

Information Guide | Philadelphia

Welcome to Rare Book School!

FOR MORE THAN FORTY YEARS, the bibliographical community has been supported and nourished by the work of Rare Book School (RBS). From its tentative beginnings at Columbia University, the School has educated several generations of librarians, collectors, academics, conservators, and booksellers, producing a network of loyal alumni, talented faculty, and dedicated friends around the globe. In the process, it has also earned a reputation as the world’s premier institution for the study of bibliography and book history. We are delighted that you will soon be a part of that distinguished tradition, and of our School’s promising future. We look forward to welcoming you to Philadelphia for your Rare Book School course.

This Information Guide will provide general information about what to expect during your course week. Upon arrival, you’ll receive a digital copy of the Student’s Vade Mecum with additional information to ensure that your stay is as productive and enjoyable as possible. (N.B. Please bring the present guide with you when you take your RBS course; it contains valuable information not repeated in the Vade Mecum.) We eagerly await your arrival, and look forward to another wonderful session!

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RBS in Philadelphia

PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA, is a city of more than one and a half million people, located at the confluence of the Schuylkill and Delaware Rivers. A hub for North American cultural, artistic, and intellectual life for more than three hundred years, the city also boasts a central place in the history of print: Benjamin Franklin—arguably the most influential printer in early America—owned and operated various presses here during the eighteenth century.

In this session, Rare Book School is excited to contribute to this storied bibliographical history with a course taught at the Free Library of Philadelphia (1901 Vine St.). Students will also have the opportunity to visit the University of Pennsylvania’s Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts. The Free Library will host “Introduction to Islamic Manuscripts,” taught by Kelly Tuttle, Instructional Designer and Cataloger for the Manuscripts of the Muslim World Project.

We’re excited that you’ve decided to join us in Philadelphia this summer, and we want to do all we can to deliver an exceptional educational experience. If you have any questions about the city or RBS in general, please email us at rbsprograms@virginia.edu.



The RBS Week

All RBS students are expected to be in attendance and on time for all regularly scheduled classes, labs, and field trips. This is to ensure the quality and community of RBS as a School, and we insist that participants attend all sessions of their courses, unless presented with the most extraordinary of circumstances. Practically speaking, this involves a full-time commitment of one-and-a-half hours on Sunday evening, 9 a.m.–5 p.m. Monday through Thursday, and 9 a.m.–4 p.m. Friday. Please make your travel plans accordingly!

SUNDAY, 5–6:30 p.m. **Opening Reception**

RBS students will convene for registration and a meal (location TBA). Once there, all students will receive a digital copy of the *Student's Vade Mecum* and a name badge.

N.B. If you plan to attend this event, RSVP by email (rbsprograms@virginia.edu) no later than 15 June.

Late arrival: We strongly suggest attending the Sunday night registration, but if you are unable to make it, please email us (rbsprograms@virginia.edu) and let us know. Students not attending the Sunday Opening Reception will need to register at their course location at 8:45 a.m. sharp on Monday morning.

MONDAY through THURSDAY

8:45 a.m.* **Registration (Monday Only)**

Registration for those not in attendance Sunday evening. If necessary, this is also the last good opportunity to obtain wireless connection information from the library staff.

9–10:30 a.m.* **First Period**

10:30–11 a.m. **Morning Break**

Light refreshments will be provided.

11 a.m.–12:30 p.m.* **Second Period**

12:30–1:30 p.m. **Lunch**

Class breaks for lunch. There are several restaurants within walking distance.

1:30–3 p.m.* **Third Period**

3–3:30 p.m. **Afternoon Break**

Light refreshments will be provided.

3:30–5 p.m.* **Fourth Period**

FRIDAY

9–10:30 a.m.* **First Period**

10:30–11 a.m. **Morning Break**

11 a.m.–12:30 p.m.* **Second Period**

12:30–2:30 p.m. **Lunch**

Classes break for a long lunch. By tradition, students take their instructor to a group lunch on Friday (you are not obligated to attend). Advance reservations are strongly recommended.

2:30–3:40 p.m.* **Third Period**

3:40–4 p.m. * **Course Evaluations**

Students receive course completion certificates and fill out RBS course evaluations.

Friday, 4–6 p.m. **Closing Reception**

RBS will host a closing reception (location TBA). Food and drinks will be served.

** Required activities are noted by asterisk*

Before you arrive

Reading Lists

Most RBS courses have advance reading lists or assignments that RBS instructors expect their students to complete before they arrive. These are outlined at www.rarebookschool.org/reading.

Students should come to class prepared. Those who have trouble locating required readings might try obtaining them through interlibrary loan (ILL), from used or antiquarian booksellers through the Antiquarian Booksellers Association of America (ABAA), or online via sites such as www.bookfinder.com or www.vialibri.net.

Arrival & Departure Logistics

When thinking about your transportation arrangements, please remember that staying over Friday night after the last day of class can be an excellent idea, if you can swing it. Arriving a day early may also be a good idea, as it can provide an opportunity to settle in, overcome jet lag, &c. RBS first-timers are often surprised by the intensity of the experience, so be sure to get some sleep before class starts!

Problems

Please let us know if you encounter problems on any front. If such problems occur before you arrive, email (rbsprograms@virginia.edu) or telephone us (434-924-8851, 8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.; voicemail after hours). If you encounter issues with tuition payments, contact RBS Accounting Specialist Michael Taylor at 434-243-2920, or by email (michael.taylor@virginia.edu).

Should any difficulties arise during the course, please bring your concerns to a faculty member, an RBS staff member on site, or contact us at Rare Book School.

Accommodations

Perhaps the most inexpensive and convenient lodgings are available through Penn Hospitality Services (215-898-9319; Mon–Fri, 9 a.m.–5 p.m.), which offers short-term summer housing in the Penn dormitories. RBS is currently finalizing dormitory options for students. The Penn dorms will be \$60 per person per night, plus a 15.5% occupancy tax. Students who opt to stay in the dorms will have the option to purchase a linen package for \$115 plus sales tax, which includes bedding, pillow, and towels. Please note that the care and laundering of these linens will be your responsibility. An on-site laundry facility will be available for use.

To register, visit: <https://upenn.irisregistration.com/Form/RareBookSchoolCohort32025>. If prompted, select registration for Cohort 3. Please reach out to rbsprograms@virginia.edu with any questions.

Students also have the option of staying in a nearby hotel; however, nearby options have been selling out quickly, and rates tend to increase in the summer. Some recommended options include [The Sheraton Philadelphia Downtown](#) and [The Logan Philadelphia, Curio Collection by Hilton](#). Both are located approximately a 7 minute walk away from the Free Library. Students are encouraged to book as soon as possible or investigate alternatives, such as AirBnB.

Transportation

Air Travel

The major airport servicing Philadelphia is Philadelphia International Airport (PHL; 215-937-6937). It is located almost seven miles from Penn and 13 miles from the Free Library. It is accessible either by car or by the airport line on the subway.

Driving to Philadelphia

The main north-south route into Philadelphia is Interstate 95, one of the nation's busiest and potentially most frustrating highways. Coming from points to the west of the city will usually involve a combination of either I-76 E and I-70 or I-71. No matter what route you take, know that rush-hour traffic can be intense, and parking spaces in Philadelphia are rather pricey.

Taking the Train

If your place of embarkation is on the Northeast corridor, it may be more convenient and affordable to use Amtrak (www.amtrak.com; 1-800-872-7245) as your means of travel. Philadelphia's 30th Street Station (PHL); (2955 Market Street) is the city's hub for Amtrak travel and is only a ten-minute walk from Penn and a twenty-minute walk from the Free Library.

Parking

Paid street parking is available, and payments can be made at kiosks or through the MeterUp mobile app. A municipal lot is also nearby, but requires a fee. Be aware that some street parking spots have a two- to three-hour limit, so look for those designated as 12-hour spots. A free parking lot is available north of Spring Garden, though it requires a 10-15 minute walk to the library.

Advance Advices

What to Bring

At RBS, dress is business casual for all events. Summers in Philadelphia are generally hot and humid, but the weather can fluctuate wildly: it can be 75 degrees Fahrenheit one day, and 100 degrees the next. The rooms we use are very cold, so if you chill easily under air-conditioning, bring a sweater. In general, a light rain jacket or umbrella is also a good idea.

RBS participants are encouraged to come to class prepared and are required to be on time. Bring a watch. If you wish to take notes, plan accordingly. Pencils, paper, and other supplies are available at nearby convenience stores. Before leaving home, check the course description on the RBS website and the reading list for specific instructions on what to bring. (It is not, for instance, always necessary to bring copies of your advance reading.) Other inside tips on what to bring can be found in the previous year's course evaluations, also available on the course web page.

Pharmacies & Medical Facilities

The nearest pharmacy to the Penn Libraries is a CVS (215-662-1333) located at 3401 Walnut Street, a one-minute walk west from the Van Pelt-Dietrich Library Center. The closest emergency room to Penn is in the University of Pennsylvania Hospital, located at 3400 Spruce Street, less than a half mile from the Penn Libraries (non-emergency: 212-662-4000).

The nearest pharmacy to the Free Library is a CVS (215-575-9227) located at 2001 Pennsylvania Ave, a five-minute walk. The closest emergency room to the Free Library is the Jefferson University Hospital Emergency (215-955-6840) located approximately 13-minutes away by car.

As always, if you need immediate help, dial 911.