

Teaming up with your Library and Librarians to Teach Classics with Rare Materials

While classicists use their library's general collection materials on a constant basis for teaching and research, rare materials located in special collections may seem more hidden away and inaccessible for classroom teaching. This paper, provided from the perspective of a librarian with a Ph.D. in Classics and years of experience teaching with rare materials, offers information on how rare books, manuscripts, and other special collections materials have been used at my university to teach Classics courses of all different kinds. First, I will discuss how librarians can serve as teaching partners and can help plan and create class sessions with rare materials. Next, I will cover how librarians can aid in discovery of collection items that fit teaching objectives and give some examples of rare materials that can be used for a variety of classics courses and audiences, from language classes to courses on special topics, and from undergraduate to graduate audiences. Finally, I will describe what sessions can look like and how they can be carried out, including, for example, the layout of the rare materials and the activities of the students during the sessions. By walking panel attendees through the process of planning and teaching a class session with rare materials, I hope to break down any barriers and dispel any hesitations instructors may feel about reaching out to their librarians and using the hidden gems of their library's special collections to teach new concepts, reinforce old ones, spark curiosity, and give students a experiential learning opportunity they will never forget.