

Rare Book Collection, Georgia Tech Archives and Special Collections

Collection Development Policy

The Rare Book Collection in the Archives and Special Collections at the Georgia Tech Library support the mission of the Georgia Institute of Technology and more specifically, that of the Library:

The Georgia Tech Library defines excellence in the creation, preservation, curation, and connection of scholarship. Through this work we create new paths of learning, knowledge, information, and resources to develop leaders who advance technology and improve the human condition.

Collection description

The Georgia Tech Rare Book Collection focuses on the history of science with strengths in astronomy, physics, mathematics, and engineering. Other areas of interest include Newtoniana, navigation, and natural history. With a concentration on Early Modern European history of science, it documents the origins of the disciplines studied by current Georgia Tech students. The collection also consists of books on the history of science printed after 1800 as well as publications that correlate with the Archives other collecting areas, such as the textile industry, architecture, science fiction and Georgia history.

Highlights of the collection include approximately 300 books printed before 1800 and bound manuscripts from the 17th and 18th centuries.

Collection vision

- To expand the collection into new areas that support the current research and teaching needs of Georgia Tech students and faculty
- To extend holdings of rare and unique materials to serve as a nationally renowned hub for researchers in the sciences and history of science
- To increase awareness of and engagement with the collection across the Georgia Tech community and greater Atlanta area
- To acquire unique books that support our existing collecting area that are not found in other institutions in the city of Atlanta

The goals of collecting are:

- To support teaching and learning and encourage student success by incorporating collections into activities that increase learners' critical thinking and primary source literacy skills

- To support research by Georgia Tech faculty, staff, and students, as well as scholars and members of the public locally, nationally, and internationally
- To advance Archives and Special Collections' commitment to relevant resources and services through the acquisition of materials related to all communities
- To preserve rare materials that are found in very few or no other publicly accessible library collections
- To continue to enrich traditional areas of strength while also responding to new trends and opportunities in research and scholarship
- To support Archives and Special Collections' program of outreach and engagement through exhibitions, public programming, community outreach, digitization, and other activities
- To serve as responsible stewards of our collections and resources by following Georgia Tech's code of ethics, including transparency and accountability in collecting practices

The collecting methods and principles are:

- Materials are collected through in-kind donation and purchase. Purchases are made possible by an annual Library-issued collections budget, endowed funds, and gifts. Occasionally, rare or fragile materials are acquired through transfer from the Library's general collections
- Materials are collected with the intention of providing an enduring commitment that is resource intensive. Factors such as anticipated processing time, conservation needs, and storage costs are assessed when making acquisitions decisions

Traditional areas of strength are:

- Early Modern European history of science
 - Books printed before 1800 documenting the history of science across Europe
 - Multi-disciplinary with strengths in astronomy, physics, mathematics, and engineering
 - Newtoniana, consisting of books by Isaac Newton and his contemporaries, books influencing Newton's work, and books influenced by his work
 - Geographic range across Europe in several languages including Latin, English, German, Italian, French, and Dutch
- History of science post-1800
 - Books documenting the history of science printed after 1800 in Europe and the United States

- Books that support existing collecting areas or are acquired as part of manuscript collections
 - Topics include architecture, Atlanta and Georgia history, science and engineering books, and books authored by Georgia Tech faculty

The Georgia Tech Archives and Special Collections continues to acquire materials in these areas with a focus on unique or rare examples and those that support teaching and learning.

The current collecting priorities are:

- Materials that support teaching and learning
 - Books that support teaching across a wide range of disciplines, specific materials requested by faculty or students, and materials identified as useful for the curriculum by archivists who teach
 - Books with visual or interactive elements that students will find engaging
 - Books with unique physical characteristics for teaching the history of the book and books as objects
 - Geographic and chronological coverage is broad
- Materials that support outreach and programming
 - Materials that align with exhibitions, public programming, or would be useful for engagement in open houses, tours, Library newsletters, and social media
 - Geographic and chronological coverage is broad
- Materials created by all communities whose voices and experiences enrich our collective understanding
 - Focus is on materials that complement or fill gaps in collection
 - Geographic coverage is international
 - Chronological coverage is broad, spanning the 1500s to present
- Materials on subjects that fill gaps in the existing collection
 - Priority areas include natural history, early computer science, cryptography, medicine
 - Geographic and chronological coverage is broad
- Materials that expand the collection's geographic range
 - History of science books printed in the United States before 1800
 - History of science books by American scientists or authors before 1800
 - Books printed in non-European countries or in non-European languages
 - Priority for books in Chinese, Japanese, or Arabic
- Bound manuscripts related to the history of science and knowledge dissemination
 - Topical, geographic, and temporal range is broad

- Books with unique physical characteristics
 - Books with marginalia, unique bindings, provenance that connects to existing collections, or other unique characteristics that add value or serve as examples for teaching book history or books as objects

Materials that are not typically collected include:

- Books or topics that are out of scope for Archives and Special Collections' collecting priorities
 - Religious texts
 - General history
 - Classical texts and their translations
 - Medieval manuscripts
 - Literature and drama (unless related to science fiction or acquired to support instruction or programming)
- Books that are not unique to existing physical holdings at Georgia Tech or can be found in rare book collections at other institutions in Atlanta
- Books that are not significantly rare or valuable
- Books that are damaged or in poor condition (unless they are in a condition useful for teaching book construction)