

Collection Development Policy Addendum

The Cold War Special Collection

Objectives of the Cold War Special Collection

The purpose of the DC Public Library's Cold War Special Collection is to provide patrons, the community, and researchers with a wide selection of resources focused on this era of the twentieth century. All media types and formats are eligible for consideration. Fiction, nonfiction, academic papers and journals, government documents and reports, graphic novels, documentary films, feature films, news media journalism, anime, video games—any media or literature can be selected for inclusion in the collection if it is found to be sufficiently noteworthy and to meet certain criteria. The materials in this collection should reflect the diversity of the information needs of its users—from the casual DC-area patron to the academic researcher accessing DCPL resources online. The Cold War was a complex historical period—it is many things, and it cannot be adequately described in a single work or from a single perspective. It is the intention of this collection's administrators to offer many perspectives on the subject of the Cold War, and to employ a thorough, balanced approach to their curation.

Selection Criteria

1. Subject matter relates significantly to the Cold War, which shall be defined as the historical period beginning with the announcement of the Truman Doctrine on March 12, 1947, and ending with the fall and dissolution of the Soviet Union on December 26, 1991, during which an era of frequently escalating nuclear tensions, proxy warfare, and espionage ensued between the United States and the USSR
2. Provides either explicit or thematic insight into the Cold War
3. Is by a reputable author or publisher (or producer/creator)
4. *(If fictional)* Is not generally considered to be science-fiction or fantasy¹
5. *(If research)* Is peer reviewed, or authored/endorsed by reputable historian/researcher
6. *(If government or military resource/document)* Has clear origin and credentials; is not classified or has been officially declassified
7. Adheres to US copyright law and/or Creative Commons license

¹ This criterion is intended to A) effectively preclude fiction in which the only potential connection to the Cold War is that nuclear war is an aspect of the premise, while B) effectively allowing for the inclusion of such titles as *Alas, Babylon* and *Threads*—in which both nuclear war and the Cold War could be considered main story elements—as well as C) alternate history titles like *For All Mankind*.

Date of Publication

This collection is intended to provide both an accurate representation of current public knowledge of the Cold War as well as a resource for historical artifacts associated with the period. Some of these latter materials may at times proffer what are now known to be inaccurate or misunderstood theories, principles, or ideas. It is thought that the importance of including such artifacts outweighs any potential for misinformation due to their inclusion, which is likely negligible. For this and other reasons, the date of a material's publication should have little or no negative influence over its inclusion.

Paul Bracken's *The Command and Control of Nuclear Forces*, for example, is an exhaustively detailed academic examination of the systems and procedures that govern and manage nuclear weapons arsenals. It was published, however, in 1980, and so its utility in terms of *modern* weapons systems and procedures will be rather limited. Regardless, modern weapons systems fall outside the scope of this collection—the Cold War ended in 1991, so those looking for information on modern nuclear forces will need to look elsewhere. Bracken's work definitively meets all criteria for inclusion in this collection.

Selection, Maintenance and Weeding

In terms of historical periods, the Cold War's proximity to the present makes it a relatively fluid area of study—new, more accurate information is frequently revealed as journalists and researchers dig deeper into the recent past via FOIA (Freedom of Information Act) requests, or when previously classified documents are declassified by the government, or as officials become less reluctant to disclose increasingly obsolete state secrets.

As a result, careful maintenance and weeding (deselection) of preexisting collection materials should coincide with the annual selection of new materials. The collection should be reshaped and developed during this process to more accurately reflect and represent the contemporary body of public knowledge and discourse on the Cold War.

The basic process for selecting new collection materials should consist of progressing alphabetically by author through the Library of Congress Subject Heading entries for "Cold War" and identifying the titles most appropriate for inclusion. (This first iteration [2022] ended in the 'Bo's.) A more nuanced and analytical approach should be implemented concurrently to ensure the collection has a human touch and to maintain its robustness.

Records of all changes made to the collection will be kept and maintained as an administrative component to the collection. Special attention will be given to ensuring that media formats are standard, up-to-date, and readily accessible to both in-person patrons and online users—materials in outmoded formats will tend to render the collection less dynamic and useful.

Content Challenges

When a resource is challenged for reasons related to legitimacy or accuracy, measures will be taken to authenticate the information, up to and including consultation with experts or

authority figures. Otherwise, the procedures outlined in the DCPL Collection Development Standards (under “Purchasing Decisions”) will be followed.

Gifts and Suggestions

(See the DCPL Collection Development Standards)