S583: Rare Book Libraries and Librarianship

Fall 2011

Thursdays, 9:30 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.
Ellison Room, Lilly Library

Instructor: Joel Silver (812-855-2452)
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Books and Journals referred to in the Syllabus:


RBM: *Rare Books & Manuscripts*

RBML: *Rare Books & Manuscripts Librarianship*

The only required textbook is *A Gentle Madness* by Nicholas A. Basbanes, which is available for purchase from the Friends of Art Bookshop, Fine Arts 121. If you don't already have a copy, you may also want to purchase or download *ABC for Book Collectors* (it's quite useful beyond the limited required reading I've assigned for this course). All other assigned readings will be available on e-reserve.

Grading: Grades will be based on a take-home midterm examination, a term paper, and a take-home final examination.
The weighting of the exam, the assignment, and the paper are as follows:

Take-home midterm examination, to be distributed in class on Thursday, September 29, due Thursday, October 20: 30%

Term paper, on an aspect of rare book librarianship, due Thursday, December 1: 35%

Take-home final examination (to be distributed in class and online on Thursday, November 17), due by 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, December 13: 35%

Class Schedule

Please try to read the assigned selections prior to the appropriate class meeting. There will be additional readings, all on e-reserve or accessible directly online, that will be assigned for some of the class sessions. There will also be guest speakers at several class sessions who will discuss various aspects of rare book librarianship, including cataloging and technical services, reference and public services, digital issues, conservation, and acquisitions and development.

Thursday, September 1 – Introduction to the Course and Introduction to Book Collecting

Thursday, September 8: Book Collecting (Continued)

Basbanes, pp. 1-222 (I realize that you may not have read all of these chapters by Sept. 8)


Subscribe to Exlibris, an electronic news and discussion group for matters related to rare books and manuscript librarianship. Some of the issues discussed on Exlibris will form the basis for class discussion.

To subscribe to Exlibris, send the following message to the server:
LISTSERV@LISTSERV.INDIANA.EDU

SUBSCRIBE EXLIBRIS-L yourfirstname yourlastname, institution

"Be sure the message is contained in a single line in the message area; the subject line should be blank. You need not include the comma and institutional identification, but the latter is helpful to the list Moderator and to others. You yourself must subscribe from the address to which you wish Exlibris messages sent, both to assure proper usage and to assure that the subscription is under your control. The server will not acknowledge or successfully distribute mail to Bitnet addresses, other source routed addresses, or those
originating from an open relay. You MUST give your real name to subscribe. The list does not allow pseudonyms or so-called "concealed" subscribers. The Moderator approves all subscription requests since that it about the only way to prevent spammers from subscribing."

Thursday, September 15: No Class Meeting

Thursday, September 22: The Antiquarian Book Trade and the Book Auction Market


Also, take a look at www.abebooks.com, and www.abaa.org.

Thursday, September 29: Rare Book Libraries


The following articles are in Wilson Library Bulletin, October 1983:


The following articles are in Library Trends, Vol. 36, No. 1 (Summer 1987):


Thursday, October 6: Rare Book Libraries: Cataloging and Processing

Guest speakers: Elizabeth L. Johnson, Head of Technical Services, Lilly Library, and Lori Dekydtspotter, Rare Book Cataloger, Lilly Library


Thursday, October 13: Rare Book Libraries: Use and Interpretation of Collections;

Guest speakers: Rebecca Cape, Head of Public Services, Lilly Library; and Jillian Hinchliffe, Curator of Puzzles, Lilly Library.


Browse the following site devoted to the first ten years of the Katherine Kyes Leab and Daniel J. Leab American Book-Price Current Exhibition Catalog Awards for Excellence: http://www.rbms.nd.edu/committees/exhibition_awards/first_ten_years/index.html

Thursday, October 20: Rare Book Libraries: Digital Issues; Legal and Ethical Issues

Guest speaker: Erika Dowell, Public Services Librarian, Lilly Library

ACRL Code of Ethics for Special Collections Librarians:
http://www.rbms.nd.edu/standards/code_of_ethics.shtml

Malaro, Selections from Chapter IV, (“The Acquisition of Objects”), p. 60-84; p. 135-149.

Thursday, October 27: Rare Book Libraries: Preservation and Security

Guest speaker: Jim Canary, Head of Conservation, Lilly Library


“Guidelines for the Security of Rare Books, Manuscripts, and Other Special Collections.” http://www.rbms.org

Basbanes, p. 465-519.


Thursday, November 3: Rare Book Libraries: Public Relations; Working with Donors

Readings to be assigned.

Thursday, November 10: Rare Book Libraries: Organization and Management,

Guest speaker: Breon Mitchell, Director, Lilly Library

Readings to be assigned.

Thursday, November 17: Collection Development for Special Collections Libraries

Readings to be assigned.

Thursday, November 24: Thanksgiving Holiday – No Class Meeting

Thursday, December 1: Rare Book Librarianship: The Development of a Profession


Cave: Chapter 11 (p. 139-147). “The Training of Rare Book Librarians.”


Thursday, December 8: Current Issues in Rare Book Libraries and Librarianship


RBMS Task Force Committee on Core Competencies in Special Collections Librarianship. “Revised Final Document” 7/1/08
http://www.rbms.nd.edu/committees/task_force/core_competencies/index.shtml

Additional readings to be assigned.