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L-140v: Building a BookLab
13, 15 & 17 January 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. The pre-course readings were all very informative (and manageable).
3. The readings were very interesting and useful.
4. The readings were useful and relevant.
5. They were a helpful resource.
6. I thought they were fine, interesting. Maybe not integral but I don't mind reading around a course.
7. I found the pre-course reading assignments incredibly useful in making sure all students were on the same page with terms, concepts, and possibilities for the booklab and makerspace movements regardless of their level of familiarity before the class began.
8. The readings were all relevant and useful.
9. {no response}
10. Yes. I appreciated these readings, which offered practical and theoretical guidance on the topic.
11. {no response}
12. The pre-course readings were perfect. I read all the required readings, and I think they were "just enough"—the right length and put me in the right mindset for the class.
13. I had read some of them already and was happy to have suggestions for additional readings that may help me in the future.
14. {no response}
15. Very useful and well-chosen readings to illuminate a range of theoretical perspectives and practices.
16. Yes, they were both useful and interesting!
17. I found the reading assignments very helpful and will likely refer to them in the future.
18. I would like more readings—these were very useful—and I guess it would be useful to see specific syllabuses and also to have readings that mixed the experiential with the historical, theoretical, and pragmatic (what is and is not possible).
19. The readings were very useful and informative.
20. Yes, I found the pre-course reading useful and will likely cite from the readings in the future when I build a proposal for a booklab at my institution. I must say that I also appreciated that they were brief!
21. I learned a lot from the pre-course readings and I'm glad to have them in my ready reference files now.
22. {no response}
23. Yes.
24. They comprised a good set of readings.

25. {no response}
26. Yes, the reading assignments were really useful! I enjoyed them all and found them very complementary—not too much repetition.
27. The pre-course reading assignments were useful.
28. Most of the pre-course readings were helpful. I think some readings or suggested readings related to printing/letterpress printing would be great.
29. Yes! I found them all very helpful for framing histories and contexts as well as critical questions.
30. The readings are enormously helpful and are the beginning of a book lab library for me. We didn't really spend much time engaging with them—which is fine.

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. I appreciated the sharing of sample assignments.
3. N/A. Though we really didn't use the RBS paper?
4. {no response}
5. We were sent materials to sew a pamphlet style book. I think this could be a bit more integrated into the class so as to feel intentional.
6. Mailing out the materials was nice but I made the error of having them mailed to my school address over break. It was cute but most of the folks in the course had already done that sort of thing.
7. We didn't have a course workbook, but the teaching materials mailed to us were helpful and allowed us to try a simple hands-on activity we can bring to our own classes and workplaces.
8. The course content was appropriate and very useful. I will doubtlessly turn to the slides when I work on my own booklab project.
9. {no response}
10. Very helpful materials all around. I especially liked the hands-on book making activity, which was simple and easy to reproduce.
11. {no response}
12. The slides are really helpful (especially the list of questions to address about developing a lab presented on the last day). I'll be referring to them in the future for sure.
13. The slide decks were informative, and I will likely refer back to them.
14. {no response}
15. Yes, the teaching materials were very helpful and will remain useful in the near future. It might have been useful to include more detail and discussion about the course(s) that UMD offers in their booklab and how they plan to coexist with the other press on their campus.
16. Somewhat useful—while the pamphlet-making activity was fun and it was useful to see how easy and versatile it was, I would have preferred to use that time for more group discussion.

It was really helpful to see the materials and instructions and to hear of the activity's success in the booklab; I'm just not sure it was that helpful to actually do it.

17. The slides and book binding materials were very helpful. I appreciated the hands-on exercise.
18. Hmm, it was the same as the pre-readings.
19. The slide decks were very informative and will continue to be a useful resource long after the course.
20. I found the pamphlet stitching activity useful, overall.
21. Yes, all of the materials will continue to be useful as our institution continues to plan and implement programming.
22. {no response}
23. Very beneficial.
24. Yes.
25. {no response}
26. Yes! The assigned reading was useful, and I will continue to use it.
27. N/A
28. All the materials were helpful.
29. Yes! The teaching materials are useful as a reference and as a model for my own pedagogy.
30. Content was appropriate and useful, and I will definitely use it after the course.

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. The branding/identity discussions and the "Thinking Intentionally" prompts were the most relevant aspects for my current stage of project development.
3. I walked away absolutely inspired to start a booklab, with a ton of great ideas and important questions in my notebook.
4. Yes: new ways to imagine beginning to teach book history of a small lab.
5. I was able to be in conversation with colleagues in the field. I also appreciated the practical suggestions related to materials.
6. Wednesday's lecture and Friday's lecture on the activities, composition, and maintenance of the booklab were excellent. The main takeaway for me was that you can have successful activities in a small third-floor space without trucking in a C&P and setting up a full print shop. It was pretty inspiring to see how much fun people were having without cabinets full of type and all the elements of a full platen press setup.
7. The practical discussions of how to work within limited means and space were most helpful to me. I was able to consider several new project plans that I hope to implement, some in the short-term in my classes and others in the long term as I plan out our campus booklab.
8. I appreciated the opportunity to discuss challenges with colleagues.
9. Hearing about how others are using publication in their different disciplines, &c.
10. Yes! Many new ideas. Probably the most really valuable things were the final day when we talked about "someone's got to own it" and other considerations. Those slides really helped

me think about the mechanics of a daily booklab. Lots of practical solid organizing advice. That's what I most needed.

11. {no response}
12. It was just really helpful in clarifying what I want *my* lab to be, and some practical ways to get there.
13. I enjoyed and learned from seeing what was happening in different university settings across the country. It gave me context for my own campus initiatives and helped me ask questions relevant to pursuing future projects.
14. {no response}
15. It was helpful to have a glimpse into the complexities of initiating and maintaining a booklab within the context of a university setting. The nuts-and-bolts practicalities were very helpful as well.
16. I hadn't thought at all about the politics of the press and how we might need to be prepared to navigate that aspect of having a booklab. I also appreciated learning more about where to source supplies.
17. I appreciated the lectures and readings the most. I learned a lot from them. The discussions were helpful in getting a sense of the range of institutional contexts in which participants are working.
18. Yes, definitely useful and took away two categories of knowledge: one, logistical and (somewhat discouraging) about the logistics and struggles for setting up a book lab; two, historical and theoretical that will be useful in my own studies and writing about printers, publishers, and presses.
19. Walked away with lots of good information and insights from both the professors and fellow classmates.
20. It was incredibly helpful to learn about the kinds of equipment and materials used in a booklab and also the kinds of funding and staffing opportunities and barriers that might arise. I enjoyed hearing about the many applications of a booklab, especially in the community. I think community-engaged teaching and learning will be a major feature in our proposal for a booklab. I also came away with some key learning outcomes that could be articulated as part of our proposal.
21. I greatly appreciated the recurring theme that students find great joy in learning through booklabs/book makerspaces, and that this is an ongoing justification for creating and maintaining these opportunities for students in a variety of disciplines. I was definitely encouraged that plans can be made and implemented without spending thousands of dollars, and the nuts-and-bolts practical tips and suggestions helped me feel like we can do this!
22. {no response}
23. I am a Ph.D. student, so I have several challenges ahead of me before I can implement some of the takeaways of the course, but the overall experience was wonderful. I will put them to use in the future.
24. For me, the final class full of questions that those putting together a booklab should ask themselves was the most useful. Those questions are helping myself and those I am working with make decisions. The pedagogy exercise was a good deal of fun.

25. {no response}
26. The pamphlet-making exercise and discussions of what the instructors do at their booklab in practice were really helpful, as were the broader discussions of practicalities of starting a booklab. I appreciated the instructors' honest and realistic yet optimistic approach—they acknowledged space and funding issues that are typically real issues for these kinds of ventures and discussed what issues they had and hadn't been able to overcome. I left feeling like I'm doing a lot better at my own institution than I thought—that I've already accomplished something!—and that doing more is realistic given that other academics at other institutions are grappling with similar issues but dealing with them ok.
27. The emphasis on letterpress printing within the context of booklab was intriguing to me. My background is in book arts, and I am more familiar with letterpress spaces being referred to as shops or presses. This course presented me with a different perspective and history of letterpress in academic settings than I had been exposed to previously.
28. Learning that you can print with Legos and all the different types of presses that you can acquire.
29. I walked away with concrete answers to questions I had about starting a booklab, new readings and questions to consider, and a sense of the stakes and questions I still need to think through.
30. It was helpful to be in a "room" with others who want to build the same kind of space. Many insights in terms of organization and building a network.

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. {private response}
3. Yes, this was pretty much what I expected. The instructors were very candid in sharing the development of their booklab, and provided a good potential model for opening one.
4. Yes.
5. I was able to gain what I was looking for.
6. Yes, I think the description of the course is apt.
7. I learned what I had hoped to learn, and the instructors were instrumental in that pursuit.
8. Yes, the course instructors were very helpful and supportive.
9. I feel like there was too much time spent on the letterpress. It was mentioned in the course description however I felt like MOST of the teacher-led instruction was around letterpress and this is not a tool that we can access at the elementary level.
10. Yes. Very much so.
11. {no response}
12. Yes! KK and MGK are very knowledgeable and generous.
13. I learned a lot about how they created their booklab setting and they provided questions and context for thinking about my own campus initiatives.
14. {no response}

15. Yes, I think the course fits the description. The online format and brief six-hour session have limitations. However, I would not have been able to attend an on-Grounds course, so I am very thankful to have had the opportunity to attend virtually. Thank you for offering this!
16. Yes! Both instructors were great and enjoyable to talk to and learn from, and I really liked the way that the course was structured.
17. Yes.
18. Yes, but see my point above—it almost calls for a consultancy—where they show up in our communities and spend a week helping us make the case for funding, put together buy lists for our specific circumstances, and perhaps bring us back to earth with sobering realism of what is and is not possible. We did get this in detail in the course—let me be clear—but there is no substitute for experiential and lab-like learning (which is one of the main theses of this course).
19. Yes, I learned what I had hoped to from the course.
20. Yes, I found that many of my questions were answered in the course of the three evenings. I would have liked a bit more time to speak with others in the group, but I know that this can be challenging. I think preset breakout groups based on interest could be useful so that you can chat with the same people across three nights. Introductions took up most of our breakout time.
21. Yes, absolutely.
22. {no response}
23. The instructors were friendly and spoke well. They are, of course, experts who presented their ideas brilliantly.
24. Yes.
25. {no response}
26. Yes, definitely. I wanted to learn more about programming and practicalities like funding and space and came away feeling much more assured.
27. No. The instruction is a case study of a particular booklab with an emphasis on letterpress printing. That is interesting and has its uses, but from the description, I expected the instructors to present a survey of approaches to starting a booklab in a variety of contexts.
28. This class was awesome! I wish we had more time during the week to cover material. I learned so much on the topic and it opened more avenues of discovery.
29. Yes.
30. I hoped to learn about the nitty gritty of building and sustaining a booklab—and I did.

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

1. {no response}
2. This course provides a solid foundation for project planning.
3. Opening a booklab at my institution!
4. Hoping to apply to convince a university to begin setting up a lab.
5. I will use the shared resources, especially when considering what to purchase.
6. I'm going straight back to my proposal and including a lot of the content here, but with a slight shift in perspective. Then I'm going to reassess how I manage the space we have.

7. I plan to use the skills and knowledge I acquired in my courses, in establishing a makerspace on my campus, and in my own research on printing and publishing practices.
8. I plan to develop a booklab for my institution.
9. I am going to use ideas that I heard from other students about how to get students publishing and sharing their ideas. I will also use the questions that were presented in Friday's class to build a stronger focus for our publishing center
10. I am co-leading a booklab project at my own university. It was very helpful to think through the various aspects of what this entails. The course was well organized and productive. I learned a good deal of valuable information here!
11. {no response}
12. I'm going to build my lab!!
13. Will use them moving forward as we expand our campus press initiatives.
14. {no response}
15. This information will be useful in understanding and planning an on-ground lab.
16. I will apply what I've learned to running our library's pressroom and incorporate it into our future plans for a makerspace.
17. I am hoping to incorporate more book arts- and booklab-related activities into my teaching and contribute more fully to the letterpress/book arts lab on our campus.
18. Start a booklab. Write a book. Also, try to find a like-minded group (staff, faculty, &c.)—so that the burden does not fall on one or two people.
19. Will apply directly to my professional work at a small liberal arts college.
20. I plan to take what I've learned in this course and develop a proposal for internal funding at my institution. There is money available for these kinds of innovations and this course helped me think about the who, what, when, where, why, and how of developing a compelling and complete proposal.
21. I'm putting together a proposal for our Dean referencing the course and what I've learned and my suggestions for next steps here in our library.
22. {no response}
23. I hope my plans will materialize in a couple of years.
24. We are opening a booklab.
25. {no response}
26. I'll start doing versions of some of the activities discussed, and work toward getting a space for our little booklab (and try to have patience for the latter!). Knowing how helpful the storage space was was helpful—and that might be easier for me to get.
27. I will be using it to reframe how I define the goals and scope of the booklab I hope to build, and even to consider renaming the project.
28. I plan to use the skills to work on developing a booklab at the institution I work at plus developing programming that can be used to support a booklab.
29. I hope to start a book lab at my institution.
30. I plan to build a lab in my library.

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

1. {no response}
2. Folks with some but minimal exposure to printing and book arts might benefit most from taking this course.
3. Anyone interested in the pedagogy of book history.
4. Teachers of book history contemplating establishing a booklab.
5. Those looking to set up a booklab that also have some idea of what their funding options are.
6. People who are thinking about developing spaces but don't know how to make the space fit within an institutional context with limited funds.
7. I think people who would like to build a booklab in their workplace, are in the early or planning stages of that kind of a plan, or who have worked in a similar setting and are currently planning on implementing changes to their space or programming would benefit most.
8. People interested in developing booklabs at their institutions, or even folks with general interest in the topic.
9. {no response}
10. Anyone interested in starting a booklab or teaching with a small tabletop press/book activities.
11. {no response}
12. Librarians and faculty interested in developing a booklab (broadly defined).
13. Faculty, library, archival, and other university staff involved in book studies and letterpress curriculum and initiatives. The nice thing about this course is that it meets you where you are—there is probably something for almost anyone interested in this topic and building a space for bookmaking and printing on their campus, especially one outside the usual contours of an art studio program.
14. {no response}
15. I think anyone with an interest in starting a hands-on printing venture within an academic library (and with limited resources).
16. Anyone starting or running a booklab.
17. English professors, library staff, graduate students.
18. People who want to add experiential learning and applied humanities to K-16 and graduate education and community centers; and anyone interested in printing, small presses, and (book and print) artists who want to reach a wider audience outside of art students K-12, B.F.A.s, M.F.A.s, and other artists. That is the real value of booklabs—everyone gets to do something usually hidden inside art departments.
19. Anyone interested in starting, running, or expanding a booklab of some sort. Very useful information for both professional staff and faculty in higher ed settings. Very applicable information for similar institutions as well—museums, arts organizations, community centers, &c.
20. I think this course would benefit instructional faculty, staff in libraries, archives, and humanities centers, and potentially graduate students in disciplines like library science, English, history, and media studies.

21. Educators from a variety of disciplines who feel ready to take even a small next step forward towards realizing the creation of a humanities makerspace.
22. {no response}
23. Teachers.
24. Those who are considering opening a booklab.
25. {no response}
26. I think people like me, who want to start a booklab or are in the process of it but have been feeling a little like they're flying from the seat of their pants. It's helpful to know that we all are, to some degree, and to get practical advice as well as theoretical insight from people further along the path.
27. Anyone interested in building a letterpress-forward booklab for English and humanities students within a pre-existing classroom space.
28. I think anyone wanting to develop a booklab.
29. {no response}
30. Others interested in building a lab and talking to a community of folks with similar ambitions.

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. {private response}
3. Not a moment but the cumulative effect of the authors describing how they did their thing, the frankness about the problems they faced/face and the joy of working with people in the lab all made it sound like a doable project. I was anxious about starting my lab, less so now (or at least anxious in an informed way).
4. {no response}
5. {no response}
6. Honestly just seeing the UMD booklab. I'm used to seeing spaces like Skeuomorph or whatever and maybe we just don't need that. I had thought a simple proofing press would suffice but I'm more clear-headed on how we'd have to manage type collections for something like that.
7. N/A
8. {no response}
9. {no response}
10. I was a bit intimidated by the chibitronics and other more technical aspects of the "bibliocircuitry" article, but in class KK showed samples of the work, and I felt excited that this is something I might really be able to do with a class. It made me brave enough to consider it, anyway.
11. {no response}
12. {no response}
13. {no response}
14. {no response}

15. It was helpful to realize that it is very possible and indeed worthwhile to start minimally and then to grow organically.
16. See above, regarding politics of the press.
17. {no response}
18. The pop-up mobile booklab idea. The paper-widgets. The idea of a community space and a lab that reaches out to the public community. Type is a metal constraint encouraging invention—not thousands of font-type choices.
19. Getting the tour of the UMD booklab space, and learning what has worked, and what hasn't.
20. I really appreciated thinking about the role of the printing press in this period of political strife and with rising threats to press freedom. Beyond its use as a space for teaching or making, the booklab can be a gathering place, organizing place, and a space of activism and social change as the print shop has been for centuries.
21. {no response}
22. {no response}
23. Not a single as much. I was impressed by the course in its entirety.
24. As I said, the questions to consider when one makes the leap to open the lab, especially those about responsibility.
25. {no response}
26. {no response}
27. {no response}
28. {no response}
29. {no response}
30. Honestly, the resources were amazing—and something to build upon which is great.

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

1. {no response}
2. {private response}
3. The discussion breakout rooms were okay, but they desperately need appointed hosts/conversation starters.
4. {no response}
5. {no response}
6. Go into the discussions more intentionally—they need to be managed. The first day none of us wanted to talk or lead and nobody had dispensation to do so. It doesn't work in a setting like this—tell us what to do.
7. N/A
8. {no response}
9. {no response}
10. I wish we had a little more time, but I also appreciate what we were able to accomplish in three sessions. I am also glad to have the course online as an in-person course would have been cost prohibitive for me.
11. {no response}
12. {no response}

13. {no response}
14. {no response}
15. Also, while discussion/breakouts amongst the attendees have value, it would have been more useful to have a bit more time to focus on the expertise of the instructors and what they had to offer.
16. I would really love to have done this as a one or two day in-person workshop/seminar. I think everyone was really excited about the subject matter and wanted to talk, but time limitations as well as Zoom awkwardness (though that was mitigated as much as possible!) made this more difficult. Once we were finished with introductions in the breakout rooms, we didn't have much time for discussion, and, since the course took place in the evening, I'm not sure it would be helpful and/or practical to extend the sessions. Alternatively, I think having a fourth, structured, discussion-based session (maybe with discussion questions?) the same week as the other sessions may have addressed this. (This may have also been part of the purpose of the social hour; I personally got distracted from that with the winter storm and other events, which obviously are not in RBS's control!)
17. {no response}
18. Again, as mentioned above—the impossible situation of having more hands-on experiences—which would mean almost everyone could not attend. So, I know that it would be better and perhaps needs to involve lots of booklabs around the U.S., and internationally.
19. Additional hands-on exercises to be tried away from the online meeting time.
20. As I noted above, I think more time in structured breakouts would be helpful.
21. I would have liked more time dedicated to curriculum and specific activities that have been successful in both one shot instruction sessions and semester length course work.
22. {no response}
23. No.
24. Not that I can say.
25. {no response}
26. {no response}
27. Less breakout sessions and more information about how other booklabs started.
28. {no response}
29. {no response}
30. More hands-on work. The activity where we were learning a stitch was fun. You could incorporate that making into the rest of the course— so we have things to do with our hands while you lecture.

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. {no response}
2. 5
3. 10
4. 9

5. 8
6. 8
7. 9
8. 10
9. 5
10. 10
11. {no response}
12. 10
13. 8
14. {no response}
15. 9
16. 10
17. 9
18. 8
19. 10
20. 9
21. 9
22. 10
23. 9
24. 10
25. 10
26. 10
27. 5
28. 10
29. 10
30. 8

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. {private response}
3. N/A
4. {no response}
5. {no response}
6. N/A
7. N/A
8. {no response}
9. {no response}
10. N/A
11. {no response}
12. N/A
13. N/A

14. {no response}
15. N/A
16. N/A
17. {no response}
18. No.
19. N/A
20. {no response}
21. N/A
22. {no response}
23. Maybe. A hands-on experience involving a booklab would have been interesting.
24. N/A
25. {no response}
26. N/A
27. {no response}
28. N/A
29. {no response}
30. 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. {private response}
3. Do it. Short as it was, packed with info and helpful.
4. {no response}
5. {no response}
6. {no response}
7. N/A
8. {no response}
9. {no response}
10. Do it!
11. {no response}
12. {no response}
13. {no response}
14. {no response}
15. Support and take advantage of the expertise and range of experience offered at RBS.
16. No.
17. {no response}
18. I hope we can make a trip to the UMD booklab— that is my one big hope. To spend a day there.
19. Make sure to do the reading and contribute to/monitor the chat space in Zoom.
20. My advice is to have a sense of how your institution works before you take this course, since some of the guidance is specific to how one's own institution operates.

21. {no response}
22. {no response}
23. No.
24. N/A
25. {no response}
26. {no response}
27. No response
28. {no response}
29. {no response}
30. {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. Think with intention, do a lot with not a lot, and own your booklab.
3. Inspiring.
4. Always stimulating.
5. {no response}
6. {no response}
7. RBS courses are an incredible method of continuing to develop our research and teaching interests as working teachers, librarians, and archivists through engaged group learning I haven't seen in any other setting, in large part due to each class member's varied experiences and home disciplines.
8. A wonderful opportunity to join a strong community of practice.
9. {no response}
10. I loved this experience and also just getting to meet others interested in this topic. It was a lovely community of folks.
11. {no response}
12. {no response}
13. The course helped me see that we are in relatively good shape, and helped formulate some important questions for us moving forward in terms of our identity as a space and initiative.
14. {no response}
15. Grateful :)
16. Creative spaces like booklabs are important and valuable places for empowerment and community-building!
17. It was great! Thanks to MGK and KK!
18. Inking A Book Lab Deal in the Belfry

press, paper, type, ink, folding, bindings
for reading

literacy

history

books

literature

& #dingbats

19. Weekday nights at home
Will the online class translate?
Indeed so, perfect!
20. when all else feels bleak
we talk together of print
our joyful reprieve
21. {no response}
22. {no response}
23. Informative.
24. {no response}
25. {no response}
26. Wonderful and inspiring!
27. {no response}
28. Time well spent.
29. {no response}
30. Did the trick!