

RESEARCH METHODS ASSIGNMENT

The goal of this assignment is to help you develop academic research skills. In part 1 you will complete a library skills exercise and in part 2 you will produce a bibliography in proper MLA style and explain your choice of sources. To complete both parts you will have to develop and refine a topic related to one of the authors you will be reading in the course. However, your topic cannot be the author-as-subject alone. Instead, focus your topic by selecting specific aspects of the author's work to investigate.

PART 1: LIBRARY SKILLS EXERCISE (50%)

1. Defining your topic as author-as-subject is too broad, so you will have to narrow it by using the strategies covered in the library instruction session. For example, conduct preliminary research using encyclopedias and/or apply the 5Ws to refine the topic to specific aspects of the author's work. Example: *Magic realism in the short story fiction of Gabriel Garcia Márquez*. (10%)

Topic:

2. Identify the main concepts in your topic. Then consider synonyms for each concept to use as possible keywords to search article databases and/or the library catalogue. (10%)

| | Concept 1 | | Concept 2 | | Concept 3 |
|----|-----------|-----|-----------|-----|-----------|
| | _____ | AND | _____ | AND | _____ |
| OR | _____ | AND | _____ | AND | _____ |
| OR | _____ | AND | _____ | AND | _____ |
| OR | _____ | AND | _____ | AND | _____ |

3. Find at least two reference sources (encyclopedias, handbooks, bibliographies, etc.) you can consult to conduct background research on your topic. List the title of the reference source and the relevant entry or entries within each. (10%)

| | Reference Source Title | Title of Entry |
|----|-------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. | | a) |
| | | b) |
| | | |
| 2. | | a) |
| | | b) |

4. What is a scholarly journal article, a literature review, and a book review? Provide a definition for each type of publication and list as many characteristics as you can. *Hint: review the SPA258 Course Guide, especially the "Making Scholarly Choices" section.* (15%)

5. **Select appropriate databases to search:** Navigate to the list of article databases grouped by subject (literature, history, philosophy, etc.) on the U of T Library website. Using the drop-down menu, select the subject most suitable for this course. List three (3) databases you can search to find articles on your topic. Indicate if the databases are discipline-specific or multidisciplinary. *Hint: Recall the Subject A-Z List on the U of T Library website.* (5%)

| | Discipline or Subject | Name of Article Database | Discipline-specific or multi-disciplinary? |
|----|------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|
| 1. | | | |
| | | | |
| 2. | | | |
| | | | |
| 3. | | | |
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