

# Northwestern University Library Collection Development Policy Statement

## African American Studies

by Kathleen E. Bethel

February 11, 1999

### **I. Brief overview of the collection**

#### **A. History of the collection**

Not applicable

#### **B. Broad subject areas emphasized or de-emphasized**

Humanities and social science disciplines (i.e., anthropology, art and archaeology, drama, comparative literature, American literature, economics, education, geography, government, history, linguistics, mass media, music, philosophy, religion, sociology, and women's studies) are emphasized. Materials on all aspects of Black life and culture are collected. Most relevant materials are held in the Main Collection of the University Library.

#### **C. Collection locations**

Materials on African American life and culture are found throughout University Library units (e.g., African-American art in the Art Library; health care and folk medicine at the Galter Health Science Library; African American music in the Music Library; rare and ephemeral materials in Special Collections; and videocassettes in the Mitchell Multimedia Center).

### **II. Purpose or objectives**

Resources in African American studies are collected not only to meet instructional needs for specific courses offered as part of the African American Studies Department but also as general resources in support of courses offered within disciplinary boundaries (e.g., history, sociology, anthropology, political science, and others) in the Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences. These materials also support instruction in the Schools of Speech, Music, Education and Social Policy, Kellogg Graduate School of Management, as well as the professional schools of law and medicine. Faculty, research, graduate and undergraduate interests are reflected in a wide variety of academic areas, particularly in the humanities and social sciences.

### **III. Library unit or title of the selector responsible for this collection**

African American Studies Reference Librarian and Bibliographer

### **IV. Scope of the subject coverage**

#### **A. Language**

English is the major language of the collection. Works in Spanish, French and German are collected on a limited basis.

#### **B. Geographical scope**

Although no area is specifically excluded, historical emphasis is placed on the contiguous United States. Materials on the Black diaspora in other areas of the Western Hemisphere (e.g. Canada, the Caribbean, Central and South America) are collected

#### **C. Chronological scope**

No chronological periods are excluded.

#### **D. Publication dates collected**

The University Library collects current publications extensively and earlier centuries selectively

#### **E. Formats and genres**

##### **1. Inclusions**

Monographs and serials, including newspapers, are collected most intensively. Statistical information, documents, technical reports, pamphlets, video, and audio materials are acquired as relevant. Dissertations are acquired only when requested by faculty. Microform collections are acquired when appropriate. Reference materials of all types are collected. Attention is given to publications from small African American presses.

2. *Exclusions*

No formats are specifically excluded

**V. *Acquisitions procedures affecting collection policies***

A. *Standing Orders*

There are few standing orders, primarily for monographic series.

B. *Approval plans and blanket orders*

A profile is established with the university library's primary vendors

C. *Gifts and exchanges*

Gifts are welcome. There is no exchange program.

**VI. *Duplication with other NU library units***

There is limited duplication to materials in the Law and Health Science Libraries and non-circulating materials in Special Collections.

**VII. *Expensive purchases***

The small collection development budget for African American Studies precludes the purchase of expensive items. Support for expensive purchases of African American Studies materials is sought annually from the University Library's General Fund.

**VIII. *Interdisciplinary collections***

The Melville J. Herskovits Library of African Studies, and where appropriate, the Art Collection, Music Library and Curriculum Collection carry overlapping materials.

**IX. *Purchases with endowed funds***

Not applicable

**X. *Cooperation with other libraries***

A. *Other resources, including local, regional or national libraries*

The Vivian G. Harsh Collection of Afro-American Life and Culture, the Chicago Public Library's premiere collection on Black life is a frequent referral. Strong area academic collections include the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and the University of Illinois at Chicago.

B. *Consortia*

Not applicable

**XI. *Policies for purchasing journal article reprints or electronic files on demand***

Not applicable

**XII. *Other factor of local importance***

The Chicago area has a rich array of collections that support research in African American Studies. These include diverse collections such as the Chicago Public Library, the Newberry Library, the Chicago Historical Society, the Center for Research Libraries, and the Race Relations Library of the Chicago Urban League.

**XIII. *Collection levels***

Conspectus number:

3 - Instructional support level: a collection that is adequate to support undergraduate and most graduate instruction or sustained independent study; that is, a collection adequate to maintain knowledge of a subject required for limited or generalized purposes of less than research intensity. It includes a wide range of basic monographs, complete collections of the works of important writers, a selection of representative journals, and the reference tools and fundamental bibliographical apparatus pertaining to the subject.

Language codes:

E - English language material predominates; little or no foreign language material in the collection.

F – Selected foreign language material included, primarily Western European, in addition to the English language materials.