Welcome to the Rare Book & Manuscript Library!

Our mission is to preserve and make accessible the collections of one of the greatest rare book and manuscript libraries in the country. We view our library as a place of inspiration for our students and faculty, as a cultural center for our region, and as a research destination for national and international communities of scholars.

We believe that in a great special collections library, ideas should interact with the lengthy tradition of scholarship that preceded them and with the latest theories. In our library, this happens not only when scholars study our collections, but also through our strong commitment to teaching.

We make connections through a variety of public events such as exhibitions, conferences, concerts, workshops, and lectures. Activities that enhance our role in the intellectual life of the campus ensure that RBML is viewed as more than a historical curiosity—that it remains a place of cultural experience, one that can bind together disparate elements of university life.

LEARNING

The Rare Book & Manuscript Library is committed to training new generations of curators and special collections librarians. Finally, with the Graduate School of Library and Information Science (GSLIS), we offer a Certificate in Special Collections Librarianship through our Midwest Book & Manuscript Studies program. The program emphasizes an apprenticeship model and RBML does its part by offering hands-on training to GSLIS students.

RESEARCH

Scholars from around the world find their way to the Rare Book & Manuscript Library to work with our magnificent collections. Some are supported by Visiting Scholar Fellowships (go to http://www.library.illinois.edu/rbx/research_fellowships.html for more information). We also work with faculty and graduate students to develop research topics and regularly communicate with scholars at institutions, answering specialized bibliographic and reference queries.

TEACHING

We collaborate with faculty members across all disciplines to make RBML collections an integral part of the curriculum. Over 200 classes a year visit the Rare Book & Manuscript Library, where faculty teach in collaboration with curators, designing courses and assignments that bring students in direct contact with special collections. Our goal is for students and faculty to interact with the primary source—whether a medieval manuscript or a letter by Mark Twain—not only as precious objects, but also as opportunities for discovery. We encourage the use of rare materials as real, readable, digestible, discussable texts in our university courses.

The Rare Book & Manuscript Library is located on the third floor in the northeast wing of the Main Library. All readers must register before using the collections. Find us on Facebook and Twitter at IllinoisRBML. Our hours are Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
The Rare Book & Manuscript Library (RBML) of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign is one of the largest special collections repositories in the United States. The collections—over half a million volumes and three kilometers of manuscript material—encompass broad areas of literature, history, art, theology, philosophy, technology, and the natural sciences.

**PRE-1500 BOOKS & MANUSCRIPTS**
Manuscript collections date from approximately 3000 BCE to 1500 CE and range from clay tablets to illuminated manuscripts and early modern historical documents. Topical strengths include rhetoric, religion, pedagogy, and English literature and culture. The collection of over twelve hundred fifteenth-century printed books (incunabula) is one of the largest university collections in the U.S. and is especially strong in classical texts, theology, pedagogy, and science.

**EARLY MODERN BOOKS & MANUSCRIPTS (1500-1800)**
Particular collection strengths lie in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, with distinctive and deep collections in English literature, including works by Shakespeare; various important editions of the Bible, school books, and works by and about John Milton. Early modern continental imprints include works in religious, philosophy, literature, and history, as well as memorabilia of scientific publishing, and an extensive collection of colophon books.

**MODERN BOOKS & MANUSCRIPTS (1800-PRESENT)**
Literature, history, and science are well represented, with strong holdings in first editions of nineteenth- and twentieth-century English authors, books relating to travel and exploration, and social history. Also noteworthy are collections in radical literature, natural history, fine press and typography, and the history of publishing. Literary archives include the papers of H. G. Wells, Carl Sandburg, W. S. Merwin, and Gwendolyn Brooks, letters of Marcel Proust, and archival collections associated with such figures as Anthony Trollope, William Makepeace Thackeray, John Ruskin, Grant Richards, William Allingham, Richard Bentley, Benjamin Disraeli, Rhoda Broughton, Lewis Carroll, and John Richardson, among others.

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**A SAMPLING OF OTHER COLLECTION STRENGTHS**

- **History of Science**
- **Spanish Civil War**
- **Geology**
- **History of Economics**
- **Travel Literature**
- **Architecture**
- **History of Engineering**
- **Nineteenth-century Novels**
- **Artistic Exploration**
- **Early Modern Pedagogy**
- **Edital Political Cartoons**
- **History of Mathematics**
- **Italian History & Culture**
- **History of Technology**
- **Spanish Golden Age**
- **English Civil War**
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- **Chicana**
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