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T-10: The History of Typography
4–9 August, 2024, Chicago, Illinois

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 helpful. They were absolutely essential to use for review during the course. While I looked over the materials prior to the class, I only fully made use of them after the course had started.
2. I felt that the pre-course readings were helpful, and appreciated that there was not an overwhelming amount of required readings.
3. I loved the books, but I think a more narrative history of typography would have been better for pre-course reading.
4. I found them useful; no suggestions.
5. I have no regrets having read through the required and optional books, though I would be open to some historical context articles. *The Anatomy of Type* may have been too much of the same compared to the others; loved *While You were Reading* and *Seeing Letters*. So, basically maybe offer things beyond books?
6. Yes, the pre-course readings gave a strong foundation for the course.
7. The readings were useful.
8. Yes.
9. The Shaw was less useful than anticipated (and was pricier than suggested). I'd prefer maybe 2-5 shorter articles instead? So many of the things mentioned in class and posted on Notion were so interesting!
10. Yes, the reading assignments were very helpful.
11. The pre-course readings were brief. They could have been....well, more articles and web resources would have rounded out the required readings.
12. The pre-course reading assignments were useful, but both books focused on type by category, a page or two per type. A narrative history would also have been helpful.

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. Excellent! I will be referring to the handouts and website materials for a long time to come.
2. The materials were helpful—mainly citations with room for my own notes/thoughts. I will certainly refer to my notes and some of the handouts again after returning to my library job.
3. Course materials are great!
4. The Notion was a great idea, and I will keep it bookmarked after the class. If the handouts contained reproductions of some images that could have been helpful.
5. Handouts were great and much appreciated, love the Notion site, and will be using it going forward.
6. {no response}
7. The content is appropriate and will continue to be useful.
8. Yes! All of the handouts were very helpful and descriptive.

9. Handouts were very useful and will be great to help build my staff share when I get back.
10. The content was appropriate and useful. It will be useful after the course.
11. The professors used an online program called Notion. They added to it as the course progressed. It would have been nice if they had spent more time pre-filling it in. It would/could be a great pre-class resource. No workbook was handed out—only a sheet each period. A missed opportunity to add to our learning experience. I hope they make a workbook and use Notion in 2025.
12. It will be useful as a reference for item descriptions, but a packet would be preferable to individual handouts.

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 entire course! And I have several new ideas about first, how to write about book history and typography, and second, several specific ideas for new articles (for instance on the relevance of handwriting for typography, or the comparison of Eastern and Western typographic traditions).
2. Many! I left class each day looking a bit closer at letterforms on buildings and signs around Chicago. Learning more about the design decisions that go into a typeface gave me a new appreciation for things I see every day.
3. Too many to state—course was very generative! I was thinking of things every session of every day.
4. As someone who had very little knowledge of typography, this was an excellent overview. I am leaving with insights that can be applied to my research in non-Roman printing.
5. I loved the timeline approach to the course and having a lecture followed by a hands-on session each time. These insights are going to help with my teaching and collection development moving forward. This has been one of the best organized sessions I have been to at RBS.
6. I loved all the Newberry materials we were able to look at—it really emphasized the applications of what we learned.
7. Every aspect of the course was interesting and relevant; the teachers shared a lot of information that I will be able to apply to my job and research project.
8. The early history of typography and the arts and crafts examples were the most intriguing. ST mentioned stencils being used to create playing cards, now I want to delve into the history and design of playing cards.
9. I was thrilled to get such a thorough grounding in the physical realities of casting type and printing; the questions I most often receive from students have to do with the craft of printing, and this class has been enormously helpful in allowing me to answer them authoritatively.
10. The history of the different typefaces and how they were made. I did walk away with new insights on typefaces.
11. Learning how the history of type developed, how technology impacted its development, was great. The content was appropriate and useful. I would like to take a course on type design!
12. Anything that helps me date books without title pages and answer customer questions about why books are the way they are is useful. Now I hope to collect different strands of information and turn them into a presentation for colleagues.

Really interested by the close relationship between handwriting and type. Also, the decline in quality during the Nineteenth century and reasons for it. Religious aspect is fascinating.

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.
2. I learned all I had hoped to and much more. The instructors' expertise and knowledge are profound, and they are clearly excited to share these with us.
3. Yes! Instructors were great. Would have liked some assessment more hands-on stuff with typography beyond looking at texts, but overall instruction was amazing. JG and ST were wonderful and knew so much!
4. Yes—very impressed with their level of knowledge.
5. Yes, and then some. I got things listening to them that I could never get from reading on my own.
6. {no response}
7. Yes.
8. Yes.
9. I did—and more! This was an excellent course and I wish it could go on!
10. Yes, the instructors helped me acquire all the skills and information I anticipated on learning. The instructors did teach what was promised.
11. I learned what I hoped to learn, though I wish there would have been a hands-on, experiential component: hand-set type, visit a letterpress shop, see casting, &c. There are shops and studios in Chicago. Hands-on learning is an important aspect of many RBS classes.
12. I can no longer remember what was promised in the course description. I left with less of a sense of timeline and movement than I'd hoped—I'll have to do more research on that.

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

1. I intend to.
2. There is no doubt in my mind that I will apply what I have learned in this course regularly when I teach about book history at my home institution. I have yet another lens through which to scrutinize and examine books, manuscripts, ephemera—and even buildings.
3. In my teaching and doctoral research.
4. Doctoral research.
5. Mainly curatorial activities at my library, from collection development to teaching to reference and more.
6. I have so much specialized info to share with my colleagues and students.
7. I will continue to enhance my knowledge of typography using the resources I learned about in this course.
8. {no response}
9. This course has introduced me to some new designers and projects that I will seek to use in classes; they have also helped me re-think how we use specimen books.
10. I will use it for my own knowledge and to teach the students at the institution I work at.

11. I will use what I learned to inform work with faculty and researchers, work with donors. In my own research I will pay attention to font use, and types. I am starting a journey!

12. Create PowerPoints and PDFs for co-workers. Eventually I'd like to host information on my company's website, accessible to customers. Enhance educational aspect of rare book browsing, since most of them aren't there to buy anything.

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

1. Any student of book history, including collectors and librarians. Graphic designers would also benefit immensely.

2. I think that this course would be most beneficial to graduate students, designers, and librarians, as well as anyone else curious about the art of the book and about printing and design.

3. Anyone interested in type, typography, printing, and book history. Maybe too basic for people really involved with typography already.

4. People who have related materials in a collection they work with.

5. I do not know that this should be your first book history course, so someone who has thought about the book as an object a few times and wants a deep dive in type because they already understand something about printing.

6. Graduate students shouldn't feel discouraged from applying—you can still learn a lot and succeed in the course.

7. {no response}

8. {no response}

9. Graphic design folks, people who need to use typography to date printed materials (catalogers and curators).

10. Myself.

11. Anyone with no formal training in type design/history.

12. Graphic designers and typography students. Anyone who wants a complete history of the book, since general history courses don't go into this level of detail.

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. {private response}

2. {no response}

3. Seeing all of the technical innovations that made typography take shape in the Fifteenth century, like coin making and connecting the dots between so many objects, innovations, etc., over time.

4. Learning about the "rise of the punch cutter." Learning what logography is—helped me understand an elusive reference in my dissertation research sources.

5. I had not considered the portability of punches as a means of making a living but also immigrating places. Also, I knew that the Newberry had a great collection, but seeing things in context was even better than I could have dreamed.

6. {no response}

7. The presentation on Linotype was particularly engaging. I enjoyed looking at the material that was brought into the class.

8. {no response}

9. SEVERAL! Learning about how Blackletter was set up as a deliberate identity—to the point that "bad" words were set in Roman type as a jab at Catholics, and non-Blackletter prayerbooks were DESTROYED—was fascinating and mind-blowing. Learning how Linotype machines did justification and realizing why galleys are called galleys...I could go on and on!
10. How every typeface had a different meaning, and the look of it was intentional.
11. Viewing many examples of type and talking about elements of type.
12. Seeing scribal calligraphy next to early printed type. Aha! Also, my God, all those beautiful books. The Newberry has a magnificent collection.

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

1. It might be possible to have a more rigorous structure (e.g. taking turns for students to talk about their book) for the activity where we analyzed selected books without any guidance. It might also be interesting for students to be able to bring in a sample font of their choice (e.g. a book from the Newberry collection) and present about it.
2. Perhaps having students describe/identify typefaces or individual letter words would give them more practice in applying the terminology and skills learned within a friendly and non-critical environment. This could be an individual or group exercise.
3. 1. More "assessment" in identification, dating, etc. 2) More about evaluating specific designs and design features. 3) Hands-on activities beyond looking at texts.
4. For a noob such as myself, if slides had timelines/maps/dates to ground some of the big historical moments it would have helped but I understand the rest of the class had enough background not to need this.
5. I want to see someone make type, but I also know how hard getting that sort of a demo is.
6. I wish there had been more time for hands-on experiences of learning—lots of the time designated as "hands-on" was still lecture based.
7. The teachers did a wonderful job at sharing their own knowledge and perspective on typography and covered a lot of ground. They selected material for us to look at that was related to the topics discussed in class—they did an excellent job in my opinion!
8. Maybe more breaks. Sessions were very long with a lot of info packed in to the point where it was a bit of overload. I think it would be helpful and less tiring to have shorter sessions.
9. This just has to do with physical space, so I don't know if it was a possibility, but no one used a microphone when speaking, and especially with various outside noise, it was occasionally hard to hear. I would have enjoyed other/different evening opportunities.
10. I like the course the way it is.
11. Hands-on element. Group work or informal quiz to test our knowledge and help sharpen what we've learned.
12. Can you provide a ring light or something for photography? These overheads create strong shadows. Also—very important—more infographics and a timeline.

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. 10
10. 10
11. 10
12. 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. The guest speakers certainly added fresh viewpoints to the course.
2. The guest speakers (we had two of them) added useful information to what we learned in the course, and they brought a great deal of passion and excitement to their presentations as well.
3. Yes, guest speakers were great.
4. Guest speakers were very useful.
5. It was nice to have a few guest speakers because they helped create even more connections and questions.
6. I thought the guest speakers added a lot of specialized expertise to the course information.
7. The guest speakers enhanced the course experience.
8. Yes, the speakers were interesting especially Don Reynolds. I liked his Blackletter lecture; I learned a lot.
9. So much! Dan Reynolds and Doug Wilson and Dave Weimar were all fantastic guest speakers who each shed light on aspects of type I had never before considered.
10. Yes, they did. They brought forth their own knowledge and perspectives.
11. I wish we had made at least one field trip outside the building.
12. The Newberry destination is enough.

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

1. The course provided a masterful overview of Western typography. No halfway serious student of book history, bibliography, graphic design, and so forth, can afford to miss it!
2. {no response}
3. {no response}
4. I don't see how a \$500 housing and travel stipend could possibly cover a week in Chicago, but I was able to make it work.

5. Space out the readings because it will start to blend together; I'm not sure that I would take this if it wasn't offered at the Newberry since the collections were half the fun.
6. Be prepared for lots of listening and learning.
7. {no response}
8. Make sure to get lots of sleep so you can be rested! RBS has action-packed days and you need the energy.
9. 1) Pick a different hotel. 2) Make sure you know where Big Shoulders Coffee is. 3) Drink water at all the breaks. 4) Remember a pencil.
10. You will have a new perspective of typefaces. You won't look at it as just letters. You will have an eye for the artistry and the work that was put into making them.
11. This is a good introduction taught by passionate, intelligent faculty. Enjoy!
12. Read up on the chronology first because the course focuses on specifics (raised type for blind readers, blackletter) and is not a narrative.

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

1. {private response}
2. Unhinge the top of your skull and get ready to fill your brain to the brim!
3. Shatter the Crystal Goblet! Typography is identity made visual.
4. I will never look at the font menu the same way again.
5. RBS is all about connections, both to new-to-me collections of international importance and colleagues I will talk to long after this week.
6. Learned so very much about typography and book history!
7. Interesting, informative, and engaging.
8. Wonderful!
9. This was a very illuminating class that will make me a better teacher; I am incredibly grateful to have been able to attend.
10. It was worth it.
11. Observe what you observe/now that you know/what to look for in/typographical elements./Serifs./Extenders./Oh, my!
12. More please!