

Brenna Bychowski
L-150: Modern Special Collections Cataloging
8-13 June, 2025, Charlottesville, 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. Pre-course work was perfectly suited to course material and did not demand an unreasonable amount of time.
 2. N/A.
 3. Yes, I found them helpful because I was unfamiliar with RMBS(B) and useful to think about how that standard differs from RDA. Also useful to take a bit of time to consider RDA broadly as a standard without trying to map to a specific MARC field.
 4. The pre-course reading assignments were very useful. It is always important to keep your mind refreshed on RDA and DCRM(B) for cataloging purposes.
 5. I found the pre-course exercise useful: I appreciated the opportunity to consider the differences between DCRM(B) and RDA, and I felt these readings prepared me well for the lessons learned in the class.
 6. {no response}
 7. {private response}
 8. The reading assignments were essential for the Modern Special Collections Cataloging course. Also, they were not so extensive as to cause heartburn.
 9. The pre-course readings were brief, but gave me a good refresher in RDA and some background in DCRM(B). The pre-course exercise was especially helpful in re-familiarizing me with the RDA Toolkit. Could the readings be in a smaller binder, please?
 10. Yes, these were very helpful. I would also have benefitted from even more readings and manuals, especially DCRM(B). This is a very knowledge-intensive class.
 11. Yes. I will also revisit the readings with a better understanding of the work I need to do.
- 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. Content was extremely helpful, clear, and well organized. I expect to continue to use the materials distributed and my notes in my daily work.
 2. Very appropriate. Really appreciated being able to catalog actual examples.
 3. Content appropriate and useful 10/10. I appreciate having the content made available as slides and printed format in a binder, I used the printed slides to take notes. I will continue to refer to these materials in my ongoing cataloging practice.
 4. All content, work, and teaching materials that were distributed to us by our faculty member were extremely useful in demonstrating the different types of cataloging we were expected to complete during our week. I will refer to these materials and the examples of cataloging we created to refer to in my work at my institution for years to come.

5. Absolutely! I plan to keep this binder on the reference shelf by my desk at my institution. I see myself referencing it often in my cataloging in the future, in addition to referencing the knowledge gained in this course to assist my fellow catalogers.
6. Excellent and full of useful examples and resources. I'm sure I will not only be referring to it myself but also passing it around to my colleagues!
7. {private response}
8. The course workbook made things very easy to follow in class and to take notes during the lectures. This course workbook will also be useful to me going forward in my own job.
9. The materials are helpful and I like that she gives us in person examples. There was a nice balance of instruction and hands-on exercises. It was very nice to have different assigned seats every day so that you could get to know people, especially during the exercises with materials. Brenna was very kind with all our questions, and never seems impatient or put-upon. I felt very safe and able to learn in a very non-judgmental environment.
10. Yes, the workbook is perfect and will be well used! I referred to it often. It was so helpful to have during class, not just to refer to while cataloging, but as an aid in the note-taking process—there was so much to absorb, I could not have recorded enough without this as a starting point. And of course it was essential to the in-class cataloging assignments! The many examples as well as explanations are wonderful. It would also be helpful to have the slides assembled in a single electronic document that could be keyword searched when using it to quickly look up/find information for the in-class cataloging (due to limited time and lack of prior familiarity with a lot of subject matter).
11. Yes, it was great to be able to take notes during class and to consolidate things learned in a personal format later. The course binder will sit on my desk and get consulted frequently.

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. BB's entire course was challenging, enlightening, and eye-opening. I got as much out of the lecture portion as I did from cataloging exercises. I have pages and pages of notes on projects, initiatives, and ideas to take back to my unsuspecting colleagues.
2. {no response}
3. Cataloging ephemera, very new area for me. We have ephemera in both our special collection and general reference that need attention and I am more confident about approaching these materials.
4. The sections on ephemera and comic book cataloging were very eye-opening and useful to my individual work. I am excited to get back to my institution to use BB's guide on cataloging ephemera to work on a new collection of samizdat poetry.
5. I feel newly energized and excited to share what I learned at my home institution! I already feel like a more confident, curious, and capable cataloger.
6. Brenna's discussion about and enthusiasm for the importance of collaboration made me seriously think about trying to work up some kind of 'cataloging basics' section for the non-catalogers at my institution.

7. {private response}
8. This class was directly relevant to the work I do every day. Getting straightforward training for RDA was a big plus because so much of my previous training was simply self-training or short one-on-one training by colleagues and contained a blend of old and new standards, which was confusing. I also felt that BB's suggestions about documentation and advocating for more support in technical services were very helpful.
9. The formats covered applied to much of the special collections materials I work with, including late nineteenth-century books, fine press, and ephemera. The comics materials will help me with my cataloging our popular trade graphic novels. I will definitely start implementing the 752 to give increased access to publication locations.
10. Yes! I now have a much better understanding of the differences between editions and printings and how/when/what to catalog on a local level rather than part of the general record. I learned so much more about how to both more accurately and more fully describe so many different types of materials. I loved discovering the many additional thesauri for 655s, as well as other resources that will be so helpful in creating more accurate and descriptive bibliographic records.
11. It was an intense week, for someone who had had no formal and little on-the-job training in this kind of work to learn with others who ask questions I could not have thought of at this point. The catching up was thoroughly enjoyable, and unparalleled, because of the instructor's approach to teaching. I am very grateful for this experience.

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.
3. I learned more than I was expecting, or rather some things that were different than I was expecting. I appreciated learning from fellow students in addition to BB's instruction!
4. I learned everything I hoped to learn and more!
5. I learned everything that I had hoped to learn and more! The instructor was engaging, thoughtful, and made every moment of the course an incredible experience.
6. I feel like I learned even more than I'd hoped. BB provided a great selection of materials for us to practice on and was genuinely helpful in guiding us through both lessons and practice work.
7. {private response}
8. The class truly exceeded my expectations and I learned so much. I learned from the instructor, the materials and my classmates. I didn't expect to gain confidence in my own work, and it was a pleasant surprise to do so.
9. Two very enthusiastic yeses! She was amazing, as were my classmates. I feel like I've learned so much, including to be more confident in myself and my cataloging.
10. Yes! BB is an amazing teacher. I expected a lot, and she went far beyond what I hoped to learn. I feel like the whole world of cataloging has opened up to me all

over again. Honestly I could write a novel about all the ways this course will help me. I feel truly inspired!

11. Yes, much more than I expected. I now have a solid grasp of the basics, learned fine points and sources to look things up through ample practices, and will bring home exemplars (including records for three out of five items I worked with this week!) to absorb.

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

1. {no response}
2. {no response}
3. {no response}
4. I plan to apply the skills and knowledge I have gained to my job immediately, both in the special collections acquired by the Russia section and for the Imperial Russian Collection.
5. The knowledge I acquired here will be invaluable to my regular cataloging work. In particular, I have large backlogs of ephemera and mass market twentieth-century paperbacks. Before this class, I was dreading this work: now, I'm eager to begin these projects with the skills that I need to accurately and consistently describe them.
6. I have a book cart full of special collections material waiting for me when I return to work and am excited about tackling it with my new knowledge. I'm also thinking of improvements and edits that could be made to some of our recent cataloging work.
7. {private response}
8. I will use this acquired knowledge daily in my cataloging practices. I will also share tips and resources gained in this class with colleagues in my department.
9. I plan to write a guide to cataloging comic books, as well as some new suggestions for special collections cataloging. She also had some great advice on how to promote special collections cataloging.
10. I'm really going to be able to create records that are so much more accurate and helpful not only to our patrons, but the wider library community. I'm excited to dive back into my work. We still have a lot of older records that need improvement (especially for special collections), and I'm receiving more and more original cataloging requests every day (due to a switch in what we're acquiring).
11. I took this course to gear up for what I plan to do over next academic year, so everything acquired is going directly into the records I make and documentation I keep.

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

1. Catalogers dealing with any kind of special collection, particularly those with an emphasis on post-1800 materials
2. Any cataloger, whether rare books or general.
3. {no response}
4. Any cataloger that deals in weird stuff, so ALL catalogers!
5. I believe that people with at least introductory MARC and RDA cataloging experience who are curious in the description of modern rare materials would

benefit the most from taking this course, particularly catalogers who may not have access to this kind of training otherwise.

6. {no response}
 7. {private response}
 8. Catalogers, and anyone who may have cataloging as even a small percentage of their job duties.
 9. People looking to catalog late nineteenth-century books, ephemera, American comic books, and fine press publications with RDA.
 10. In addition to everyone who works with any sort of special collection, I'd recommend this for anyone who does original cataloging of any kind, as well as those who work with any type of rare, unusual, or even less usual materials. It's going to help me in so many areas beyond the actual special collectionsthat are only part of my job.
 11. Not only catalogers, but also public services library staff who work a lot with special collections materials. Knowing how descriptive data is and is supposed to be structured for library collections would mean better access to materials for library research.
- 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. {no response}
 3. {no response}
 4. The section on comics cataloging was certainly the most noteworthy. I have never had the chance to learn comics related cataloging anywhere else and do not know of any other such course.
 5. I realized the power of actual cataloging training: the sheer amount of hands-on cataloging knowledge I received in this course made me realize how much training I lacked before this week. I feel as though I can see the cataloging profession (and special collections cataloging) with entirely new eyes.
 6. {no response}
 7. {no response}
 8. While reviewing each other's work, we each seemed to learn little technical details that were new to us. Again I would say that realizing I know more than I thought I did was my "aha" moment.
 9. Interacting with everyone was wonderful! "Aha" moments happened every day. She answered any and all questions, so I felt comfortable asking so many I've had for such a long time. She instilled in me a confidence I never thought possible.
 10. The information about how and when to use different rules, such as DCRM(B) (and how/when/why to make sure that OCLC won't merge a unique record); the information about additional MARC fields that I haven't been using which would be helpful for so many reasons; the greater ability to accurately represent the material in hand, as well as qualities that are unique to the local copy; the sense of community I now have with other members of the class and our wonderful instructor.
 11. After these five days, it is no longer a pain to learn someone else's rules to get work done.

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

1. {no response}
2. {no response}
3. {no response}
4. I wish it could be longer! I would take an entire semester of Modern Special Collections Cataloging with BB!
5. More discussion of zines and artists' books would be nice, but I realize that this would probably be impossible within a one-week time frame. Make this a two-week course please!
6. {no response}
7. {no response}
8. I would only say that folks with invisible accessibility issues may feel uncomfortable with changing seats every day or not having the option to sit where they can see/hear or simply feel comfortable.
9. {no response}
10. This is truly one of the best classes I've ever attended—very thought-provoking—and a joyful experience that I will never forget.
11. It would be great if this course could be followed by a sequel.

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. 10
5. 10
6. 10
7. 10
8. 10
9. {no response}
10. 10
11. 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. Yes!
2. {no response}
3. {no response}
4. Yes, the trip to SC here at UVA was very useful. We got to get a good crack at cataloging broadsides which I had never done before.
5. Yes, our field trip to catalog actual materials in UVA SC was incredibly useful in mirroring the real-world cataloging problems that many of us will face on the job.

6. Yes! It was great to visit UVA's SC and get to practice what we'd learned on selections of their items.
7. {no response}
8. Visiting SC is always a bonus!
9. Yes. Looking at the SC, and being able to catalog the materials in the collection, was great!
10. Definitely! I loved the visit to SC!
11. Yes, we had one session in SC and I scheduled appointments to see materials in the reading room myself as well.

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

1. No. It's perfect. Ten out of ten. No notes.
2. {no response}
3. Do it!
4. Just take it, you will learn *something* valuable to take back to work with you.
5. Do it!
6. If you can do it, do it! BB is an excellent teacher and I would never have believed this course is only in its second year—it is that polished and effective.
7. {no response}
8. Don't be intimidated by folks coming from what you may think of as exclusive institutions. People are all at varying levels of experience and are very generous with their knowledge, and also just as curious and ready to learn as you are.
9. {private response}
10. If you have the opportunity to plan additional time for yourself, the school will take up almost all the time during the week.
11. Read course evaluations from previous years, like I did.

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

1. Transformative.
2. {no response}
3. {no response}
4. If there was only one thing/that I were able/to say, thank you Miss Brenna
5. Once-in-a-lifetime experience!!!!
6. I am genuinely sorry it is over.
7. {private response}
8. Energizing and rewarding!
9. Morning, Ms. Brenna,/and all of my new friends here,/you are always great.
10. You have reawakened the love of cataloging in my soul!
11. Ascending, through terrene, to magic Perpendiculars (to steal from Emily Dickinson).