THE RARE BOOK & MANUSCRIPT LIBRARY

The Rare Book & Manuscript Library of the University of Illinois is one of the largest and most distinguished special collections in the country. In Illinois, no cultural collection south of Chicago is worth more, culturally and in terms of real dollars, than the Rare Book & Manuscript Library’s holdings, which rival those of the Beinecke at Yale. Yet, because of its limited physical location, its cultural value is obscured.

Instructor: Dr. Vidar Lerum
Class meets: MWF 1PM-5PM
Credits: 6 hours
Max enrollment: 16 students

The Rare Book & Manuscript Library is one of the great assets of the University of Illinois and is integral to its mission. As one of the world’s foremost rare book collections, it also serves a constituency without borders and engages populations of scholars from around the globe.

A stand-alone, purpose-built facility, when filled with the collections and vibrant public programming of RBML, would become a center of campus life and a destination for citizens from around the state.

catalog description

ARCH 573 Technology & Performance: Design of buildings and systems focusing on structure, enclosure, technology and performance. Integration of building materials, components and systems and their impact on the design, construction, and sustainability of buildings and architectural environments at a wide range of scales.

course description

With a focus on energy, materiality, and tectonic expression, students will explore the conditions and potential for environmentally responsible building designs that can make constructed contributions to a sustainable development at the University of Illinois Urbana Campus. Students will use the Rare Book & Manuscript Library’s collections and programming as a source of inspiration and as a datum to reference designs of new objects and artifices. The method is one of exploration through multiple iterations within a framework of four consecutive studio projects. Project one (site) and three (precedence) are group projects lasting two weeks each, with four competing teams. Project two (parts) and four (whole) are individual projects lasting 4-5 weeks each. Energy performance will be analyzed using a direct computational link established between an energy modeling program and digital three-dimensional models. Each student shall construct 3-4 physical models: tectonic detail, part, whole, and site.

precedence

Henri Labrouste; Bibliotheque St Genevieve; Will Bruder: Phoenix Public Library; Snøhetta: Ryerson University Student Learning Centre.

texts

Established in 1936 from the collections of two professors, Harris Fletcher and Thomas Baldwin, the Rare Book & Manuscript Library has grown to nearly half a million volumes and over three kilometers of manuscript material. Particular strengths lie in early printing and the Elizabethan and Stuart periods in England, with works by Shakespeare and other playwrights, various important editions of the Bible, and renaissance school books standing out as distinctive and deep collections. The Library is renowned for its outstanding collections of incunabula, emblem books, and continental renaissance imprints. Also noteworthy are the collections in the history of science and technology, theater history, American wit and humor, the history of economics, free speech movements, and natural history. The literary papers of such notable figures as Benjamin Disraeli, Anthony Trollope, William Allingham, Marcel Proust, John Richardson, Carl Sandburg, H.G. Wells, William Maxwell, Shana Alexander, and W.S. Merwin are housed in the Rare Book & Manuscript Library.

mission

The mission of The Rare Book & Manuscript Library is to make its collections accessible to all who wish to consult them, while doing its best to preserve these collections for future users.
On an early Monday morning students line up on the sidewalk outside the Saint-Genevieve library to get a seat at a desk in the great reading room. One of the finest public buildings of the nineteenth century, Saint-Genevieve has served the university and the public for 160 years. Writings and books from the Abbey of St Genevieve formed the initial foundation of its collections.

All the major functions of the library: entrance lobby, offices, archives, and reading room, are contained within an elongated massive volume measuring roughly 285 meters in length, with a transverse section 20 meters wide and 20 meters tall. Only the central staircase, including mechanical and other servant spaces, are positioned outside the main building form: to the north-east.

This building was designed from the inside out and the outside in - and that is a very important pair of phrases because most buildings are designed in different ways and for us to be talking about buildings that are compatible with this world, they have to be designed from the outside in without compromising the inside-out. That’s quite important.

There was not too much talking about energy and green building or any of that stuff - but again you have to remember in 1990 when we conceived this building green was not the common nomenclature of - you just do it. We made it that.

When we started doing this building, we wanted to design a building that literally would not fit anywhere else. What I mean by not fit anywhere else, a building that was so site specific- to this latitude and this set of conditions and climate, that you could not take it away.

Ryerson University's new Student Learning Centre will be a transformational addition for the city of Toronto and the University. The building's program expands the existing University library facilities to include more collaborative learning spaces, dynamic educational environments, and provide greater student access to technology. Ground level shops, and the building's open entrance on Yonge Street will integrate the Student Learning Centre into the existing active retail corridor.

The design begins with a south facing, raised platform that opens up to the street corner to allow for a broad range of pedestrian activity, from larger gatherings to smaller individual seating areas. It is neither a plaza nor a porch; it is a combination of these things. A series of steps and ramps leads toward the entrance below a tilted ceiling that directs sunlight down to the public spaces and entry. Additionally, along the commercial street, a new retail accommodation is created that will allow for greater access to shops while also not overwhelming the public and academic components of the design.

Source: snohetta.com