

Richard Ovenden
I-45v: The Photographic Book since 1843
5-10 June 2022

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. Since the reading list was voluminous, it would be helpful to have some clearer divisions between “must read” texts and optional readings. One or two readings were marked for each day, but more guidance would have been appreciated.
2. {no response}
3. {no response}
4. Yes, I found the pre-course material that I was able to get a hold of to be very helpful. I had to buy Richard Benson’s book *The Printed Picture* which I am keeping since I found it to be a very good resource.
5. {no response}
6. Yes—list length was overwhelming though.
7. Great reading list! I read in advance and felt prepared. But also I could concentrate on my own interests. Extensive bibliographies are a great service—integral to the courses.
8. N/A
9. The bibliography was very comprehensive, a bit too much though. I would have preferred a full comprehensive list next to a short pre-class reading list.
10. Yes, very useful. I always appreciate that the most recommended are highlighted.
11. {no response}
12. {no response}
13. Great context in the reading list.
14. {no response}
15. Very thorough list—including many items my institution doesn’t have and/or would have been very hard to track down. But still useful to have.
16. {no response}
17. Yes.
18. Helpful reading list.

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. It was great to be able to have access to the instructor’s PowerPoint slides during and

- after the course.
2. {no response}
 3. {no response}
 4. I found having the one ILL article beneficial because the ILL I placed at the local library did not come in time for the class. I wish there were more articles or book chapters readily available. Also, I am under the impression that I cannot share the slides with anyone.
 5. {no response}
 6. Yes.
 7. We didn't do too much added stuff during class--this course was about looking at primary material. The PowerPoint slides were given in advance, which is great. Also good to go back to.
 8. It was helpful to circulate the slides in advance and have them accessible during the course.
 9. The only course workbook are the PowerPoint slides and one other document which is a list of albums. I would really have liked an actual syllabus which does not need to be hundreds of pages but a couple of pages of written syllabus would have been nice.
 10. The class PowerPoint slides and the book lists will be very useful to me in the future as I put together instruction sessions and when I acquire new materials for our print collections.
 11. {no response}
 12. {no response}
 13. Content was well-organized and very detailed. I will return to it frequently after the course.
 14. Everything was appropriate and it will continue to be useful in the future.
 15. {no response}
 16. Yes on all points.
 17. Yes.
 18. Appropriate and hopefully useful.
- 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 thoroughly enjoyed every minute of the class, and I expect it to inform a photobook project I have planned.
 2. {no response}
 3. {no response}
 4. There were more "aha!" moments for the class. I wanted knowledge of the early history of photographic books which the class readily provided.
 5. {no response}
 6. Yes--the reminder to use photographic illustrations in books as examples of specific

- photographic techniques was something of an “aha!” moment for me.
7. It’s affecting my photography. The course definitely helps me as a collector. But it also expands my world as a cultural historian.
 8. I hope to be able to use the skills in my archival processing work by being able to identify and describe photobook formats and processes.
 9. Not really, I was a bit disappointed by the chaos of the class, without the syllabus I felt it was five days of fun information without a thread or purpose.
 10. I loved seeing a couple of photographically illustrated books highlighted that I was already familiar with from our collections and now I know even more about them. This course also made me question my own bias toward earlier printed materials (pre-1800) and illustration processes and aesthetics. The knowledge I gained in this course will be very helpful in appraising our cataloging backlog better and understanding what we already have in our collections.
 11. {no response}
 12. {no response}
 13. I am interested in lending my words to the images taken by a photographer, and will pursue such projects with great energy. I will apply my knowledge of the history of the photographic book both in choosing representative teaching materials, and providing the inspirational basis for future projects.
 14. {no response}
 15. The historical arc of this class was very useful, as was the explanation of photographic printing processes and how they’ve changed over time.
 16. “Aha!” in terms of my own research for my next book.
 17. Curating and writing regarding photo books.
 18. Not so much an “aha!” moment but if the Bodleian librarian can give a wonderful series of lectures online without much fuss about putting things on the photo mount upside down, perhaps I can relax a bit too regarding the classes I’d like to present.
- 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. Yes, and more.
 2. {no response}
 3. {no response}
 4. I believe RO did an excellent job as a lecturer and is very knowledgeable in this history of the photographic book.
 5. {no response}
 6. Yes.
 7. Yes, yes.
 8. As a processing archivist, I didn’t learn as much practical information and skills as I would have liked.

9. I had hoped for more information on the binding structures, on how the development in the printing and binding world ran next to the development of photography and how those developed the photographically illustrated books. This was really more a history class on the major photographic developments and the books that used those.
10. Yes, I definitely learned what I hoped to learn.
11. {no response}
12. {no response}
13. Yes, and yes.
14. Yes.
15. Yes. {private response}
16. Learned all and more.
17. Yes.
18. Yes! And more.

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

1. Of course, it would have been really nice to be able to take the course in person, but doing it online was more convenient for me.
2. {no response}
3. {no response}
4. I really wish there was a course reserve all students could access. Not all students can access ILL. The time between receiving my acceptance for the class and the start of the class was too short to make use of ILL at a public library. The public library did not have all the books in the main or branch libraries.
5. {no response}
6. {no response}
7. A final discussion period. But as the lectures were so valuable, I'm not complaining that our time went there.
8. I would have appreciated more diverse artists showcased. A lot of the "canon" is helpful for historical context, but I think it would have been good to supplement with lesser known and wider range of artists. I also would have appreciated some time at the end of the course on the last day for questions. Lastly, but I think this is important, I would have appreciated some acknowledgement or historical context for some of the material shown in the course that depicted harmful language/content. For example, we were shown a book with the pejorative title "Gypsies."
9. A syllabus with a beginning, middle, end, and conclusion.
10. No, the course was well paced and fit a lot in the 12 online hours of instruction!
11. {no response}
12. {no response}
13. {no response}
14. {no response}

15. {no response}
16. One technical piece of advice, when the professor went from projecting PowerPoint slides to his document camera, was that the PowerPoint slides should have been minimized and the camera maximized so we could see details as he wished us to see them. {private response}
17. More time for interaction with the other class participants. Would have been beneficial to have an introductory session that allowed each participant to talk about their experience and their wishes for the class.
18. It's always best in person to see the objects but YAY Zoom for allowing courses, meetings, &c., to occur at all.

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

1. Anyone working with collections of or doing research on the photographic books of any time period.
2. {no response}
3. {no response}
4. People who work in archives, special collections libraries, book dealers, and private collectors.
5. {no response}
6. {no response}
7. Anyone who has to handle or identify the materials. But also to art historians and historians of technology, and everything in between.
8. I think this course is best suited for photo curators/historians/catalogers, or those interested in collection development.
9. Art historians and curators.
10. Curators and special collections professionals who may work with photographically illustrated materials on a regular basis and collectors interested in building their own collections. Photographers and book artists interested in learning more about the history of photographs in books. Perhaps conservators as well.
11. {no response}
12. {no response}
13. {no response}
14. {no response}
15. Academics, archivists.
16. {no response}
17. {no response}
18. {no response}

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

1. Yes.
2. {no response}
3. {no response}
4. I found it personally a little steep for an online class and if my work did not pay for the class, I could not have afforded it on my own. However, I found the instructor very informative. How RO presented the information made it easier for me to learn and process the information (which a person cannot really put a price on).
5. {no response}
6. Yes.
7. Sure.
8. Somewhat.
9. Not really, again, if there was a syllabus, I would have thought it worth my time more. Now it was just a fun fact class. **See Q3.**
10. My institution paid for the class from my professional development allotment.
11. {no response}
12. {no response}
13. {no response}
14. Yes.
15. Yes.
16. Yes.
17. Yes.
18. Yes.

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

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

18. 10

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

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

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

1. Start the reading early.
2. {no response}
3. {no response}
4. Again, it would be nice to have a course reserve for the class. **See Q5.**
5. {no response}
6. {no response}
7. Read the recommended material that you can get your hands on.
8. {no response}
9. {no response}
10. No.
11. {no response}
12. {no response}
13. {no response}
14. {no response}
15. {no response}
16. {no response}

17. {no response}

18. {no response}

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

1. Terrific, as always.

2. {no response}

3. {no response}

4. Very insightful on the history of photographic book.

5. {no response}

6. {no response}

7. ZOOM!

8. {no response}

9. {no response}

10. Definitely a privilege to learn from a true authority on photographically illustrated books!

11. {no response}

12. {no response}

13. A worthwhile experience, and a wonderfully knowledgeable instructor.

14. Great!

15. Photo in the book

Inked into permanence

But faithful? Maybe.

16. {no response}

17. Positive experience.

18. #BodelianBrilliant!