The University's stewardship of rare book collections as well as other unique resources and archival materials is facilitated through several distinct special collections on the OU campus. These collections are a tangible connection to the past. They are our common cultural heritage. Importantly, these significant cultural resources are available to support our university's mission of research, teaching, and outreach.

It is fitting for the Institute to partner with the OU Libraries and bring history to life through books from the past. There are many hidden treasures among the special collections that helped shape American culture and that relate directly to America's founding. The goal of this partnership is to share literature and inform the greater community of the unique treasures waiting in the University of Oklahoma's libraries.

SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

The books depicted on these pages are part of the John and Mary Nichols Rare Books and Special Collections and of the History of Science Collections.

The Liberty Bell, 1846
Published by the Friends of Freedom for the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Fai, this rare book is a part of a series of literary annuals containing prose and poetry that were published from 1839-1859.
Areopagitica, 1644
This was written as a philosophical defense of freedom of speech and expression in response to censorship. John Milton was arguing against licensing requirements that emerged at the height of the English Civil War.

Politics, 1498
This copy of Aristotle's Politics, one of the most well known works of political philosophy, was published in the 15th century and resides in the History of Science Collections.

The collections also hold many other works on government, law, politics, and the state, including two works from Thomas Hobbes, the English Philosopher, best known today for his work on political philosophy.

Leviathan, 1651
This work which concerns the structures of society and legitimate government is regarded as one of earliest and most influential examples of social contract theory.

Philosophical Rudiments of Government and Society, 1651
This book is the English translation with minor corrections of De cive (1642, 1646), a work which did much to establish Hobbes's reputation as a major figure in European philosophy.