

Every great city deserves a great university, and at every university's core is a great library.

Rare Books Collections at UH Libraries

Building the Rare Books Collections is an important priority for University of Houston and UH Libraries. Great university libraries are distinguished by the special collections, unique roles, and customized services only a university library can provide to the community it serves. Our role is increasingly important because of the transformative power of information to unleash human potential.



The Rare Books Collections represent a significant priority of the University of Houston and UH Libraries, supporting President Renu Khator's strategic goals of national competitiveness, student success, community advancement, resource competitiveness, and national and local recognition, as well as UH Libraries' core value of providing resources that promote and value diversity while reflecting the unique essence of our people and our region.

In a diverse urban city, like Houston, every person's potential can be elevated, simply by having significant special collections inside the library to serve as a cornerstone for interdisciplinary scholarship and research.

Mission

Our mission is to provide superior collections of rare books that support student success and faculty teaching by serving as tools for hands-on discovery, original research, and the development of critical thinking skills in a learning laboratory environment. This collection will also strengthen a diverse array of archival collecting areas by adding related books, pamphlets, magazines, and other published materials to their unique holdings.

Our Rare Books Collections generate excitement among students, faculty, and visitors alike. Books connect us physically to other times, other stories, and other cultures. Older books display historic craftsmanship through features such as handmade paper, leather bindings, and illuminations with gold leaf. Modern books use a variety of printing and illustration techniques to bring to life the stories of underrepresented people, or play with the relationship between a book and a work of art.

We accomplish our mission by building rich collections of printed materials that support student learning and faculty teaching across a variety of disciplines at the University of Houston. We also promote the use of our distinctive collections of medieval and Renaissance manuscripts, early printed books, American and British literature, artists' books, fine press books, and Texana for teaching, learning, and research.

Vision

Our vision is to build and provide access to collections of rare books that educate and inspire students, and are integrated into the curriculum and the life of the university.

Initiatives

In support of this mission and vision, University of Houston Libraries is:

- Acquiring unique and historical rare books, manuscripts, and maps that document the history of the book and cartography through printing, scripts and typefaces, illustrations, and bindings, as well as preserving examples of the contemporary book arts through fine press and artists' books.
- Building deep collections related to campus teaching and research interests like energy and sustainability, colonialism and exploration, women's history, Hispanic culture, and LGBT history.
- Collaborating with faculty members across a variety of disciplines to develop class sessions, student research projects, and embedded academic units using rare books as tools for students' active learning.
- Developing presentations, programming, exhibits and digital assets to enrich the academic and intellectual objectives of students, faculty, scholars, and lifelong learners.
- Preserving materials that would otherwise be lost, and sharing records of our holdings with scholars and libraries worldwide to facilitate research.
- Digitizing collection to make them accessible to students, teachers, and scholars beyond the limits of print and the walls of the library onto the global stage.
- Creating on-line and on-site exhibits of manuscripts and print materials to engage the public with the history, beauty, knowledge, and insight found in books.
- Employing UH and community students from different disciplines to be a part of our exhibition, digital scholarship, and research programs, providing unique opportunities to gain experience and understanding of the history of the book.
- Organizing speakers and events that highlight our collections and programs.
- Promoting rare books and other printed materials as resources for scholars working in the digital humanities, combining computing tools with humanities research.



Case by Cambras for L'Art en relació amb l'home etern i l'home que passa by Joaquin Torres-Garcia, 1919.

UH Libraries Rare Book Collections expand our world, preserve our shared history and culture, and inspire new discoveries by scholars and in the classroom. UH Libraries Rare Books Collections embody our unique heritage and serve to provide an outstanding documentary resource for teaching, learning, research, and enterprise.

UH LIBRARIES VISION

A community nurtured by curiosity and creativity that drives lifelong learning and scholarship.

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