



SPA258H: Introduction to Hispanic Literary Studies

Library Research Seminar

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E.J. PRATT LIBRARY

Research Methods Assignment

1. Please go to uoft.me/spa258
2. Click on **Research Methods Assignment** (left-hand side).

Overview

By attending this seminar, we will learn:

- what the **peer review process** is and how it relates to the **scholarly communication cycle**
- the best strategies for locating books, journal articles and other **academic publications**
- the **criteria** that we can apply to determine which publications are the best sources for completing research assignments
- the **advantages** of consulting printed books (and not limiting your research to easily locatable online sources).

What Are Some of the Challenges You Encounter When You Start to Research Your Topic?

Tips for Research Success

- Become friends with librarians and talk to us often
- Begin your work early
- Know the starting points for research in your discipline
- Consult a rich variety of sources (print and electronic)
- Browse the stacks to discover new ideas and approaches, and to further develop your topic.

What is a “Scholarly Journal Article”?

“Scholarly journal articles 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.”

Reference Sources: Encyclopedias, Dictionaries & Handbooks

- Reference sources contain entries which provide an overview of a specific topic
- They are designed to provide background reading for your own development/refinement of a topic
- They provide such introductory information as definitions, major works and scholars who study the topic, the importance of studying a particular issue or idea, and a works cited list.

Group Exercise #2: Examining an Encyclopedia Entry

In groups of two or three read (or skim) the encyclopedia entry handout. Then, answer the following questions:

- 1) What type of information does it provide about the topic?
- 2) Does the entry draw your attention to any terms or concepts or names worth noting?
- 3) How can you use it to find additional sources?

Reference Sources: Encyclopedias, Dictionaries & Handbooks

- Reference sources often consist of numerous volumes and authors (in addition to editors)
- Compiling, editing, and publishing an edited, multivolume work is a long-term process, often spanning several years or more
- Subsequent and/or revised editions of the same title may take years to appear in print
- Therefore, they do not cite current and/or recent research literature on a specific topic

Get to Love Our Stacks ♥

Screen displays (such as on your phone or laptop), are typically not read (for a variety of reasons) with as much attention as print formats.

Therefore, it is also important to include printed publications in your research for **in-depth analysis**.

Books are vital because they provide needed **contextual, theoretical, and conceptual information** indispensable for understanding a given topic. Concentrated, careful reading helps generate ideas that lead to further investigation, and offer balanced analysis on a wide range of issues.

Dilevko, Juris, and Lisa Gotlieb. "Print Sources in an Electronic Age: A Vital Part of the Research Process for Undergraduate Students." *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*, vol. 28, no. 6, 2002, pp. 381–392.

RESEARCH METHODS ASSIGNMENT

Sample Topic:

*Magic realism in the short stories
of Gabriel García Márquez*

Narrowing Your Topic with The 5Ws: Gabriel García Márquez

Who?

- Specific character? Category of characters (female characters)?
- Leading literature scholar's approach to Garcia Marquez
- Literary influences

Where?

- Limit by geography? Settings?

When?

- Author's early works? Later works?

What?

- Can refer to several aspects of topic: Novels? Short stories? magical realism? Gender relations? Specific theme? Journalistic fiction? Literary influences?

Why? How?

- Theoretical lens: Marxism, feminism, or postmodernism?

Magic realism in the short stories of Gabriel García Márquez

Search Strategy:

1. Identify main concepts in your topic
2. Generate keywords to capture each concept
3. Consider synonyms for each concept to use as keywords
4. Combine keywords using AND/OR
5. Select appropriate database(s) to search

Literature Database Search

Concept #1	Concept #2	Concept #3
Gabriel Garcia Márquez	AND Magic realism	AND Short stories
OR	AND	AND Short fiction
OR	AND	AND Novellas

Obtaining Research Assistance



- In-person research help
- Book a research consultation
- Email research help
 - ❖ colin.deinhardt@vicu.utoronto.ca or
 - agatha.barc@vicu.utoronto.ca
- Chat with a librarian.