

Course Number & Name: LIS 531O - Rare Book and Special Collections Librarianship

Description: With the growth of the Internet and the proliferation of electronic applications in librarianship, the role of the Special Collections and Rare Book library has not gotten simpler. In fact, the new technology has added a layer of complexity to the life of the librarian, while many operations remain unchanged. Often, Special Collections/Rare Books Departments are like a library in microcosm, for many of these departments do all of what the parent institution does, in both technical and public services. On top of this, many administrators look to the Rare Books Department and use the department's facilities and holdings for public relations and other fund-raising activities. This course is designed as a practical introduction to Rare Book and Special Collections Librarianship, to cover for the neophyte as well as the experienced librarian the many issues of these departments' responsibilities.

- **Prerequisites:** None
- **Audience (level, environment/setting):** general; all settings
- **Student Learning Outcomes [by number]:**
 - 1. Demonstrate the ability to apply standards relevant to specific information service activities.
 - 3. Develop user-centered strategies for solving reference service problems, while demonstrating a command of current issues and trends.
 - 4. Analyze, synthesize, and communicate information and knowledge in a variety of formats.
 - 6. Assess, create, and evaluate systems for managing content.
 - 10. Analyze information problems and develop solutions drawing from a wide range of information technology tools and practices.
- **Topics/List of Lectures:**
 - Introduction
 - Role of the librarian, special collections department; relationship with parent institution
 - Collections management
 - Department management
 - Ethical conduct
 - Cataloging
 - Creating finding aids
 - Physical materials of the collection and make-up of those materials
 - Bibliographies and bibliographical description
 - Book collecting and evaluation; acquisition; auctions
 - Holdings in different media / materials (fiche, microcards, film, CDs, DVDs, etc.)
 - Dealing with theft, disaster, personnel issues
 - Evaluation (for use; for cost; for insurance); supply and demand; condition; "market value"; signed copies; association copies; "limited editions"; binding and dust jacket; "ex lib"; tools
 - Reference: local, post, email, phone
 - Vulnerability of special collections; theft and mutilation; fakes and forgeries; security
 - Legal issues (access; copyright; gifts and deposits; appraisals; activities of the librarians and staff; cost recovery/fees for services)
 - Inter-Library Loan

- Fundraising for the general operations of the department and for the acquisition of individual collections
- Outreach: exhibitions and publications; use of the department space by non-department people
- Fee for use issues—other considerations
- Preservation and Conservation (and Restoration)
- Digital realities (access versus preservation; reformatting; scanning and mounting onto the web; preservation issues; access issues; selection for reformatting; alternatives)

Suggested texts/Reading list:

John Carter. *ABC for Book Collectors*.

RBML (*Rare Books & Manuscripts Librarianship*; reborn as *Rare Books & Manuscripts*)

Sidney Berger. "What is So Rare: Issues in Rare Books and Special Collections," *Library Trends* 36.1 (1987): 9-22.

Michèle V. Cloonan and Sidney Berger, "The Continuing Development of Special Collections Librarianship," *Library Trends* 52.1 (Summer 2003): 9-13.

Course History:

December 2006: Voted in as a new course.

Document prepared by: Sid Berger, 12/06