Rare Book Cataloging

Mandatory Reading

Descriptive Cataloging of Rare Materials (Books). Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress Cataloging Distribution Service, 2007. ISBN:970-0-8444-1162-0. Please order early! The instructor can provide copies for sale on site ($75) by prior arrangement. Read before coming to class, paying special attention to the preface and introductory sections, area 4, and Appendix G.

Belanger, Terry. “Descriptive Bibliography” in Book Collecting: a Modern Guide, ed. Jean Peters (New York: R. R. Bowker, 1977), 97-115. This is a mandatory text. Students are encouraged to read several times and bring with them to Charlottesville for additional review during the week.

Optional Reading


Leslie, Deborah J. and Benjamin Griffin. Transcription of Early Letter Forms in Rare Materials Cataloging.

Bibliographical issues


Library systems & records


Guide to Rare Book Records in Online Systems, available online. A bit dated, but still useful in identifying aspects and features of online library systems necessary for appropriate indexing, searching, and display of rare materials and special collections.


Management issues

Bradshaw, Elaine Beckley and Stephen C. Wagner. “A Common Ground: Communication and Allegiance Between Cataloger and Curator for Improved Access to Rare Books and Special Collections,” in College & Research Libraries 61:6 (Nov. 2000): 525-534. Although leaving something to be desired in academic rigor, this article provides an overview of some of the issues involved in setting policy.

Taraba, Suzy. “Administering the cataloging of special collections materials,” in Rare Books and Manuscripts Librarianship 7:2 (1992), 87-90.

Special collections cataloging
