Brown University Library welcomes gifts of materials that, in its judgement, will significantly enhance its collections in subject areas of established strength or in areas targeted for growth. Items must be in subject areas and languages relevant to the teaching and research needs of the University. Types of materials accepted include books, complete or near-complete runs of critical academic journals, archival materials (personal papers, organizational records), physical media (CDs, DVDs), and other materials. Any donated materials must be in good physical condition, free of damage from fire or water, and without mold or insect infestation. We do not generally accept museum objects (e.g., paintings, sculpture, etc.)

Potential donors should understand that the Library has very limited physical space and human resources for storing and processing materials and making them available for use. While we recognize that the materials may have value to a donor and potential value to an institution, not every collection is a good fit for us. Thus in very few cases is it possible to accept all items in a gift; in many cases, we must decline, with thanks, entire gift collections. We can suggest alternative places for donations for some kinds of materials. Please note that once a gift is given, it becomes the property of Brown University. The Library always retains the right to dispose of unwanted or unsolicited gift materials in the manner of its choosing.

Donors are responsible for any appraisals of materials donated. The Library cannot provide donors with estimates of a collection’s market value, although we can refer donors to qualified appraisers who may give such estimates. We can also provide you with the appropriate IRS forms to acknowledge receipt of a gift. However, any tax implications arising from a gift should be discussed with qualified financial advisers; the Library cannot provide tax advice.

Those wishing to donate may contact one of our subject specialists for further information. A current list of specialists is available online at: http://library.brown.edu/about/specialists.php. These librarians will talk to donors in-depth about potential gifts. If the subject specialist believes a
collection fits the Library’s collection profile, donors will be asked to fill out a gift form describing the items. This form does not constitute acceptance of a gift; it is only an agreement to review the items further for possible addition to the Library’s holdings. A subject specialist can also advise about the logistics of transporting a gift to the Library and may, in some cases, he/she may wish to schedule an on-site visit to examine the items before a decision is made. Please note that the Library expects donors to bear the cost of transporting items to Brown.

Once accepted and received, gifts will be processed according to priorities established by Library staff. Librarians will determine where the materials are ultimately housed and how, or if, they will circulate. We encourage donors who wish to see their donations processed quickly to consider a cash gift that will support expedited processing. Our gift form offers a place for you to indicate your willingness to provide such support. Library staff can help provide cost estimates in such instances.