

## Rare Books Collections, UH Special Collections

### Collection Development Policy

The Rare Books Collections in Special Collections at the University of Houston Libraries support the [mission](#) of the University of Houston and more specifically, that of the Libraries:

*University of Houston Libraries advances student success, knowledge creation and preservation, and globally competitive research.*

#### The goals of collecting are:

- To support teaching and learning in order to encourage student success through activities that increase learners' critical thinking and primary source literacy skills
- To support research by UH faculty, staff, and students, and scholars and members of the general public locally, nationally, and internationally
- To strengthen the holdings of selected archival collecting areas that are targeted for national prominence by adding complementary books, magazines, and other published materials
- To advance Special Collections' commitment to relevant and inclusive resources and services through the acquisition of materials that represent a variety of historical and cultural actors and events, including those related to communities that have been historically underrepresented
- To preserve rare materials that are found in very few or no other publicly accessible library collections
- To continue to enrich selected areas of strength while also responding to new trends and opportunities in research and scholarship
- To support Special Collections' program of outreach and engagement through physical and virtual exhibitions, digitization, and other activities

#### The collecting methods and principles are:

- Materials are collected through both donation and purchase, primarily purchase made possible by endowed funds. Occasionally rare or fragile materials are acquired through transfer from the Libraries' general collections.
- Materials are collected with the intention of providing an enduring commitment that is resource intensive.

#### Traditional areas of strength are:

- Medieval and Renaissance manuscripts
- History of the book, including rare Bibles
- American literature of the 19<sup>th</sup> century
- Texas history
- Dictionaries
- Maps, general
- Fine press and artists' books, general

Special Collections continues to acquire materials in these areas in a limited manner with a focus on particularly rare examples and those that support teaching and learning.

**The current collecting priorities are:**

- Materials that support teaching and learning
  - Focus is on materials that support teaching areas of emphasis within and across classes, or specific materials requested by faculty or identified by Special Collections librarians who teach
  - Geographic and chronological coverage is broad
- Energy and sustainability
  - Deep and extensive collection of materials that complement archival collections in Energy & Sustainability Research Collection
  - Focus is on materials that document the history and impact of oil & gas and alternative energies on global industry, economy, politics, culture, security, environment, and sustainable development
- LGBTQ+ history and culture
  - Deep and extensive collection of materials that complement archival collections in LGBT History Collection
  - Focus is on materials that document major issues and movements within LGBTQ+ communities
  - Geographic coverage is primarily the United States
  - For books, serials, and ephemera focused on a local audience, geographic coverage is primarily Houston and secondarily Texas.
- University of Houston publications
  - Coverage is comprehensive
- Houston-related publications
  - Focus is on selected materials that complement archival collections in Performing & Visual Arts, Contemporary Literature, and Architecture and Planning, and materials that reflect Houston's diversity
  - Coverage is selective
- Hispanic history and culture
  - Focus is on selected materials that complement archival collections in Hispanic Research Collection
  - Geographic coverage is primarily the United States, Latin America, and the Caribbean
- Feminism
  - Focus is on selected materials that complement archival collections in Carey Shuart Women's Research Collection
  - Focus is on 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century feminist movements and politics, plus women's suffrage
  - Geographic coverage is primarily the United States
- Colonialism and exploration
  - Geographic coverage is primarily Latin America and the Caribbean
  - Selected materials are collected from other geographic areas
- Natural history
  - Focus is on natural history of Texas, the Southwest, and the Gulf Coast, especially birds
  - Geographic coverage is the United States
  - Many of these acquisitions are supported by endowments

- Artists' books, Latin American
  - Focus is on experimental artists' books of the 1970s, an area of interest for a faculty member
  - Some selective acquisition of more contemporary Latin American artists' books
- Zines
  - Zines related to Houston are of particular interest

**Books and other publications that are not typically collected include:**

- Materials that are out of scope for Special Collections' collecting priorities
- Materials that are not significantly rare
- Materials that are not in excellent condition
- Collected works or broken sets