Rare Books and Special Collections Concentration

The Palmer School offers a specialization in Rare Books and Special Collections as part of the American Library Association-accredited MSLIS in Library and Information Science program. The program is designed for students intending to pursue careers in research institutions and the book trade. Students develop proficiency in rare book curatorship, archival techniques, book history, rare book cataloging, preservation, and exhibition planning. They become acquainted with major rare book collections through field trips and internships, and they will have opportunities to meet experts in this area. Specialized courses in book history are offered, and courses relevant to this specialization may also be selected from the Palmer School’s Certificate in Archives and Records Management program.

Students pursuing this specialization receive a Palmer certificate of recognition when they complete four courses (12 credits). Specialization requirements include the following two required courses:

LIS 713 Rare Books and Special Collections Librarianship
LIS 658 History of the Book (or one of several other historically oriented classes that meet the history of the book requirement)

And two of the following courses:

LIS 519 Great Collections of New York City
LIS 616 Contemporary Artists’ Books
LIS 652 Exhibitions and Catalogs: Library Meets Museum
LIS 657 Introduction to Preservation
LIS 709 Rare Book Cataloging and Descriptive Bibliography
LIS 714 Archives and Manuscripts
LIS 763 Metadata for Digital Libraries
LIS 901 Collecting and Managing Ephemera
LIS 901 Institute on Maps Collections

Courses in web design and digital libraries are strongly recommended although they do not count towards the concentration.

Students may take up to two (2) courses in the University of Virginia’s Rare Book School (LIS 710) as part of this concentration. This option must be approved by the Palmer School before the student enrolls in the RBS program.

For more information, contact J. Fernando Peña, Director of the Rare Book and Special Collections Program, at (212) 998-2681.