

Peter Crane & Roger Gaskell
I-50: Six Hundred Years of Botanical Illustration
21–25 July, 2025, Upperville, Virginia

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. Yes, so useful. The reading list was huge so I didn't get to all of it but what I was able to read in advance was very helpful, and it's great to have the reading list for future reference.
2. The reading material was good, but Blunt was dense, fact-driven, with names, dates, &c. The big picture reading might be assigned, solely. The workbook, with quotes, lists of books, and a rough chronology of botanical thinking, was very useful, glossary, too.
3. Yes.
4. Yes.
5. Yes, I plan to go back and reread them now that we looked at and learned about so many books. The reading will help reinforce what we learned on-site.
6. They were useful.
7. Yes, though I was able to only complete a portion due to professional and personal constraints.
8. The pre-course reading assignments were useful, but not strictly necessary. If you don't have time to do the readings, you can still attend this course and do well. The reading list is an especially useful tool for further research after completion of the course.
9. The readings were suitable for our course.
10. Useful yes, but difficult to fit into a personal reading schedule.
11. Yes, a lot of readings but a good foundation — may be useful to expect basic understanding of the processes and then focus more on seeing examples and training the eye.
12. I found both the Blunt/Strean and Harris books gave me a very good foundation to build upon in this class, especially coming in with no previous experience with botanical illustration. I found the Blunt/Stream to be more directly related to the works we looked at in class.

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. The workbook was very helpful and I will look back at it. I'd love to have the slides from all the PowerPoints. The course covered so much — kind of overwhelming — but it would be great to be able to go back and look at the slides again.
2. {no response}
3. Good and yes.
4. It's a good outline and will be useful for future research.

5. It would be helpful to get the PowerPoint slides to have the visuals, quotes, and citations. It was hard to make notes on everything during lectures. I sometimes missed titles or quotes. Having the citations with notes for the library sessions was very helpful.
6. Delightfully helpful. I would appreciate content organized by session. It was a challenge to know where to look in the guide during sessions. Also, blank space to keep notes with text for each session.
7. I found the citations of the books with space to annotate a smart addition.
8. Thorough and generous course workbook to which I will return, especially when analyzing printed illustrations.
9. The workbook will be useful mainly as a record of the books we studied. I would like for the workbook also to have a complete bibliography of all of the books mentioned/explored in our seminars, but I do not think this is feasible.
10. Very much useful. I intend to refer to the workbook when I return to work.
{private response}
11. Yes, but — it is hard to follow the book lists while in the library to take notes on them — things got out of order pretty quickly. Also— too many books in too short of a time. Course needs more slow looking.
12. I like that the workbook provides information about each book and space for notes. I primarily used the workbook during the library sessions and a separate notebook for lectures. I plan to synthesize my notes following the class for review and to add my photos. I also like the glossary and bibliography which will be helpful for further research.

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. It was so helpful to look at examples of different kinds of printing and learn how to tell them apart.
2. {no response}
3. Learning about printing history, techniques — which is why I took the course.
4. The collection that we observe and study in person is so wonderful. We looked at a great variety of illustrated books of different time periods, regions, and functions. It is helpful for my current research projects.
5. It was a great survey of botanical books. I often work with rare books one at a time, or in isolation, so this gave me a solid foundation of the chronology and evolution of botanical illustration. I will approach reference and teaching with a new foundation of this history and have a huge list of books to go to and build upon.
6. The breakdown of how printing method is accomplished and physical examples of plates, wood blocks &c is hugely helpful for understanding. Keeps it from being too abstract. I loved handling the books, understanding the way paper and ink change over the history of publishing.
7. The colleges and staff at OSG and RBS culled with the collections of Mrs. Mellon is a match made in heaven.

8. I was drawn in primarily by the topic and course instructors. We focused more on the history of printed illustration than botanical science, but I think that was a good use of the little time we had. Given more time, it would have been nice to hear more from PC or an ecologist, though. I am walking away with more confidence in my ability to identify printed illustration techniques and a few new research ideas.
9. I feel a bit overwhelmed by the possibilities. I will be bringing new material into my classroom for analysis with students and investigating a range of new resources for research and publication.
10. All the difficult areas of research that can spawn from even just a single item have given me many ideas for displays, courses, and programs of my own.
11. Absolutely — reading to look at the institutional collection with fresh eyes to understand it better.
12. I most enjoyed the opportunity to look at a TON of different books and printing styles up close. I was fascinated by the way the printing styles and choices regarding the addition of color served (or did not serve!) the intent of the illustration and its evidence. Looking at the printing types together under the microscope was also very useful for me.

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, the instructors were amazing. It would've been good to hear from PC more about the science, again there needs to be more time — a longer class.
2. Excellent balance between the history of the printed book and botanical history. Reliance on the OSGF library made great sense, and course topics materials were well supported by in-person viewing and handling.
3. Yes.
4. Yes, helpful.
5. YES — I need to go home and organize my notes and photos but I expect I will consult these materials for years to come.
6. Yes, though sad the illustrator was ill and not able to instruct on field drawing and illustration. That would have been very helpful.
7. Printing processes and how they impact the transmission of botany along with understanding the early herbals and how they fit into the timeline of horticultural literature was important.
8. Yes, though I will say that the course title should really be "600 Years of Botanical Illustration in the West" given that the focus is undoubtedly on British/French/German books. I did not learn as much about botany as I anticipated, but I am very happy with what I learned about illustration.
9. Yes, and more. I learned more about printing techniques and production this week than I have in the whole of my career.
10. I think I learned all and more than I expected to learn.
11. Yes.
12. Yes, I learned all that I hoped and more. I came in with an interest in the physical materials and media of botanical illustration and am learning with a greater

knowledge of this. I also learned so many other things I hope to explore more regarding specific artists, engravers, and colorists.

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

1. To enhance catalog records at my library. I feel more confident now in creating good descriptive records.
2. Towards a new book project.
3. Better decisions on books to buy.
4. It is inspiring for me to think about relevant issues in a different culture. I found some materials in the collection that are related to my research project, so I can use them in my research writing.
5. Integrate this into teaching and reference.
6. Review our holdings, to understand for giving better info to users. The historical context, both publishing and scientific, is huge for understanding the world in which our library's focus was operating.
7. I want to reexamine my library's holding and use the knowledge I learned here to assist in mounting an exhibition.
8. The information and skills that I developed here have been generative to my research and have strengthened my ability to work with illustrations in my capacity as a librarian.
9. I will use new skills and knowledge in my research; writing about botanical illustrations; teaching; and theorizing about the relationship between art and science.
10. I intend to use the knowledge acquired in my day-to-day work for description and program development, as well as utilizing it within my personal interests outside of work.
11. Instruction with Biology and Environmental Science courses, develop the collection further.
12. I hope to apply skills such as identification of printing methods and knowledge of the appropriate materials and contexts for botanical illustration in my continuing education and career in libraries and archives.

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

1. Catalogers. Anyone interested in the history of printing.
2. Folks working on histories of the European printed and illustrated book, especially from a history of science perspective. Someone used to studying world history of plants, plant humanities.
3. Librarians, book sellers.
4. Researchers doing research directly relating to the subject with the keywords: botanical illustrations and book culture.
5. Anyone who works with botanical rare books and wants to learn more about their production and use.
6. Art historians, ecologists, science rare book librarians.
7. Members of CBHL and/or staff at Botanical or Horticultural libraries.
8. Someone interested in the history of botanical illustration!
9. Art historians, humanities scholars, artists, librarians, book collectors.

10. Everyone, but most certainly library workers and students.
 11. Art historians, rare book curators, book historians, catalogers.
 12. So many people! Librarians, archivists, professors, graduate students.
- 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. The combination of lecture and discussion and hands-on looking at books was perfect.
 2. Big questions/concepts: veracity, ad vivarium, authorship, goals and intents of publishers/artists/writers, definitions of scientific vs ornamental? commercial?
 3. N/A
 4. When we see the rare books in person.
 5. Hearing how people often copied or borrowed from others was really helpful because I had seen that but discussing it was helpful.
 6. Seeing the copperplates, litho stones — Seeing the archive of illustration proofs — Breakdown of scientific uses — Linneus's influence on format and context in illustration.
 7. {no response}
 8. Looking at RG and RBS's collection of copperplates, woodblocks, wood engravings, and the lithographic stones; examining books with RG while identifying how they were illustrated; just being at Oak Spring as a group.
 9. It is thrilling when our seminar presenters share their excitement. PC's brief film clips about pollination were astonishing. RG's enthusiastic examination and identification of different print processes was consistently engaging and helpful.
 10. I was surprised by how many terms and concepts I thought I knew that got clearer and were well defined in the course.
 11. Seeing Strickland Freeman's absolutely NOT constructive criticisms of the colonists: “very bad” Learning about plant transportation in Pelev's lecture (glass containers).
 12. It was powerful to work and learn side-by-side with so many people from diverse careers with such a wide range of knowledge. Looking at the books in pairs and having the opportunity to discuss our observations between ourselves and with our teacher was very insightful.
- 8) *Are there any other ways in which the course could have been improved?*
1. It needs to be longer! It was so much info to cover. The class should really be five full days, at least. It would be great to travel to Oak Spring on Sunday and leave Saturday so that we could have more time for the class.
 2. Perhaps a few minutes of guided looking at the main technologies of illustration printing, using the screen at the seminar room? Just a quick addition of PowerPoint slides with labels? The social history but at the end might be touched on — a little at the beginning? The library work was worth it alone. The seminars were also great; it is clear the instructor had immense experience first-hand with the subject matter. Very willing and able to answer all questions, clear he was also engaged in active research on the topic.

3. Less standing, more presentations of books on the screen — pointing out issues and items of interest — would move more economically. I do not agree with amateurs thumbing through rare books.
4. Maybe we could have a guest lecture sharing a case study or research methodologies with examples and in-depth analysis during the study.
5. There was so much amazing material I would keep it all, but sometimes I felt rushed. It would be great to fly in on Sunday and leave Saturday to give us more down time to digest the material.
6. {private response}
7. The mid-afternoon lecture after lunch could have a moment in the middle for jumping jacks or to stand and stretch.
8. More time! RBS courses are five days and that is what I expected when I signed up. It also would have been nice to have the librarians and other staff join us for at least one dinner. They are our colleagues too and it would be great to have further opportunities to get to know them and thank them. This is one of the most expensive RBS courses but I'd like to stress that it is worth it, both in terms of the facilities and (especially) the instruction.
9. It would be wonderful if there could be a specific seminar devoted to the subject of ecology vis-a-vis botanical illustrations. {private response}
10. It would have been nice to have 5 full days as opposed to the two half days on Monday and Friday. There is a lot of information that had to be rushed through.
11. The course NEEDS TO BE A FULL WEEK! 4 days is simply not enough time. If this is not possible, reduce the amount of material, to sharpen the focus. Perhaps a day spent on tracing 1 plant across 600 years/ and printing technologies, along with insights from a science person about accuracy/inaccuracy of representation.
12. I would have loved to stay longer! Such a fantastic course!

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. 9
4. 10
5. 10
6. 10
7. 9
8. 10
9. 10
10. 9
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. Our guest speaker, Alice Tangerini, was sick so that was disappointing, it would've been nice to have the drawing demo, although the course was already so jam-packed that I'm not sure how it would work. Again, the class needs to be longer.
2. The class in fact relied on the library sessions, they were indispensable.
3. {no response}
4. I think having a guest speaker would be great.
5. PC's sessions on botany were especially helpful. I loved getting the book history sections from RG and they were complemented very well by PC's botanical parts. I imagine this was extra helpful for the art folks who may think of these as purely artistic.
6. Yes, the science lectures were very helpful.
7. Yes, I rather enjoy the social time with colleagues.
8. It was great to meet the fellows.
9. {no response}
10. {no response}
11. No guest speakers — but that was OK — the intensity of the books and spending time with the cohort was enough — and great.
12. We, unfortunately, did not get to have our drawing practice with Alice Tangerini BUT I felt that the opportunity to look at contemporary art by Oak Spring Garden Foundation residents was fantastic and informative!

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

1. RG is fantastic — so knowledgeable and his love of the topic really comes through.
2. {no response}
3. {no response}
4. {no response}
5. {no response}
6. RBS continues to not just offer an educational experience, but also grow a community of learning.
7. {no response}
8. {no response}
9. Bring comfortable walking shoes and a sun hat. Make sure your shoes are enclosed so you can walk through the fields.
10. {no response}
11. Yes — absolutely take it!
12. Bring your bug spray and prepare to learn a lot!

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

1. Beautiful books in a beautiful setting.
2. {no response}
3. {no response}
4. A great study retreat for those interested in plants, images of plants, and the ways of understanding them in varied contexts.
5. Wonderful experience.

6. Intense, exhilarating, exhausting, enlightening. Continues to offer one of the best professional development experiences of my career.
7. OSG is a fantastic site to hold this course. RG, similarly, seems to be the right man to teach this course. His knowledge was evident and his delivery was just right.
8. RG is a gem.
9. I am full of gratitude.
10. An abundance of plants and books and knowledge that I will be using for eternity.
11. The books, the library, the baskets, the plants, the gardens... BONKERS.
12. Once-in-a-lifetime experience!