# INLS 151 Retrieving & Analyzing Information Fall 2015

# FINAL EXAM

NAME:

"On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid on this assignment"

Your initials:

This competency examination will test your information literacy and research skills. To complete the examination you will employ concepts and resources taught in INLS 151. Using library resources (catalog, databases, library guides) you will conduct advanced searches to identify appropriate material on your selected topic. The steps will guide you through this literature search:

1. identify and skim one or two entries in a reference source to get a brief overview of your selected topic (this will help you identify appropriate keywords with which to craft search strings)
2. search a statistical information source to identify supporting/background information relating to your selected topic
3. determine initial keywords, synonyms, and search strings relevant to the topic
4. identify appropriate subject headings from a database that reflect the nature of the topic
5. construct and perform several searches using appropriate Boolean operators, phrases, truncation, limits/facets, and other advanced search techniques to identify material that supports one or more aspects of your selected topic. Included in this process will be any search limits/facets to scope the searches by the stated parameters (e.g. publication date range, peer-review, etc.)
6. select two information sources (scholarly and/or non-scholarly) that support your topic; cite each in APA format; evaluate and justify your selections using criteria we’ve discussed in class

Please select **one** of the following topics with which to complete the exam. Each topic is fairly broad so you may choose to focus on one of the sub-questions or create your own tangential question directly related to the overarching topic. Design your search strategies and select resources that would help you better understand the topic – I don’t expect you to find a golden article that addresses every sub-question.

1. **Treating addiction**: What does current research tell us about treating addition to alcohol and/or drugs? Is medication recommended? Are psychotherapy and support groups like AA and NA more effective? Is there a vaccine to treat addiction?
2. **Prison reform**: Many low-level nonviolent drug offenders have been locked up for long periods of time, contributing to prison overcrowding and state budget deficits. What evidence is available regarding mandatory sentencing and rationale for changing such laws?
3. **Online privacy**: Are new laws needed to prevent organizations from collecting online personal data? Many privacy advocates want the United States to adopt Europe's stronger regulatory approach, and business advocates want Europe to become more like the less-regulated U.S. What types of personal data do experts consider most “at risk” in terms of privacy?
4. **Alternative medicine**: What does “alternative medicine” mean? What are some examples of alternative medicine in practice? How is it viewed by “traditional medicine”? Can alternative medicine save health plans and insurers money?
5. **Cheating, plagiarism and illicit academic collaboration**: recent studies have found that cheating is prevalent among high-achieving students. How? Why? Is this a new trend?

**STEP ONE**: Identify and skim one or two entries in a reference source to get a brief overview of your selected topic (this will help you identify appropriate keywords with which to craft search strings). Locate one article/entry from a **REFERENCE SOURCE** that provides background information relating to your topic. Read it to identify some keywords that you might not have thought of yet.

1. Go to the UNC Libraries Homepage: <http://www.lib.unc.edu/>

2. Click on E-Research By Discipline

3. Select the **PUBLIC ISSUES** and/or **REFERENCE** category

4. Suggested resources from these two lists:

* *CQ Researcher (*covers the most current and controversial issues of the day with complete summaries, insight into all sides of the issues, statistics, charts & graphs, bibliographies and more)
* *Issues and Controversies on File* (a reference database that contains full text articles on current topics of interest, arranged in opposing points of view)
* *Gale Virtual Reference Library* (collection of reference books and encyclopedias in electronic format. The titles cover a wide range of subjects, from the arts to medicine, and from multicultural studies to social science)
* *Oxford Reference Online Premium (a*llows searching hundreds of basic reference sources)
* *SAGE Knowledge* (provides full-text access to high quality reference works in many areas of the social sciences)

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| Citation in APA format for the entry you selected that seemed to provide a good overview of your topic |  |
| In which reference compilation source did you find it? (e.g. CQ Researcher, Issues & Controversies, SAGE Knowledge, etc.) |  |
| Keywords or aspects of the topic that you gleaned from this and will incorporate into your search strategy |  |

**[2 Points out of 20 Points]**

**STEP TWO:** Use one of the two resources listed below to search for and identify some **STATISTICAL INFORMATION** relating to your selected topic. By searching for existing statistics, charts, and graphs, you will better understand how your topic is described and represented in current information/news sources. Take note of how the overarching topic is addressed in terms of scope, subtopics and facets – this may help you refine, narrow or find an interesting twist to your topic and bring it into a manageable scope.

The two statistical sources I suggest for current/popular issues are *Statista* (via library subscription) and *Pew Research Center* (freely available on the web).

**STATISTA** *(*statistics and studies gathered by market researchers. Statista has more public data than any other statistical resource on the web)

1. Go to the UNC Libraries Homepage: <http://www.lib.unc.edu/>

2. Click on E-Research By Discipline

3. Select the **STATICS (NUMERIC DATA)** category

4. Suggested resources from these two lists:

**PEW RESEARCH CENTER:** [**http://www.pewresearch.org/**](http://www.pewresearch.org/)

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| If you find a relevant chart, graph or statistics, please write down the citation information including title, author/source, any date/year, and the URL |  |
| If you do not find any relevant statistical information, tell me what terms and/or phrases you used to search either Statista or Pew |  |

**[2 Points out of 20 Points]**

**STEP THREE:** Now that you’ve read a background piece and done a little searching for statistical coverage, determine initial **KEYWORDS AND SEARCH STRINGS** that you think will be effective in searching library databases for literature on your topic. Remember to break down the topic into individual/discrete concepts or components, think of synonyms for each concept, and consider truncating terms down to the root word to cover any variance.

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| **Keywords and search strings using Boolean logic**  Examples:   1. I am interested in how people cope with the death of a loved one. So my basic/discrete concepts are:   Coping and death   1. Next I think of synonyms for each component:   (cope or coping or grief or grieving)  (death or dying)   1. Then I combine these with Boolean operators to craft my search string:   (cope OR coping OR grief OR grieving)  AND  (death or dying)  4) I will paste the search strings into a database to search |  |

**[2 Points out of 20 Points]**

**STEP FOUR**: Search at least one of the library databases (suggestions below) to identify appropriate **SUBJECT HEADINGS** (controlled vocabulary/database thesaurus – ‘what they call something’) from the list in that database that reflects the nature of the topic.

One of these suggested library databases should provide access to articles about your topic

* **Academic Search Premier:** Covers popular and scholarly journal articles with many full-text articles
* **PsycINFO**: the most comprehensive international database of psychology; includes relevant materials from related disciplines such as medicine, psychiatry, education, social work, law, criminology, social science, and organizational behavior.
* **Communication and Mass Media Complete:** Indexes over 400 journals in the areas of Communication Studies and Journalism & Mass Communication
* **Business Source Complete:** provides full-text business journals and hundreds of scholarly, peer-reviewed journals covering all aspects of business
* **Education Full-Text**: covers more than 600 periodicals in the field of education

1. Go to the UNC Libraries Homepage: <http://www.lib.unc.edu/>
2. Click on E-Research By Discipline
3. Databases are recommended in a variety of categories here – but there is also an alphabetical listing in the lower right-hand corner. Use whichever way works for you to access specific library databases.
4. Once you are in the selected database – look around to find access to their **subject headings** – usually called ***thesaurus*** *or* ***subject terms*** *or* ***descriptors*** *or* ***index***
5. Browse/search through this list to see what subject headings this particular database uses in regard to your topic. For example, in Business Source Complete, they use the phrase “viral marketing” instead of “viral advertising” in tagging articles by topic. Academic Search Premier uses “e-mail” instead of “email” in tagging articles by topic.

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| **Name of selected database**  **(not “EBSCO” for example, the name of the actual database, such as Academic Search Premier or PsycINFO)** |  |
| **Subject headings (and subheadings if available) that look appropriate** |  |

**[2 Points out of 20 Points]**

**STEP FIVE:** Construct and perform searches in TWO different library databases using appropriate Boolean operators, phrases, truncation, limits/facets, and other advanced search techniques to identify material that supports one or more aspects of your selected topic. Do you need to add search limits/facets to scope the searches by the stated parameters (e.g. publication date range, peer-review, etc.)? Do you need to revise/modify search strategies to identify the information that best fits the stated information need?

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| **Name of first selected database** |  |
| **Search strings you try**  e.g. (term OR term) AND term\*  **Limits/facets you set**  e.g. (peer-reviewed, publication date 2007-2012), etc.)  **Revisions/modifications of search**  (e.g. you get too many results so you add in another search term; you get too few results so you choose other keywords)  **[1 Point out of 20 Points]** |  |

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| **Name of second selected database** |  |
| **Search strings you try**  e.g. (term OR term) AND term\*  **Limits/facets you set**  e.g. (peer-reviewed, publication date 2007-2012), etc.)  **Revisions/modifications of search**  (e.g. you get too many results so you add in another search term; you get too few results so you choose other keywords)  **[1 Point out of 20 Points]** |  |

**STEP SIX:** Select two resources that best support the information need you selected. Provide the complete citation to the item in correct APA style format. You may consult the *APA Style Cheat Sheet* from our class website: <http://ils.unc.edu/courses/2015_fall/inls151_002/Handouts.html> Evaluate and justify your selections using criteria we’ve discussed in class (also described on final page of exam). Evaluate each source using 2-3 criteria (sentence structure or bullets).

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| **Resource #1**  **Citation in APA format**  **[2 Points out of 20 Points]** |  |
| **Evaluation / justification**  **[3 Points out of 20 Points]** |  |
| **Resource #2**  **Citation in APA format**  **[2 Points out of 20 Points]** |  |
| **Evaluation / justification**  **[3 Points out of 20 Points]** |  |

***Evaluating Resources***

*Here is a list of criteria you should use to evaluate your resources.*

*Each criterion includes a list of guiding questions to help you evaluate each resource.*

**Author**

* Does the author have authority on the topic?
* What are the author’s credentials?
  + Does the author have a graduate degree in the area she or he is writing about and/or do they teach at a college or university?
  + Are they associated with an organization that is concerned about the issues that the author is writing about?
* Has the author written any other works? [You might search the author’s name in other databases and/or the web]
* Consult Web of Science to see how many and what other publications the author has written
* If the content is located on a specific organization’s web site, what do you know about the organization?
* Is contact information provided for the author or creator?

**Publisher**

* What, if anything, do you already know about the publisher?
* Consult the publisher’s website to help answer the following questions:
  + Do they have a reputation for publishing quality information?
  + Does the publisher have a clearly articulated editorial policy?
  + Is the publisher a university press, a large commercial publisher, a small publisher, or an alternative press?
* Consult Ulrich’s Web Online (Guide to Periodicals) to learn more about the journal and publisher (scholarly or not, how long it has been published, etc.)
* Consult Web of Science to see measurement of impact of the journal

**Type of Information**

* Is the information scholarly, popular, governmental or from a private business? What influence does this have on how you use the information?
* Has the author looked at the material objectively?
* Is there a consensus of opinion on this topic? What are the important ideas?
* Does the source provide information relevant to your research focus/thesis argument?
* How does the source help answer your research questions?

**Purpose**

* What is the purpose of the source? How will it impact your research? Is the purpose to inform, entertain, teach, or to influence?
* Is the author giving a factual report, presenting a well-researched scholarly opinion, or relaying a personal opinion?
* Who is the intended audience--general public or other academics and researchers?
* Does the author offer several points of view?
* Can you identify objective writing (both sides of the argument) or a subjective bias (expressing one's own point of view)?

**Sources**

* Can you determine where the author gathered the information? (hint: in addition to citations and footnotes, look for in-text references to outside sources)
* Is the material from original research, experiments, observation, interviews, books or documents?
* Are secondary references (a bibliography, for example) provided?

**Currency**

* When was the material published? (NOTE: copyright date is not the same as publication date)
* Is the information accurate for when it was written?
* Does your research demand current information or is older information useful?
* How often is research updated in this discipline?
* Is the website updated frequently?

**Style**

* Is the writing style of the author clear and understandable? Does the author legitimately need to use complex language because of the subject matter, or is complex technical language used to possibly confuse the reader?
* Are helpful charts, graphs, or pictures provided?