

Unit 2: Research in Your Discipline

Project: Researching Scholarly Sources (15% of final course grade)

Writing Process Schedule:

Potential Research Question Due: Tuesday, 10/12 by 9:00AM through Blackboard

One Full Annotation and Outline of Topic Evaluation Due: Monday, 10/18 by 9:00AM through Blackboard

Full Rough Draft Due: Before your [individual conference](#) the week of 10/25

FINAL DRAFT DUE: Wednesday, 11/3 by 9:00AM through Blackboard

Description:

Keeping track of your sources is an important step in any research process, and this ongoing step will help you to build and strengthen those skills. This assignment will help you to choose effective and credible sources to answer your research question and learn more about your topic. There are two parts to this assignment: the research process and the research entries.

- I. Research Process: Discuss your topic, research question, and research process.
- II. Research Entries: Select 8 highly relevant, credible sources (see [FAQ](#) for more details) and write narratives that summarize, evaluate, and reflect on each source.

Research Process:

Describe the research process that led to the sources that you found. This part should be about 500 words and will include at least the following things (though you can and should expand beyond these questions):

- What topic have you chosen to write about for your literature review?
- What research question did you write in order to guide your research?
- Why is your topic important to your discipline? Include quotes, paraphrases, or summaries from at least two sources that show why this research is important in your discipline.
- What purpose does your research serve (*e.g. will it address existing conflicts in the published research, gaps in the research that illustrate the need for more studies, etc.*)?
- Write a short narrative explaining your research process, using the following questions as a guide: What research did you do in order to narrow your topic into a more focused and specific research question? What key words did you use to search and how did you adjust them throughout the research process? What sources, ideas, or feedback changed the course of your research and your understanding of the topic?
- How did you decide which sources were the most important to include in your final research entries? What perspectives do these sources bring to the larger conversation about your topic?

Research Entries:

Each research entry should include the following things. You may combine all of these things into 1-2 paragraphs or you may list them out with the numbers below, as long as you are writing in full sentences.

1. Include a full citation, which should be in the citation style appropriate for your discipline (See [FAQ](#) for more details)

2. Write a brief (3-4 sentence) summary in which you state the genre of the source (scholarly article, trade article, grey literature), detail the author's purpose for writing, the argument or conclusion of their research, and the elements of the source that you found most important and relevant to your research. Include quotes or paraphrases of specific sections that you want to keep from this source.
3. Write a brief (3-4 sentence) evaluation of the source's credibility. If you do any research on the author/publication, which you should, make sure that you cite that information by providing a parenthetical citation or hyperlink. This thorough evaluation should consider at least two different elements from the IF I APPLY framework, and it should be clear from your narrative that you thought critically about which elements to evaluate for each source entry.
4. A detailed description of what this source adds to the conversation about your topic and how this source connects with at least one other source in your final assignment. (Note: This should not simply be a statement of "this source agrees with source X because they both make the same argument." Consider specific connections relating to methods, findings, references, etc.)

Frequently Asked Questions:

Q. What if I don't know what citation style my discipline uses?

A. If you're not sure, you can ask your major-specific advisor, a professor in your major/concentration, or your [subject librarian](#). You can look at submission requirements for authors who submit to a major academic journal in your discipline (For example, if your discipline is Sociology, you could look at the information for authors who submit work to the American Journal of Sociology). Finally, this [resource from Purdue OWL](#) is a good place to start, though your discipline may vary from the larger major listed on the page.

Q. Do my sources all have to be recent?

A. The answer is really, "it depends." As we've talked about in class, it depends on whether your discipline is one that changes quickly (like IT or Cybersecurity) or one that doesn't change as quickly (English Literature). It also depends on your research question—Are you considering a trend in the research (which would require that you look for some sources that go back a bit further) or are you seeking to fill a gap in the research (which would require more current sources)? You will also want to consider sources that are seminal or classic words in your discipline that you can use as a foundation for later research. When we talk about evaluating sources for credibility, currency is something that we will talk about.

Q. What is a "highly relevant, credible source?"

A. The short answer is that you need scholarly, peer-reviewed sources for this literature review. For most of you, all 8 of your sources must meet that requirement. There are some disciplines, however, where research is disseminated in a different way, and if that is the case, you may use 1-2 sources that are of a different genre. For example, citing conference proceedings in a scholarly article is more common in Cybersecurity than it would be in History. Some art and design disciplines have thorough articles in trade magazines. If your topic is political in nature, you may need to include sources that fall under the category of [grey literature](#). Because all of these sources are *not* scholarly, peer-reviewed articles, you will need to do an even more

thorough evaluation of their credibility and make certain that they are crucial to your research before deciding to include them. It is important for your *ethos* as an author to ensure that you use credible sources in your research.

Q. Do I have to write an essay with these sources?

A. Yes. The research in your discipline unit asks you to craft a research question that is relevant to your major, find sources to answer that question, and then use those sources to write a literature review. We'll talk more about literature reviews later in the semester, but here's a quick overview:

In a research paper, you use the literature (another word for the sources that you found) as a foundation on which to build your own argument. The focus of a literature review, however, is to summarize and synthesize the arguments and ideas of others without adding new contributions. You will use the sources that you searched for and selected in the annotated bibliography to explain trends in the discipline, new findings and research, or even gaps in the research for a specific field.

Q. What do I need to bring to the individual conference?

A. Before your individual conference, you will submit a rough draft of the Researching Scholarly Sources assignment. The rough draft should include, at minimum, the following things: **A list of all 8 sources that you will use, narratives for at least 4 of your sources, and an outline of the answers to the questions in the research process portion of the assignment.**

Formatting and Audience and Tone (10% of final grade):

- Place your citations in alphabetical order by author's last name
- Write in Times New Roman, 12 pt. font (can be single or double-spaced)
- Each citation must be in the citation style that is appropriate for your discipline

The **audience** for this assignment is students like you: Emerging scholars in the discipline—people who have a foundation in the field, but who are not familiar with this specific topic. Since you're writing in an academic genre, you'll now be required to write in academic tone. Academic tone means a lot of things that we will discuss in the coming weeks. For this assignment, focus on these elements:

- Write clearly and concisely, using appropriate language for a professional and academic audience
- Do not use contractions (i.e. it's, they're, can't)
- Avoid subjective statements about whether the source is "good" or "not good" and instead focus on statements that show your critical thinking about a source's credibility

An A-level researching scholarly sources assignment will:

- Include 8 highly relevant, credible sources.
- Include correct citations in the citation style for your discipline
- Have an insightful and thorough summary, reflection, and evaluation for each of the 8 sources.
- Explain your research process, topic, and sources.
- Be written in an academic tone.

- Have minimal grammatical errors that impede the reader's understanding of the writing and be formatted correctly.