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B-75: American Publishers' Bookbindings, 1800–1900
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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. I think adding Johnathan Hill's "From Provisional to Permanent: Books in Boards 1790–1840" to the pre-reading list would be helpful since it came up several times in our discussions.
2. The pre-course readings were very helpful in orienting me a bit before I got here. I was quite the beginner when it came to this course content so while I didn't understand them all, I did find the grounding useful, especially as we started to dig into it all the first day. Also loved that the amount of reading wasn't overwhelming.
3. I was not able to complete all the readings prior to the class, but the ones that I read provided a useful foundation.
4. The reading list for this class is very focused and doesn't contain much extraneous material compared to the list from previous versions of the course. One article that was mentioned in discussion during several days was Jonathan Hill's "From Provisional to Permanent: Books in Boards 1790–1840," which might be good to add in the future.
5. The pre-course reading assignments were helpful, as well as the additional resources that TP highlighted and provided in the course workbook and throughout his slide presentations.
6. Yes, they prepared me well.
7. Pre-course reading assignments were useful.
8. The readings that the instructor sent out about one week before the class were more helpful, the rest of the ones listed on the advanced reading list weren't helpful.
9. Yes, the pre-course readings were helpful.
10. The pre-course readings were useful, though the Pickwood reading was hard to understand at times.

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 course book is above and beyond. I'm so thankful we have actual samples of endpapers and cloth. I will return to the workbook as a helpful resource after the course.
2. The workbook is INCREDIBLE. Such a valuable resource; I feel like I would have taken the course to get that book alone. The content is very useful, both for what I'm working on but also in general as a person who handles rare books often and frequents archives. This course's content seems like the kind of content that would be useful to ANYONE in the fields of English, book history, and library science.
3. TP included samples of bookcloth and endpapers in the workbook which was incredibly helpful! I expect that the workbook will remain an incredibly useful tool for years to come.

4. The course materials weren't used very much during the class due to the pace of the lectures, but they were very thoughtfully prepared as reference materials and will be very useful in the future.
5. The course workbooks were a helpful resource, particularly the materials that were pasted in which gave a tangible resource to identify certain materials (i.e., endpapers). I was surprised that we did not use the workbook more considering how much information it contained, but it will be a resource to which I can reference in the future if/when working with publishers' book bindings.
6. {no response}
7. Love the tip-ins; perhaps color images would be nice; the bibliography is very useful.
8. This was my third RBS course, and the teaching materials distributed for this course were probably the most relevant of all. The instructor didn't talk about anything that wasn't accompanied by a physical example.
9. The workbook feels like an extremely valuable tool and resource—particularly the material samples. It was a bit unclear to what extent information from course slides were repeated in the workbook. For note-taking purposes, it might be helpful to note when there are further details included in the book.
10. The course workbook is extremely helpful, especially because it contains a bibliography and a sample of endpapers.

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. The information about binding structure—especially the difference between adhered boards and case bound books—was really helpful. I appreciated TP's demonstrations.
2. The practical knowledge of how bookbinding works was very useful. But I particularly loved the focus on who was often doing this overlooked labor (women). I definitely left feeling inspired to pursue new projects and, particularly, to expand current ones in new directions.
3. The binding demonstration in class were incredibly helpful for understanding the evolving structure of publishers' bindings in the Nineteenth century. TP demonstrated that the changes we're seeing in Nineteenth-century bookbinding is not merely the result of changing tastes but a response to changes in the manufacture process. This class highlighted the often-overlooked economic considerations behind commercial bookbinding.
4. The biggest insight I got from the class was the chance to look at bookbinding as something more integral to the process of publication, and to consider it as having several different steps that could be adapted or reused by binders in different places. The discussion of bindings by period could be the start of several useful projects in my institution's collections.
5. Most intriguing to me were the dies and stamps developed by various artists (i.e., John Feely) that were used and reused throughout book publishing. It was fun to see stamps show up again across publishers and to see developments, such as die cutting, that changed a stamp's impression in future covers. In addition, the resources relating to cloth grains were helpful as a way to help identify and date early- and mid-century bindings.

6. {no response}
7. From the demonstrations of making bindings to artists' designs—very relevant and intriguing. Definitely will be looking at my institution's collections with new eyes!
8. Yes! I gained insight especially about the physical construction of Nineteenth-century books and the processes which went into their manufacture, especially dealing with the earlier part of the century.
9. This course was helpful in identifying areas of research ripe for further discovery which absolutely inspired my research. It was also helpful in filling in knowledge gaps related to physical materials, processes, structures, and techniques which can be difficult to grasp from literature alone.
10. I was most intrigued by the discussions of late Nineteenth-century bindings because my home repository holds many collections from this era. I was also deeply appreciative to learn about signed bindings and book designers. I look forward to incorporating this new knowledge into instruction sessions for undergraduates. Also, learning how to research information about bindings was incredibly useful.

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. I learned a lot more than I had hoped—and my hopes were very high! TP organized the class in a clear and helpful way. Having the schedule of each day and the topics ahead of time gave a helpful roadmap.
2. TP helped me acquire those skills and more. The course exceeded my expectations of what I'd learn. So much jammed into one week (in a good way).
3. Yes, all that I hoped and more!
4. TP gave a great overview of binding techniques and up-close looks at individual binders. I think I got a good foundation for the topic that I wanted to research.
5. YES! The course delivered a lot of information and content in a clear and deliberate way. TP also had an incredible ability to tailor the course, books, and presentations to meet the needs of all students enrolled in the course, going so far as to include English bindings (in an American course!) for one student who had professional interest, which helped to inform the course content.
6. {no response}
7. Yes, I learned more than I thought I would.
8. Yes! All of what I had hoped to learn, and more. I only could have learned more if the course was longer than five days.
9. Yes, I feel that I learned the relevant skills to continue in-depth research in this area. It often felt like racing through a survey course of many decades, techniques, and individuals. I definitely learned the key players and landscape of Nineteenth-century bindings, but have more focused research ahead of me (which I now have the tools for).
10. Yes, I learned even more than what was described. This is a very content-rich course.

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

1. I am going to use the skills for two courses I am teaching in the fall semester at my home institution. What I learned here is also going to feed into my research.

2. I'm returning to archives I've visited before with a better understanding of how to read the materials I previously saw there. I'll also be returning to an article project with ideas for expansion. But mostly I'm now so excited to teach classes on bookbinding, packaging, and marketing. I feel much more confident engaging my students in these subjects than I did before, mostly because of how thoroughly all of us were engaged in this course.
3. I now have a much richer understanding and appreciation of Nineteenth-century bindings
4. I hope that it will benefit me in my future career as a curator working with collections of many different periods and areas.
5. The opportunity to immerse myself in this course; to be among librarians, curators, researchers, and educators; and to handle the materials that RBS has made me more knowledgeable about these bindings and has cultivated a profound appreciation for this component of the book as a material object.
6. {no response}
7. I plan to do more research and perhaps write an article. I will work on a description of my institution's collections.
8. Looking at the various parts of a book differently. Now I understand the meaning of aspects of the book which I previously overlooked. Continue working on researching Sarah Whitman.
9. I plan to use the knowledge learned here to propel my future research on the topic.
10. I will use these skills to enhance catalog descriptions at my institution and to teach undergraduate instruction sessions.

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

1. Anyone interested in the commercial circulation and history of books. While the course was focused on American bindings, it was also helpful even though I work on British literature mostly. TP was very knowledgeable about what elements carried over beyond an American context.
2. I honestly can't think of a single person in RBS-related fields who wouldn't benefit from taking this course. But it's especially useful to Nineteenth-century Americanists interested in book history, print culture, and related fields. Also, unexpectedly great for people focusing on Women's Studies in this period.
3. Special collections librarians, curators, conservators, and anyone doing research on Nineteenth-century books
4. Anyone who studies printed books in the Nineteenth century but who does not have the ability or the background to understand binding structures.
5. This course can satisfy any number of students, and not just those interested in bookbinding. The content of the course spoke to the general materiality of the book, the history and industrialization of book production, the evolving nature of book consumerism in America and elsewhere, and more. This course can help any number of bibliophilic enthusiasts to better understand the book as a whole in America during this dynamic era in its history.
6. {no response}
7. Anyone teaching or working with book collections!
8. Anyone who works in a library or that owns, researches, teaches on, or really anyone who deals with Nineteenth-century books.
9. Rare books librarians and anyone interested in book history.

10. Nineteenth-century scholars, bookbinders, curators who specialize in Nineteenth-century printed works or who care for these collections

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. I hadn't understood adhered boards at all before, and now I feel like I do.
2. Beyond some of the practicalities of book binding (how text blocks adhere to boards and/or cases, &c.), a lot of my outstanding moments in the course related to who did this kind of work and how they were or were not recognized/compensated. "Aha!" moments normally related to understanding who was the publisher vs. binder vs. designer vs. illustrator, or even who within a bindery would produce a die vs. endpapers vs. the sewing, &c.
3. Seeing TP's binding demonstrations!
4. The discussion of intermediate binding and sewing structures, and the demonstrations of binding that helped me understand what was actually going on underneath the cover of the book.
5. The detective work that goes into examining and identifying a publisher's binding was an exciting and exhilarating exercise. Seeing the book through a loupe and catching that tiny yet distinctive signature of a die cutter, a bookbinder, a book art designer, &c., was quite fun!
6. {no response}
7. Numerous, but seeing two simultaneous binding demonstrations stands out.
8. The PowerPoints and RBS teaching collection. It often seemed like there isn't a book that TP hasn't seen.
9. Understanding how publishers' and binderies' records and ledgers (and census records) can be used as primary resources.
10. Viewing the Margaret Armstrong exhibition really tied the class together. Also, all of TP's demonstrations were amazing and helpful. I really enjoyed the class-led content and the visit to the McGregor Room—please keep this portion of the class!

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

1. This is my fifth RBS course, and it was the most informative one.
2. Perhaps seeing the full extent of the bookbinding demonstration (how a case binding works from start to finish) earlier in the course might have been helpful in contextualizing other elements earlier. But everything made sense, even without seeing the end of that process until Friday.
3. It would be helpful to have more captions on the slideshow images if possible (especially with date and location).
4. The pacing of lecture content (slides) and interpretation could be a bit more balanced. There was more information than could fit into a week, and the opportunities to pick our own books was a good break from lecture, but there was so much information delivered that it blurred across days. I would have been happy to spend one evening working on a binding or a set and discussing with a small group, similar to the exercise periods in DesBib.
5. {no response}

6. Include a very brief section on binding practices pre-1800 so we can understand changes. The scholarly debate over what is a publisher's binding is interesting but probably should go after some basic orientation to binding practices of the period.
7. Is there a complete list of every book we saw available?
8. No! Keep it the way that it is. Can't beat TP.
9. It is a lot to cover in one week, but all content is interconnected and helpful so I am not quite sure if I would recommend dividing it—maybe just adding more sub-topic courses.
10. I think this course should have a prerequisite, such as an "Introduction to Bookbinding" course. Many elements of the class went over my head simply because I knew very little about bookbinding prior to this class.

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
6. 8
7. 10
8. 10
9. 10
10. 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. The visit to see the dust jackets was a good way to see a lot of material in person.
2. I LOVED walking through the Margaret Armstrong exhibit for a better deep-dive on women designers. The SC visit was wonderful, too, but we get to handle so many wonderful books already in class...
3. Yes, the dust jacket collection in SC was interesting.
4. I think that the SC session gave some additional exposure to materials beyond RBS's collections, but ideally it could be made into more of an active exercise-based session rather than a show-and-tell, even if it doesn't cover as much material.
5. Our trip to SC was a nice treat to see dust jackets, but it seems to me that RBS has enough materials in its own collections that the trip was not necessary, though I did enjoy it.
6. {no response}
7. The visit to SC was a valuable addition.
8. The dust jacket trip was great and informative. Perhaps would have been great to try our hand at researching more of these adverts ourselves.
9. Somewhat. They did not detract but were not necessarily what I would pinpoint as "highlights."

10. The visit to SC was okay, but we could not touch anything, which negatively impacted the visit. However, the Margaret Armstrong exhibition tour was amazing.

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

1. The suggested readings are essential. I feel like coming in cold to the course would have been too confusing.
2. TAKE IT! Best instructor, best course.
3. It's an absolutely amazing course! Do it! TP is a wonderful and entertaining lecturer, you will not regret it.
4. It would be useful to have at least a brief familiarity with binding and bibliographical terms, and some of the basic steps to making a book before coming. The class starts fairly quickly with the differences between binding structures, and these get explained over the first two days, but a little refresher would help guide you through the first couple of lecture sessions.
5. TP is an excellent instructor and is very generous with his time, knowledge, and materials. You will not regret taking this course.
6. {no response}
7. {no response}
8. I would have taken this course first because it gives you a good historical grounding, even though it is advertised as a bookbinding class.
9. Only, "do it!"
10. Try to gain some foundational bookbinding knowledge before attending this class—you will absorb more if you do.

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

1. Beware! Being in TP's class will lead to accidental eBay purchases of Nineteenth-century books!
2. The most useful book historical experience I've had in my professional career (and the most fun!).
3. An incredibly interesting, fun, and informative week that makes me want to spend even more time with Nineteenth-century books!
4. {no response}
5. Define book bindings/Published, uniform, quantity/It's so hard to do!
6. {no response}
7. An experience that is exciting, fulfilling (exhausting) but lives beyond this week.
8. The more books you look at, the more connections you can make.
9. Inspiring and energizing.
10. Taking this course pulled me out of my bibliographic comfort zone in the best way. I will never look at a nineteenth-century binding the same way again.