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G-85: Why Black Bibliography Matters
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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. All were useful. It would have been better to publish the entire list on the website. We only saw a few items.
2. {no response}
3. {private response}
4. Yes, they were very helpful.
5. Not particularly. We could have been more prepared, but there were more readings for this course than the ones posted on the website and we didn't get access to all materials and weren't aware of all the readings until the week of the class.
6. The pre-course reading assignments were tremendously beneficial and helped prepare me for the discussions and contextualize my understanding of the materials with which the class engaged each day. Furthermore, the fiction and works of poetry provided an opportunity for scholarly book club-esque discussion through the lens of the course topic, "Black Bibliography."
7. Yes, they were useful.
8. They were especially helpful to me because I am not in the library profession. The articles gave me vocabulary and concepts to learn and anticipate. Likewise, they also gave me very good information on history and book content. They served as leads to find my own sources as well.
9. The readings were useful. I was unable to access the readings until Day Two, so getting the readings sooner would have been helpful and less stressful.
10. The pre-course readings were very useful in situating us in the field. It also gave us time to work on reading the novel and choreopoem in advance of our discussion.
11. I appreciated the pre-course readings because they gave me a sense of what the course might look like going forward.
12. The pre-course reading assignments were helpful, and it is very important to complete this reading because we engaged deeply with these texts during class.
13. Readings were relevant, useful, and comprehensive.

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. {no response}
3. Great course content, and I'm glad to have purchased some of the materials. I'll be keeping them for a while!
4. We did not receive a course workbook.
5. Great teaching materials with actual books and ephemera from the collection.
6. I would love to have a list, or course bibliography if you will, of all titles we examined in class throughout the week to leverage for my own teaching and instruction at the undergraduate level.
7. Yes, the content was appropriate and useful and will continue to be useful after the course.
8. The teaching materials were A1! I was so glad to experience learning through doing. Each day we actually worked with materials and created an actual case study as the culmination. Rare Book School is the ultimate hands-on experience for teachers, librarians, graduate students, and researchers.
9. I did not receive any work material in class. However, I did purchase the two books we were asked to purchase. I enjoyed these works and will re-read them in the future.
10. Yes, the content was appropriate and useful. These are readings I will continue to turn to after the course.
11. There wasn't a course workbook but we did have material distributed to us for readings via Google Drive. It was absolutely appropriate, timely, useful, and poignant to have this material alongside the lectures and activities. I will be referring back to the texts afterwards for my own continued knowledge and awareness as I work to gain more expertise in my field.
12. We did not have a course workbook, only a syllabus. To be honest, I would have appreciated a course workbook.
13. The syllabus was the main item that was distributed that I found helpful. In the future, it would be nice to have a list of the special collections materials we saw sent out after each day so we could review—this would also alleviate the pressure to be on phones taking pictures for memory.

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. Examination of editions to explore change of authorial intent, market conditions, &c.
2. The visit to the Schomburg Center, as well as the small group projects throughout the week, were particularly useful and interesting for my work as a rare books cataloger.
3. Talking about Black bibliographers themselves was incredibly eye opening. The visit to the Schomburg was truly impressive and a great use of our time and schedule.
4. The most intriguing aspects were seeing physical printed material and also meeting

people with deep and varied expertise. I walked away with a new knowledge of the history of Black printed material and perhaps what I appreciated the most was hearing about the kinds of research one could do into various parts of Black bibliography. Another invaluable and unexpected aspect of the course was learning how to teach these materials—which was not an explicit element of the curriculum, but it was done by example in seeing the instructors teach the material to us.

5. I really enjoyed the interaction with the texts. It was a lot more hands-on and insightful than purely lecture based courses I've taken in the past.
6. Without diminishing the content of the course as a whole, the most relevant aspects of the course for me as an individual included items I could use to build on my own teaching efforts. We examined several items in class that I also have access to at my institution; I took away incredibly nuanced and important ideas from the class discussion around these materials that will make my own pedagogical efforts more critically aware.
7. Most aspects of the course were intriguing and relevant. I enjoyed learning more about publishers, editions, and the history behind Black authors/books.
8. Visiting the Schomburg was an awesome part of the course and getting to hear the history and interact with their workers and materials after having read about the collection. I am working on how a syllabus on Black Joy can incorporate images and materials from this course. I'm looking at how Schomburg's life fits into Black Joy. I plan to teach this in the fall as the theme for my Black Contemporary America course as well as The Black Experience course.
9. The discussion that was generated by each group activity each day turned out to be very enlightening to me. I thought of two lesson plans for my beginning composition class as I listened to my classmates speak and as I interacted with the materials.
10. Being exposed to rare materials I did not have access to at my home institution was extremely valuable. I thought I knew a little about Black bibliography but that was just the tip of the iceberg. This course managed to both introduce and delve deep into key issues in the field that have sparked a lot of interest for my future projects and teaching.
11. I enjoyed the last day of class in which we had an activity to curate texts based on Ntozake Shange's *for colored girls who have considered suicide/when the rainbow is enuf*. The process of looking at and analyzing the materials selected and seeing what they shared in common in relation to what we knew of Shange's text was fascinating. It gave me insight into how I may approach print materials' curation alongside manuscripts as I continue to work on an exhibit for the spring of 2024.
12. This class was structured very differently from other RBS courses I've taken. This class was primarily discussion based and required a lot of group work. This class was also a bit more theoretical than other RBS courses. It took me a while to get adjusted to this format, but I did come away with knowledge and practices that I can implement in the future.
13. I'm inspired to dig deeper into Black bibliographic work as a concentration in my

career, and I'm encouraged to document and publish my own writings more.

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, it was excellent.
2. Yes.
3. Yes! I hoped to be able to help others see the value in Black bibliography and to take it more seriously as part of the discipline, and I believe I'll be able to do that now that I've taken this course.
4. Yes! I learned everything I hoped and more.
5. Yes, instructors were great guides and facilitators and provided great commentary for all the work we were doing around collections. Their themes-based approach for each day also gave the class a great structure and helped me feel more prepared.
6. Yes, the instructors were both exceedingly generous while also challenging the class to explore and express new ideas. It is incredible how they were able to nurture and create a safe space for learning and free thinking in such a short time.
7. I did learn many skills concerning Black bibliography and hope to expand on the skills and information I learned throughout my career.
8. They definitely helped me acquire skills! Much of this I did not know, but I'm leaving with an abundance of knowledge.
9. Yes! This course taught me more than I expected.
10. Yes, the instructors were very knowledgeable and were eager to pose helpful questions and respond to our queries. I learned so much more than I expected.
11. The instructors were excellent. KN and JG gave us an effective on-ramp towards understanding and integrating the ways Black bibliography is unique and therefore worthy of different approaches to study. Their knowledge, generosity, humor, and curiosity led us towards other possibilities when considering the richness of literature created in African American and African diasporic communities. I am grateful to the instructors for their time, and indeed feel as though I walked away with a lot of worthwhile information.
12. The instructors did an incredible job of making students the agents in learning. I did not expect this. I learned quite a bit in this course, but my takeaways are very different from what I thought. In many ways, I've come away with a greater sensitivity toward Black bibliography and the questions I must ask myself when I encounter a Black text.
13. The professors taught me more than I could have imagined absorbing in such a short period of time. Thank you 🍷

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

1. Inform my collecting and reference practices.

2. {no response}
3. For acquisitions and teaching, and also to build relationships with scholars.
4. I will apply it to my graduate and professional work going forward; it will inform my research, and it will inform my teaching.
5. The skills and knowledge will help with writing and researching bibliography in my own institution.
6. Primarily with instruction at the undergraduate level. I also will use the knowledge I acquired to disrupt problematic and systemic practices in bibliographic description and collection at my institution.
7. I have an interest in Black publications and hope to use the knowledge I learned as a rare book cataloger.
8. First of all, my syllabus will use the texts. Secondly, I will be using the bibliographic info in presentations to students about citations and what editions are used in their research. I'm also interested in a Rare Book School Certificate of Proficiency.
9. I will use the knowledge gained to better inform my research. I was unaware of the publishing struggles Black authors experience(d); this knowledge gives another, new dimension to my work.
10. The skills really play into my shifting the way I conceptualize research and will inform the types of questions I ask of myself and my work.
11. I plan to apply the skills in textual analysis, research, description, and provenance in my own work as a curator, especially in relation to a forthcoming exhibition.
12. As someone who holds both curatorial and collection management duties, I plan to use the knowledge gained in this course as I acquire more Black texts for my home institution and as I describe these items in cataloging systems and present them to the public through exhibitions and programs.
13. I plan to elevate my research, curation, and reference work by considering questions of authorship, authenticity, credit, edition, revision, distribution, motive, and more. I also plan to self publish some of my own work or find independent publishers now, and I will probably collect the work of other Black indie artists even more voraciously now.

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

1. Anyone involved in collection development for literature. Anyone involved in collection development or reference for African American studies.
2. People with different levels of familiarity with Black bibliography, literature, and cultural history could all find the course useful, either as an introduction to rare materials pertaining to Black studies, or as a deep dive into the larger intellectual and ethical questions that the professionals in the field should consider.
3. More doctoral students need to take this course, as well as some administrators who need a fresh look at collecting trends.
4. Anyone from graduate students, to curators, to archivists, to librarians!

5. Any faculty, librarians, or archivists who work in the fields relating to ethnic studies, who teach literature and history at their institutions.
6. Students, librarians, archivists, curators, publishers, dealers.
7. Anyone interested in the history of Black publications would benefit from this course.
8. Of course library science graduate students to apply information, but a good mix of everyone in the education process is what made our class a success.
9. Students interested in Black American literature; professionals in library studies; authors; publishers.
10. Everyone! The class was made up of a wide array of professionals and students in different disciplines that when placed together really facilitate a rich learning environment.
11. Scholars interested in Global Black Studies, as well as other practitioners who are working to develop more inclusive collections' management policies and strategy.
12. Subject librarians, catalogers, graduate students, and curators who specialize or who have interest in African American printed texts.
13. I think anyone would benefit from this course, but I think a blend of scholars, practitioners, and artists would best appreciate the course.

7) *If applicable, what were the most powerful, or otherwise noteworthy educational moments in the course? Were there any "aha!" moments you'd like to share?*

1. {no response}
2. The visit to the Schomburg center (as well as the pre-reading) was very illuminating for me in working with Black literature materials in the context of special collections.
3. Poetry doesn't have to be hard.
4. The "aha!" moments were when we discovered new turns in the history of Black bibliography, especially in terms of how Black authors innovated on the formats and practices of Black print production and distribution.
5. The final curatorial exercise helped to tie everything together, to go back to the beginning and bring things "full circle" in thinking about Black bibliography.
6. {no response}
7. Seeing materials from Black authors and tracing the history of the materials created a powerful connection between the work they did and the present time.
8. The Richard Wright texts and their missing editing history and the estate's future for his texts AND Toni Morrison's papers made me think about the lives of texts and how we ignore this in academic writing.
9. I really enjoyed the hands-on approach that was taken in the course. Being able to examine the artifacts created a sense of materiality and made me consider questions of authorship and the potential fluidity of books and stories over time.
10. The most powerful moment for me was seeing the first edition of Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*. It has had such a significant impact on my life on personal and academic

levels, so studying it closely for the first time was a real treat. It also gave me a clue about a further research subject.

11. I deeply appreciated the time and attention given by the staff at the Schomburg. Being in the space and seeing their collection made me value how much their work is tied to both place and a particular urgency to document, share, and care for works created by and for Black communities.
12. The visit to the Schomburg was monumental for me as was the first day's emphasis on early Black books.
13. Many notable moments were in the comments I'd hear from other students while we discussed or presented. There were so many I couldn't choose one.

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

1. {no response}
2. {no response}
3. {no response}
4. Not that I can think of!
5. No.
6. No.
7. {no response}
8. No.
9. Not that I can think of.
10. It would have been helpful to get a note from the instructors in advance just pointing us toward the reading and confirming the advance reading list was up to date.
11. No. {private response}
12. Even though KN set the scene for each day with some wonderful and helpful comments, I would have liked a bit more lecture (maybe with slides or a timeline?) at the beginning of each day's session to help contextualize the time periods a bit more.
13. Some intentional space for emotional response/art/release would be nice when working with heavy texts or subjects. This of course should not be the focus of the course, but if there was space at the end of the day (even after class) to have creative time or guided meditation to decompress grief & trauma of looking at materials dealing with racial violence all day.

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. 10
2. 10

3. 10
4. 10
5. 10
6. 10
7. 10
8. 10
9. 10
10. 10
11. 9
12. 9
13. 10

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

1. Absolutely. The trip to the Schomburg allowed us to learn directly from some of the foundational texts.
2. Yes.
3. Yes!
4. Yes!
5. Yes. The trip to the Schomburg Center was the perfect tie-in to the course. It was the first time where I realized that "absolutely no two copies of a book are exactly the same."
6. 100%. The visit to the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture was integral to the course experience.
7. Visiting the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture provided one of the best experiences of the course.
8. {no response}
9. Yes!
10. Absolutely! We visited the Schomburg in NY and it was so illuminating!
11. Absolutely! See my "aha!" answer.
12. Yes!! The in-person Schomburg field trip is imperative!
13. N/A

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

1. {no response}
2. I want to praise my instructors for assembling a diverse and wonderful cohort for this class and for facilitating a great learning community. Every member of our cohort brought in their unique expertise and perspective, which kept me looking forward to

- the discussions and group work throughout the week.
3. Let yourself be surprised.
 4. Perhaps be prepared to stand a lot?
 5. For those who don't specialize in Black literature, prepare beyond the suggested readings. An overview of the Harlem Renaissance and radical Black Arts/Literature would be helpful.
 6. {no response}
 7. {no response}
 8. {no response}
 9. Come prepared to work, but it will be enjoyable work with great minds.
 10. Get ready to be amazed, have your assumptions challenged, and have your mind blown! It's such a generative environment, have fun! Yea.
 11. None at this time.
 12. Come into the class with an open mind and give yourself space to think, ask questions, and realize that there is not always an answer.
 13. Definitely take it.

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

1. Powerful, mind-expanding, will make me a better librarian.
2. Enlightening and enriching.
3. This has reaffirmed what I'm working toward.
4. A well-thought-out, smartly conceived, and brilliantly accessible course!
5. Fabulous.
6. Revolutionary.
7. RBS gave me a look into the rare book field that I would not be able to get in my M.L.I.S. program.
8. Community learning and doing produce excellence.
9. I love books and texts / Professors know all the things / Yay for Rare Book School.
10. Amazing lessons with an amazing group!
11. A deep dive into a corner of the rare book world that deserves more encounters and attention from the rest of the information science field.
12. This course made me question everything I previously knew about bibliography...in the best way possible.
13. Speculate Black soil / From what Earth emerges this / Blended bibliographic will.