Scholarly Secondary Sources

- Most of your college research will use scholarly secondary sources, either books or academic journal articles. These differ from other publications meant for a broad audience in important ways, including:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Popular Publications</th>
<th>Scholarly Secondary Sources</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Published by a for-profit organization/business</td>
<td>Usually published by an academic press or a university</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written for a general readership</td>
<td>Written for a specialized audience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topics tend to be broad</td>
<td>Topics tend to be narrow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does not go through peer-review process (see bulleted point below)</td>
<td>Goes through peer-review process (see bulleted point below)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probably will not have a works cited/bibliography</td>
<td>Will have a works cited/bibliography</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

About Academic Journals

- They are published at scheduled times (monthly, quarterly, etc.)
- They undergo “peer review,” the process in which experts in the field read information to decide if it should be published
- Unless your professor says otherwise, assume that you will use peer-reviewed, academic journals for college-level work
- Journal articles heavily cite the work of other experts. To find additional relevant sources, see the works cited/bibliography/footnotes. Librarians call this process “pearl growing.”
- You should refer to academic journal articles as ‘article’ or ‘essays’
- In a footnote or endnote citation, the title of an academic journal article is in quotation marks, whereas that journal’s title is italicized.
- Here is an example of a footnote citation for a journal article:


About Scholarly Books

- They could be by one author on one topic, or collections of essays by several authors.
- Unlike popular books (i.e. those meant for a general readership), they undergo “peer review,” substantial review by other experts in the field before they are published.
- Unless your professor tells you otherwise, assume that you will use peer-reviewed, scholarly books for college-level research.
- Scholarly books heavily cite the work of other experts. To find additional relevant sources, see the works cited/bibliography/footnotes. Librarians call this process “pearl growing.”
• You can request virtually any book you can find via Universal Borrowing (much faster but somewhat more limited selection) or Interlibrary Loan. Allow at least a week to request books; if not, limit searches to Murphy Library.

• In scholarly writing (including citations and references), the titles of books are *italicized*. You should refer to books as “books” (not “novels”) or monographs if they are a collection of essays.

• The following are examples of footnote citations for scholarly books:


Evaluation Process for Information

What is my assignment?
- Do I understand what I am supposed to do? Do I need to clarify anything with my professor?
- How will I manage my time? Should I use an assignment calculator (google this; the University of Minnesota has one) to help me estimate how much time research will take?

What kind/s of information do I need?
- Persuasive: Goal of convincing someone toward a specific viewpoint
- Informative: Provides facts on a topic
- Primary Source: Original source from a given time (diaries, newspapers, etc.)
- Secondary Source: Written after an event (analysis of an event)
- Academic/Scholarly/Peer-reviewed source: Written by experts in the field on a specialized topic
- Popular source: Written for a general audience
- Statistics: Number information

What is the “container” for the information that I need?
- Dissertation or thesis: Written by a graduate student to demonstrate proficiency and expertise in a field. For most (if not all) of your undergraduate work, you will not need these. See a librarian if you need one.
- Journal articles: Shorter works (ranging from 15-50 pages) with a narrow focus. Find articles in article databases.
- Newspaper articles: Short columns/essays about current events. Find newspaper articles in newspaper databases.
- Books: A longer work with a broader focus and/or a collection of articles or essays. Find books in the library catalog or Universal Borrowing catalog.
- Online databases: Collections of articles (popular, scholarly, and newspaper) available to UW-L students and employees both on and off-campus

Is this information right for me at this time?
- Does it make sense for the assignment?
- Is the information true?
- Can I trust the creator of the information?
Finding information to cite

- Ignore the “cite” feature found in many databases. It is likely to be incorrect.
- When citing page numbers, use the ones from the original text (in a book or for an article). If the article is in html, omit page numbers.
- Some articles have an abstract, a summary of the information contained in the article. While abstracts may help you decide if an article will be helpful, you should not use abstracts in annotated bibliographies.
- Some articles have author biographies provided. These biographies give you a sense of if the information will be helpful to you. For example, if an article was written by a journalist—even if the article has many references—it is unlikely to be considered a scholarly article (which has the purpose of providing in-depth information on a particular topic).
- Each source will look slightly different. Know what information you need and make sure you have it before leaving an article download page or returning a book.
- Zotero can be a helpful tool for citation and for managing information. Workshops and trainings are held throughout the year and will be posted on the Murphy Library website. If you would like to try Zotero on your own, search “Zotero” on the Murphy Library website.
- Librarians at the reference desk and tutors at the Writing Center can help you with citation questions.
Finding Secondary Sources for History

Scholarly Book

- If you find a solid source that lists a scholarly book in the works cited/bibliography, go to the Murphy Library catalog and enter the book title. Then select “title” from the right before hitting search.
- If you don’t have a title in mind, search for words related to your topic.
- If books are not available in Murphy, you can request them via Universal Borrowing (the other UW libraries). If books are not available in the UW system, you can request books through Interlibrary loan.

Academic Journal Article

- Choose a database. Several are listed on this webpage that will be particularly useful to you, but you are encouraged to search any of them. The main differences is the focus (just history? general?), the years of publication available (JSTOR will not have the most recent issues), and whether the article is available immediately (aka “full text”) or if you may need to wait a few days for it to arrive via Interlibrary Loan.
- Regardless of which database you choose, limiting your search to “history” will eliminate material that is not relevant.
- Depending on the assignment, you may also wish to look at related fields to your topic (Latin American Studies, Psychology, etc.). Choosing “Library Guides” from the Murphy Library page will give you lists of resources for each major offered at UW-L. Check with your professor to see if using non-history sources is appropriate.
About Primary Sources

- Primary sources are evidence that come from the time period itself, rather than later. In history, these are typically written sources (articles, advertisements, government information, etc.), but may also include material objects, artifacts, oral traditions, music, etc.
- Local archives mainly collect primary sources related to community, regional, and/or state history. There is also a growing amount of primary resources that are available on the Internet. See the Murphy Library page for a list of links.
Big Picture Search Strategies

- Start with the works cited/bibliography of a source and choose a source that might be useful. Determine if it is a book or an article. If it is a book, do a search in the library catalog for the title. If it is an article, search the “Journals by title” link from the main page of Murphy Library. If we have the particular journal, you will be connected to it by following the links. If we do not, you can request it via interlibrary loan.

- When searching for journal articles, limiting your search to ‘history’ as a subject will give you more results that are subject-specific.

- Adding “Boolean operators” (and, or, not) or quotation marks when searching can make your search more efficient. For the sake of example in explaining these, take the scenario of a paper on the “freshman fifteen” (idea that first year college students gain at least fifteen pounds within the first two semesters)
  - Truncation (*) finishes a word to give you more variations on it. For example, universit* would return university (singular) and universities (plural). This is useful for the ends of words.
  - The ? symbol is helpful when a middle letter can change the word. “Freshm?n” would give you both Freshman (singular) and Freshmen (plural).
  - Quotation marks hold an idea together and makes sure the words are next to each other. “Freshman fifteen” would ensure that “freshman” isn’t near the beginning of the article and “fifteen” near the end. The terms only appear next to each other.
  - “And” makes a search narrower by making sure your search includes all terms. In this example, you would enter “freshman fifteen” and “college.” This ensures that both terms will be present.
  - “Or” makes a search broader. If you search “college” or “university,” you will retrieve results that have one term or the other. “Or” is useful for synonyms.
  - “Not” eliminates words and makes a search more specific. I am using () to mark the different search boxes. You could search (“freshm?n fifteen) AND (college* or universit*) NOT (Canada). None of your results would be about the freshman fifteen in Canadian university students.