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I-45v: The Photographic Book since 1843
7–11 July, 2025, Online

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. {no response}
2. {no response}
3. Yes, I loved the reading list and the suggested readings.
4. {private response}
5. The reading list was extensive and well researched. It was very pertinent to the material taught. I would have liked to discuss at least some of the reading material during the course meeting times; I think that would have further enriched the course.
6. Some of them were very hard to access or impossible to find.
7. Ok.
8. Reading through sections of Benson's *The Printed Picture* was very helpful for having some basic groundwork to work from and enriched my experience of the course.
9. The pre-course assignments were very useful. They gave me enough background knowledge to follow the lectures.
10. {no response}
11. The reading list provided was comprehensive and is something I will refer back to in the future as a useful resource. I appreciated the advice that none of it was compulsory to read, and the prioritization of especially recommended titles, one of which I did read and found so good that I've bought myself a copy.
12. Yes, really informative readings. However, for this course, sometimes entire books were recommended as required readings. Realistically, I think few students have time to read whole books. It would've been nice to be directed towards some key chapters.
13. Very useful. Many of the books are out of print and both difficult to find and expensive to buy. Few were available to borrow from my local library (NYPL). Further, to read them all would require much longer than the course duration. That said, the ones I did manage to find and read were excellent and the rest I will keep an eye out for.
14. {no response}
15. Yes, the reading list is useful.
16. Yes, the readings are useful, though as previous years' reviewers note, they aren't discussed during the course itself. If you want a refresher on the history of photography and/or photomechanical processes, Benson is the most useful in my opinion, as well as one of the easier books to find. *Art and the Photographic Album* is also a pleasure to read. Armstrong is interesting at times but her analysis doesn't often consider larger issues in the history of the book/print. On the whole, I'm very happy to have RO's bibliography to return to post-course.
17. {no response}
18. {no response}
19. {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. {no response}
2. The content was very useful for the course, but I think the most useful were the books that our instructor showed us live on the screen. It was awesome to see the pervasiveness of these books over time.
3. I appreciated the updated references throughout the week.
4. {no response}
5. The reading list will be a good reference for the future.
6. Great content; great choice of photo books. The first day of the course I found the examples were too similar to each other.
7. Very useful and will definitely continue to be useful for me after the course.
8. All materials will be useful to continually refer back to.
9. The PowerPoints will continue to be useful after the course. I can use the information in them to identify photos and photographic processes in materials in my institution's holdings.
10. RO provided ample information prior to the course that we were able to reference before/during/after lectures. I found it helpful to have the day's PowerPoint presentation and title list of books we would discuss open alongside my notes document, making it easy to reference images or citations to keep my notes organized. I will absolutely be referring to these resources after the course, particularly the bibliography. We prioritized viewing actual books on the document camera, so I will revisit the slides to review what we saw live, and for more information into the various photographic process or individual photographers. The slides are definitely meant as a tool to reference later.
11. The course materials provided were incredibly well designed and will continue to be useful in my work in the future as a reference resource.
12. I thought the book lists and PowerPoints were really helpful. However, sometimes the PowerPoints had duplicated slides/photos which was a little confusing.
13. They were useful to frame and advance the narrative. The book lists I have printed for future reference.
14. Yes, the reading list was very useful and will be a valuable ongoing resource for me. I'm also looking forward to revisiting the PowerPoint presentations as a supplement to the in class experience.
15. {private response}
16. I found RO's PowerPoints and book talk lists essential in helping me keep focused during his lectures—at three hours/day the course is much shorter than the average RBS course, and the pace is quick. That also meant there simply wasn't time to review all his teaching materials in depth. So yes, I'm pleased that students will continue to have access to these after the course, and I intend to review and return to them often.
17. {no response}
18. {no response}
19. {no response}

3) *Which aspects of the course were most intriguing and relevant for you as an individual? Did you walk away with any new insights, ideas, or project plans?*

1. {no response}
2. I am very excited by the new, though limited, ability to recognize certain processes on sight. I plan on implementing this once a photo book crosses my desk.
3. I enjoyed having access to RO to ask him questions and to hear the responses from other attendees.
4. {no response}
5. I enjoyed viewing the rare editions and multiple editions of certain photobooks. I also enjoyed learning more about various printing processes associated with the history of photography.
6. I love the examples of photobooks RO provided and I will definitely use them in my teaching.
7. Through the document camera, we get to see the physical items housed in the Bodleian Library—the most intriguing part for me.
8. Seeing the parallel histories of photography and the photographic book has really helped me to see how linked they are to each other, which has given me a new perspective on the relationship of the book to the original images.
9. The whole course was intriguing to me. I had a very basic knowledge of the photographic book when I started and now I want to create an exhibit based on the process that make the photographic book possible.
10. I wanted to take this course to become more knowledgeable about the history of photography, its development, and the photobook more generally. I will be able to directly apply this knowledge to my work supporting the photography program at my university through instruction and collection development. Now that I have a proper foundation to understand these technologies and design developments, as well as prominent names, I am emboldened to view more photography exhibitions and visit local special collections with photobook collections. Previously, I didn't really know what to ask about or what to look for. Now, I feel confident that I can request to view a variety of photobooks and I will be able to understand how to look at them in a meaningful way.
11. This was a very insightful course that manages to survey a big picture while also conveying important technical detail regarding printing processes, &c. I came away with a new appreciation for innovation in the book trade during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, a long list of books to acquire for the collection I manage, and some ideas to apply to exhibition development. I have acquired an appreciation for the subject and technical knowledge—a real win-win.
12. I loved learning about the different types of printing. That was a side of photography I didn't have a lot of familiarity with.
13. I was not aware of the furious churn in technical advances in photographic bookmaking until I took this course.
14. The classes covering the nineteenth century were especially helpful for me, since I have more experience working with photographs than I do with photographic books of this era. It was exciting to put together my previous course work in art history and the history of the book with my mostly hands-on knowledge of

photographic prints and processes. I found the discussions on the role of serials in disseminating images and supporting the book trade highly engaging and also relevant to my day-to-day collections and reference work. I would be very interested in taking a course more narrowly focused on this subject (expanded to include more artistic and avant-garde publications up to the present day). This course was both intellectually engaging and tremendously practical for me. I came away with many new ideas, as well as renewed energy and insights for ongoing projects.

15. The summary slides illustrate the development of photobooks, highlighting ideas about faithfulness and 'not to fade.' The techniques of photographic processes help me understand the development and technology of the time. The printing techniques and the format of photobook provide me with some new ideas.
16. I really enjoyed seeing photobooks from the Bodleian Library's collection and hearing RO speak about the collections in his care and about photobooks in general. I loved that RO still taught from material examples—even given the online format, I still got a good sense of all the books' particular materialities.
17. {no response}
18. {no response}
19. {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. {no response}
2. I believe so! My hope was to learn the history and processes of photobooks, which was very well covered.
3. Yes, I learned about the history of the photobook as a printed object!
4. RO is incredibly knowledgeable, and the breadth of items available for us to digitally peruse was so helpful for visualizing the history we were learning.
{private response}
5. Yes, I think it was accurately described and taught.
6. With no doubt.
7. Yes, RO is a very knowledgeable instructor with a good sense of humor. I have learned a lot.
8. I learned a tremendous amount and am glad to have the course materials to continue to refer back to in the future.
9. I learned more than I had hoped to by taking this course! RO knows what bibliophiles are looking for and showed everything in great detail. I appreciated him taking the time to show how the pages were tipped in and describing the types of paper that we were seeing over the camera.
10. Yes!
11. Absolutely.
12. I thought RO was very knowledgeable.
13. Yes, and yes.

14. I've worked with photographic books and photography collections for decades, so I have a lot of knowledge about individual books and had a general understanding of many of the technical developments covered in the course. I was hoping to develop a solid overview and technical framework to fit these in and I was not disappointed. I was also hoping to get more context for my library's collections (strengths and gaps) and the course fulfilled that goal as well. I left with a great roadmap for continuing independent learning.
15. It was a good experience to learn how to observe and describe the photobook via reading.
16. Yes. RO is accessible and charming, and the course is an excellent introduction to the photobook as a specific phenomenon. While it's not a complete history of photography, it does provide a good basic survey of its development, as well.
17. {no response}
18. {no response}
19. {no response}

5) *How do you plan to use the skills and knowledge acquired during your time here?*

1. {no response}
2. I hope to use my newfound knowledge to better identify and catalogue photobooks that come across my desk in the book trade.
3. I hope to write in more depth about such objects found in the archives with which I work.
4. {no response}
5. Our library just acquired a large collection (4,000+ titles) of historical photobooks that I'll need to catalog...
6. Mostly for my photography and printing classes.
7. Apply to my work, definitely.
8. This will be very helpful for me as a bookseller and photography enthusiast.
9. I plan to use my new knowledge to identify types of photos and photobooks in my institution's holdings. I also plan to create an exhibit to share that knowledge with our patrons.
10. For professional purposes and personal enjoyment. I support photography at my university, so having a better understanding of how the photographic book came into being and the relationships of people and technologies involved in that evolution is critical to serving my students, faculty, and collection development. Personally, I'm excited to better understand what I'm looking at when I flip through a photobook or attend an exhibit. I'm also excited to visit my local museum library, where I can request photobooks to view as a researcher.
11. I'll be making plans next week for exhibition development and book purchasing, as well as designing a session for my team to share what I've learned.
12. I hope to use what I learn in my acquisitions job and to better inform my personal collecting hobby.
13. I am curating a show of photographs and photo books next year. The course's historical perspective will inform that work.

14. I have already found many practical applications for knowledge acquired in this course. Over the past week I have identified a dozen titles in my library's general collections to move to special collections, added several high-value titles to our desiderata list, identified multiple titles for immediate purchase, and marked items in our backlog for priority cataloging. This course has directly influenced the goals I have come up with for the upcoming year (in conjunction with my manager) and I've already begun setting them in motion. These include creating a process for capturing information about individual photographers or photo essays in serial issues to add to our library catalog records in conjunction with managing exhibition loans (a lingering stack of serials in my office will be great for a pilot project); working with our museum archivist to record an oral history with the former head of our photography department to document major photography acquisitions to our library collections (the curator is amenable); and finding opportunities to collaborate with local university instructors on photobooks workshops and class visits focused on our partially-processed special collections.
15. I hope to explore more photobooks, in particular those published and circulated in China and England during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.
16. I will apply my new knowledge to understanding my home collection more deeply and to creating descriptions of greater sophistication, as well as to research and study further.
17. {no response}
18. {no response}
19. {no response}

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

1. {no response}
2. {no response}
3. Archivists, photographers, and book collectors.
4. Those who are interested in a comprehensive crash course in the history of photography, especially the more technical elements of photography and printing/copying/publishing.
5. This course seems like it would appeal to a wide range of people: information professionals, photographers, collectors, professors, &c.
6. Art teachers, scholars, and anyone interested in photography.
7. anyone interested in photobook and printing techniques.
8. Booksellers, librarians, archivists, and anyone interested in photography.
9. Archivists, special collections librarians, and rare book catalogers would find this course helpful.
10. Anyone interested in photobooks who may not already have a strong knowledge of the history of photography will get so much out of this course. There were novices and aficionados in my class; I think there was something here for everyone.
11. Anyone working in a special collections or rare book library, particularly those with an art focus.
12. Anyone interested in understanding photobooks better, for professional or personal interest.

13. Librarians, those involved in the trade, and collectors.
14. Special collections librarians, rare book librarians, photography curators, archivists working with mixed-format collections, graduate students, and instructors in photography, the history of the book, media studies, or interdisciplinary studies.
15. Librarians.
16. Anyone for whom the content sparks interest! The class this year comprised such an intriguing range of professionals: curators, academics, subject librarians, special collections catalogers, conservators, and photographers—I feel like this course may tend to draw especially diverse cohorts. I really enjoyed being a part of it!
17. {no response}
18. {no response}
19. {no response}

7) *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. {no response}
2. {no response}
3. The concurrent history of photography along with the development of printing processes in regard to the structure of the book.
4. {no response}
5. {no response}
6. I loved the Thursday session, it was definitely my favorite.
7. Too many to address.
8. {no response}
9. The visual examples were my “aha!” moment. It’s one thing to read about a photographic process, but it is another to actually see them.
10. In the last session, RO showed us multiple editions of the same book, side by side. What a phenomenal way to understand the design choices that go into these books, by seeing the variations right next to each other!
11. I found myself reframing my perceptions and opinions several times during this course. I have never been a big fan of the Victorian publishing period but have come away with a new appreciation for the intense innovation that we can see in the mid -nineteenth-century book trade. I don’t think these books—which are very numerous in the collection I manage—will ever look ordinary to me again. Less revelatory but still impactful were the connections made between magazine publishing and the book trade in the early twentieth century, another extremely important moment for book history.
12. Loved the explanation of halftone printing.
13. The course illuminated the long chain of influence among photographers over the medium’s history.
14. {no response}
15. ‘Photos’ are prints!?
16. I had no familiarity with the photobook as a concept or format before the twentieth century. I certainly do now!

17. {no response}
18. {no response}
19. {no response}

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

1. {no response}
2. {no response}
3. I think it was great, so no.
4. {no response}
5. I would have enjoyed discussion of at least some of the readings in the bibliography.
6. Maybe change the first session to have a greater variety of examples of books.
7. I wish I could attend in person, but the online approach makes it more accessible for people who cannot be there in person.
8. {no response}
9. {no response}
10. Just more of it :) I was a little surprised when I realized how early the sessions ended each day. But I still got a lot out of the course.
11. It would be great if Australia and New Zealand time zones could be considered in the design of online courses.
12. Would have liked it to be as many hours as the in-person classes.
13. {no response}
14. {no response}
15. Maybe an in-person course would be better.
16. I definitely wanted more pre-twentieth-century/glass-plate-era American work, as well as processes like autochrome, if there are relevant examples out there.
17. {no response}
18. {no response}
19. {no response}

9) *Do you feel that you got your money's worth? How likely are you to recommend this course to others? On a 1-10 scale, 1 would indicate that you disagree that you got your money's worth, 5 would indicate a neutral response, and 10 would indicate that you agree that you got your money's worth.*

1. 9
2. 8
3. 10
4. 6
5. 8
6. 10

7. 10
8. 10
9. 10
10. 9
11. 10
12. 7
13. 7
14. 10
15. 8
16. 9
17. {no response}
18. {no response}
19. {no response}

10) *If your course made any (virtual) field trips outside of the classroom or had guest speakers, do you feel that they enhanced the course experience?*

1. {no response}
2. {no response}
3. N/A
4. {no response}
5. No field trips, but maybe one to a printer or press might be interesting in a future version of this course.
6. N/A
7. N/A
8. {no response}
9. {no response}
10. N/A
11. {no response}
12. {no response}
13. N/A
14. N/A
15. Yes. It would be nice to have (virtual) field trips. It is good that the instructor was able to show us the books online.
16. {no response}
17. {no response}
18. {no response}
19. {no response}

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

1. {no response}

2. {no response}
3. Be prepared for an in-depth experience.
4. {no response}
5. {no response}
6. Be ready to see a fascinating number of photobooks!
7. {no response}
8. {no response}
9. {no response}
10. {no response}
11. RO was a fantastic teacher. He was highly knowledgeable, generous and responsive, and with an infectious enthusiasm for his subject. I very much appreciated the skillful way he has designed this online course and particularly appreciated seeing so many books live, using the document camera. It is so much more engaging than simply viewing images on slides—although great to have both as they will be what I need to refer to later. Similarly, the detailed bibliographical lists of books were and will be extremely helpful.
12. {no response}
13. Nope.
14. I appreciated the insights of my fellow students and thought the instructor created a very positive and respectful forum for dialogue.
15. Read the materials in advance.
16. If it piques your interest, go for it! You'll see a lot of beautiful objects and learn a good deal.
17. {no response}
18. {no response}
19. {no response}

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

1. {no response}
2. There is nothing better than an instructor who loves what they do and what they study!
3. Surprising detailed and luxurious.
4. {no response}
5. Enlightening.
6. RBS is always rare and impactful.
7. Great course to attend!
8. I am invigorated to use the knowledge that I have gained and appreciative of the opportunity to acquire it.
9. A bibliophiles dream!
10. Seek the permanent/Silver is fugitive/Offset and RBS endure
11. Loved it; I will be back for more.
12. {no response}
13. It was fun to think about photobooks for a full week.
14. {no response}

15. Good experience!
16. Sun pictures are so/Miraculous in a book/Traces of the real
17. {no response}
18. {no response}
19. {no response}