The Harry Ransom Center is a humanities research library and museum. Current exhibitions are on display in the galleries on the first floor. The Gutenberg Bible and the First Photograph are on permanent display in the lobby. The Ransom Center is free and open to the public.

**In the Gallery**

*Banned, Burned, Seized, and Censored*  

The exhibition *Banned, Burned, Seized, and Censored* reveals the machinery of censorship at work in America during the interwar years, letting writers, reformers, attorneys, and publishers speak for themselves and illuminating the complex negotiations that occurred at the intersection of literature and “obscenity.”

1. Many different organizations actively banned offensive literature in America. Name 3 of these organizations.
   1. _______________________________________________________________________________
   2. _______________________________________________________________________________
   3. _______________________________________________________________________________

2. Who was one of the most active attorneys for the anti-censorship cause during the interwar years?
   _______________________________________________________________________________
3. What is a “smut hound”?

__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________

4. In summary, what is being discussed in the letters written between E. Greenbaum and J. Sumner? (Location: left side of the gallery, in the “Negotiating Obscenity” section)

__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________

5. What challenges do you think publishers and bookshop owners faced during this time?

__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________

6. In Boston, how did “objectionable” book titles start leaving bookstore shelves?

__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________

7. How did pro-censorship organizations use extra-legal intimidation to wage war on “objectionable” literature?

__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________

8. In the photograph, “Upton Sinclair in Boston, 14 July 1927,” what is Upton Sinclair doing? What were some potential consequences? (Image location: back wall of the gallery, in the “New England Watch and Ward Society” section)

__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________

9. How did Walt Whitman find himself in the middle of the early 1880’s censorship controversy?

__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
10. What were some of the fears that Claude McKay and his publisher faced?
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________

11. How did writers respond to censorship? Give a specific example form the exhibition.
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________

12. How did customs agents decide which books to seize?
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________

13. How did the Smoot-Hawley Tariff affect the distribution of literature in the United States?
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________

14. What was the Comstock Act and how did it affect the United States Post Office?
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
15. Briefly describe how censorship has changed from the mid 1930s to the present.

__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________

Need help? A guide to the exhibition is available at the front desk.