

**Executive Summary**  
**English Literature Collection Assessment**  
 Submitted by Harry D. Nuttall  
 May 2020

**INTRODUCTION**

The English Literature collection is adequate to support the courses taught in the Bachelor's and Master's programs in English and also Secondary Education, which incorporate the collection into their curricula. Complete conspectus sheets and checklists are available upon request for a more detailed examination of the collection.

**HOLDINGS**

The English Literature collection contains 41,345 titles in the call number range PR1 – PR9999.9, including 4,383 e-books. Total monograph expenditures for literature from fiscal years 2012-13 through 2018-19 inclusive were **\$265,013.32**. (Expenditure amounts are for all literatures. Literature discipline expenditures cannot be subdivided.) English Literature has had 3,839 new titles added since the previous assessment. These newer additions comprise 9% of the current English Literature collection.

These numbers represent a snapshot of the collection, as titles are continually being added and withdrawn for collection maintenance and growth. These numbers do not represent additional titles available through e-book databases.

<b>Classification</b>	<b>Subject Area</b>	<b>Library Holdings</b>
PR1-PR9999.9	English Literature	41,345

**Monograph Expenditures for Literature\***

<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>Amount</b>
2012-2013	\$40,896.28
2013-2014	\$32,405.26
2014-2015	\$36,151.93
2015-2016	\$33,305.93
2016-2017	\$39,987.85
2017-2018	\$41,248.36
2018-2019	\$41,017.71
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$265,013.32</b>

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**PERIODICALS AND SERIALS**

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FY 2012-2013 to FY 2018-2019 (see table below). The dollar amount spent for aggregated databases for 2018-2019 is **\$373,149.24**.

**Serial Expenditures for Literature\***

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Complete details are available in the full assessment, which is available upon request or at <http://bit.ly/2fyeMMU>.

## English Literature Collection Assessment

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### INTRODUCTION

The English Literature collection is central to the University curriculum, since it supports study for the degree program in English at the Bachelor's and Master's levels offered by the School of Arts and Humanities, as well as the Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Secondary Education offered by the School of Education. The collection also supports minors in these areas along with the degree in the major field. The collection is adequate to support the courses taught and faculty research in these fields. Complete conspectus sheets and checklists are available upon request for a more detailed examination of the collection.

### HOLDINGS

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### SUPPLEMENTAL SUPPORT

Interdisciplinary subjects are those that extend beyond the boundaries of the assessed discipline. Supplemental support for research in the English Literature collection includes a wide range of such subject areas, including the holdings in the related subject collections of American Literature; Western European Literatures; Languages and Related Literatures; History; Art; Drama; Music; Auxiliary Sciences of History; Philosophy, Ethics, and Religion; and General Works.

**TITLES ADDED/TITLES PUBLISHED**

Below is a comparison of the number of book titles added to the Houston Cole Library collection versus those made available for sale each fiscal year through GOBI.

**Monograph Titles Added Versus GOBI/YBP Titles Published Comparison  
(All Publishers: University and Trade)**

<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>Added to Collections PR1-P9999.9</b>	<b>New Titles Report</b>	<b>Percent</b>
2011-2012	N/A	Figures Not Available	N/A
2012-2013	212	2,399	9%
2013-2014	169	2,671	6%
2014-2015	247	2,686	9%
2015-2016	199	2,703	7%
2016-2017	256	2,693	10%
2017-2018	219	2,720	8%
2018-2019	259	2,623	10%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,561</b>	<b>18,495</b>	<b>8%</b>

[https://www.gobi3.com/StaticContent/GOBIContent/YBP/Private/Help/Pages/newtitlereport\\_us.html](https://www.gobi3.com/StaticContent/GOBIContent/YBP/Private/Help/Pages/newtitlereport_us.html)

**CHECKLIST SUMMARIES**

Bibliographies including *American Reference Books Annual* (ARBA), *Choice’s Outstanding Academic Titles* (OATs), and *Resources for College Libraries* (RCL) were used to measure the quality of the Library’s collection. In checking these bibliographies against the Library’s catalog, the following percentages were revealed in the subject area of English Literature.

<b><i>American Reference Books Annual</i> (ARBA): 2011-2018</b>			
<b>Year</b>	<b>Held</b>	<b>Listed</b>	<b>Percent</b>
2011	8	11	73%
2012	8	14	57%
2013	8	11	73%
2014	3	9	33%
2015	4	7	57%
2016	1	3	33%
2017	0	12	0%
2018	4	10	40%
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>47%</b>

<b><i>Choice’s Outstanding Academic Titles</i> (OATs): 2012-2019</b>			
<b>Subject</b>	<b>Held</b>	<b>Listed</b>	<b>Percent</b>
English Literature (PR)	77	93	83%

<b><i>Resources for College Libraries</i> (RCL): Retrospective to Current</b>			
<b>LC CLASS</b>	<b>Held</b>	<b>Listed</b>	<b>Percent</b>
PR1-PR9999.9	551	1,074	51%

## **AWARD WINNERS**

Most of the statistics in a collection assessment reflect quantitative measurements. One way to add a qualitative component to the assessment is to compare holdings to lists of awards, in this instance awards for English Literature. Here are the holdings comparisons for five major British literary awards.

<b>Costa Book Awards/Whitbread Book Awards (Book of the Year, First Novel, Novel, Poetry)</b>			
<b>Years Covered</b>	<b>Held</b>	<b>Listed</b>	<b>Percent</b>
1971-2018	33	43	77%

<b>Man Booker Prize</b>			
<b>Years Covered</b>	<b>Held</b>	<b>Listed</b>	<b>Percent</b>
1969-2018	35	53	66%

<b>Author</b>	<b>Year Awarded</b>	<b># Titles Held</b>
Rudyard Kipling	1907	107
Rabindranath Tagore	1913	28
William Butler Yeats	1923	128
George Bernard Shaw	1925	135
John Galsworthy	1932	64
T. S. Eliot	1948	77
Bertrand Russell	1950	94
Winston Churchill	1953	25
Samuel Beckett	1969	61
Patrick White	1973	16
Elias Canetti	1981	8
William Golding	1983	20
Nadine Gordimer	1991	27
Seamus Heaney	1995	15
V. S. Naipaul	2001	19
J. M. Coetzee	2003	15
Harold Pinter	2005	19
Doris Lessing	2007	37
Alice Munro	2013	15
Kazuo Ishiguro	2017	9
<b>Totals</b>	<b>20 authors</b>	<b>919</b>

<b>Women's Prize for Fiction</b>			
<b>Years Covered</b>	<b>Held</b>	<b>Listed</b>	<b>Percent</b>
1996-2019	10	24	42%

## **WITHDRAWALS**

As currency of information is very important in the English Literature collection, older books are withdrawn on a regular basis or as newer editions supersede them, and new books are ordered to fill gaps as curriculum requirements change. The table below shows withdrawals from the PR classification.

<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>Titles Withdrawn</b>
2012-2013	14
2013-2014	0
2014-2015	346
2015-2016	7
2016-2017	3
2017-2018	4
2018-2019	28
<b>Total</b>	<b>402</b>

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The following indexes and bibliographies were checked against the Library's holdings for serial titles pertaining to Literature, revealing the corresponding percentages:

Titles	Held	Listed	Percent
<i>Magazines for Libraries</i> 23 <sup>rd</sup> Edition 2015: Literature (Category cannot subdivide)	120	196	61%

According to *Magazines for Libraries*, any journal indexed by them is by definition a core journal.

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Through partnerships such as the one with the Alabama Virtual Library (AVL), the Library is able to obtain additional content. Resources provided to the Library by the AVL are designated with the AVL icon.

### **SUMMARY**

#### **Strengths:**

Total holdings, conspectus evaluation, and checklist comparisons indicate the overall English Literature collection is more than adequate to support the curriculum. The collection is central to both Bachelor's and Master's degree programs in English, and areas that are most central to the canon and the curriculum within the discipline will be selected heavily; areas less central will increase more slowly. Attentiveness by the subject specialist insures the collection will be strengthened in appropriate areas as the curriculum evolves. At present this strengthening focuses on literatures of "developing nations" (former colonies of the British Empire), as authors from these nations are receiving a higher profile in the curriculum. Additionally, writings by and about 21<sup>st</sup> century authors are being collected at a higher rate than for previous assessments.

**Weaknesses:**

Canon expansion mandates that acquisitions emphasis be moved from the traditional canonical core to twenty-first century writers and authors and works of nations formerly within the British Empire. These things are finding their way into the curriculum more and more, and because this is a fairly recent development these parts of the collection are weakest. It should be kept in mind that areas with the smallest holdings often are so because they are out of scope for the curriculum.

Attention also must be paid to reference, not only adding appropriate titles but also preserving older print titles already in the collection. More and more the subject specialist is encountering student assignments whose requirements simply cannot be met without heavy reliance on reference materials.

**Recommendations:**

The growth rate of the English Literature collection should be maintained in order to continue providing support for majors and minors in the degree programs of English and Secondary Education. The monograph collection should be selectively increased, based on budget and the curriculum, with a strong focus on core and outstanding titles. The periodical collection available via databases is substantial and should be maintained. Older bound print periodicals should be preserved due to the cyclical nature of literary research. For example, the migration of second floor bound periodicals off-site has deprived library stakeholders of immediate access to approximately a half dozen major reviews in the AP2 classification plus some other useful journals in AP4. With a single exception (in JSTOR Archives), none of the titles the subject specialist checked were found in the Library's most used databases. The backfiles simply are not deep enough. With regard to monographs, the weak subject areas (noted above) should be addressed in future additions to the collection. In the past this has been done through adding to the reference collection, which often provides information on authors who have not yet received much critical attention and for whom it is difficult to find information in monographs and databases.

Liaison with English Department faculty should continue in order to assure that collection development aligns with curricular and faculty research needs.