The LuEsther T. Mertz Library Policy and Procedures for Access and Use of Special Collections

The Mertz Library defines special collections as library and archival materials in any format that are generally characterized by their artifactual or monetary value, physical format, uniqueness or rarity. These collections are housed in the Rare Book Room, closed stacks, photo vault, and in the Archives. The preservation and conservation of the special collections materials is the Library's primary concern. Consultation or copying of any material may be restricted due to fragility or poor condition.

Opening times and general conditions

1. The LuEsther T. Mertz Library is open Monday-Friday. Please visit our website for our current hours, or call 718-817-8604. The Garden is closed to the public on Monday, and therefore access to collections is more limited.
2. Researchers are encouraged to make an appointment ahead of time by emailing libref@nybg.org. While appointments are encouraged, Library staff will also accommodate same-day in-person requests as staffing permits.
3. Current photo ID must be presented when making a request to see materials, and researchers must sign the Visitor Log in the Library and fill out appropriate paperwork with Library staff.
4. All coats, handbags, backpacks, briefcases, packages, umbrellas, packs, and all other personal property must be stored in the lockers provided. The Library reserves the right to inspect any items brought into the Library by researchers, or taken out of the Library. The Library does not accept responsibility for researchers' personal property.
5. No food or beverages (including bottled water) are permitted in the Library.
6. Cell phones should be put on silent. Patrons should leave the Library when answering a call to avoid disturbing other researchers.
7. A digital camera is used to monitor the Rare Book Room and the Reading Room. Researchers who object to being recorded should not use these Collections.

Use of special collections materials

1. Only laptops, notebooks, and pencils are permitted when working with special collections materials. No pens, sticky notes, food, drink, sharp objects, or erasers are permitted.
2. Access to items that are fragile or delicate is at the discretion of the Library staff member on duty. When possible, digital surrogates or printed reproductions of special collections items should be consulted in lieu of original materials.

Handling of special collections materials

1. Hands must be freshly-washed and thoroughly dried.
2. On no account should Researchers remove materials from the study area designated for them by Library staff. All items should be used at the table where they are set up by Library staff.
3. Only one box or book per researcher is allowed on the table at a time. If a Researcher has requested more boxes or books, these can be brought to the table once the previous item has been returned. Two items may be used at one time if the items are being directly compared. The Library staff may limit collection access as they deem necessary in the safeguarding of the Rare Book Room materials.
4. The proper order of manuscripts within file folders, portfolios, and boxes must be maintained. One folder at a time should be removed from its box, examined, and then returned to the box before the next folder is removed.

5. Researchers are required to wear cotton gloves provided by the Library while handling photographs or negatives not sleeved in Mylar. Photographs or drawings must never be removed from their mats.

6. Researchers will be advised by the Library staff member on duty regarding proper handling procedures. Every precaution must be taken to prevent damage to the item being used: it must not be marked, leaned upon, opened fully, or handled in any way that is likely to cause damage.
   - Researchers will be provided with properly sized book supports and cradles for appropriate consultation of bound volumes.
   - Rare, delicate, or damaged materials are sometimes housed in protective enclosures, such as clamshell boxes, self-closing wrappers, or envelopes. Library staff will remove such items for researchers and will replace them in their protective enclosures when researchers are finished. Researchers may request archival paper strips to use as place holders.
   - Researchers should never hold down the pages of a book, but should use weights if needed. Researchers should never force a volume open, or cut uncut pages. Uncut pages and other irregularities should be reported to the Library staff.

7. For the purpose of creating research copies, scanning and copying of Special Collections material is permitted at the discretion of the Library Staff. Researchers are encouraged to use digital cameras, (including phone cameras), without flash, as this is the least damaging way in which to take copies of materials. The use of flash photography is never permitted

Staff is obligated to intervene if a book is being used in an inappropriate or unsafe way.

**Publication and reproduction**

Please see the current fee schedule for information pertaining to obtaining digital photographs of materials, fees associated with reproduction of materials, and related information.

http://libguides.nybg.org/fee-schedule

**Declaration**

I have read the above regulations and agree to be bound by them.

Signed

Name (Print):

Date:

finalized 07.30.2015 - SF