Collection Development Policies for research and taught-course collections in the Bodleian Libraries

African Studies

1. Overview

1.1 General coverage

African Studies, both teaching and research, is covered comprehensively by three libraries: the Weston Library, the Bodleian Social Science Library (SSL), and the Bodleian History Faculty Library (HFL).

Extensive research collections are held on the history and political, economic and social development of sub-Saharan Africa, including the offshore islands. All historical periods are covered, although the greatest emphasis is on the colonial and post-colonial periods. Through legal deposit the Library acquires the great majority of Africana-related materials published within the British Isles, and this is supplemented by purchase of relevant material published in Africa itself, in Europe and in the United States. Anglophone Africa is covered in greater depth than Francophone or Lusophone Africa. The most heavily used monographs and journals are held on the open shelves in the David Reading Room and Reference Area in the Weston Library, along with reference material and bibliographies, and relevant archive collections are consulted there. Other publications are stored at the Book Storage Facility from where they can be ordered to a number of reading rooms.

The SSL houses material on the social, economic and political development of African countries since the 1960s in support of the research and teaching activities of the Department of International Development. The Library also contains substantial statistical runs, reports and series from international organizations such as the World Bank and IMF, and general methodological, economic and social science works.

The HFL provides lending material on the historical treatment of most African countries in support of the teaching activities of the History Faculty. The emphasis is on late Roman / Byzantine history in North Africa, and colonial and post-colonial history of Sub-Saharan countries.

SOLO is the online catalogue which lists most books and journals in the Bodleian Libraries teaching, learning and research collections.

Other parts of Bodleian Libraries hold material relevant to African Studies including the Sackler Library, English Faculty Library, Taylor Institution Library and Music Library (see sections 1.4, 2.4 and 3.3).

All members of the University are encouraged to recommend items for purchase. An online suggestions form is available.

1.2 Legal deposit

Key legal deposit material relating to the history and current affairs – political, economic and social – of sub-Saharan Africa is selected for the open shelves in the David Reading Room and Reference Area. Other legal deposit titles are housed at the Book Storage Facility (BSF) from where they can be requested to the Bodleian Reading Rooms and main research libraries including SSL.
Works on development and post-1990s social science material on global political economy and social science methodology are housed in the SSL.

At midnight on 5/6 April 2013, new legislation came into force allowing the Bodleian Libraries and the other Legal Deposit Libraries in the UK and Ireland, to access electronic books, articles, web pages and other electronic documents published in the UK. The 2013 Regulations will be implemented gradually over several years, as the Legal Deposit Libraries agree collectively to accept electronic versions from each UK publisher.

1.3 Electronic resources

Where possible and if desirable, resources for African Studies are made available online in preference to, or as a supplement to, printed versions.

Over 50,000 electronic journals are available, and can be accessed from any site in the University, or outside Oxford using Single-Sign-On. All major publishers are included in Oxford’s portfolio of e-journal packages (which often includes the complete back files), and additional e-journal titles are subscribed to on an individual basis if deemed cost-effective.

There is also a growing collection of ebooks and online reference works (including Oxford Bibliographies Online (OBO) – African Studies). Bodleian Libraries provide access to more than 500,000 online books across many subjects, and subscribes to three major platforms: EBL, EBSCO and Ebrary.

There are also over 1000 databases available online via OxLIP+ and SOLO, including Africa specific databases such as – Aluka, AllAfrica, Francis, Empire On-Line, and Confidential Prints -Africa as well as social science and humanities-wide databases and platforms such as SCOPUS, Historical Abstracts and the Proquest platform.

1.4 Notes about particular formats or collections

House at the Book Storage Facility are representative collections of African newspapers, substantial microform collections, and extensive collections of government documents, including statistical series and annual departmental reports, both current and historic. Relevant working papers and other examples of grey literature, including large numbers of pamphlets, are also held.

The SSL holds key international statistical series and a range of country series and publications for African countries via the OECD, World Bank, IMF and WTO. Working paper series in development studies and economics are held selectively.

The Taylor Institution Library collects African feature films on DVD.

1.5 Languages

The majority of titles are in English, but there is also material in Afrikaans, French, German, and Portuguese, with lesser amounts of material in other European languages and other African languages. The SSL and HFL both collect mainly English material.

The Taylor Institution Library collects African literature written in French.

1.6 Bodleian Libraries Collection Management
The Bodleian Libraries aim to support new research areas and taught courses as they arise, and collection policies will be subject to amendment and continuous development in the light of such changes in academic requirements, while having regard to national/international provision in subject areas where the Bodleian Libraries have leading collections.

The Bodleian Libraries have a range of Collection Management Policy Documents which refer to all subjects and collections, particularly as regards location, retention, disposal and transfer of library materials.

2. Teaching collections for African Studies

2.1 Text books

Reference copies of African Studies reading list material, providing they fall within the main collecting areas, are held on the open shelves in the Weston Library.

The SSL provides lending copies of African Studies reading list material relevant to the social sciences (including anthropological) and general and methodological works.

In the selection of lending textbooks, the HFL is first and foremost guided by the Faculty’s reading lists and degree programmes. The History Faculty also expects the HFL to remain alert to trends in historical scholarship and to keep abreast of shifts in the way African history is being taught. Funding permitting, the Library will therefore actively buy newly published critical monographs on African history, provided they are suitable for undergraduate and postgraduate level.

2.2 Journal articles

The majority of journals are available online. Any journal articles required for teaching that are unavailable in Oxford (online or print) will be obtained through inter-library loan. Providing the terms of the University’s licence agreement with the Copyright Licensing Agency are adhered to, academics may scan journal articles (and book chapters) for use via WebLearn or make the relevant number of multiple copies.

SSL eReadings service provides digital copies of print-only book chapters and articles cited on reading lists. These scans are created and hosted under the terms of the CLA HE Licence for the course below:

MSc African Studies

2.3 Levels of provision

Legal deposit titles and publications purchased for the open shelves in the Weston Library or to be held at the Book Storage Facility are for reference only.

In general, the SSL aims to provide a minimum of two print copies (one reference and one lending), or one online copy, of every core text. Additional copies are purchased in the light of user’s needs, requests and usage patterns.

HFL Undergraduate provision: The Library will normally buy one lending copy in the first instance, if a textbook from a reading list is selected for purchase. If the title is for a highly subscribed course or should evidence from enquiries, circulation and reservation activities
indicate high use, then additional copies will be bought, sometimes over time, to support demand. Provisions and usage of titles in other Bodleian libraries will also inform a decision about how many copies to purchase.

HFL Taught Masters provision: Resources permitting, the HFL always hopes to make the same level of provision for taught course graduates as for undergraduates.

2.4 Other

The English Faculty Library has a large lending collection of African literature (based on a donation from Queen Elizabeth House), and continues to acquire the works of important writers mainly in support of teaching and research in postcolonial literature.

3. Research collections for African Studies

3.1 Research books

The Bodleian collects extensively on the history and current affairs – political, economic and social – of sub-Saharan African countries, and selectively on anthropology and cultural studies.

The SSL comprehensively collects material in support of research in development studies and selectively on anthropology. It also houses texts on research and survey methodology.

3.2 Journals

The Bodleian holds a substantial collection of journals, both current and non-current, received by legal deposit, subscription and donation. The Library Service welcomes requests for specific titles not currently subscribed to and is committed to expanding coverage of development studies journals as funds permit.

Core journals for development studies are held in the SSL.

3.3 Other

The Sackler Library holds comprehensive research collections on Egyptology, on the archaeology, history and culture of Greek and Roman North Africa, and on the art and archaeology of Islamic North Africa.

The English Faculty Library supports research in post-colonial literature including Africa.

4. Special Collections

The Bodleian Libraries’ special collections, housed in the Weston Library, include substantial manuscript and archival collections relating to Africa, acquired under the auspices of the Oxford Colonial Records Project, its successor projects and by individual donation. This is the largest holding (some 4,000 collections) of its kind in the country and is of national and international significance. It comprises principally the papers of individuals and organisations active in Africa since the late 18th century through to the present day. In addition to written materials it includes oral archives, photographs, lantern slides, original artwork, and a small quantity of documentary film on video or DVD. Maps are available in the Bodleian’s map collections.
The principal organizations whose archives are held are the Africa Bureau, Anti-Apartheid Movement, Anti-Slavery Society, Fabian Colonial Bureau, United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, and the Overseas Nursing Association.

Individuals whose papers are held include Cecil Rhodes, Lord Lugard, Dame Margery Perham, Arthur Creech Jones, Sir Roy Welensky and Archbishop Trevor Huddleston.

The Bodleian holds an extensive collection of aerial photographs of many African countries, dating from the 1940s-1980s and also holds the Trevor Hearl Collection of books and archive material relating to St. Helena.

5. Core Research and Teaching Areas for African Studies

In addition to the legal deposit intake and general works, the Bodleian Libraries will purchase non-deposited material in the following specific subjects when related to African countries:

In addition to its comprehensive collections on African history, and political, economic and social development of sub-Saharan Africa, the Bodleian’s holdings cover general colonial and imperial history, and have a special interest in slavery and race relations and in mission studies.

The SSL covers the following research subjects: AIDS, development economics (especially transition economics, informal sectors, income distribution, labour economics, microeconomics and microfinance, trade); governance and political development; globalization; poverty; economic assistance, international relief and aid; rural development; conflict, war and post-war reconstruction; gender and development; children and development; social science and ethnographic research methodology.

In addition to works on the general history of most African countries, the HFL will buy selectively works for individual countries on economic, social and political history; imperial and colonial history; rural history; nationalism and intellectual history; historiography; historical geography; contemporary travel and description; theory of colonialism, nationalism and post-colonialism; religious and witchcraft history; slavery and race relations; oral testimonies, written sources.

6. Contacts

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