

# Northwestern University Library Collection Development Policy Statement

## Literatures in English

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

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

The library's collections in English-language literature and literary criticism have grown up in support of the teaching and research needs of Northwestern University's Department of English.

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

Consistent with the historic emphasis of Northwestern University's Department of English on the literature of Great Britain, the Library's collections in English and Irish literature are overall both strong and diverse. American literature has been emphasized only in recent decades. Even today, Northwestern's collections in American literature are not cultivated at the same level as its Anglo-Irish collection. Generally, collections in other world literatures in English (e.g. India, Australia, Canada) are intended to be representative and do not aspire to research strength. Due to the extraordinary holdings of the Melville J. Herskovits Library of African Studies in anglophone African literatures, especially from Nigeria, Ghana, and South Africa, Northwestern's library can claim to be a national center of post-colonial literatures in English. Indeed, for the period 1985–95, roughly one quarter of all monographic acquisitions in the area of English-language literatures at Northwestern were recorded in Africana

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

These collections are housed in Northwestern's Main Library. The Core Collection also has basic primary and secondary texts in this area. The Reference Collection has an exceptionally strong representation of materials in support of English-language literature studies. Also, e-text collections for specific authors, e.g. Austen, Dickens, Hardy, Melville, Shakespeare, Twain, are available. Large electronic corpora, e.g. those from Chadwyck-Healey, are listed separately.

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

With 25 full-time faculty, 48 graduate students, and approximately 20 graduate degrees conferred annually, Northwestern's Department of English is the largest humanities department in the Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences. At the undergraduate level, given Northwestern's focus on its professional schools, the English Department principally serves an auxiliary function, providing literature training to highly talented students whose principal ambitions will be met in other areas. This requires broad (rather than deep) collections of canonical writers, modern reprints and facsimile editions of traditional works, world literatures in English translation, etc. At the graduate level, however, the Department of English is educating students at the highest level, and strong primary and secondary collections are mandated—and provided—in certain select areas.

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

Bibliographer for Western Literatures and Languages

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

#### **A. Language**

With the exception of a few very important writers, e.g. Shakespeare and Joyce, whose works are collected in several Western European languages, primary texts are acquired in English only. Literatures in languages other than English from predominantly English-speaking countries (e.g., Celtic in the United Kingdom and Ireland; Spanish in the United States) are collected at a representative level, both in the original language and in translation. Research literature is acquired at a near-comprehensive level in English, but only selectively in other languages, e.g. French, German, and Italian.

**B. *Geographical scope***

Northwestern has traditionally focused on English and Irish literature more than American, with other world literatures in English (with the distinguished exception of Africana) receiving significantly less attention.

**C. *Chronological scope***

Northwestern has traditionally seen its mission as the collection of English-language literature of the 19th and (especially) 20th century. This takes into account the proximity of The Newberry Library and its complementary strengths in older periods, and the strengths of the University of Chicago in medieval English collections. Our own collections, however, are strong enough in these areas for all undergraduate work and much research at the graduate level.

**D. *Publication dates collected***

No restrictions.

**E. *Formats and genres***

**1. *Inclusions***

Monographs and serials still make up the backbone of the collection. At the same time, however, traditional non-book, non-serial formats continue to be central to the Library's provision of primary texts for teaching and research, e.g. University Microfilm's Early English Books series of microfiche, now encompassing well over 10,000 texts, many of these bibliographically accessible via the library's catalog.

Northwestern has been aggressive in securing access to electronic databases available via the World Wide Web—indeed, this medium has revolutionized Northwestern's provision of primary collections in the area of English and American literature. During the last several years, the Library has acquired unrestricted access to Chadwyck-Healey's English Poetry Database, English Drama Database, Early English Prose Fiction, and the database of Eighteenth Century Fiction not to mention (from other sources) the Riverside Shakespeare and central reference resources such as the English Short Title Catalog and the Oxford English Dictionary. A number of important works editions are available through Northwestern's Electronic Text Service, e.g. the complete works of Jane Austen as well as selected works by over 20 English and American writers. Acquisitions in CD-ROM format have also become more prevalent, e.g. the works of Ruskin, Whitman, Woolf, among others, and these databases normally circulate like monographs.

**2. *Exclusions***

We exclude no formats, though mass-market paperbacks will be purchased only if better, more durable editions are not available. Sound recordings, however, once a significant part of the collection, are now acquired only selectively in collaboration with the Mitchell Media Center. Sound recordings in CD form accompanying other formats (monographs, serials) are regularly sent to the Music Library, where they are available for use but do not circulate.

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

**A. *Standing Orders***

Northwestern University Library maintains numerous standing orders for primary materials, e.g. the Early English Text Society Series, and for important series in literary criticism, e.g. Cambridge Studies in American Literature and Culture.

**B. *Approval plans and blanket orders***

Approval plans are in place that secure for us automatically:

Relevant output of virtually all US university presses

Serious fiction reviewed in the New York Times Book Review

Relevant publications of Canadian university and academic publishers

A selection of Canadian fiction, poetry, and drama Academically relevant publications of British university and academic publishers

All publications authored by a canon of 150 prominent UK and Commonwealth writers

**C. *Gifts and exchanges***

Publications by Northwestern University Press, including the TriQuarterly, are received as gifts.

The Library regularly and gratefully receives significant gifts of books and journals from Northwestern faculty, students, and alumni.

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

Consistent with its mission, the Core Collection duplicates important primary and secondary texts. Holdings of other Northwestern libraries (Special Collections, Africana) will not be duplicated. Holdings at United Library or at the Chicago campus, including Schaffner, will be duplicated only for central works or if a pressing local need can be documented.

## **VII. Expensive purchases**

The acquisitions budget for library materials in the field of English-language literature is adequate to meet most needs. For the following categories, however, outside sources of support are usually necessary:

electronic media

large microform sets

large collections from private individuals or antiquarian booksellers

establishment of new collection areas

rare books (normally only by Special Collections)

The "outside sources" that make possible these purchases include discretionary funds at the disposal of the Assistant University Librarian for Collection Management; funds applied for from the Library's Board of Governors or the University administration; endowed funds; gift funds; funds from Special Collections.

## **VIII. Interdisciplinary collections**

An ever-growing part of library collections defies the traditional assignment to a single discipline. This is especially the case in women's studies and in ethnic and area studies collections. Purchases in these areas often require collaboration among selectors, or a willingness on the part of one selector to assume responsibility for purchases that transcend his or her own subject area

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

Almost 40% of funds available for monographic purchases in English-language literatures derive from endowment revenue. Where restrictions on these funds are present, they are honored, though past and current donors have tended avoid placing such restrictions. Examples of recent purchases with endowed funds: "World Literature in Translation" from the Warrick Fund; "UK Humanities Monographs" from the Gonser Fund.

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

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

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As mentioned above, cooperation with the following neighboring institutions has a significant impact on collection management at Northwestern:

The Newberry Library medieval and Renaissance collections; early American literature and imprints before 1850; collections in Chicago and regional literature; Native American literatures (e.g., Edward A. Ayer Collection)

The University of Chicago medieval literature (especially bibliography); contemporary fiction and poetry. Reciprocal borrowing privileges with the University of Chicago provides the Northwestern community direct access to Chicago's very strong collections in English and American literature Chicago Public Library and Evanston Public Library

### **B. Consortia**

We also have good (formalized) access to the collections of the 12 other members of the Committee for Institutional Cooperation (CIC) and the Center for Research Libraries, located in Hyde Park. Costly materials available through these institutions will not be purchased by Northwestern unless there is a documentably urgent local need.

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

Not applicable.

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

Not applicable.

## **XIII. Collection levels**

English Literature: History & Criticism	3	3	E
English Literature: History (General)	3	3	E
English Literature: History by Period	3	3	E
English Literature: History by Form	3	3	E
English Literature: Collections	4	4	E
Anglo-Saxon Literature	4	3	E
Anglo-Norman & Middle English Literature	4	4	E
English Renaissance Literature: Prose & Poetry	4	4	E
English Renaissance Drama: Anonymous Plays	4	4	E
English Renaissance Drama: Playwrights A-Shaj	4	4	E
English Renaissance Drama: Shakespeare	4	3	E
English Renaissance Drama: Playwrights Shar-Z	4	4	E
English Literature: 17th & 18th Centuries	4	4	E
English Literature: 19th Century	4/3	3/2	E
English Literature: 1900-1960	4	3/3	E
English Literature: 1961-	3	3	E
English Literature: Provincial, Colonial	4	3	E
English Literature: Canada	3	2	E
English Literature: Latin America, Africa, Asia, Orient, Australia, New Zealand	5	5	W
American Literature: General, History, Criticism	4	3	E
American Literature: Collections	3	3	E
American Literature: Colonial Period	3	3	E
American Literature: 19th Cent	3/2	3/2	E
American Literature: 1900-1960	3/4	3	E
American Literature: 1961-	3	3	E
Canadian Literature	3	2	E