



## SPA344H: The Spanish Sensorium

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VICTORIA UNIVERSITY  
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E.J. PRATT LIBRARY

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## RESEARCH IN SENSORY STUDIES

Sniff some **very old books** and scented candles to refine our appreciation of rare books as **historical artifacts**

Review the **essential academic resources, strategies, and skills** associated with conducting academic research in the area of sensory studies and culture

Provide an overview of our reference and research consultation services.

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## COMMON CHALLENGES

1) Finding **too many** sources on your topic  
and  
2) Finding **too few** sources.



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## SPA344H BIBLIOGRAPHY

[uoft.me/spa344](https://uoft.me/spa344)

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## THE BOOK SNIFFERS CLUB

A sensory project created by British artist Justin Wiggan

It aims to help us reconnect with our sense of smell as a mode of “creative investigation,” as Wiggan describes it

The Club’s activities and initiatives are legitimized as culturally significant in the United Kingdom, with funding provided by Arts Council England

It maintains an online library, where each title in the collection is accompanied by “sniff notes” contributed by the members.

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## WHAT MAKES A BOOK RARE?

Historically, rare books have been typically valued for their **distinctiveness** due to their contents and **physical characteristics**

In other words, rare books are both important **literary texts** and **historical artifacts**

By handling these rare books and inhaling their scent, we can develop a deep appreciation for the importance of their **materiality** as **historical artifacts** to the act of reading and learning about the past.

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## BOOK & CANDLE SNIFFING EXERCISE

- 1) Gently open the book resting in front of you on the table
- 2) Close your eyes and breathe in, inhaling the scent within, letting it fill your nose and stir your mind
- 3) Write down your thoughts; the smells it reminds you of, how they made you feel, and any memories they stirred
- 4) Compare these scents with the artificial smell of the candle. Do you prefer one over another? Why?

*Adapted from the Book Sniffers Club (<http://www.booksniffers.club/>).*

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## BOOK & CANDLE SNIFFING EXERCISE

Please briefly discuss your observations of the book:

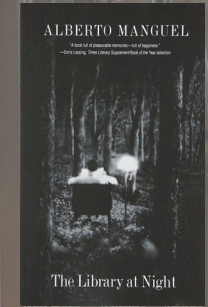
- 1) Bibliographic information, including the title, author, and the date of the publication
- 2) Your opinion on how the scent or the appearance of the book affects your appreciation or reading of the text.

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## THE SCENT OF THE LIBRARY AT NIGHT

“I must allow my other senses to awaken ... to smell the wood of the shelves, the musky perfume of the leather bindings, the acrid scent of my yellowing pocket books.”

Alberto Manguel, *The Library at Night* (2007)



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## THE IMPORTANCE OF MATERIALITY

What are the differences between traditional print (or analogue) books and their digital representations (or digitized copies we can access online)?

Why is the physical experience of holding (and especially sniffing) a “piece of the past” (or olfactory contact with the past) important to reading and historical research?

How does it contribute to the appeal of books as physical objects?

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## THE IMPORTANCE OF MATERIALITY

“Analogue archival documents and their digital counterparts are entirely different types of sources... [T]he ways in which analogue and digital sources are studied differ greatly from each other. Digital archives should complement, rather than replace, analogue collections.”

—Charles Jeurgens, “The Scent of the Digital Archive: Dilemmas with Archive Digitization” (2013)

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### CONSTRUCTING A PRELIMINARY SEARCH STRATEGY

- 1) Identify the main concepts in your topic
- 2) Generate keywords to capture each main concept
- 3) Consider synonyms for each main concept
- 4) Connect each term using AND / OR
- 5) Select appropriate research tools to find sources on your topic.

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### “THE OLFACTORY PLEASURE OF CONSULTING AND READING OLD BOOKS”

Main Concepts	Synonym #1	Synonym #2	Synonym #3
Olfactory	OR Multisensory	OR Smell*	OR Scent*
AND			
Reading	OR Consulting	OR Handling	
AND			
Book*	OR Codex	OR	

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### ASK A LIBRARIAN

Access the online reference service  
Send an email  
Book a research consultation.

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