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L-155v: Institutional Book Arts Collections: Evaluating & Describing  
10–14 June, 2024, 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. The course materials were uploaded a week before the class, so I didn't get to the bulk of the readings. However, I look forward to reading them with more context after the class than I would have had previously.
2. For this course, the pre-course reading assignments were only posted to the shared folder three days before the start of the course, so I was unable to read them ahead of time as planned. In looking over the array of readings and skimming throughout the week of the course, however, they were very useful and well-suited to the material.
3. Yes, the instructor provided a great amount of readings with varying topics all related to the course.
4. I didn't have the time to read all the suggested readings or articles, but the ones I did read were pretty much the kind of literature I was looking for for my professional development. I look forward to reading the rest of the articles.
5. I think the pre-course reading assignments were useful. I would have liked to see them made available sooner.
6. Yes, very helpful.
7. {private response}
8. They were very useful, though it would have helped to get them sooner. I think there was a glitch and our list wasn't posted until much later. When I saw 41 items on the list (including a full book) it was a bit daunting! Further, we didn't have the chance to discuss every one. I feel like a combination of paring the articles down to the essentials and then possibly adding more time to the course would be ideal because we'd have a chance to prepare ourselves better and to spend more time interacting with the readings during our instruction.
9. {no response}
10. Yes, the Drucker text is foundational. I do wish that we had had more time to read it before the class. The reading list was not up until just a couple of weeks before the class...I had to inquire about it.
11. The readings were great, my only complaint was they were not posted or available until the Tuesday before the class started. I think they were more recommended readings, so it may not have been essential to get through them all, but I still would've liked more time to prepare and digest them.
12. Yes, they were useful but was only made aware of the advance readings one week prior to the course so did not get through them all.
13. The instructor provided a valuable list of readings applicable to the subject.
14. {no response}

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. That said, the articles I did read were very interesting, and my immediate work responsibilities are not exactly aligned with the course material.

2. The content is definitely useful to me! I plan on using the body of materials shared during the course week throughout my career and to inform the specialized skills that I am working to build in my professional career.
3. These were amazing. You can tell that RR is an instructor outside of RBS and is really engaged with the book arts field.
4. I took the class to gain more theoretical knowledge about art collection, as I already have plenty of practical experience. I was seeking stronger professional frameworks in this class to improve as a practitioner. For this reason, I can say that yes, the content and material were useful, and I intend to continue referring back to it after this class.
5. The content was appropriate and useful. I definitely will use the content that applies to the goals we have in mind for our collection.
6. Very appropriate and very useful. Well organized. Will continue to use.
7. {private response}
8. I very much liked the course notes and the outlines provided, particularly how our instructor brought in familiar definitions from other parts of library science to ground our conversations about artists' books within the larger field. I took a lot of notes and will be holding on to them. The course readings also form a valuable packet to refer to.
9. {no response}
10. The teaching materials/examples and discussion related to developing collection development policies around book arts collections will be extremely useful to me in my current work.
11. We didn't have a course workbook, but the course outlines were (and continue to be) very helpful.
12. Yes, the advanced readings and session outlined will be helpful.
13. The course materials were prepared to be both useful during the class and to be of use for future reference. I think RR designed the course with this idea in mind and it was much appreciated.
14. {no response}

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 really appreciated the larger philosophical questions around book art objects, as well as the more practical discussion various strategies for providing description and access.
2. I found discussions about descriptive processes and access to book arts objects to be the strongest feature of the course. As someone who has made artists' books and is interested in their placement in library collections, I found the practical considerations that go into fostering these unique collections really interesting and meaningful.
3. Policy creation, digitization and access, instructional needs when dealing with special collections materials. I walked away feeling validated for the direction I am taking my own classes as an adjunct instructor.
4. I believe that overall, the sessions that will be most useful for my professional development were those concerning perceptions of 'artness' and 'bookness,' as well as discussions about artists' books and special collections (including acquisitions,

description, and management). The class will definitely help me put together an acquisition policy for artists' books. I believe it will also enhance my ability to support the theoretical dimension of mediation activities with art books.

5. The most relevant topics for me included policies and defining collecting priorities. I have new ideas to discuss with faculty in the art and design program at our university.

6. Just the breadth of topics within the course description. So many ideas and insights I can't begin to list them (my head is exploding with them!).

7. {private response}

8. I really appreciated conversation about access points and managing artists' book collections in a way that increases their use and exposure by special collections patrons. It was the first time I was introduced to the idea of "browsability" of collections in a special collections setting, including the risk-reward tradeoffs that come with adjusting current collection management methods to increase visibility. Some project ideas for me include social media focus on rare books, most especially artists' books, through an "unboxing the archives" piece as well as revisiting the organization of our reading room to create collection highlights that are visible to patrons (simulating browsing traditional library stacks).

9. {no response}

10. The most relevant portion of the class for me was the discussion and content around developing book arts collection development policies. I also found the approach that RR took in treating book arts materials as archival materials interesting and useful.

11. All aspects of the course were intriguing and relevant. I guess I'd say our discussion of description and cataloging of book arts objects was probably most relevant to my work, but the bigger discussions of collection development and policy documentation were intriguing, and I think vital for my overall growth as a librarian.

12. The collective statements and policies are helping us craft our special collections statement. Lots of thoughts and ideas about how to organize collections.

13. As an academic researcher (rather than a librarian), I found the most intriguing elements of the course to be the moments we discussed theories around and definitions of book arts that really have yet to be settled. The category of "books arts" is expansive and variously defined depending on their value to certain disciplines, individuals, or institutions. I appreciated the moments where we could have group discussions on this matter.

14. {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. I probably was not as prepared as I would have liked for this course, but the instructor(s) led a lively discussion, and did a great job framing the issues of the course.

2. RR was a wonderful instructor and I found that the course description aligned very well with what was taught. The course's session outlines were a great way to ensure that I knew what materials were being covered and how they aligned with the course outcomes, and in turn, are also items I can return to. I learned what I hoped to learn.

3. Yes, absolutely!

4. The instructor had very precise objectives to achieve with this class, and he adhered to them diligently. The class aligned well with the description provided on the RBS website. Furthermore, I highly appreciate that every session began with definitions. It might seem trivial, but since I was seeking more theoretical knowledge through this class, this aspect holds significant value for me.
5. I learned most of what I had hoped to learn. I would have appreciated more time talking about using book arts for instruction.
6. Yes, most definitely.
7. {private response}
8. I believe all the promises made were kept and I completed the course with a completely different perspective than I started. I had a deeper idea of the complications in creating access to these materials digitally as well as the concerns with the library science field that prevent creation and adoption of standards for cataloging and description. I hope to continue to be part of this conversation.
9. {no response}
10. Yes, absolutely!
11. I think so.
12. It was a really good amount of information. I was probably the most basic participant and so did not want to ask basic follow up questions. I do have more information and ideas about how to find answers having taken the course.
13. The instructor set expectations and met them for this course.
14. {no response}

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

1. Most likely I will be using the resources in the description portion, and have bookmarked the various appraisal checklists for future use.
2. I am still in the process of earning my M.L.I.S. degree and I view this course not only as professional development but as a larger portion of my education as an information professional. This course will affect how I approach my studies and, in the future, my professional career.
3. In my own personal research and also my own teaching methods.
4. First, I will create an acquisition policy for artists' books. This will ensure that the institution allocates a regular budget for developing this collection. Second, I will enhance my awareness of object description and access points for users. This will enable me to provide more competent comments and suggestions to the catalogers.
5. I plan to use the knowledge I have acquired through constructing policies around our book arts collection.
6. Impacting my work in so many arenas: collecting, analyzing, networking, instruction, working with colleagues, &c.
7. {private response}
8. One of my primary roles as an archivist is in collections management, and I've largely approached that from a backend, pragmatic viewpoint. How do we safely locate and retrieve materials? How do we determine what materials should be stored where? This course brought to my attention the public-facing side of collections management that I've fully neglected. I believe some of this is because it does, to a point, fall within our curators' purviews. That said, the heart of my job is access and focusing on managing our collections in more public spaces increases access to them.

In many ways, my view of my role has opened up hugely and the skills and knowledge I acquired are going to help me navigate my way in this new side of things.

9. {no response}

10. I will be using what I learned during this course to directly inform the formation of my institution's collection development policies and procedures.

11. I catalog artists' books and book arts objects regularly, so our discussion of description will definitely help me there. Looking down the road, I think the discussions of collection development and policy will help me with larger scale projects and documenting our collecting and cataloging practices.

12. Have started writing a collection policy and thinking about classification and access.

13. The instructor provided links to many useful collections and resources about book arts that I hope to mine further for research purposes.

14. {no response}

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

1. I think most special collections librarians would get something out of this, but those who work with artists' books or zines would probably get the most out of it.

2. I believe any special collections practitioner would be well served in taking this course.

3. Anyone, especially those interested in artists' books and book arts. Though the information was shared in a digestible way so that it can be used for most types of special collections.

4. I believe that special collections librarians will definitely benefit from this course. However, I also think that art librarians in general could be a valuable audience. There aren't many classes tailored to our professional practices, and this course offers valuable theoretical knowledge applicable to our diverse collections. For example, art libraries don't solely consist of digital collections and likely never will.

5. I think catalogers would benefit the most from this RBS course.

6. anyone working on any aspect of collecting, cataloging, teaching with artists' books.

7. {private response}

8. I think there is information to be learned for catalogers, curators, and archivists. The way the course is structured around carefully considering examples meant that different perspectives were addressed and there was something useful in each lesson.

9. {no response}

10. Anyone working directly with book arts collections in an institutional setting, especially curators and catalogers.

11. Any librarian working with book arts or artists' books collections.

12. Certainly those working with artists' books or fine press materials.

13. This course is primarily geared toward special collections librarians and archivists, and I think those in those roles received the most benefit from this course.

14. {no response}

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. I found an early course discussion on the function of “specimen” as a subject heading vs. an object to be really thought provoking. Many of our conversations considered how we define key terms related to book arts collections that expanded my thinking about what and how a collection “means.”
3. {no response}
4. I truly appreciated the “artists’ books case studies,” particularly when the instructor showcased *5 Ketchups* and *Some Things Are Beyond Words* by Brad Thiele. It illuminated, from a theoretical standpoint, the diverse types of collections that special art librarians must navigate. The following day, when I read the Drucker article, it became evident that we indeed manage collections at the intersection of books and art.
5. {no response}
6. Literally MILLIONS.
7. {no response}|
8. I can't say there were any specific moments; rather, the course made me so aware of an entire ecosystem within rare books that I had only tangentially considered prior. It also showed me the pathway to become more involved in that ecosystem and to how to examine my role in collections management (a) outside of archival materials and (b) in a public forum. I began to feel connected to patron engagement, something that has been missing in my work.
9. {no response}
10. There were many but I was especially drawn to the idea of treating a book art object like an archival object (even though I'm a rare book cataloger/curator by training and experience).
11. {no response}
12. Brown's collection statement very much captures our own experience. Talking about a collection statement that covers past, present, and future. How donations have shaped collections based on donors' interests.
13. {no response}
14. {no response}

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

1. {no response}
2. N/A
3. No, it was the best RBS course I've taken!
4. {no response}
5. The only thing that I would suggest for improvement would be setting aside some course time for a discussion on instruction.
6. {no response}
7. {no response}
8. Again, an additional session each day—or maybe an extra half hour on the two early sessions—would have been very helpful.
9. {no response}
10. As I said earlier in my comments about the online logistics, I found following the chat activity (which was mostly very useful) too much to balance with taking in the instructor's lecture/shared screen content.
11. {no response}
12. No.

13. It would've been great to have viewed more book arts/artists' books together in real time (using overhead cameras) rather than view most examples via online databases. Even though we were online together, I would have loved to see more items be pulled that we could have viewed together in real time.

14. {no response}

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. 7

2. 10

3. 10

4. 10

5. 9

6. 10

7. 10

8. 10

9. 10

10. 8

11. 10

12. 9

13. 8

14. {no response}

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. Not necessarily. So many of the participants had interesting things to say that the discussion was probably more valuable than a guest lecture. Also, hard to do virtual field trips in a satisfying way.

2. N/A

3. N/A

4. Yes, for sure. Furthermore, it might not be a bad idea in the future for instructors to have access to a special camera to showcase one or two artists' books during the sessions.

5. N/A

6. {no response}

7. N/A

8. N/A

9. {no response}

10. N/A

11. {no response}

12. N/A

13. {no response}

14. {no response}

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

1. {no response}
2. N/A
3. The way the online course is set up (hour class, lunch, hour class, break, hour class) was really great over four days. It was manageable for taking time off work without having to use tons of vacation days. It also kept me engaged with the course with the online structure and accountability of the instructor. RR was conscious of our time and breaks and did not go over on any of the time allotments, which I appreciated.
4. {no response}
5. Nothing additional.
6. HIGHLY recommend! Wonderful instructor, rich materials, great cohort.
7. {no response}
8. Don't obsess about reading every little article; focus on truly engaging in the discussion and sharing within the classroom space. That was the most enriching part for me.
9. {no response}
10. No, not really.
11. {no response}
12. No.
13. {no response}
14. {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. A fast-paced, but fun, bookish week!
3. The best class I've taken at RBS!
4. If you work as an art librarian, you should not hesitate to take this class. It will either assess your practices or enhance them, at the very least.
5. Attending RBS is always a transformative experience.
6. Fantastic and rich experience cram packed with information, conversation, thought exercises, wonderful colleagues, and a fantastic instructor—this experience will influence so many aspects of my work.
7. {no response}
8. Absolutely brilliant.
9. {no response}
10. A wonderful week of talking about book arts!
11. Great job!
12. The instructor was incredible, very knowledgeable and generous with their answers. The participants were also really wonderful and added much to the course as well.
13. {no response}
14. {no response}