Richard Hark did a good job of relating the complexity of the using and understanding how to read tests, while not discouraging investigation. There's no way we would become experts, but we have a foundation and know where to look for information.
8. Yes. I came away with the basic understanding of multiple options for scientific analysis of the book.
9. Yes, I was hoping to refresh my knowledge of scientific and analytical techniques used in examining cultural heritage materials, and I feel I got a great foundation on these.
10. {no response}
11. {no response}
12. Yes! Both instructors are very good, they know the subject very well . I liked that they shared with us their experience in the use of this technology for the study of books.

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

1. Some of the lab sessions were a little bit harder to follow because of connection issues and

shaky cameras, but I appreciated being able to see equipment in action. Perhaps some more videos could help supplement the bandwidth issues?

2. {no response}
3. n/a
4. Perhaps in the future some of the presentations on the various technologies presented could be distilled into discrete videos for pre-course viewing—for example a prerecorded video on what a Raman device is, what it looks like and how it is used, &c. This would allow for more detailed post introduction discussion.
5. I don't think so; in the future, I'd love to be able to attend in person. My own circumstances limited me to virtual courses this year.
6. No.
7. I think I personally miss the aspects of in-person learning. It's just what I know. I feel more comfortable sharing in that environment as opposed to zoom. But others thrive with online and it allowed for international participants to join, which was lovely. I appreciated the effort with the lab sessions, and understand the difficulties with technology, but oh, if we could have teleported to the lab everyday, that would have been more informative.
8. I would have really enjoyed an in-person version of this course. Everyone learns better when they get to be in the room when these things are being done.
9. {no response}
10. {no response}
11. {no response}
12. The majority of the examples we reviewed in class are about MS. I would like to recommend to include some examples about the use of this technology on printed books and bindings.

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

1. This class was amazing for me as a member of my institution's curatorial staff—there are huge, obvious benefits for conservators, but I think this is a really well-designed class for others in my position.
2. Researchers interested in expanding into scientific methods, curators/librarians interested in it for their own research or for providing tools to researchers.
3. Everyone!
4. Medievalists; researchers; conservators; booksellers interested in pre-18th century materials and particularly parchment dealers
5. Anyone interested in taking their understanding of physical materials for research or management purposes to a new level.
6. I think anyone interested in the subject. We need more folks to do scientific analysis on rare books, and I hope to get more people interested through my own teaching and research!
7. Unsure. Whoever has the inspiration for the information.
8. Conservators, curators, rare book librarians.
9. The interdisciplinary nature of this course makes it ideal for librarians, conservators, and scientists trying to "speak the same language" when it comes to sampling, testing and

interpreting analytical results. I personally appreciate knowing what scientific techniques are most appropriate for which kinds of materials, as well as their potential limitations.

10. {no response}
11. {no response}
12. My students, at the conservation school, and my colleagues, at the National Library as I will share this knowledge with them.

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

Definitely!

1. Yes!
2. Yes!
3. Yes
4. Yes, definitely.
5. Definitely.
6. Yes.
7. Yes, I believe paying for my tuition was a good investment for RBS and the Mellon Cultural Heritage Fellowship.
8. Yes! I particularly liked the practical advice on how to get started, and reach out to other specialists in the field who may be interested in collaborating on research projects.
9. {no response}
10. {no response}
11. Yes!

8) *How likely are you to recommend this course to others?*

1. 10
2. 8
3. 10
4. 10
5. 10
6. 10
7. 10
8. 10
9. 9
10. {no response}
11. {no response}
12. 10

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

1. Definitely—having a question and answer session was fantastic. Having read their article beforehand helped us hit the ground running and really get the most out of the guests. Definitely preferred over a lecture.

2. Yes we had guest speakers who had some really interesting research.
3. Oh yes! The visitors were so informative and provided great depth to topics we touched on previously.
4. The guest speakers were the icing on the cake of what was a fascinating week. To discuss research techniques and bounce ideas of leading researchers in the field was invaluable.
5. Yes, our guest speakers were amazing.
6. Yes.
7. Yes, our guest speakers added so much to the last day.
8. Yes! Our guest speakers really helped explain new non-destructive sampling techniques that I will definitely use in the future.
9. Yes, absolutely. I really enjoyed both Sarah and Matthew's session on Biocodicology, and it was wonderful that they were able to join the class to discuss their research projects.
10. {no response}
11. {no response}
12. {no response}

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

1. Don't be intimidated if you weren't good at science in school!
2. {no response}
3. {no response}
4. {no response}
5. {no response}
6. {no response}
7. I wish I had planned the timing better with my day, so knowing the class schedule way beforehand would have helped. One of the drawbacks to online is that one can never truly get away if still "at work" and I would advise a future participant to really focus on just the class if possible, even if physically in the office.
8. This is an excellent introductory course to get you familiar with different methods of analyzing the physical book from a scientific perspective. The course material, coupled with a foundational understanding of manuscript study will give you a whole new way of looking at books.
9. {no response}
10. {no response}
11. {no response}
12. To try to be at all the sessions, there is a lot of information given at each one and listen to the experiences and questions of the attendees are useful to have new ideas and to clarify some questions.

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

1. This class was action packed and illuminating—absolutely no time was wasted!
2. It's a great experience in meeting like minded people passionate about books!
3. Amazing! Thank you for bringing us all together. It was wonderful to be with such a varied group of people learning about scientific analysis.
4. Career affirming experience
5. Book nerds are gonna nerd!
6. I have been wanting to take an RBS course for years, but I never had the support (financial and time) from my institution. I changed jobs and institutions last year and finally have the support to take a class, and it was everything and more I hoped it to be. I cannot wait to take more RBS courses, and I am elated to be at an institution that will support me in that endeavor! Also, Ray and Richard are absolute RBS treasures! Brilliant and so very kind, the both of them.
7. Packed with information, knowledge, and expertise. A joyful gathering of like-minded and excited individuals ready to share and grow from each other. Thank you!
8. Who knew I could be so interested in biocodicology?
9. {private response}
10. {no response}
11. {no response}
12. Fantastic!