



# UUCOV Library Book and Materials Selection Policy

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The following describes proposed policies, procedures, and criteria for stewarding UUCOV library resources wherever they reside around our campus.

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## Definitions

In this policy the term “information resources” refers to the following: hardcover books, paperback books, pamphlets, periodicals (magazines), newspapers and newsletters, textbooks, curricula, reprints, dissertations and theses, charts, artwork, photographs, pictures, posters, flashcards, kits, dioramas, models, realia, games, maps, globes, musical scores, audio-visual materials, computer applications, electronic and digital media, and Web-based resources. “Library materials” is used interchangeably with the term “information resources.”

The term “selection” refers, in this policy, to the ongoing processes of acquiring new materials, removing obsolete materials, replacing still valuable but lost or worn materials, and evaluating donated materials for inclusion in the library and book table collections. Therefore, “selection” means deciding whether to add material to the library collection or remove material already in it.

## **Purpose and Scope of Policy**

This materials selection policy helps guide UUCOV library and information resource collection development by describing:

- The criteria and procedures by which materials will be added to or removed from UUCOV materials collections
- Who has responsibility for materials selection and removal
- The procedures that will be followed if an individual or group were to question the presence of an item in the UUCOV library or other UUCOV materials collections

This policy will also apply to the UUCOV book table, and to any other book-giving or -selling activity (e.g., book fair) conducted by the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Venice's Library team in support of the UUCOV Library and the mission of UUCOV. The policy could also help guide materials selection for other UUCOV programs as well as linkage to other websites.

## **Policy Statement**

UUCOV regularly acquires, collects, and receives media in a variety of formats: print, audio-visual, digital, and tangible. Therefore, the UUCOV Library ministry provides, through its library, book table, website, social media, events, and related means, a wide variety of information resources that:

- Support, enrich, and extend the mission, programs, and activities of the congregation.
- Foster active understanding of Unitarian Universalist principles, purposes, and values.
- Foster an understanding of UUCOV and UU polity, governance, and procedure.
- Reflect the diverse views within Unitarian Universalism.
- Encourage understanding of Unitarian and Universalist origins, history, traditions, worship, and denominational activities.
- Represent the many sources of spiritual insight and religious teaching on which Unitarian Universalism draws.
- Focus on the lives, works, and ideas of Unitarians and Universalists, past and present.
- Include the works of Unitarian Universalist authors and publishers.
- Support and enrich the lives of members and friends at all ages and stages in their spiritual journeys within the Unitarian Universalist tradition, emphasizing a free and responsible search for truth and meaning.
- Emphasize and encourage diversity, equity, and inclusion.

- Focus on multicultural awareness by nurturing an understanding of world faiths, holidays, customs, rituals, cultures, and the perspectives of diverse peoples.
- Support and enrich UUCOV's religious/spiritual exploration programs for children and adults through materials that directly or by example reflect UU principles, purposes, and values.
- Nurture parents and encourage parenting from a Unitarian Universalist perspective.
- Help members and friends understand and cope with significant personal questions and issues from a Unitarian Universalist perspective, among them human sexuality, gender identity and roles, marriage, family life, separation, divorce, depression, substance abuse, illness, aging, death, dying, and grieving.
- Assist UUCOV staff, Board, and leaders, and the work of UUCOV's many committees, teams, programs, projects, and activities.
- Honor and uphold [UU's Principles & Sources](#).
- Encourage members and friends to be active on behalf of social justice and environmental responsibility, and to serve wider communities and the world in ways that reflect and extend Unitarian Universalist values.

Material is evaluated for inclusion in the UUCOV library or other inventory based on the foregoing criteria as well as by the more general selection criteria below.

### **Donated Materials**

Donated material is evaluated in the same manner and by the same criteria herein described. Donated material that is not formally added to UUCOV Library may be: (1) provided to the public through the UUCOV's LITe Free Library), (2) given to other organizations that might use them, (3) appropriately discarded.

### **Policy on Controversial Materials**

UUCOV Library subscribes to the statements of library philosophy, principle, and policy as expressed in the following American Library Association documents, which are considered foundations of this UUCOV Library Materials Selection Policy:

[Library Bill of Rights](#)

[Interpretations of the Library Bill of Rights](#)

[Libraries, An American Value](#)

[The Freedom To Read Statement](#)

## Responsibility for Materials Selection and Collection Development

- 1. Delegation of Responsibility:** The Board and congregation, via the Minister and/or Board of Trustees delegate responsibility for selection of (1) general library and book table materials to the UUCOV Library Coordinator; (2) of committee-specific materials to UUCOV committee chairs, and (3) of staff-required materials to the respective UUCOV staff members, within the context of this materials selection policy and approved budgetary guidelines. UUCOV Board, staff, and committee members who acquire library or program resources for UUCOV, utilizing their respective UUCOV program funds, will observe the selection principles, policies, and procedures outlined in this document, as will the Library Coordinator and team.
  
- 2. Library Coordinator and Library Team Responsibilities:** The responsibility for overall UUCOV Library collection development and the selection of library and book table materials rests with the Library Coordinator in consultation with UUCOV staff, Board members, and committee/team leaders. The Library Coordinator will communicate with these people as needed to avoid duplication of resources. In addition, the Library Coordinator will consider requests and recommendations for materials from the UUCOV Library team, Board members, staff, committee chairs, UUCOV members and friends at large (both children and adult), guest speakers, other community people, or subject specialists as appropriate. In overseeing the materials selection process, the UUCOV Library Coordinator:
  
- 3. Develops and expends materials budgets judiciously.**
  - Coordinates the selection and ordering of materials for UUCOV Library and book sales, group work, displays and events.
  - Uses the UUCOV Materials Selection policy and related procedures to carry out materials selection.
  - Consults with and advises UUCOV staff and other UUCOV groups about their library resource needs and purchasing.
  - Reads reviews and stays abreast of relevant Unitarian Universalist-related publications.
  - Checks the library catalog to avoid unintentional duplication of resources, purchasing or accepting duplicates only of extensively used or potential group-read materials.
  - Weeds the collection of worn or obsolete items. (Suggested weeding schedule - May/June and November/December and may also be done continuously.)

- Evaluates gift materials using these UUCOV selection criteria.
  - Orders materials from standard book, media, and library sources (e.g., wholesalers that offer libraries generous discounts as well as standard library cataloging and processing services) or purchases resources from local sources depending on the nature of the material, the time frame, and other professional considerations.
4. **Selection by the UUCOV Board and UUCOV Committees:** The responsibility for selecting Board or committee-specific program materials rests with Board members and committee leaders, respectively, in consultation with UUCOV staff and the Library Coordinator to avoid unnecessary duplication of resources.
  5. **Selection by UUCOV Staff Members:** Responsibility for selecting staff-specific program materials rests with UUCOV staff members, in consultation with the Library Coordinator and any relevant committee members to avoid unnecessary duplication of resources.
  6. **Responsibility for Cataloging:** UUCOV Board, staff, and committee leaders are asked to provide the Library Coordinator with information about any materials acquired with UUCOV funds or donated for UUCOV use so that they can be cataloged to make them accessible to all, to avoid unintentionally duplicating them, and, in general, to steward UUCOV's information resources responsibly.

**Summary:** Those responsible for materials selection within UUCOV will be guided by this policy, placing UUCOV's mission above personal opinion and reason above individual bias in the selection of materials of the best quality in order to assure a comprehensive, well-organized, and accessible resource collection for use by all UUCOV staff, leaders, members, and friends.

## **General Selection Criteria**

### Main Library

Materials considered, whether they are donated or purchased, for inclusion in the library collection are judged based on the following criteria:

- Overall purpose and direct relationship to UUCOV's mission
- Importance and relevance of subject matter to current UUCOV initiatives, activities, and programs
- Favorable reviews found in standard materials selection sources
- Significance of the author/artist/composer/producer/publisher

- Authoritativeness of the author/artist/composer/producer/publisher concerning the topic
- Accuracy, reliability, and authenticity of the work as a whole
- Currency (unless historical)
- Intended level of use—introductory, popular, scholarly, or in-depth study—concerning subject and audience
- Needs, interests, and abilities of users
- Readability and comprehensibility for the intended audience
- Intended audience size, e.g. individual, small group, large group
- Quality of writing and/or technical quality of production
- Clarity of organization, presentation, or layout
- Aesthetics, attractiveness
- Durability, sturdiness, physical condition
- Balance of viewpoints on issues and questions important to UUs
- Sensitivity and respect, in written and graphic material, for peoples, groups, or cultures portrayed
- Lack of bias and stereotyping—Note: Under certain circumstances biased materials may serve as appropriate resources to present contrasting and differing points of view, and biased materials may be employed in order to teach about bias, stereotyping, and propaganda. Also, classic and contemporary literary works, periodicals, and specialized materials may be selected even if they do not meet this general standard, if otherwise necessary or appropriate.
- Overall collection balance

#### A Note about UUCOV's Little Free Library

UUCOV's Little Free Library's collection is driven by many of the same criteria as the main library, though its purpose is to freely provide materials to the public while building community and inspiring readers. See [the Little Free Library's mission](#). The LFL's collection tends to focus on fiction and high interest items for all ages. The collection will be regularly maintained and refreshed. Items are not required to be returned.

## Weeding and Withdrawing Materials

UUCOV staff or members who acquire library materials for their respective UUCOV program areas will also advise the Library Coordinator about withdrawing those materials when they're no longer relevant to that program area. Similarly, the Library Coordinator will consult with staff and program leaders before withdrawing library materials. Final decisions about the withdrawal of library materials will be made with the Library Coordinator.

The Library Coordinator takes responsibility for systematically adjusting library catalog records when materials are withdrawn. The Library Coordinator and library team also take responsibility for physically removing books from the collection and preparing them for withdrawal.

The Library Coordinator, with advice from staff and program leaders, will generally use the criteria known as MUSTIE (misleading, ugly, superseded, trivial, irrelevant, or obtained elsewhere) and CREW (continuous review, evaluation, and weeding), as well as periodic formal inventories to cull or withdraw books from the library collections. Materials should remain in place on library shelves until the formal withdrawal decisions are finalized.

Other factors to be considered in weeding, withdrawing, and discarding materials include:

- The general and specific selection criteria noted just above
- Relevance to UU principles, purposes, and values.
- Relevance to current UUCOV staff, members, friends, and programs
- Representation of UU authors, subjects, and publishers, e.g., [Skinner House](#) and [Beacon Press](#)
- UUCOV archival or UU historical value
- Frequency of use
- Space

**It's important to note that infrequency of use, as indicated by library circulation statistics, is not necessarily a reason to discard items.** In a church, many library items are browsed or used without passing through the library's circulation system. Similarly, publication date may not necessarily be an automatic factor in a decision to discard an item. Older materials may have historical UU or UUCOV value. Ultimately space becomes a limiting factor in library collection maintenance.

## Procedure for Reconsideration of Materials

UUCOV recognizes the right of a UUCOV member to question the inclusion of a particular title in the UUCOV Library. The following procedure is recommended for handling concerns about library materials, where "concern" here refers to an active, intense question about why an item

is included in UUCOV Library, or to a suggestion that an item be removed from the library or restricted from use, because the item is, in some way, objectionable.

1. An individual who has an active concern about library material and seriously questions the presence of an item in UUCOV Library is encouraged, in the spirit of the UUCOV Communications Covenant, to talk directly to the Library Coordinator, the minister, and/or the Director of Religious Exploration (DRE) about the concern.
2. These three (i.e., minister, DRE, and Library Coordinator), upon learning of the individual's concern, will mutually inform each other of it, maintaining confidentiality around the concern.
3. If initial conversations do not seem to lessen the concern, the individual will be given a copy of or directed to this UUCOV Library Materials Selection Policy, including the statements of intellectual freedom and freedom to read that are considered foundations of the policy.
3. If requested, the minister will meet further with the individual to listen actively to the concern. During the meeting, the minister will again refer to the individual to the UUCOV Library Materials Selection Policy to make sure that the individual has become familiar with it.
4. If the individual remains concerned about the library item to the point of insisting that it be removed or restricted from use, the minister will send or provide a letter explaining the option formally to question the item's selection for the congregation's library. The letter will also contain a "Request for Reconsideration of Library Material" form.
5. If the individual officially submits the "Request for Reconsideration" form, the minister will convene a committee of members and staff to review the concern. The committee will include, in addition to the minister, the Library Coordinator, the Director of Religious Exploration, a board member, and a UUCOV member at large who has a very good grasp of UU congregational process, library procedure, freedom-to-read principles, and/or the subject matter involved.
6. The Library Coordinator will explain the committee's charge to them. Within a reasonable amount of time, the committee will review the procedure by which the material was selected or accepted for the UUCOV Library collection, to determine whether proper selection procedure was followed and selection criteria met. The committee will vote on whether to retain the item and will inform the individual of its decision and the reasons for it.

During a book or media challenge, it's important to emphasize: (1) the fundamental principles of intellectual freedom and freedom to read, (2) consideration of the work as a whole, and (3) the process and criteria by which materials are selected.

Note: Should a UUCOV staff person have serious and significant concerns about an item in UUCOV library, the procedure above will be thoughtfully adapted to fit the situation.

UUCOV paid staff are not voting members of the congregation.

## Sources for Library Materials Selection Policy

The following sources have been consulted, quoted, or adapted to develop Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Venice's library materials selection policy:

### Materials Selection Policy Guidelines

- [Guidelines for Library Policies](#) – American Library Association.
- [A Content Analysis of District School Library Selection Policies in the United States](#) – School Library Research, journal of the American Association of School Librarians
- [Analyze Children's Books for Sexism and Racism](#) – Teaching for Change
- [Guide for Selecting Anti-Bias Children's Books](#) – Social Justice Books

### Intellectual Freedom Resources and Guidelines

(From the American Library Association unless otherwise noted.)

- [Access to Library Resources and Services](#)
- [ALA Statement on Book Censorship](#)
- [Banned and Challenged Books](#)
- [Banned Books Week](#)
- [Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion](#)
- [First Amendment and Censorship](#)
- [Freedom to Read Statement. American Library Association](#)
- [How To Respond To Challenges and Concerns About Library Materials](#)
- [Intellectual Freedom Issues and Resources](#)
- [Intellectual Freedom Resources for Trustees, Friends, & Foundations](#)
- [Libraries: An American Value](#)
- [Library Bill of Rights](#)
- [Library Bill of Rights Interpretations](#). See links to selected interpretations of the Library Bill of Rights below.
- [Professional Ethics, Code of Ethics](#)
- [Sample Reconsideration Form](#)
- [Schools and Minors' Rights](#)
- [The Selection Policy Toolkit for Public, School & Academic Libraries](#)

### Selected Interpretations of the Library Bill of Rights

From the American Library Association. See also the full list [of Interpretations of the Library Bill of Rights](#).

- [Access to Library Resources and Services for Minors](#): Library policies and procedures that effectively deny minors equal and equitable access to all library resources available to other users violate the *Library Bill of Rights*...
- [Access to Library Resources and Services Regardless of Sex, Gender Identity, Gender Expression, or Sexual Orientation](#): The American Library Association stringently and unequivocally maintains that libraries and librarians have an obligation to resist efforts that systematically exclude materials dealing with any subject matter, including sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation.
- [Access to Resources and Services in the School Library](#): The school library plays a unique role in promoting intellectual freedom. It serves as a point of voluntary access to information and ideas and as a learning laboratory for students as they acquire critical thinking and problem-solving skills needed in a pluralistic society...
- [Challenged Resources](#): ALA declares as a matter of firm principle that it is the responsibility of every library to have a clearly defined written policy for collection development that includes a procedure for review of challenged resources...
- [Diverse Collections](#): Collection development should reflect the philosophy inherent in Article I of the *Library Bill of Rights*: “Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.”
- [Equity, Diversity, Inclusion](#): Libraries are essential to democracy and self-government, to personal development and social progress, and to every individual’s inalienable right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. To that end, libraries and library workers should embrace equity, diversity, and inclusion in everything that they do...
- [Evaluating Library Collections](#): Libraries continually develop their collections by adding and removing resources to maintain collections of current interest and usefulness to their communities. Libraries should adopt collection development and maintenance policies that include criteria for evaluating materials...
- [Expurgation of Library Materials](#): Expurgating library materials is a violation of the Library Bill of Rights. Expurgation as defined by this interpretation includes any deletion, excision, alteration, editing, or obliteration of any part(s) of books or other library resources by the library, its agent, or its parent institution (if any).
- [Labeling Systems](#): The American Library Association opposes the use of prejudicial labeling systems and affirms the rights of individuals to form their own opinions about resources they choose to read, view, listen to, or otherwise access...

- [Politics in American Libraries](#): The Library Bill of Rights specifically states that “all people” and “all points of view” should be included in library materials and information. There are no limiting qualifiers for viewpoint, origin, or politics.
- [Privacy](#): All people, regardless of origin, age, background, or views, possess a right to privacy and confidentiality in their library use...
- [Rating Systems](#): Rating systems are tools or labels devised by individuals or organizations to advise people regarding the suitability or content of materials. Rating systems appearing in library catalogs or discovery systems present distinct challenges to intellectual freedom principles...
- [Religion in American Libraries](#): For this interpretation “religion” refers to all that touches on the infinite, a supreme deity or deities, or one’s understanding of the ultimate meaning or purposes of life. It includes formally organized systems of belief and practice and informal individual spiritualities. It also refers to adherents of older religions, newer religions, and no religion. While this interpretation is most clearly applicable to public libraries, it should in most cases also be appropriate for school and academic libraries. Private libraries, especially those associated with religious institutions, should apply these guidelines as appropriate with their institutional mission... Librarians have a professional responsibility to be inclusive rather than exclusive in collection development. Libraries serve all members of their communities and within their budgetary constraints should address all information concerns of all members—including their religious information needs...
- [Restricted Access to Library Materials](#): Libraries are a traditional forum for the open exchange of information. Attempts to restrict access to library materials violate the basic tenets of the Library Bill of Rights...
- [Services to People with Disabilities](#): Libraries should be fully inclusive of all members of their community and strive to break down barriers to access. The library can play a transformational role in helping facilitate more complete participation in society by providing fully accessible resources and services...
- [Universal Right to Free Expression](#): Freedom of expression is an inalienable human right and the foundation for self-government. Freedom of expression encompasses the freedoms of speech, press, religion, assembly, and association, and the corollary right to receive information without interference and without compromising personal privacy.