Polar Studies Resources in the Dartmouth College Libraries
Amy Witzel, with contributions by Barbara DeFelice, Jay Satterfield, and A. Nicole Stuckenberger

The Dartmouth College Library collections of print, digital, visual and audio materials are a rich resource in polar studies collected over more than two centuries of research and teaching in the areas. The collections can support your research at any point, whether gathering background information at the beginning stage of your project, or investigating detailed information at advanced stages.

Polar research projects using Dartmouth College Library resources cover a wide range of disciplines. For example, undergraduate projects during the 2007-2008 academic year include: technological change in traditional Sami transportation; the implications of oil drilling in the Alaska National Wildlife Refuge for Gwich’in communities; an examination of differing worldviews of the Aurora Borealis; and the influence of traditional Inuit clothing on the design of modern cold-weather gear.

Although there is no single best path to your research, you will find it easiest to start with a brief overview of a topic – such as an encyclopedia article, moving on to in-depth books and gathering more specialized information as the work progresses. Or you may be inspired by browsing titles of published research articles. You can generate such a list by entering a keyword into a search engine that covers journal and magazine articles, often called an article index or article database. Yet another approach is to draw inspiration from a physical object or primary source, such as an explorer’s diary in Rauner Special Collections Library, a scientific instrument from Dartmouth’s Scientific Instrument Collection [LINK to Instrument Collection gateway] or art and ethnographica in the holdings of the Hood Museum of Art [LINK to gateway guide of Hood]. Studying this object or source in close observation can lead one to understand the issues surrounding it, and its differing interpretations. Your research no doubt will require multiple approaches, and new information gained may raise new questions that cause you to revisit and reframe your topic.

Visiting the Library

The Dartmouth College Library comprises nine physical locations at both the College & the Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center campuses, and supports undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, clinicians, researchers, and staff in the School of Arts & Sciences, Tuck School of Business, Thayer School of Engineering, Dartmouth Medical School, as well as the Medical Center. All are welcome to use library materials on site, including our online subscriptions. Visitors beyond the Dartmouth community wishing to borrow material may purchase a Borrowers Card at the Baker-Berry Library Circulation Desk. For additional information, see our visitor page.

Polar materials can be found across the entire library system. The most significant holdings can be found at the following libraries:
• **Baker-Berry Library** has a substantial selection of books, journals and other materials on polar region history, exploration, geography, cartography, government policy and ethnology. For a sense of relevant items in Baker-Berry’s collection, run [this search in the library catalog](#).

Additional cultural materials are housed in the following locations:
- **Sherman Art Library** (Carpenter Hall)
- **Paddock Music Library** (Hopkins Center basement)
- Jones Media Center (Berry Level 2) has a selection of documentary and dramatic [films related to polar regions](#).
- Evans Map Room (Berry Level 2) houses a large number of [maps and atlases of polar regions](#).

• **Kresge Physical Sciences Library** houses the physical sciences collections and includes materials in earth and environmental sciences, space physics, and meteorology. For a sense of relevant items in Kresge’s collection, run [this search in the library catalog](#).

• **Rauner Special Collections Library** houses the College Archives, rare book and manuscript collections, and includes the [Stefansson Collection on Polar Exploration](#) - based on the private research collection of Arctic explorer Vilhjalmur Stefansson (1879-1962). Rauner Library is a rich source of primary document material, perhaps best appreciated once your initial background research has been completed. For a sense of the wider Rauner collection related to polar research, run [this search in the library catalog](#). For a sense of how Rauner’s collections are being used in Dartmouth classes, see this [article](#) from the May 2008 issue of *Dartmouth Life*.

**Starting Your Research**

• **Overview information**
  To get started, use the print and online reference collections and the very helpful reference staff! Our reference collections include specialized dictionaries and encyclopedias to help you understand the basic issues around a topic and identify key themes, terminology, geographic locations, and (often) a starting list of related documents. Relevant titles include the *Encyclopedia of the Arctic*; *Encyclopedia of the Antarctic; Exploring Polar Frontiers : a Historical Encyclopedia*; and the *Encyclopedia of World Cultures*. For further exploration, the library catalog contains records for books, periodicals, films, research databases (and more!) across the Dartmouth College Library system, and allows keyword searching across catalog records or browsing author, title, or subject headings.

• **Research articles**
  Find research journal articles on your topic by using subject-specific search engines such as *Arctic & Antarctic Regions*, which covers topics from Anthropology to Zoology from 1800-present. Other excellent sources of research
articles are GeoBase, and Web of Science, which has sections for Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences as well as Sciences.

Many libraries offer access to general purpose article search engines, which cover research journals as well as popular-press magazines such as Newsweek. At Dartmouth you have access to a few general purpose search engines, including Academic Search Premier.

Be aware that many of these databases do not link directly to the full-text of the article and instead serve as searchable indexes, providing only the article’s author, title and journal information (issue date and paging), and perhaps a summary. These databases’ primary role is to reveal – not deliver – existing research. Dartmouth does not subscribe to all the journals covered, so you’ll need to search our library catalog to see if we own the one you need. We don’t list individual articles in the Library catalog, but you will find journal, magazine and newspaper titles with the years available in print or electronic form there. Request items not owned at Dartmouth via our interlibrary loan services, BorrowDirect and DartDoc.

- **Primary resources**
  Most primary sources such as archival and manuscript materials can be found at the Rauner Special Collections Library. Rauner houses one of the best collections of polar research materials in the world in its Stefansson Collection on Polar Research. Rauner’s staff has created a large number of detailed finding aids for individual components of the Stefansson collection. [Finding aids are listed in call number order; for Stefansson finding aids, scroll down to entries with call number beginning “STEM”].

- **Accessing online resources**
  Expect to find materials in all formats - including electronic - but realize not all of our collection has been digitized. Our online resources (including encyclopedias, bibliographies, books, newspapers/magazines/journals, and statistical databases) are listed in the library catalog along with books, DVDs, CDs and other materials. Most are available from any computer on the Dartmouth network for Dartmouth students, faculty and staff, and from computers within the libraries for non-Dartmouth researchers and students. Links to these resources are available from our library catalog as well as our subject guides.

- **Need additional help?**
  Don’t hesitate to telephone, email, or visit a reference librarian for help with your research. In addition to helping to find relevant materials and navigate our library databases, we can also help you work through your topic. For more information, see our Reference Help page.