# INLS 151 Retrieving & Analyzing Information Spring 2016

# MIDTERM 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)

[1 points possible]

1. determine initial keywords and search strings relevant to the topic

[1 points possible]

1. identify appropriate subject headings from each database that reflect the nature of topic

[1 points possible]

1. 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

[4 points possible]

1. include search limits/facets to scope the searches by the stated parameters (e.g. publication date range, peer-review, etc.)

[included in 4 points above]

1. revise/modify search strategies as needed to identify the information that best fits the stated information need

[included in 4 points above]

1. evaluate and justify your selections using criteria we’ve discussed in class

[3 points possible]

You must complete the entire exam using this document/form, so the first thing you should do is save this document locally (to your personal computer, a flash drive, etc.) so that you don’t lose any work. When you have completed the exam, save & submit the entire document to me as a .doc or .docx via email: [rclemens@unc.edu](mailto:rclemens@unc.edu)

Please use the subject heading: *Midterm\_Lastname*

**Completed exams are due to me via email by 5:00 pm on Wednesday, March 9.**

I am happy to meet with you and answer any specific questions about the exam, email me to set up an appointment.

Please select **one** of the following information-need scenarios with which to complete the exam.

**Restorative Justice**

In your public policy class you are required to explore the theory and practice of *restorative justice* and write a 10-page paper discussing the different sides of this issue. Restorative justice is a different way of thinking about crime and our response to crime and has been developing over the last 35 years. It focuses on repairing the harm caused by crime, requiring offenders to take responsibility for their actions rather than automatic incarceration. For example, proponents envision non-violent offenders working in closely monitored community projects, earning money with which to make financial restitution to their victims and their victims’ families. There are many examples of restorative justice in practice – from victim-offender mediation to sentencing circles through which a plan is constructed so the offender can repair the harm done.

You need to identify some background information in order to better understand differing opinions on this philosophical approach to crime and punishment. And it would be helpful to find a few real-world examples of how this works (or doesn’t work) in real life situations. You probably want to focus on more recent research and examples (maybe going back 10 years). And a mix of scholarly research and professional or news sources would provide a nice balance.

**Digital Journalism**

In your journalism class you have been reading about the changes in where people get their news and the impact of social media on this phenomenon. One article from The Atlantic (<http://tinyurl.com.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/o7ev4jv> ) notes that, computer-generated algorithms funnel stories on particular subjects or from particular viewpoints to users based on profiles developed from stories they followed in the past. Increasingly, people are referred to news via their friends on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram or other services rather than seeking out news sites on their own.

You want to write a paper that explores whether this sort of self-selective process combined with algorithmic feeds are narrowing the kinds of information Americans are exposed to. So you need to find some background information on *digital journalism* and look into how researchers are tracking this phenomenon. As this is a time-sensitive issue, you will probably want to limit your search to the past 5 years but both popular and scholarly sources may be helpful.

**Consumer decision-making and marketing**

In your psychology class you are studying about decision-making and decision-theory and need to write a term paper relating to this area. A lot of the research in this area comes from economics – how people make rational choices (or irrational choices) in terms of economic decisions. You get the idea to investigate decision-making from a marketing/advertising perspective. How do companies influence or appeal to consumer decision-making? Do they play to certain emotions (cute puppy, adorable baby), to your social identity or social status (trendy brands or expensive products), to your sense of environmental concern (green products), etc.? What do marketing/advertising experts know about **consumer behavior and decision-making**? And how do they use that to try to influence our decisions? So you might look for some specific case studies or examples of how certain products are marketed or more general information on consumer perceptions of quality and value. You will probably want to limit your search to the past 10 years but both popular and scholarly sources may be helpful.

**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, 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)
* *SAGE Knowledge* (provides full-text access to high quality reference works in many areas of the social sciences)
* *Oxford Reference Online Premium (a*llows searching hundreds of basic reference sources)
* *Gale Virtual Reference Library (*collection of reference books and encyclopedias covering a wide range of subjects from arts to medicine, and from multicultural studies to social science)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Citation for the entry you selected that seemed to provide a good overview of your topic | Title of entry:  Author of entry:  Year of publication:  Publisher:  Title of encyclopedia/handbook which contains the article/entry: |
| In which reference compilation source did you find it? (e.g. CQ Researcher, Issues & Controversies, SAGE eReference, etc.) |  |
| Keywords or aspects of the topic that you gleaned from this and will incorporate into your search strategy |  |

**STEP TWO:** Determine initial keywords and search strings relevant to the topic. Generally, what keywords, phrases and search strings do you think will be most helpful? Are there aspects of the topic that you should break into parts? If so, what are they?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Keywords and search strings using Boolean logic**  Examples:  *coping AND grief*  *(death or dying) AND grief*  *cop\* AND (grieve OR grief)*  \*the asterisk is used to truncate root works in almost all databases |  |
| Should you break the overarching topic into different components for better searching? If so, how?  Topical example:  Information on the effects of concussions in college athletes  You could break it down to:  (college OR university)  AND  (athlete\* OR sport\* OR football OR gymnastics)  AND  (concussion OR head injury)  AND  (treatment OR prevent\* OR effect\*) |  |

**STEP THREE**: Search two of the library databases (suggestions below) to identify appropriate subject headings (controlled vocabulary/database thesaurus – ‘what they call something’) from each that reflect the nature of the topic.

The **library catalog** will provide access to books and multimedia material about your topic

1. Go to the UNC Libraries Homepage: <http://www.lib.unc.edu/>
2. Enter keywords in the search box near the top of the page

In addition, these suggested library databases should provide access to articles about your topic

* **Academic Search Premier:** Covers popular and scholarly journal articles – many are full-text or use *Find @ UNC*
* **Communication and Mass Media Complete:** Indexes over 400 journals in the areas of Communication Studies and Journalism & Mass Communication - many are full-text or use *Find @ UNC*
* **Business Source Premier:** provides full-text business journals and hundreds of scholarly, peer-reviewed journals covering all aspects of business - many are full-text or use *Find @ UNC*
* **Education Full-Text**: covers more than 600 periodicals in the field of education
* **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. Some full-text or use *Find @ UNC*
* **Proquest Social Science Journals:** Research covering topics in sociology, social work, anthropology, and politics. Some full-text or use *Find @ UNC*

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 Premier, 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. *Please note that not all databases provide the value-added service of assigning subject headings – for example, JSTOR does not*.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Name of 1st database**  **Subject headings (and subheadings if available) that look appropriate** |  |
| **Name of 2nd database**  **Subject headings (and subheadings if available) that look appropriate** |  |

**STEP FOUR, FIVE AND SIX:** 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. 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?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Name of 1st 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) |  |
| **Name of 2nd 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) |  |

**STEP SEVEN:** Select three resources that best meet the information need you selected. Evaluate and justify your selections using criteria we’ve discussed in class (described on next page). Evaluate each source on 2-3 criteria (sentence structure or bullets).

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Resource #1**  **Citation**  **Evaluation / justification** |  |
| **Resource #2**  **Citation**  **Evaluation / justification** |  |
| **Resource #3**  **Citation**  **Evaluation / justification** |  |

***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?