

Anthony Grafton

M-65v: From Poggio to Mabillon: The Study of Latin Manuscripts in the First Age of Print
26 September–5 October, Online Only

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. Yes, they were VERY useful.
2. {private response}
3. The pre-course readings were very helpful and not too onerous. They were all very useful as preparations for the sessions themselves.
4. Yes, and the bibliography will remain useful! On occasion, the lectures duplicated information in some of the reading assignments—but this served to reinforce and was not tedious. On the first day, AG emailed us with suggestions for which readings to prioritize, which would have been helpful for subsequent classes.

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. Again, very useful and well organized. The list of recommended readings is so much appreciated.
2. The cache of readings are a treasure trove, since humanism is a new area of interest to me as a classicist.
3. The PowerPoint presentations contain a lot of great information and images which I hope to use again in the future.
4. Grateful for the sharing of the PowerPoint slides.

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. 1) History of Renaissance libraries as important cultural centers 2) The role of P. Bracciolini and A. Poliziano 3) Encounters of Greek and Italian scholars in the fifteenth century (from readings, first lecture) 4) Scientific analysis of the pre-Mabillon era 5) Detailed analysis of how J. Mabillon produced his work. Plans—to take other RBS course(s) on topics related to manuscripts and palaeography.
2. I got a much inkier and more maculate view of the intellectuals and practitioners of the period. I'll certainly revisit the problem of fakes and forgeries.

3. The fact that the earliest origins of Latin paleography are grounded in legal issues and forgeries was most intriguing.
4. {no response}

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, yes indeed—to both questions.
2. {no response}
3. Yes, the course description reflects very well what we learned in the course itself.
4. I think so. We learned concrete facts about the development of manuscript studies—interesting anecdotes to re-tell—but more importantly I can think about the subject in a broader and more nuanced way.

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

1. It is too early to tell something concrete.
2. I'm working on a project that involves exploring humanist manuscripts and early books. This course provided me with a sort of "way in" to the libraries I'll be visiting.
3. The knowledge acquired during my time here will certainly make me a more informed scholar of early modern reception studies and will make me a better teacher of Latin and Greek paleography.
4. The effects of this course will be evident in the ways that I approach, think about, and discuss texts and textual transmission, particularly when teaching.

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

1. Librarians, archivists, historians, specialists in Neo-Latin studies.
2. It was really useful for me as a classicist to probe more deeply into the history of methods. It's not only fascinating in its own right (and important to be able to historicize the discipline) but the very pragmatic, material account that AG laid out for us of early palaeography made me think about different ways of interacting with the evidence for antiquity.
3. Anyone with an interest in the early modern period.
4. Anyone with interests in manuscript studies and/or textual criticism, especially coming from outside book history. I was worried that lack of expertise in Renaissance/early modern Europe would be a significant hindrance, but it wasn't.

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) Format—two shorter presentations with discussions after each of them instead of a longer one. 2) The way how the material was presented, e.g., demonstrations of two or three manuscripts/printed pages on the same slide.
- For me, there were a number of asides and brief "meta" stories that AG shared that were important pointers about methodology in the humanities more generally.
- {no response}
- {no response}

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

- It would be very interesting to know more about the history of palaeography after J. Mabillon.
- {no response}
- If anything, there could be more sessions.
- It was a pleasure to listen to AG's lectures. The discussion portion of the classes was sometimes a bit awkward (though I know that can be unavoidable in a Zoom class where people don't know each other!). One idea I had to mitigate this would be to send out a few discussion questions ahead of each session to get students thinking as they're reading. These might be good jumping-off points for a brief discussion—perhaps even at the start of class, before the first lecture—while still allowing for additional questions as they arise.

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.*

- 10
- 10
- 10
- 8

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?*

- I do not think so. For a series of just four lectures with a lot of material presented by the great scholar we had enough to work on.
- {no response}
- N/A
- {no response}

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

1. Yes. It is very helpful to read in advance as much as possible from the recommended literature.
2. {no response}
3. {no response}
4. {no response}

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

1. It has been a truly rewarding experience.
2. {no response}
3. Incredible class with an amazingly knowledgeable professor.
4. Oculis tantum hic opus est!