

SPA198H: A Brief History of Love in the Western World

Making Scholarly Choices

Scholarly Sources

Scholarly sources report on original research by experts in a particular academic discipline. Often they go through a **peer-review process**, which means that they are evaluated by reputable scholars in the field before they are published.

Scholarly & Popular Sources

Criteria for Evaluating Scholarly Journal Articles

Part

Author:

Questions to Ask

Who wrote it? Are they an scholar, journalist, or a writer?

Sources:

Does the author have credentials that qualify him or her to write knowledgeably on the topic?

Does the author acknowledge his or her sources? How?

Content:

Is the content substantial?

Does it appear to be valid and well-researched?

Does it make sense, based on your own background knowledge, or what other articles have to say on the topic?

Writing:

Is the language scholarly?

Is the article or book well written?

Do illustrations and data support the content in a scholarly fashion, or do they appear to be attention-getting, or sensational?

Audience:

Who is the article written for?

Is it written for experts and researchers in the field, or for members of the general public?

Journal:

Is it published in a scholarly journal?

Publisher:

Is it published by a university press or a large commercial publisher (such as Routledge or Palgrave Macmillan) that specializes in producing scholarly books?

Is the journal scholarly?

Is the article published in a scholarly journal? How would you find out?

Investigate the journal using these two strategies:

1. Visit the journal's website to learn more about the periodical.

Is it published by a scholarly association such as the Canadian Sociological Association?

Is it published by a university press?

On the journal's website, look for the "about this journal" or "submission guidelines" section to learn

about the publication's editorial policy.

2. Search the journal name in [Ulrichsweb](#) to determine if it is scholarly or peer-reviewed.

The black and white referee's shirt indicates that the journal is peer-reviewed.

Scholarly articles, book reviews & literature reviews

These three types of publications are part of the scholarly communication cycle, but their content and purpose differ in important ways.

Scholarly Articles

As we discussed, *scholarly articles* describe new knowledge or ideas based on original research, analysis and/or interpretation. They are often peer-reviewed.

- Example: Marcocci, Giuseppe. [“Is This Love? Same-Sex Marriages in Renaissance Rome.”](#) *Historical Reflections*, vol. 41, no. 2, 2015, pp. 37-52.

Book Reviews

Book reviews are also published in scholarly journals, but they do not contain original research and are not peer-reviewed.

The purpose of a review is to *summarize* and *evaluate* a recently published title that contains original research on a specific topic. Often, reviewers contextualize the ideas presented by an author in a particular book within the body of the existing research.

- Example: Hewlett, Mary S.K. [Review of Love and Death in Renaissance Italy.](#) *Renaissance Quarterly*, vol. 58, no. 3, 2005, pp. 912-913.

Literature Reviews

Literature reviews describe and assess original research sources (books and articles) that have been published on a specific topic by scholars. A literature review is usually part of the introduction to a scholarly article.

The purpose of a literature review is to summarize ideas that have been established on a subject and analyze what their strengths and weaknesses are.

- Example: Burns, E. Jane. [“Courtly Love: Who Needs It? Recent Feminist Work in the Medieval French Tradition.”](#) *Signs*, vol. 27, no. 1, 2001, pp. 23-57.

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