

Joel Silver  
L-135: Reference Sources for Researching Printed Western Americana  
24–25 June, Bloomington, Indiana

**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 useful, glad to have the orientation.
2. Yes, they set the tone for the course.
3. Yes, especially the Reese lecture.
4. The pre-course readings were appropriate and provided context for the ensuing course.
5. N/A

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 two packets are very useful. I'm glad RBS supplied a folder for them. They were absolutely useful for taking notes, starring items to buy, &c.
2. The materials are great, yes and yes.
3. Absolutely. I appreciated that there were print-outs of the packets on site so I didn't have to pack the heavy paper.
4. Workbook worked for the course. Reduced photocopies for Workbook Two would allow a margin for notes (although that may diminish readability).
5. Excellent. Content is so useful and will be after the course. JS's classes really help me value and understand how to make the best use of reference books.

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 took this course because my institution is acquiring a collection of Texana. I know nothing about the field. I have been somewhat lukewarm about the acquisition, but grew more excited about it hearing JS talk about the bibliographies. I've already ordered several for my personal collection.
2. The instructor's vast knowledge and his ease of sharing it. Leaving with a newfound appreciation for bibliographies.
3. This was a fairly new subject area for me, so it was interesting to see how extensive the literature is and all the different genres that cover Western Americana. Also to learn

more about the historiography of bibliographical literature.

4. The connections between bibliographers, collectors, and institutions within periods and across them.
5. Plenty!

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, and more.
2. Yes, and yes.
3. Yes. I have a better handle on the literature now and have an idea of which sources will be most relevant for my work. JS's comments on the strengths/drawbacks of each resource will save me a lot of time. I will be able to decipher the reference portion of catalog entries much better!
4. JS provided an appropriate subset of his larger RBS class on reference sources. This course whetted my appetite for the wider ranging course.
5. Yes.

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

1. Catalog and curate a Texana collection.
2. As I acquire relevant material, I will use the resources I learned about and refer to the course materials.
3. I am working on a Western Americana collection so I will use these resources for cataloging and research.
4. To share with colleagues at my home institution and increase the chances toward professional advancement by filling gaps in my knowledge.
5. Buy more reference books. Reorganize the reference books I have.

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

1. Collectors, booksellers, students of Western Americana, librarians.
2. Booksellers and librarians.
3. Collectors, booksellers, librarians who need to work broadly with Western Americana.
4. Booksellers, catalogers, academics, collector development specialists/curators.
5. Any serious bookseller.

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. I enjoyed two full days of "aha!" moments. I felt like I got to soak up a lifetime's

experience with this subject.

2. The "aha!" moment was when I realized shortly after the morning break on the first day that JS's knowledge of these materials was encyclopedic, as he related names, details, and stories without notes.
3. It was fascinating to think about the relationship between the organization of the print bibliographies and how collectors and librarians built collections.
4. None that come to mind.
5. {no response}

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

1. More time to look through the books, but the class would have to be extended because I wouldn't want to sacrifice any instruction time.
2. None that I can see.
3. I would have loved an extra day and more time built in to look at the books that were pulled.
4. Color reproductions of sources with color printing.
5. No.

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. 9
5. 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. {no response}
2. Going to the vault of the Lilly Library was an unimaginable experience.
3. Loved the surprise visit to the Lilly Library's vault!
4. Not applicable.
5. 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. Do it, but if you can, stay for the RBMS showcase.
3. It was easier to take notes by hand on paper than by computer. Typing would have disrupted the flow of the course in my opinion.
4. Caffeinate if you suffer from afternoon doldrums.
5. N/A

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

1. This was an exceptional opportunity to absorb the knowledge and experience acquired over half a lifetime.
2. We studied at the feet of a master.
3. Can't wait to come back!
4. Time well spent with a lot to digest.
5. Too tired for haiku. But RBS is fantastic. And JS is a bibliographical treasure.