

Peter Crane & Roger Gaskell
I-50: Six Hundred Years of Botanical Illustration
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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 readings on printmaking processes and on botanical illustration were a good complement to each other and laid a good foundation for the course.
2. I think they were useful.
3. {no response}
4. I read through much of Blunt & Stearn, and also read Bridwell before arriving and found them both to be useful. In hindsight, I wish I had also reviewed the Oak Spring *Flora* and *Herbaria* before arriving to be more prepared for the highlights of Oak Spring collection. I also wish that I had spent some time doing a quick refresher on principles and history of botany and taxonomy.
5. Pre-course readings were very helpful. The Blunt & Stearn gives great overview. I would also suggest that the Bridson reading be required—this was so helpful and a book I kept (and will keep) going back to for reference. Bridson is really succinct and specific to this class. The PDF of Bridson is helpful to have, but try to interlibrary loan the actual book if you can.
6. I really appreciated all the required readings; they were very useful background for the class. Morton's *History of Botanical Science* is probably too much reading to require for the class, but I am very glad to be reading it as well.
7. {no response}
8. The reading list was very thoughtful and thorough—I don't think anything should be removed.
9. I was very impressed with the readings, especially the depth of the resources related to printmaking. They gave great overviews of the processes in general and also connected them back to botanical illustration nicely.
10. Yes, essential actually. If you have no background in botanical illustration, you understand more if you do both the required and some of the optional readings. It will be a more meaningful class.
11. n/a
12. *The British Library Guide to Printmaking* was the most useful one.

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. Having a listing of all the books we looked at in the library was helpful. The workbook contains a lot of extra useful information.
2. Was useful and I will definitely keep the workbook. I was very pleased that every book we've discussed during the library sessions was included in the workbook.
3. {no response}
4. The course workbook came to me in advance and I appreciated the chance to review it before arriving. Once onsite, the workbook was well-designed because we could see what we would be viewing and there was room for notes. Since the

bibliographical information is listed, I will use the workbook in future as I explore my own collection for sources.

5. The course workbook is very helpful. I know I will continue to consult. Might I suggest adding a few extra blank pages for notes. I like having everything together with the course workbook. Content is very relevant and useful. I am so grateful to the bibliography RG put together, as well. All incredibly helpful.

6. The workbook was very useful, and I love the bibliography broken out into subject areas—I already plan to reference several of the works cited. Also really appreciated the list of books we used in class and the space to take notes about them!

7. The suggested reading list is comprehensive and has already proved useful. RG obviously gave careful thought to listing titles to guide further reading and to extracting (and translating) important quotes from both the primary and secondary literature. The format of the workbook was also brilliant: lists of the primary sources we examined, divided into sessions spent in the library with ample space for note taking beside each title. This was incredibly important as a mnemonic, given the range and number of items we examined in class.

8. The workbook was very helpful. I appreciated having detailed lists of all the materials we viewed.

9. The workbook was incredibly helpful. It's a lot of material (and time) to cover so having the workbook to refer to and keep for references was very handy. I also appreciated being able to look at printing blocks and plates up close in our classroom time to have the direct visual to connect to the lectures. I absolutely will be using things I learned from this course going forward in my work.

10. Very useful. And yes, it will continue to be useful after the course.

11. The course workbook is a fantastic resource I will continue to use and reference. The bibliography is especially helpful, as is the glossary of terminology. I appreciate that every book we viewed in class is listed by the date/session we viewed them, which made it easy to follow along during library sessions. As well, having the Morton overview and some of the key quotes that appeared in slide presentations already printed out for us in the workbook helped to cut down on frantic notetaking during the presentations themselves.

12. Yes, I thought the course workbook was well done. I appreciated all of the lists of books to illustrate different times and processes, and the notes that accompanied each.

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. I enjoyed seeing a broad range of materials, different types of printing, and different types of books. Learning more about their context and how the illustrations were made will help me better understand my own library's collection.

2. First of all, it gave me some more info of a part of my own collection I didn't know a lot about yet, so I'm looking forward to having a look at some of our copies of the books we discussed. I did have some new insights, especially about for whom all these luxury botanical books were produced, who used them and for what purpose. Would like to find out more about that, especially for the books in our own collections. Also, I have learned some new stuff about print techniques and seen "new" books as examples that I can use in my own workshops and presentations.

3. {no response}

4. Though I was familiar with methods and history of printing of images (woodcuts, engraving, etching, etc.), I learned much more about coloring images—by hand, à la poupée, and color printing processes. RG did a great job of conveying the collaboration that was involved in producing these works. I was intrigued by PC's lectures on botany and the history of plants and how they began traveling around the world from such an early date. It was just amazing to spend a week doing a deep dive into this world of creating and collecting and caring for these works of botanical illustration. I plan to look more closely at copies of some of these works at my institution. I will incorporate them into instruction sessions.
5. The course covers a lot in a short time frame. I liked the format in which RG introduced printing techniques and people and then we followed that with time in the library looking at actual items. For me, looking at actual materials was most exciting and relevant. I also have to comment on the setting for the class—being set and surrounded by a beautiful landscape. I walked away with new ideas, some new questions (which aren't easily answered), and potential projects.
6. The scope of the material was really interesting as a way to think about how illustration changed over time. I also loved the in-depth treatments of a few specific works—looking at the archives of colorists and their proofs and edits was so useful and enlightening, and I plan to use that as a lens for working with our art collection. The interactions between Asian and European art were also interesting—it is very hard to narrow down to just a few interesting aspects.
7. The narrative arc of the course was clear: I left with a strong understanding of how the techniques of illustration both evolved alongside the development of botanical science but also afforded new ways to look at visual, scientific evidence. That alone suggests to me that RG invested an immense amount of time and considerable experience in crafting the course. I was also impressed by the extent to which RG incorporated non-Western materials into a course that could have easily rehashed the established history of Western botanical science—brilliant examples of exchange between Indian/Chinese artists and Western botanists, for example.
8. This deep dive into the history of botanical illustration and learning the various techniques helps me to understand my institution's collections better and will inform exhibition planning and gave me ideas for blog posts and possibly an article or two.
9. I work a lot with art classes so learning more about the printmaking aspect was beneficial to me beyond the relationship to botanical illustration. I have so many ideas and potential lesson plans now, particularly related to how coloring worked!
10. The lecture followed by hands-on book viewing the same day, was very effective. I was very interested in the stories behind the creation of publications.
11. Too many to list, but in short: the exchange between RG and PC's areas of expertise provided a holistic way to understand both the bibliographical aspects and their larger botanical impacts/meanings/&c.; comparing illustration styles from East Asia, India, and Europe was especially relevant for me; the drawing session with Alice Tangerini was incredibly useful, helping me understand the tools and collaborative process of botanical illustration; discussions on color were enlightening and generative to say the least.
12. I see an exhibit of examples of a variety of artists and their time periods in our future. If possible, I'd also love to bring a group of members to the Oak Spring Garden Foundation for a tour of the Library and gardens and property—as part of a larger excursion to VA/Washington D.C.

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. The readings covered more of the printing processes and the class covered more of the history and context of the materials.
2. Definitely. Perhaps I would've liked to learn more about the botanical aspect as I'm by no means a botanist. For example, how a modern-day botanist/biologist/taxonomist might use these books and what's in it for them. To see if there's a way we can target that audience better with our collections.
3. {no response}
4. I would say that I developed a deeper understanding and appreciation of botanical illustration. I am now more familiar with landmark publications. I now understand the differences between hand-coloring, coloring à la poupée, and color printing; however, as a newcomer to this field of study, I am not confident that I could have passed a test on the final day on distinguishing between color printing, à la poupée, and hand-colored examples. The course was the perfect overview that I was seeking.
5. Yes—RG and PC were great. RG is so incredibly engaging. He has a real skill in condensing and articulating the history of printing into short enjoyable PowerPoints. I really enjoyed hearing from PC, and wish that we had had more time with him especially in the Library looking at items. Hearing RG and PC comment on materials together was really helpful/interesting. My expectations were exceeded in what I hoped to learn. Along with RG and PC, big thanks to Tony Willis and Carter Hulinsky (and everyone at the Library) who answered many questions, and the Garden Staff for their tour and expertise. Everyone from OSGF was wonderful.
6. Yes! I just wish we could have had more time to dig into details.
7. Absolutely, though I'd suggest allowing for more involvement from PC: his contributions and presence in the class were enlightening and led to unexpected questions and topics that drew on his botanical knowledge and background in the sciences. This was all the more valuable, as the class comprised mainly non-scientists. While the course offered several standalone sessions on the history of botany, more thought could be given to how the bibliographical sections could be put into sustained dialogue with the scientific sections: RG and PC in conversation, rather than trading off. PC's excellent sections might also benefit from more bibliographical detail: the timelines provided were clear and very useful, but providing citations to important works, with dates of publication, would be useful.
8. Yes!
9. RG and PC are both so knowledgeable and learning from them was a great experience. The content was beyond what I expected, honestly.
10. Yes, I learned more than I expected.
11. Emphatic yes to both. See first part of previous answer.
12. Yes, and more!

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

1. They will help me better understand the botanical illustrations in my own library's collection, so I can better describe them to patrons.
2. See also answer to the second previous question.

3. {no response}
4. I hope to carve out some time soon, while things are fresh in my mind, to look at our copies of Catesby, Hooker, Gerard, books of hours, Mattioli, and others so that I can use this new knowledge in my instruction sessions.
5. The content we learned is applicable in many ways: in terms of knowing more about what I have at my institution and how that can be applied to exhibits, displays, and course instruction. Knowledge was also gained in terms of looking at materials for potential acquisition. I enjoyed not only having RG and PC as instructors, but learning from classmates.
6. I'm looking forward to examining our books again to see what we could use more or differently, as well as looking at our art for any connections to make with the book collection.
7. I hope to work more effectively in my current role, using botanical books held in the collection in course visits, research appointments, &c. The reading list in the course workbook will meanwhile serve as an indispensable guide for research and study.
8. See above.
9. I will be applying what I learned in this course to my teaching as well as an upcoming exhibit related to plants and their various uses.
10. Have already used the information I have learned in the first week after the course.
11. This course helped me work through ideas for a future exhibition planned for our library, but it also inspired completely new potential exhibition themes and new ways to view and discuss our library materials. More personally, the course was also very generative for my own creative research practice in unexpected ways.
12. I will use what I learned to influence our collection development and, if possible, buy a book or two, or at least add later editions to our collections. I now feel more confident in my ability to identify what type of illustrations our books contain. Also, being able to have examples of several different illustrators out will allow me to offer richer tours of our collections.

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

1. Anyone interested in printing and botanical art. And anyone who wants to stay in a beautiful and inspirational location.
2. I think our group were the perfect audience, a match of more bookish and more botanical people, who have rare book collections at their institute.
3. {no response}
4. Anyone who interacts with collections containing botanical illustrations; those interested in the history of printing images; those interested in the history of botany and taxonomy; botanical artists and illustrators; those with an interest in the natural world; librarians, curators, archivists at botanical libraries and academic institutions with botanical collections.
5. Librarians, archivists, curators, exhibition coordinators, collectors, booksellers, graduate students.
6. Botany and art librarians, people studying art history (especially with a focus on plant illustration), historians of science.

7. Librarians new to rare botanical books; graduate students in the humanities/plant humanities working on a project that would benefit from bibliographical knowledge of the subject; even botanists!
 8. Any librarian or curator working with horticultural, botanical, or medical collections.
 9. As a Public Services librarian focused on instruction and outreach, I think more people in that area of librarianship would benefit from this course. When I read the description of the course, I was a little concerned that I would be out of my depth based on the professions described as I'm not a botanic expert (or even novice, really) nor am I an artist.
 10. Anyone who needs to understand botanical illustration in context, and has to convey that type of information to others.
 11. Anyone who works with books, manuscripts, illustrations, paintings, decorative arts that relate to botany, horticulture, gardens, etc. Anyone who wants to better understand the history and global exchange of botanical imagery.
 12. Folks interested in historic illustration practices would get a lot out of the class, in addition to librarians I think.
- 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. Hearing about the experience of a modern botanical illustrator from Alice Tangerini really helped me understand the relationship between the artist and the botanist, both today and over the past 600 years.
 2. I think the realization that in the making of a botanical illustration it's (ideally) a collaboration of botanist, draughtsman, printmaker, printer &c. And what I've said about the audience of the luxurious books.
 3. {no response}
 4. So far in this evaluation, I have not had the opportunity to discuss the other important aspect of this course: spending a week at Oak Spring. Even though Bunny Mellon died a decade ago, you feel her influence everywhere—in the books that she collected, in the design of the library and the garden and the house, and in speaking with the employees, many of whom worked with her for years. She was someone who had very good taste in all aspects of life and the funds to make her vision a reality. Under the direction of Peter and Elinor Crane, the Foundation is continuing her vision and taking it in new directions as well. We met and dined with the artists-in-residence and we toured the vegetable farm. We ate fantastic vegan meals that were the inspiration of the chef who used all fresh produce from the farm. We met the gardeners who gave us a tour. It is difficult to describe the experience of staying at Oak Spring to those who have not been there. The course seemed too short and I always felt I was running behind because there were so many things to explore. I'd like to recommend that one extra day be added to the course, if possible.
 5. I loved our illustration session with Alice Tangerini. It was great to hear about her work and then have an exercise ourselves. The session with her really helped connect so much of what we had discussed. I also loved the Library tour with Tony Willis and only wish we had more time on the tour.
 6. Honestly too many to name, but one that stuck out was seeing the ca. 1455 Italian herbal and its similarities to herbarium specimens. It was also really interesting working with the private collection of an individual, and considering the collecting

differences between an institution and a single person. I also think that being at OSGF makes for a very different class experience, and I enjoyed how immersive it was.

7. The realization that botanical illustration is an intricately collaborative project; that multiple kinds of expertise—those of the botanist, the gardener, the block cutter, printer, and the artist—worked together to refine scientific observation in the period. This was a brilliant theme that ran through the course readings and sessions. This realization would have been impossible without the materials made available at Oak Spring Library: seeing the multimodal process of botanical illustration from original watercolor to woodblock to printed illustration made this collaboration and refinement newly visible.

8. Too many to list! I especially loved the drawing session with Alice Tangerini.

9. I absolutely loved seeing the archive of colorist proofs with critiques in comparison to the finished book! It was great to have that insight into the process behind coloring these prints as that's not something you often get to see.

10. That some black-and-white illustrations were intended to be colored by their owners and that some books contained instructions on how to do so; I want to see several copies of one of those works in the future to compare. Also, that single pages of illustration were sponsored by patrons and their family emblems were included on the page, very nice bit of info. Also, the interesting way to look at the subscription lists and think about the possible locations of copies historically, based on the names on the list.

11. Learning that botanical illustrators today work from a combination of source material (physical herbaria vouchers, photography, and verbal input from the botanists themselves) to create a single image was so fascinating and resonates in how I see botanical illustrations from earlier periods as well. Our discussion of the users/audiences for different kinds of botanical or horticultural books was thought-provoking. The paired sessions on “voyaging naturalists” and plant diversity/global movement of plants was also very powerful.

12. All of the time spent in the Library looking at examples was one giant “aha!” moment. I loved learning more about the female illustrators and what their careers were like. The Library at Oak Spring is really a stunning place.

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

1. It should be longer!—the full length of other RBS courses.

2. It would be great to have a bit more time. I think the course might have started on Monday and ending on the Friday afternoon, preferably with some time to study on your own in the library.

3. {no response}

4. It would have been nice to have more information before arriving about what to bring/what not to bring. Basically, the rooms are like the nicest Airbnb that you've ever stayed in so no need to pack a hairdryer, for example.

5. Time. We all wish we had more time in many ways. The week flies by. Having the class begin Monday at 2 pm would be great (just to have a little more time). I would have loved time in the Library. I wasn't sure how to request anything, though, and even sharing more about the Library catalog in advance would be helpful.

6. I wish we could have had at least one more full day—there was just too much material for the amount of time. I also wish we had some more time built in to visit the library on our own as well as to enjoy the grounds.

7. More time: a full week at least, Monday–Friday, and ideally a week-and-a-half or two weeks. This additional time could take the form of several virtual discussion sections held in advance of the course if the cost of accommodation at OSGF is prohibitive. At least one more day on site would transform the course and allow for time for students to pursue independent research in line with the course's objectives.
8. A printing/printmaking demo/workshop would have been good, too
9. It would be amazing if this course could be just a little bit longer. I understand there are limitations.
10. {private response}
11. More time! Three full days was far too rushed. I didn't know when I signed up that Monday and Friday would be only partial class days.
12. It would have been fun to see examples of real life plants next to some of what we were viewing in the books, if possible.

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

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. n/a
2. Because of the, I think, limited time this was perfect.
3. {no response}
4. I really liked the drawing exercise by Alice Tangerini and the talk by Nicole LaBouff on her research into Jane Barrington. I loved the dinner with the residents and the lunch with the entire staff at Oak Spring. The dinner at the main residence with Elinor and Peter Crane was incredible; the menu was wonderful and the conversation was lively.
5. Yes! As noted, the time with Alice Tangerini was wonderful. And Nicole LaBouff shared her research which was also super interesting and highly relevant.
6. I enjoyed the drawing session as a way to think about how botanical illustration is continuing into the present. The dinner with residents was also a neat way to see the other work being done at OSGF.

7. The special session on botanical illustration was one of the most popular—several of us stayed late to finish the assigned drawing! This was valuable, in that the view of a practitioner highlighted questions that escape a more theoretical approach to the subject.
8. Yes!
9. We met with Alice Tangerini from the Smithsonian who was wonderful! I am not artistic at all so watching her process and learning about contemporary botanical illustration was so interesting and insightful. It was beneficial for better understanding just what all goes into creating these illustrations.
10. We had one guest speaker, they were fantastic.
11. Our two guest speakers, Alice (botanical artist) and Nicole (decorative arts curator) were really great. Alice's practical knowledge is invaluable, and she was so generous with her time. I very much appreciated Nicole's discussion of “drawing as knowing” and the role of women in advancing botanical sciences—if anything, I wonder if it might be possible to weave this topic throughout the course even more? (Along with an extra day or two of class...)
12. Yes, we had two women as additional speakers. Both offered insight on our course.

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

1. Definitely take it!
2. If you deal with illustrated rare books, and especially botanical books a lot, I think this course would be great for you.
3. {no response}
4. {no response}
5. Take it! You will love it. Previous feedback was super helpful in terms of bringing a big hat and bug spray. It was really hot but indoor spaces could get pretty chilly, so bring a sweater or pullover.
6. This was an amazing course, from the readings beforehand to the connections with fellow students that I hope will last far beyond the class itself.
7. {no response}
8. We packed a lot in in a short amount of time. I would suggest having Sunday as the travel/arrival day and the following Saturday as the departure day.
9. If possible, try to arrange additional library time on Monday or Friday before or after the course officially ends. This may not be possible unless you can drive but it's something I wish I had done. In hindsight, I might have considered driving more seriously had I realized this was an option.
10. No regrets, a superb location, library collection and very good instructors.
11. If you're reading this and already considering the course, you'll love it. Beyond the course itself, the gardens, food, and camaraderie make it truly memorable. But also, be prepared for mosquitos and ticks!
12. Being able to be onsite allowed us the opportunity to really get to know our classmates. I think it was probably the pinnacle of all RBS classes and for me everything else will be downhill now!

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

1. Inspiring books, beautiful location, delicious food, great company.
2. One of the best, most informative and most fun ways to spend time with rare books.
3. {no response}
4. Seeds, paths, shears, patience/Herbals, flora, color plates/Curator's presence
5. Hard to summarize: captivating books, gorgeous garden/landscape, incredible food, brilliant and interesting colleagues and instructors... it is an experience I will not forget.
6. How did this week feel like a year and also fifteen minutes at the same time?
7. {no response}
8. Oak Spring is a dream/Can't believe how much I learned/Thank you, Rare Book School
9. So many plant books/Over 400 photos/Can't do it justice
10. My RBS experience has had quite an impact on me. It's as if I've been navigating the rare botanical literature with the narrow focus of a flashlight. Learning what I needed as I worked with the material. This course turned on the lights in the library, I can now see connections, trends and relationships between 600 years of botanical illustration in our rare book collection. It's what I hoped this course, "600 Years of Botanical Illustration", I-50, would do, and it did. Thank you.
11. Pages, eyelids, leaves/unfold while cicadas saw/through butter-thick air
12. {no response}