# INLS 200 Retrieving & Analyzing Information Spring 2013

# 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 200. 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. determine initial keywords and search strings relevant to the topic
3. identify appropriate subject headings from each database that reflect the nature of the topic
4. 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
5. include search limits/facets to scope the searches by the stated parameters (e.g. publication date range, peer-review, etc.)
6. revise/modify search strategies as needed to identify the information that best fits the stated information need
7. evaluate and justify your selections using criteria we’ve discussed in class

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: *Final\_Lastname*

**Complete the exam and send to me by Saturday, May 4 at 3:00 pm**.

I am happy to meet with you and answer any specific questions about the exam – I’m on campus this week and next – just email me to set up an appointment.

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

Factory Farms

You are taking an environment and sustainability course and need to write a paper on a current environmental topic. In the news recently you’ve heard about some of the concerns surrounding factory farms, the large industrial facilities that produce food in high volume (cattle lots, chicken warehouses, etc.). You’ve seen media coverage regarding the use of hormones and antibiotics in animals, pollution from the waste generated by such large concentrations of animals, small farms failing, inhumane treatment of animals, etc. To begin preparing for this paper you need to understand some of the issues relating to factory farming. You need to collect some basic information about one or more of the concerns that have been raised regarding **factory farming** – this could include both scholarly and popular sources. This is not a new issue so information from the past 10 years should be helpful.

Gender equality in media portrayal of athletics

In reading the local newspaper for a number of years, you’ve noticed that the Sports Section features a large photo of a recent high school sporting event(s) every week. You’ve also noticed that the photo is more often than not of high school male athletes. This is puzzling to you and perhaps upsetting. You are going to craft a letter to the editor voicing your concern about the absence or negligible presence of high school female athletes, a **gender gap**, in their news coverage. But you need some information with which to present your dilemma and call for more equality in terms of gender in featured athletes. What is the state of gender equality for athletes in general including high school, college and professional athletes? You will need some fairly current information (last 10 years) to help you form your letter.

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 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 Tools

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 eReference* (provides full-text access to high quality reference works in many areas of the social sciences)
* *Oxford Reference Online (a*llows searching hundreds of basic reference sources)
* *Reference Universe (*access to over 28,000 print and online encyclopedias and similar reference works)

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| 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?

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| **Keywords and search strings using Boolean logic**  Examples:  *cope 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 Complete:** Covers popular and scholarly journal articles with many full-text articles
* **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
* **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.
* **JSTOR:** Provides an image archive of important scholarly journal literature in nearly all the humanities and social sciences disciplines, international and foreign areas studies, and many of the sciences

1. Go to the UNC Libraries Homepage: <http://www.lib.unc.edu/>
2. Click on E-Research Tools
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 Complete 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.

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| **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 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 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).

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| **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?