

Lisa Fagin Davis
M-100v: Fragmentology
17 – 22 July 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. They were very useful.
2. I thought the readings were excellent, very lively and interesting. The only thing I would have liked to learn more about were medieval practices of fragmenting manuscripts. It seems that most of what we learned about were post-medieval instances of reuse. I'd be curious to learn more about medieval reuse (maybe Kathryn Rudy has written something?).
3. Yes, the pre-course reading/watching list was extensive but gave a great background to the topics we discussed in the course.
4. The pre-readings were incredibly useful in orienting participants to the specialty of fragmentology, its history, key players, methodology, and current research. I think it might be helpful to have in the recommended readings some links to articles or lectures on fragments that turned up in unusual places.
5. They were all very useful. In terms of possible other readings for the future, I think Roger Wieck's "Folia Fugitiva" article or Gwara and Johnson's "The Butcher's Bill" (or maybe the Hornby-Cockerell Bible). If the site is still up, the Omeka reconstruction of the Llangattock Breviary would also be a cool source.
6. They were super useful! I would have enjoyed more incorporation of them into the class discussions. I liked that there were readings and videos.
7. The pre-course reading/viewing assignments were very useful and enjoyable. Especially Christopher de Hamel's paper—but everything he does is a joy to encounter! I hadn't previously known about Otto Ege, though I was familiar with fragmentation and the ongoing trade particularly in the US. Much of the pre-course material was focused on Ege, fortunately, who was likewise mentioned during the course frequently, so indeed that was useful.
8. Very—I had already read/seen a lot of the material in the last two years, but what I hadn't was very thought-provoking and informative. I can imagine that for those with less of a background in fragments that the readings and videos were instrumental in laying a foundation.
9. {no response}

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 very useful. I just wished that there had been more detailed written explanations of the

different platforms we were working with—like a IIF / fragmentology glossary.

2. I thought that the resources were very helpful. The step by step instructions for using the digital tools were excellent and a good refresher after Lisa's instructions.
3. The links and instructional sheets that Lisa provided were/are extremely useful for conducting research into medieval manuscript fragments and sharing images via IIF.
4. All of the course material was clear and useful, particularly the explanations and walk-throughs of the various platforms and tools needed to successfully do fragmentology. I will continue to refer to the resources provided in the course for future research.
5. All content used during class was very helpful. In this case, would that entail Mirador or Atom text editor? Nothing was "distributed" in the traditional sense.
6. Very useful!
7. It's difficult to say whether or not I'll have the opportunity to create IIF images with a persistent URL and code with an HTML program such as Atom again for posting manifests of photos for online viewing of medieval manuscripts. That is, however, something which would absolutely be useful for those working in special collections libraries digitizing their material, so it was highly appropriate for the course. While I had viewed IIF images of manuscripts online in private research over the years, I hadn't previously been aware of the tech and coding behind them, so that was kind of fun and interesting to learn about regardless. It gave me further appreciation for the behind-the-scenes work in special collections that benefits me as a patron. It was enjoyable overall and I would hope to be able to put that to use someday soon in future employment.
8. Everything was very helpful. Yes and yes! I came away with more resources to utilize in both research and work.
9. {no response}

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. {no response}
2. I will use what I learned to revise a chapter of my dissertation. And I may publish a very small article on the subject of the manuscript fragment I worked on because what I learned actually would have a big impact on the historiography of my subfield.
3. Yes! Now that I know about IIF and Fragmentarium, I plan to approach some of my medievalist colleagues to see if they would be interested in collaborating on a project to share our collection of medieval and early modern manuscript fragments via Fragmentarium—perhaps an upper-level undergraduate student project? I also plan to revise our acquisition policy to reflect some of the ethical considerations we discussed in class relating to the acquisition of manuscript fragments and the leaf trade, and I will incorporate much of what I've learned about fragments into the teaching I do with our collections. I also plan to research the leaves and fragments in our holdings, perhaps with student assistance.
4. I plan on continuing to work on my fragmentological issue. The course has helped me determine that the fragment I chose to work with is important not only for the history of

manuscript transmissions of the contents, but for whatever the fragment was used to line. I will use critical editions in conjunction with digitized codices to reconstruct the missing text and will then compare other extant fragments to determine if others from the host manuscript are out there. It's very exciting work!

5. Absolutely! Lots of new angles to consider, like image manipulation, the Grolier Club, among others.
6. So many "aha!" moments, and so many new project ideas now.
7. Some of the resources, Fragmentarium, Cantus, &c. websites, and the liturgical cheat sheet, should be of great benefit and use to me at home in my private collection. Indeed I've already used the cantus website in research, both during the course, and immediately after it ended when a bookseller friend contacted me out of the blue for help in researching a 15th-century Latin prayer book that had just come in at the shop. I did have a eureka moment during the course. Doing homework (viz. to use any of the resources to look at our chosen fragments), I used the cantus site to identify an antiphonal leaf in my collection. Previously I thought it contained chants for Christmas (the word "nativitate" was misleading), but discovered instead it has chants for the feast of the Nativity of Mary (Sept 8), which I'm grateful for knowing.
8. The tech side of the week was so helpful! My institution is especially interested to know how we can implement IIIF images and online viewers for potential digital exhibits.
9. {no response}

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. Mostly. The one part of the course that I wished had been expanded was on best practices for metadata. I was hoping for some best practice guidelines for this that I could take back to my institution as we start to put our collections online. I also would have liked a more in-depth discussion about IIIF servers. One other area that would have been great to have more in-depth bibliography on is the different resources for fragmentology research. Maybe an entire session devoted just to auction records and how to find/use them online?
2. I learned a lot more than I thought I would actually: liturgical refresher, codicology refresher, so many exciting digital tools. Very useful.
3. Yes, Lisa was absolutely wonderful! She was organized, passionate, extremely knowledgeable, and encouraging. I wanted to learn how to research our medieval manuscript fragments, find out how to share them with scholars online, and learn how to navigate the ethical issues of the leaf trade. I feel like I accomplished all that and much more.
4. Yes! Lisa is a fantastic instructor! She is thorough, patient, and possesses a wealth of knowledge on the subject that she was eager to share. I've come away from this week feeling like I have a good, strong foundation of the field, and I look forward to building my fluency in the various platforms used in the course.
5. The instructor was excellent, and definitely delivered on all the information promised in the course description. I'm not sure I learned EVERYTHING I hoped to learn, but now I feel more confident in trying to explore on my own. (Also, "Advanced Fragmentology", perhaps?)

6. Yes! Lisa was so patient and went above and beyond to make sure everyone knew what they were doing.
7. I think so! Unfortunately I couldn't properly identify the late medieval MS stub in my 1577 Bishops Bible during the week (so quickly), but that's really no one's fault but whoever cut it up at the Reformation (it was cut up, after all, to prevent its use). I feel confident that I will be able to identify it one day, and the skills and resources I gained in Fragmentology will help me toward that goal.
8. Maybe more than anticipated, again, especially as pertains to digital possibilities. I still think I would've liked to have a conversation about potential controlled vocabularies as pertains to fragments, but maybe that is still far off as this field is still somewhat nascent.
9. {no response}

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

1. {no response}
2. I think the course would, of course, be even better in person, so we could handle the fragments and socialize with each other more. I really enjoyed my classmates and would have liked to get to know them even more than I did. Although I loved the use of Discord outside of class—that certainly helped.
3. Not really—I found day 4 dragged a little as we spent a lot of time troubleshooting Mirador and the other tools, but otherwise everything was great. It was illuminating to see how the other students used the resources and tools to research their fragmentological mysteries, and the class discussion was superb. Thank you so very much, Lisa!
4. Because of the limitations of Zoom and internet connectivity, sometimes screen-shared demonstrations of various steps did not keep up with the audio, so there was sometimes a lag between what we were hearing and what we were seeing. Perhaps going slightly slower through the steps just to give them time to load on individual screens would fix this issue.
5. One thing I thought would be covered in the course that wasn't brought up was researching leaves from a provenance aspect. I realize that that can be more difficult to do in a week-long period when it's not the only focus, though.
6. {no response}
7. I wasn't able to figure out Discord much at all. That was the most confusing part. Others seemed to be fine with it, but my classmates seemed to be much more adjusted to social media than I am. Being a socially anxious, old fashioned, self-taught antiquarian, that's no surprise.
8. Well, I could've done with another week of this class, ha!
9. {no response}

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

1. {no response}
2. I think librarians who are considering purchasing manuscript fragments would benefit from the ethical considerations of this course. I think any cataloguer would also benefit from this course. Many of the fragments we dealt with are not what they appear to be and are not what

they are described to be—very good lessons on how to really look carefully at book material and hunt for clues into history of reuse and provenance.

3. Medievalists/digital humanities scholars planning to work with medieval manuscript fragments, and librarians/archivists/curators who care for them.
4. Anyone interested in manuscripts, rare books, and anything that could possibly have a piece of a fragment inside it somewhere! This is a course that could be beneficial to learners from all disciplines both within and outside of academia.
5. Definitely special collections curators with both medieval material and control over acquisitions, as museum workers, private manuscript collectors, and metadata librarians.
6. {no response}
7. Absolutely anyone, not just special collections folk, with an interest in medieval MS fragments and an interest in how the digitized images online are presented for patron consumption. But indeed it would seem to benefit the special collections world the most. I'm grateful I was able to participate despite my lack of affiliation.
8. I think anyone involved in the manuscripts/library/rare books spheres could benefit from this course. It's an emerging field that needs more hands on deck!
9. Anyone with the slightest interest in medieval manuscript reception and history—in the actual physical legacy of these artifacts

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

1. Yes
2. I am lucky that I did not pay for this course (RBS classes are expensive!). But I think it was a truly wonderful course. Honestly, the opportunity to work with Lisa Fagin Davis, an excellent, thoughtful, and attentive teacher and a lovely person to boot, is well worth every penny.
3. Certainly.
4. Absolutely! This course was worth every penny!
5. Oh, absolutely.
6. {no response}
7. The price did hurt in CDN funds with the current exchange rate, as I paid for it entirely out of my own pocket and I am low income (most of which goes toward antiquarian books; I've got the collecting bug almost as bad as Sir Thomas Phillipps). Cost is what has prevented me from taking courses in the past—or I could say my own collecting habits have priorities! It's difficult to say today if I got my money's worth because I'm not yet employed. Time will tell. Generally I should think so, though.
8. Yes.
9. 100%

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

1. 8
2. 10
3. 10

4. 10
5. 10
6. 10
7. 8
8. 10
9. 10

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

1. {no response}
2. {no response}
3. N/A
4. N/A
5. n/a
6. {no response}
7. Our "field trip" was into Lisa Davis' bathroom to view a manuscript fragment under a black light, haha. That was fun and time well spent. On the topic of different lighting to help bring out lettering, I learned that my attempt at photo inversion to read a bit of MS binding on a friend's 17th-century pamphlet of the Thirty-Nine Articles some years ago was actually apropos, which I did by instinct back then, not having any ultraviolet or infrared lights at hand.
8. N/A
9. {no response}

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

1. {no response}
2. I think that it is important to come in with a project that you are very excited to work on. A lot of the course is spent working on your own investigating a fragment or group of fragments. Make sure you have something you want to spend time with.
3. Do the advanced readings, especially if you feel that you are a beginner in this subject, and participate in the class discussions. I loved how our different backgrounds/viewpoints/specialties helped solve problems and enriched the discussion, which Lisa ably led.
4. Whether you work in the book trade, a library, a museum, or the academy, and your work involves the possibility of finding fragments in both expected and unexpected places, you should strongly consider taking this course.
5. It's nice to have options bringing multiple leaves to consider at the course, but in practicality I might only pick one so you can focus on it the whole week.
6. {no response}
7. {no response}
8. {no response}

9. {no response}

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

1. Just wish that it had been longer!

2. "Book fragments reunited / New digital surrogates / Limitless futures"

3. "Work of scribes long dead / Victims of Ege's scissors / Once more, together"

4. "Oh, to be fragments- / Cut and hidden in the dark / Welcome to the light!"

5. "ancient leaves scatter / puzzle pieces for the world / shadow of a whole"

6. As a classmate said, this class shows you how to value the fragment without valuing fragmentation. And as Lisa said, this class helps us to restore dignity to objects of history most in need of it.

7. It was the perfect summer fun! Short, intense, and exhausting, like playing with a slip & slide in the backyard to let off steam in a heatwave for a few hours each day (or so I assume).

8. {no response}

9. I wish it could have lasted longer than one week! I would have gladly spent my whole summer with Lisa Fagin Davis and our little class. What a great time.