Library shelfmarks
The Library has two sequences of shelfmarks – Dewey, which files numerically (e.g. 320.941 = British politics) and Bliss, which files alphabetically (e.g. MUA = British history). To find a particular item on the shelves, note the complete shelfmark from the catalogue.

Shelf pattern
The shelf pattern for finding books is across (from left to right) and from top to bottom (see overleaf).

Finding items on Levels 1–3
The main book stack begins on Level 1, running from 001s near the Help Desk to 322 at the far end. From there the sequence continues through the yellow arches by the stairs in a circuit that returns to the yellow arches at 720.94 and then progresses to Level 2, to 841, and finally to Level 3, where the sequence continues on to 999 and where the older Bliss classification is to be found.

Finding books and photocopied articles in the Reading Room Collection
The Reading Room Collection holds core reference items and photocopied articles. Photocopied articles are held in a numerical sequence, prefixed by P/C (photocopy), e.g. P/C 4122. The Reading Room can be found by following the red carpet stripe from the Help Desk, walking through the yellow arches, turning left past the photocopiers and then through the audio-visual collection and Quiet Study Area. Reference Collection items are also located in the Reading Room.

Finding journals
Journals held in print format can be found on Level 4. Electronic journals are accessible via the eLibrary at http://www.bbk.ac.uk/lib/elib. Please note: Some journals are held only in print, some only in electronic format; others are held in both formats.

Finding audio-visual material
The A/V collection can be found by following the red carpet stripe past the photocopiers and then through the glass link into the Quiet Study Area.

Birkbeck Library Floor Guide

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<td>Level 4</td>
<td>Journals: Print Journals in alphabetical order</td>
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| Level 3 | Books ACC - XXV: Bliss Classification using letters  
Books 842 - 999: Main Book Sequence – Dewey Classification using numbers |
| Level 2 | Books 720.941 - 841: Main Book Sequence including Literature |
| Level 1 | Books 001 - 720.94: Main Book Sequence, Reading Room Collection, Reference Collection, A/V collection |
Looking for your item
Once you have located the floor on which your item is held, by using the floor guide (overleaf) or by following the signs in the Library, you then need to find the correct shelf for your particular item. For example, if you are searching for Politics UK by Jones & Norton, the shelfmark for this is 320.941 POL. Remember to write down the whole shelfmark, including the letters.

First, find the shelf stack containing the 320s, then move along to the 320.9s until you come to 320.941 and from there use the letters, which will be in alphabetical order, to get to 320.941 POL.

Classification schemes explained
The example given above is from the numerical Dewey classification sequence, which most of the Library’s printed books are shelved in. However, works in the Literature section use a variation on this system, and there is also an older sequence of books located on Level 3 that uses the alphabetical Bliss classification instead.

Dewey classification
Dewey items are classified according to their subject area and are shelved in numerical order. You will need to note the whole shelfmark – all the numbers and all the letters – in order to locate your item easily. Items with the same number are shelved together and arranged alphabetically by the letters which follow the number.

So: 658 BAR before 658.382 EMP before 658.4 ADA before 658.40082 DAV before 658.40082 MAR

Literature in Dewey
Literature includes works both by an author and about that author. For example, 827 DIC 6 COL is criticism of Dickens, made up of 827 (English Literature) DIC (Subject – Dickens) 6 (Subject area – criticism) COL (Author – Collins).

So: 827 DIC 4 PRI before 827 DIC 6 COL before 827 DIC BLE before 827.3 DAL before 827.3008 SLA

Bliss classification
This is a classification system using mainly letters but which includes some numbers and a three-letter suffix. In Bliss, letters plus numbers are shelved before letters without numbers and then alphabetically by the suffix.

So: V3 before V3B before V3Bea before V3Bf before V4 before VA [Ald] before VA [Edw]

How the shelf stacks are arranged
The shelving pattern is from left to right across each bay, moving from top to bottom, as shown in the