Scholarship as Conversation

Teaching an Information Literacy Course in a Divinity School Curriculum

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W HEN THE NEW *FRAMEWORK FOR INFORMATION LITERACY FOR Higher Education* was released in 2015, I was immediately drawn to the frame "Scholarship as Conversation."[1] As a naturally shy introvert, it might seem unexpected to focus on the frame that centers "conversation" so clearly. What I was struck by, however, were the connections and networks that are embedded and implied in the concepts of this frame. As a child, the books that started with a family tree or a map with travel routes highlighted always fascinated me. As a young academic researcher, I was intrigued by the acknowledgements section of a book, seeing the network of scholars who had influenced or helped the author along their path of investigation and writing. As a librarian, I still love these aspects of books, but now citations and footnotes capture my attention. All these are ways in which "Scholarship as Conversation" can manifest in and aid the process of academic research. As an instructor, sharing how to use these resources with my students, and seeing the penny drop when they understand how useful they are, is what animates my teaching.

Since starting my professional librarian career at Wake Forest University's Z. Smith Reynolds Library (ZSR) in 2004, I have taught a combination of introductory and advanced information literacy courses. ZSR has had a robust and popular information literacy program for almost twenty years. LIB100: *Academic Research and Information Issues* is currently offered in fifteen sections each semester. Additionally, we offer a slate of 200-level courses customized for specific disciplines (sciences, social sciences, humanities, business, history) or covering specific information topics (history of the book, archival/primary source research, fake news, Wikipedia, business informatics). As the liaison to the

departments of Art, Theatre & Dance, Study of Religions, and the School of Divinity, I helped design and, ultimately, teach the humanities-focused course, LIB250: *Humanities Research Resources & Strategies* four times between 2009 and 2014.[2] By 2015, however, we had yet to propose a graduate-level course and, as the liaison to the School of Divinity, I was interested in offering a research and writing course to help the students in that program.

The course that was proposed to the School of Divinity in 2016 was MIN790D: *Introduction to Research and Writing.* Hilary Floyd, who is an alumna of the School and was working as the Academic Skills Counselor at the time, and I designed the course together. In Fall 2017, we taught MIN790D: *Advanced Research and Writing* to second- and third-year students who were working on significant writing projects or considering applying to PhD programs.[3] These courses were evenly divided in lecture content and assignments between my area of "research" and Hilary's area of "writing." By Fall 2018, Hilary was pursuing a PhD elsewhere, so I taught a revised version of our introductory course, CDS512: *Introduction to Research and Writing.* As I was responsible for the research half of the original courses and the *Framework* pertains most directly to these, I will focus this discussion on the research-oriented lectures, readings, and assignments that comprised the three courses.

Integrating the Framework into Course Design

As of 2015, when I was conceptualizing my portion of the introductory course, all ZSR's undergraduate information literacy courses had been designed to meet the criteria of the *Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education* (*Standards*), which had been released in 2000. Designing the MIN790D: *Introduction to Research and Writing* course was, therefore, my first opportunity to implement the concepts and ideas delineated by the updated *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education* (the *Framework*).[4] For practical purposes, the *Standards* presented discrete skill sets that were frequently characterized as a checklist of tasks that students should be able to accomplish after information literacy instruction. The *Framework,* on the other hand, highlights the overlapping mindsets and "dispositions" (clusters of preferences, attitudes, capabilities realized in a particular way) that researchers in our current, messier, information landscape need to develop both as users and creators of information. As students begin to absorb these framework concepts and apply them to their research approaches, in addition to mastering specific research tasks, they hopefully will begin to integrate these concepts into a holistic research mindset.

But why focus on "Scholarship as Conversation"? While clearly all the frames are important and contribute to an understanding of the overall task of research, "Scholarship as Conversation" fits most closely to skills and approaches that I already tend to highlight in my teaching. In addition to being the disposition that I believe the students I teach need most, this is the frame that prioritizes citations and crediting the work of others. Correctly citing sources, and even committing inadvertent plagiarism, continues to be an issue for many students in our program, as well as for Wake Forest students as a whole. The main research assignments in the course require students to "critically evaluate contributions made by others" and "identify the contribution that particular articles, books, and other scholarly pieces make to disciplinary knowledge."[5] By "[d]eveloping familiarity with the sources of evidence, methods, and modes of discourse in the field," students also learn to appreciate the variety of scholarly apparatuses that have been constructed over time to assist them in interpreting and connecting to information sources, as well as the fact that there are potential sources *beyond* the traditional book or journal article.[6] This frame also acknowledges the complicated reality of both the collegiality of the academy *and* the ways in which insiders may create roadblocks for those in an outsider position, but it also encourages participation, especially as a student, in the venues that are open to them. And critically, this frame also values ambiguity and the uncomfortable idea that there may not be one right answer; that we are "entering into an ongoing scholarly conversation and not a finished conversation."[7] In a discipline that has been wrestling with its essential questions for millennia, this can have a powerful resonance.

While it was my priority to center "Scholarship as Conversation," the frames are overlapping enough to make it impossible to look at any one of them individually or in isolation. One can't teach a course on research without thinking about the ideas within "Research as Inquiry" or "Searching as Strategic Exploration." Beyond these important research-related aspects, our students are in a professional school and in training to become an authority figure for a faith or community group or a scholar in the discipline and, as a result, frames like "Authority is Constructed and Contextual" become more significant to understand and internalize. As with the overarching theme of "Scholarship as Conversation," elements from each of the frames were incorporated in the course via readings, in-class exercises, lectures, and assignments.

Course Logistics: Readings, Lectures, and In-class Exercises

Because each course consisted of seven to eight class sessions, half of which were devoted to the writing portion of the course, there were only the equivalent of three class sessions that exclusively focused on research. In each of these class sessions I tried to incorporate three elements: a lecture that included an overview of any assigned readings, some type of interactive exercise, and a demonstration of the research skills that the students would need to complete the assignment connected to that day's resource type.

The assignments for the research portion of each course were based on the traditional pathfinder project. Each student selected a topic, usually history- or theology-related, and was then required to find three resources related to that topic. For the introductory course that included a reference resource, a scholarly book, and a scholarly journal article. For the advanced course, I wanted the students to discover types of resources that might be less familiar or use familiar resources in a new way, so the resource categories were slightly different:

- an online reference resource (Oxford Biblical Studies Online, Routledge Handbooks Online, etc…) OR a scholarly non-monograph book resource (collected/edited volume, Festschrift, etc…)
- a book or literature review of at least three books on a topic OR an in-depth interview with a scholar(s) OR scholarly conversations via response articles OR a theme issue of a journal
- a primary source (anthology, critical edition, etc…) OR an archive/special collection/digital humanities project

The final project for the introductory course required the students to make corrections to their three resource assignments and resubmit them along with an introductory scope note and concluding "lessons learned" summary. The advanced course students submitted a final reflection essay discussing the development of their research and writing process but no corrected assignments.

Course Readings

The required citation style guide for the School of Divinity is *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* (Turabian 8th and/or 9th editions), so it made sense to make it one of the required texts for the course.[8] Beyond the citation rules and examples in Part II of Turabian 8/9, I found the research and writing chapters in Part I were so helpful that I ended up assigning most of them

when I taught the Fall 2018 iteration of the *Introduction* class, including the "Note to Students" and the "Preface." Additionally, I referred students to Part III ("Style") to answer common grammar and usage questions. These chapters were especially helpful for building confidence in students who had been away from academia for many years or who had not taken writing-intensive courses as undergraduates.

Two of the assigned sources, Turabian 8/9 and *Reading Theologically*, communicated aspects of the *Framework* particularly well, and I was able to reinforce those ideas from the readings by projecting selected quotations and summaries during my lectures. In "Reading Basically," as Melissa Browning introduced the act of reading as a new divinity student, she passed along this wisdom from one of her own professors, "You must dialogue with the [biblical] text… Then, when you think you understand it, when you've dialogued with the text, that's when you should set a circle of chairs and invite the scholars you are reading to join your conversation."[9] This is such a helpful and powerful visual of "Scholarship as Conversation" for students to have as they begin to engage with the various authors and thinkers they will encounter as divinity students! In addition to using and illustrating the phrase "threshold concepts," Browning emphasized that, "we must learn to read in a way that is embodied, communal, spiritual, and transformative in practice."[10]

Chapter One of Turabian 9 began with a similar visualization of "What Research Is":

> When we walk into a library, we are surrounded by more than twenty-five centuries of research. When we go on the internet, we can read the work of millions of researchers who have posed questions beyond number, gathered untold amounts of information from the research of others to answer them, and then shared their answers with the rest of us. We can carry on their work by asking and, we hope, answering new questions in turn.[11]

Several pages later, Turabian 9 continues to emphasize the conversational aspect of research, "And when you report your own research, you add your voice and hope that other voices will respond to you, so that you can in turn respond to them. And so it goes."[12] One of my goals in highlighting this conversational view of research is that it can help to take away some of the negative pressure students experience surrounding citations. By framing citations as the act of acknowledging someone else's contribution to a conversation you are having, I hope to mitigate the idea that citations are onerous or only the way that students "prove" that they have done their work.

Beyond "Scholarship as Conversation," Turabian 9 also touched on various elements of the remaining five frames throughout the first two chapters. For

example:

- – Information Has Value: "Governments spend billions on research, businesses even more. Research goes on in laboratories and libraries… Research is in fact, the world's biggest industry." [13]
- – Information Creation as a Process: "In this book we use research in a specific way to mean a process of systematic inquiry to answer a question that not only the researcher but also others want to solve. Research thus includes the steps involved in presenting or reporting it… you must share your findings and conclusions with others." [14]
- – Authority is Constructed and Contextual: "But research doesn't ask for our blind trust or that we accept something on the basis of authority. It invites readers to think critically about evidence and reasoning… it must rest on shared facts that readers accept as truths independent of your feelings or beliefs." [15]
- – Research as Inquiry: "…researchers do not merely gather facts on a topic… They look for specific data to test and support an answer to a question that their topic inspired them to ask…" [16]
- – Searching as Strategic Exploration: "Research projects would be much easier if we could march straight through these steps… the research process is not so straightforward. Each task overlaps with others, and frequently you must go back to an earlier one." [17]

As I have assigned both the *Framework* and these Turabian 9 chapters as readings for the same class session, these readings have helped reinforce each other.

Across the different iterations of the courses, assigned readings beyond Turabian 8/9 and the *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education* have included:

- – "Reading Basically," [18] "Reading Meaningfully," [19] and "Reading Critically" [20] from *Reading Theologically* [21]
- – "Why Write?" "Beginning and Beyond," and "Reading to Write" from *The Seminary Student Writes* [22]
- – "Clutter" and "Unity" from *On Writing Well: The Classic Guide to Writing Nonfiction*[23]
- – "Grammar Basics," "Phrases, Clauses and Sentences," "Subjects and Objects," "Verbs," "Making the Parts Agree," and "Modifiers and Connecting Words" from *Working with Words* [24]
- – "Clinton Devotional Book Pulled After Publisher Finds Further Instances of Plagiarism" [25]
- – "Plagiarism, Privilege, and the State of Christian Publishing" [26]

Turabian	Framework
Turabian 8, p. 12-13 "As you do one task, you'll have to look ahead to others or revisit an earlier one. You'll change topics as you read, search for more data as you draft, perhaps even discover a new question as you revise. Research is looping, messy, and unpredictable. But it is manageable if you have a plan, even when you know you'll depart from it."	**Research as Inquiry** — "Research is iterative and depends on asking increasingly complex or new questions…" — "consider research as open-ended exploration and engagement with information" **Research as Strategic Exploration** — "design and refine needs and search strategies as necvessary, based on search results" — "understand that first attempts ast searching do not always produce adequate results"
Turabian 8, p. 24-25 "Once you have at least a question and perhaps a working hyphothesis… you can start looking for the data you'll need to support your reasons and test your hypothesis… Once you have a promising source, read it to find other sources… you'll discover gaps and new questions that only more sources can fill. So while we discuss finding and using sources as two steps, you'll more often do them repeatedly and simultaneously."	**Research as Inquiry** — formulate questions for research based on information gaps or on reexamination of existing, possibly conflicting, information" — "value persistence, adaptability, and flexibility and recognize that ambuguity can benefit the research process" **Research as Strategic Exploration** — "Searching for information is often nonlinear and iterative, requiring the evaluation of a range of information sources and the mental flexibility to pursue alternate avenues as new understanding develops."

TABLE 1 - *Turabian* 8 quotations mapped to *Framework* statements

Example of a Complete Class Session

MIN790D: *Advanced Research and Writing*

Class Two: Introduction to Research, Citation Styles, and Plagiarism; Using Specialized Reference Resources and Scholarly Books
For our initial class session, students shared possible research topics and goals for the course and were assigned the first two chapters of Turabian 8, "What Research Is and How Researchers Think about It" and "Moving From a Topic to a Question to a Working Hypothesis." These two chapters, along with the Turabian 8 chapters assigned for Class Two, "Finding Useful Sources" and "General Introduction to Citation Practices," prepared them for our class discussion. I started with a few PowerPoint slide questions, answered anonymously via audience response devices ("clickers"), about what the students considered their strengths and weaknesses regarding the research process to be. Almost 40% of the

students felt that their research project strength was selecting a topic, while a huge 75% responded that time management was their weakness. These responses helped Hilary and me to modify our future lecture topics to highlight time management strategies for the students.

Our discussion of strengths and weaknesses led directly into the strategies suggested in the Turabian 8 readings. I included PowerPoint slides with specific quotes from Turabian 8, which mapped to descriptions, dispositions, and knowledge practices of the "Research as Inquiry" and "Searching as Strategic Exploration" frames in order to make connections to the *Framework,* another assigned reading for this class session:[27]

To continue this discussion of the *Framework,* I talked about the four characteristics of threshold concepts and how they are transformative, integrative, irreversible, and troublesome (which I think students recognize from their own experiences in School of Divinity courses) and then discussed the specifics of the six information literacy frames and how they might manifest in our course.[28] By way of a real-world example, they had also read Rev. Emily Heath's *Ministry Matters* column responding to the plagiarism of her work by a well-known pastor, as well as a *Publisher's Weekly* article on the pulling of that pastor's book.[29] This current incident illustrated the very real implications of the "Authority is Constructed and Contextual" and "Information Has Value" frames, as well as put them into a context the students could imagine themselves being in. In her column, Heath discussed the struggles she encountered in finding a publisher for her work, based mostly on her identity rather than the content or ideas represented in her writing. She also shared how demoralizing it was to see those same ideas find easy publication when stolen by someone who had more access and clout:

> *…I'm left with this fact: a man walked into a Christian publisher with my own words—words deemed too controversial for publication—and got those same words published. He took my testimony, and the testimonies of an unknown number of others, and he cashed in on them… When privilege is combined with mediocrity and dishonesty, it's hard not to feel frustrated when it gets rewarded.*[30]

Beyond the obvious plagiarism and citation aspects of this story, it touched on these *Framework* dispositions and knowledge practices and illustrated the interconnectedness of the frames:

– "understand how and why some individuals or groups of individuals may be underrepresented or systematically marginalized within systems that produce and disseminate information"[31]

- "question traditional notions of granting authority and recognize the value of diverse ideas and worldviews"[32]
- "Experts understand that authority is a type of influence recognized or exerted within a community. Experts view authority with an attitude of informed skepticism and openness to new perspectives, additional voices, and changes in schools of thought."[33]
- "The value of information is manifested in various contexts, including publishing practices, access to information, the commodification of personal information, and intellectual property laws."[34]

I finished this portion of the class session by focusing on the "Scholarship as Conversation" frame and the research concepts within it that I wanted the students to understand by the end of the course. This is how I presented these goals on a slide:

- understanding the importance of research and developing ideas based on the work of other scholars
- knowing the required elements of a citation and how to incorporate them into various citation styles
- deciphering various citation styles used in bibliographies to find additional sources
- using clues from footnotes, forewords, dedications, and other scholarly apparatus to understand scholarly networks and methodological approaches
- branching out into other disciplines to create new conversations and fill in gaps
- participate in conferences, contribute to journals, create new sources of information
- be comfortable with ambiguity in approaches and proposed solutions to problems

For the second half of our 90-minute class session, focus turned to the first research resource assignment and the skills the students would need to complete it. I prefer to combine the demonstration of these research skills, which are usually limited to pointing and clicking in the library catalog or database, with some opportunity for students to physically turn the pages of books and examine the types of resources I expect them to find. This usually means that I will wander around in the stacks, collecting a booktruck full of examples for the various categories of resources that I want the students to be aware of. With this particular assignment, students were asked to choose between two types of specialized resources, one of which consisted mostly of online resources and was

thus demonstrated mostly through pointing and clicking, and the other that was mostly print and thus could benefit from physical examples:

– Specialized Reference Resource: options included Oxford Biblical Studies Online, Oxford Bibliographies Online, Routledge Handbooks Online
– Specialized Scholarly Book Resource: options included Festschriften, edited volumes, and handbooks or companions

While demonstrating the catalog searches that would aid in finding a Festschrift, or how to read a catalog record to see if it is an edited volume, we looked at the physical books I had pulled from the stacks to see the specific features of these resources and why they can be particularly helpful for a researcher in a given field. When looking at the Festschriften, we discussed:

– why such works are published
– how they represent the impact of an individual scholar on a discipline
– their network of students, colleagues, and mentees
– that biographical, methodological, and bibliographical information on the honoree may be included

For edited volumes and handbooks or companions, we explored:

– that in an introduction or foreword, the editor will explain the organizing theme or approach of a volume and frequently will describe how the individual chapters are in conversation with each other
– how the volume may be the result of a symposium, conference, or series
– that important visual information such as timelines, maps, or charts may be included

After our discussion of how to find these resources and the variety of information they included, I ended the lecture by walking the students through how to write a citation for an edited volume and how it differs from that of a regular monograph.

Examples of In-Class Exercises for CDS512: Introduction to Research and Writing

Class 3: Introduction to Citation Styles and Plagiarism Issues; Using Reference Sources

As part of my lecture on citations and plagiarism, I included slides with excerpts from an article by Margaret Miles, "Mapping Feminist Histories of Religious Traditions," to illustrate the various ways in which quotations or concepts taken

from a source can be incorporated into writing, using the guidelines set out in Turabian 9's section 7.4–7.5.[35]

IMAGE 1 - Powerpoint slide illustrating rules for directly quoting a source

IMAGE 2 - Powerpoint slide illustrating rules for paraphrasing

people who were willing to pay with their lives for religious sensibilities and loyalties in conflict with mainstream orthodoxy must be allowed to question and contradict the triumphal story.

For example, fourth-century Christian movements sustained some amazingly contradictory changes. These included the devastating Diocletian persecution, followed immediately by Constantine's declaration that Christianity was henceforth to be considered a legitimate sect of the Roman Empire; rancorous debates over doctrine; *and* the erection of magnificent and highly decorated church buildings. Toward the end of the century, Christianity became not only a legitimate sect but also the official religion of Empire, effectively authorizing the persecution of dissidents and marginalization of Jews from public life. In the fourth century, women's ministries were prohibited and women's voices forbidden in church choirs. A large ascetic movement protested the Catholic Church's affiliation with imperial wealth, while the Donatist Church in North Africa criticized Catholics' association with a government that had recently persecuted and executed Christians. Unquestionably, a strain of Christianity emerged from the fourth century stronger, more precise, richer in buildings and imperial support, and attractive to a broad range of people. But narrating the fourth century as a story of "gain without corresponding loss" ignores the considerable cost—and the people who bore that cost—of establishing a Christian Empire.

(handwritten: common knowledge to audience, no citation needed)

(handwritten: — would like a citation here)

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Writing History *(handwritten: — subheadings)*

New interests and methods, discussed for two decades in the field of history have not, as yet, been fully integrated into the subfields of Church history and historical theology. These interests and methods, however, can facilitate examination of women's roles in the history of Christian movements. Postmodernism has stimulated diverse new approaches to historical writing as historians' interests have expanded from a focus on wars and institutions to encompass "virtually every human activity."[2] Everyday experience, mental habits, and social arrangements, as well as the politics of interpretation, have come under scrutiny as feminist, Marxist, and populist historians explore the past. Moreover, the dissolution of boundaries dividing elite from popular cultures [and the challenge to the] assumption of [the] superiority of Western ways of thought have changed what is considered historical evidence, suggesting new subject matter [and] additional actors, . . . more inclusive of multicultural viewpoints. Con-

(handwritten: gap! —)

(handwritten: methodologies)

(handwritten: p. 78 use ellipses & square brackets to modify a quotation to fit your sentence — but don't change the meaning!)

[2] Peter Burke, ed., *New Perspectives on Historical Writing*, 2nd ed. (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001), 3.

[3] Ibid., 6, 8.

(handwritten: p. 164 · Shortened notes rather than ibid.)
(handwritten: Burke, New Perspectives, 6, 8.)

IMAGE 3 - Example of marked-up page from the Miles article handout, Margaret R. Miles, "Mapping Feminist Histories of Religious Traditions," *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 22, no. 1 (2006): 47.

I also passed out a marked-up copy of the article, which included my margin notes and other markings, as both a continuation of our discussion from the Class Two lecture on how to actively read sources and as an example of the ways that scholars utilize various writing strategies in their work. In multiple places in her article Miles indicated where there were still gaps in the scholarship on various topics, which is something that students should be looking out for, especially if they intend to do advanced research in a particular discipline: "We do not yet have similarly detailed studies for women in societies outside the Roman world."[36] "New interests and methods, discussed for two decades in the fields of history have not," she explains, "as yet, been fully integrated into the subfields of Church history and historical theology."[37] Concerning those approaches, Miles named several methodologies (populist history, New Historicism) and suggested ways in which these approaches might be used to look at Christian history in new ways. In a practical way, Miles was also a good example of an author who used subheadings to organize her text and clearly numbered her points as she moved through key sections of her discussion, which made her argument easy for the reader to follow. I also encouraged the students to incorporate those techniques that they found helpful as a reader, such as subheadings, into their own writing.

Using this article, or similar ones, as an example for students is helpful in several ways. Not only did they get to read a scholar who wrote clearly and well, but they could also see the ways in which she used multiple techniques to introduce quotations and ideas into her writing. Her ideas were complex, yet she didn't rely on jargon-filled terminology, which I think students feel pressure to do as they begin to write academic work. Also, by giving them a copy that is covered in writing and underlining, I hoped to model for them at least one way of having a conversation with a text, how to notice the scholarly "moves" a writer makes, and to see where the author felt there was further research to be done.

Class 7: Footnotes, Writing Process, and Paraphrasing

While we had discussed how to write footnotes and citations in other class sessions, I used this exercise to walk the students through how to read footnotes in the sources they find. Because different publications use different citation styles and have different rules for abbreviations, I thought it might be useful to have the students work on deciphering the footnote sections of two articles and see if they could find the resource in our collection. I handed out three pages from two articles that had extensive footnotes and assigned a footnote(s) to each student, with the instruction to locate the resource(s) in the footnote via our library catalog or databases. I had already checked the resources to confirm we had them in our collection or that they were accessible through our databases and made a list to use as an answer key.[38] I selected these examples as they

included a mixture of journal abbreviations, foreign language titles, editions, multi-author works, articles, chapters, and books, which would require the students to do some critical thinking to "translate." I also brought *The SBL Handbook of Style* into the classroom for them to use to look up any journal title abbreviations.[39]

As usually happens when I have done this exercise in one-shot library sessions, some students found this activity straightforward while others found it more difficult. I knew that we had all the items in our collection or access via our databases, so everyone should have been able to find everything in their assigned footnote(s). As a class, we walked through how to locate the items that students had difficulty finding and discussed the different strategies they used. One unexpected comment from a student at the end of the exercise was that a page of footnotes like the one that I had handed out causes him anxiety. Since my view has always been that seeing a page of footnotes is a blessing, it surprised me that someone could see it as a curse! It was an interesting exchange that I had not anticipated when I chose the page simply because it was the most compact format with which to illustrate the exercise! Overall, however, I think it was a good exercise that helped give students the opportunity to search for known items in our catalog and databases, as well as to practice the strategies they need to know in order to interpret citations in a different format than the one they use on a regular basis.

Assignments

All the resource assignments in both the intro and advanced courses were based on the same three components: search process; source citation; source description and evaluation. As representative examples, I've summarized the Reference Resource assignment from the intro course and the Specialized Scholarly Journal Article assignment from the advanced course. Also included here is information on the Faculty Interview assignment and one extra credit option, the Social Media Project.

MIN790D/CDS512: Introduction to Research and Writing Assignment Examples

Reference Source Assignment

Prompt:
Select an appropriate reference source relating to your research topic. This will most likely be an encyclopedia or handbook article, as your resource will need to be substantial enough to evaluate.

Write your search process:

– Where you started (library catalog, database page, reference collection)
– Your search strategy (terms you used, physical place you looked, links you clicked on)
– The results of your search
– Whether you modified your search strategy and, if so, how
– Any difficulties you encountered in your research

Cite your reference source using Turabian 9, Chapter 17:

– Indicate the section(s) you used to construct your citation (i.e., 17.1.8.2)
– You will likely need to use more than one rule to cite your source
– Pay attention to punctuation, capitalization, and spacing

Describe and evaluate your reference source in paragraph form:

– How is it organized? Is the method of organization logical and useful?
– Scope: How comprehensive or specialized is the resource? What is included or excluded? Remember to check the preface or introduction!
– Author or contributors: What information can you find out about the author? What credentials do they have? Is there an editorial or contributing board? What information is included about them?
– Currency: When was the reference source published? Is the research up to date?
– Bibliography: How extensive is the bibliography? Does it include early as well as more recent literature?
– Does it include links or cross-references to additional articles in the resource?
– Special features: appendices, maps, genealogies, images, timelines

–   How does this resource help you begin to answer your research question or address your topic?

–   How would you incorporate this information into your final paper? Is it simply background information, or is there a specific piece of information that you might quote or paraphrase?

Rationale and Goals:

The purpose of the resource assignments was to give the students the opportunity to: practice their research skills, write different types of citations, and describe and critically evaluate resources for their use in a research project. Within each of these three elements are smaller steps they must master and broader concepts that they need to integrate into their research mindset. These included knowing which citation rules to use based on the source they have found and understanding that reading the introduction or preface of a reference resource will give them valuable information on what is included or excluded, along with the best strategies for using its features. Ultimately, these resource assignments allowed the students to both implement and demonstrate the greatest number of *Framework* principles in one deliverable, including: developing search strategies, writing citations, using bibliographies, assessing authority, evaluating content and contribution, gaining disciplinary knowledge, understanding what resource to use to answer different types of questions, and considering how they intend to use the information they have found.

Outcome:

Generally, the more time we had in class for the students to work on the resource assignments, the better the results were. Frequently students got off-track at the first step of selecting a resource, so if I could approve their resource before they left class, they had a better chance of completing the rest of the assignment successfully. As this was just the first research assignment in the course, students were also at the early stages of applying some of the *Framework* concepts we had been discussing in previous class sessions and so may have had difficulty with tasks such as critiquing resources or evaluating authority.

Faculty Interview

Prompt:

This assignment consists of three parts:

- *Interview*: You will interview a tenure-track faculty member at Wake Forest using the interview template questions. Feel free to add other questions as they come up in the conversation naturally. Do not simply give the interview questions to your interviewee to fill out. These questions are meant to prompt an interactive dialogue in a face-to-face setting.
- *Presentation*: You will give a five (5) minute presentation to the class. In your presentation, address selected points covered in the interview, and include your reflection on the experience:
    - What did you learn that you didn't know?
    - What surprised you?
    - Did the experience give you a greater understanding of research and writing in an academic career?
- *Write-up*: You will also submit a written summary of your interview. This can be a copy of your interview notes or a more formal summary of the interview, but be sure to include your responses to the three questions above.

Rationale and Goals:

The purpose of this assignment was to give the students a view of the research, writing, and service expectations of a faculty member, as well as a greater understanding of the requirements of a doctoral program in theology or religious studies. The question template provided to the students included questions regarding the faculty member's experiences in the discipline, their doctoral program, and tenure-track job searching. I also provided them with questions specific to the resources and topics of the course:

- What scholarly or professional journals do you subscribe to? Have you been a peer reviewer or editorial board member for a journal or other publication?
- What parts of the research process are most difficult for you? Most enjoyable? Has that changed over time?
- What is the research skill you wish your students could improve on? What research skill do you wish you had had as a student?

Outcome:

One goal left unstated above was that I hoped that hearing their faculty reinforce the research and writing strategies taught in the course might give those

strategies greater credence. For the most part, the faculty achieved this, as they emphasized the importance of using bibliographies and shared how useful they have found conferences and associations for building a scholarly network. One professor even stated she "…wishes students would see research as a conversation rather than as a way to confirm their pre-conceived beliefs."

The Faculty Interview was an assignment for the first intro course and the advanced course. While the students in both courses really appreciated the assignment because it gave them the opportunity to have an in-depth conversation with a faculty member, ultimately it seemed to be a more appropriate assignment for the advanced course, which was designed, in part, for students who intended to pursue doctoral studies. For the second intro course, I shifted the Faculty Interview points and class time to other assignments to better meet the needs of that course.

MIN790D: Advanced Research and Writing Assignment Examples

Specialized Scholarly Journal Article Assignment

Prompt:
Locate **ONE** of the following journal article types relating to your research topic:

– book review or literature review of at least three books on a topic
– in-depth interview with a scholar/scholars
– scholarly responses/conversations via article
– theme issue of a journal

Your resource must be published in a scholarly, peer-reviewed journal, and the review/interview/article must be a minimum of eight (8) pages in length.

In addition to documenting their search process and writing a citation for their resource, students were expected to reflect on multiple questions, a portion of which depended on which category of the four scholarly journal article options their resource represented. Generally, all the students needed to discuss the author's credentials, the article's organization, how current the article was, the scope of the article, and their analysis of what this resource contributed to their topic. Then, based upon the type of scholarly journal article they used, the students needed to answer targeted questions such as:

- *Review*: How did the reviewer integrate the multiple resources being reviewed? What criteria did the reviewer use? Was the review favorable or unfavorable?
- *Interview*: Did the interviewer and interviewee know each other? What did you learn about the interviewee, their methodological approach to the discipline, or their work? Did anything they shared surprise you?
- *Response articles*: Who were the scholars involved in the exchange? Were the articles and responses even-handed or did the authors seem to be vindictive or trying to score points? How many interactions were you able to track?
- *Special or theme issue*: What was the theme of the issue? Was there introductory or explanatory information about the theme? Were the articles the result of a conference or event or were they solicited via a call for papers? Was there a special editor for the theme issue?

Rationale and Goals:

This assignment was created specifically to highlight some of the types of journal resources that students consult less frequently (or are instructed to avoid) when finding sources for regular research papers. These types of resources are, however, the types of resources that academics need to consult as they both build their disciplinary knowledge and understand how experienced scholars in a given discipline communicate. Some ways in which these types of resources could model aspects of "Scholarship as Conversation" or other frames, include:

- Review essay covering multiple books on a topic

    - illustrates different methodological approaches to the same topic
    - shows the development of an idea or discipline over time
    - demonstrates how a specific piece of scholarship can influence the work of others in the field

- Interview with a scholar

    - shows the evolution of the career of one scholar
    - is a reflection on the development of their scholarship and what the work of a scholar looks like
    - describes the role of mentors, dissertation supervisors, or colleagues
    - highlights participation in scholarly associations, on editorial boards, or as a mentor or dissertation supervisor

- Responses or conversations via article

    - illustrates a direct conversation between two scholars with differing views or conclusions on a topic or research question
    - is a venue for the discussion of a current topic in a discipline
    - reinforces the concept that scholarly conversations are continually evolving and that knowledge creation is never "complete"
    - gives a novice researcher the opportunity to observe one way in which scholarly discussions in their discipline are conducted (sometimes this can be a negative example!)

- Theme issue of a journal

    - introduction will usually discuss reason for theme issue and any unifying topic or methodologies that the contributors are bringing to the topic at hand
    - may represent the work of a scholarly association or organization via papers and additional content delivered at a conference, such as awards, scholarships, interview or question-and-answer sessions, association business

Outcome:

Across the twelve students in the advanced course, each of the four types of specialized scholarly journal article options were represented in the submitted assignments. Two students who submitted excellent work can serve as examples of assignments that met my goals. The first student (S. M.) evaluated a review essay, "Who Matters: The New and Improved White Jazz-Literati: A Review Essay" by Guthrie P. Ramsey, Jr.[40] S. M. appreciated the role of the review essay, stating, "The incorporation of and relationality presented by the author in this book review serve as a useful resource in providing individuals with the opportunity to read a synopsis and critique, while holding the various works in tandem with one another [in order to] bolster the central argument presented." Later in his discussion, and in a conversation with me, S. M. indicated that one of his professors had suggested he contact Dr. Ramsey regarding S. M.'s academic work and future studies, and S. M. was surprised by the serendipity of discovering that he had already come across Ramsey via this article. As I remarked in my grading comment, "Scholarship as conversation! In action!"

The second student (E. L.) came to me for assistance in locating response articles on her topic of women in Proverbs. Together we searched the Atla database using the query: (wom* OR fem* OR gender*) AND (proverbs OR

wisdom) AND response. In this instance, the first result, Madipoane Masenya's "Searching for Affirming Notions of (African) Manhood in the Paean in Praise of the 'Eset Hayil?: One African Woman's Response to Joel K. T. Bilwul's Article, 'What is He Doing at the Gate?'" actually met the requirements of the assignment as well as E. L.'s research need for her project.[41] In addition to having the title of the precipitating article in the title of the responding article, there was a direct link to that article record within the Atla database in the field "Related Records," making it easy to identify and navigate to the article being critiqued. In E. L.'s assignment, she evaluated Masenya, "I like that the article includes not just what the author did wrong, but *start[s] with* what he did right! From that 'rightness' Masenya restates her case in where the article could be improved. The author does a fantastic job of evenly distributing between critique and concession." She ended her assignment with, "I believe that Masenya herself will be a person who I will be following from now on." Several weeks after the course ended, E. L. reported back to me that because of her familiarity with Masenya from this assignment, she attended an AAR/SBL panel on which she was presenting. E. L. approached Masenya after the panel, engaged her in conversation, and is now in communication with her. This interaction was actually beyond my goals for the assignment and indicated to me that E. L. had really absorbed the dispositions of the "Scholarship as Conversation" frame and was demonstrating them in her academic life.

Social Media Project Extra Credit

Prompt:
Scholars and theologians use social media tools, too! Find a scholar or theologian who is currently active on Twitter, Facebook, or Instagram or has a podcast, blog, or other web presence. Their university or church webpage doesn't count, it will need to be something interactive or not "institutional." What do they post or share? How regularly are they online or posting? What does their profile information say? How do they interact with followers or commenters? Do they use multiple social media platforms? Have they migrated from one to another? **Write a 1–2 page summary of what you discover and learn from what they do online and how you might apply that to your own future scholarly social media use or presence.**

Rationale and Goals:
There were several goals I had in mind when creating this extra credit option. I wanted students to see how experienced scholars interact, in potentially positive and negative encounters, with other social media users. These users could be

members of the general public, engaged lay people, or other academics in their field. I also wanted students to see how the scholarly networks among followers might be positively leveraged. In my own observation of social media usage, specifically of Twitter, I have seen multiple academics at various stages of their careers leverage their network of followers in positive ways:[42]

– ask for favorite resources on a topic, frequently for class preparation or course syllabi
– solicit potential theories or explanations for a newly observed event, activity, or research topic
– share research related travel, site visits, or archives experiences
– discuss pedagogical or methodological approaches
– promote a new book, article publication, or presentation
– share calls for papers or presentation submissions
– decompress after a national/international conference or meeting
– discuss current issues or problems in their discipline or in broader academia
– retweet any of the above on behalf of another colleague in their network
– suggest or "introduce" scholars in disparate disciplines to each other by "@-ing" them in a tweet (or express surprise when two scholars in disparate disciplines already know each other's work!)

By viewing the social media postings and interactions of a scholar and their network over time, I expected that students would begin to appreciate the importance of the scholarly relationships built during graduate programs and at conferences and how social media allows scholars to extend their conversations by building and sharing their knowledge and ideas. I also hoped that they would see social media as a platform that they could use to engage with those working in the field they aspire to join and "recognize that scholarly conversations take place in various venues."[43]

Outcome:
Two students in the advanced course completed this extra credit assignment by following the Twitter feeds of two scholars. E. L. selected Dr. Nyasha Junior (@NyashaJunior) of Temple University and M. S. followed Dr. Wil Gafney (@WilGafney) of Brite Divinity School. E. L. specifically highlighted Dr. Junior's tweets regarding AAR/SBL conference attendance and appreciated her suggestions of which sessions to attend and why. E. L. also noted that Dr. Junior used her feed to share news about "local events, scholarships, articles… anything that would help someone that follows her." M. S. described Dr. Gafney's use of Twitter this way, "She interrogates her followers with provocative questions that

incite powerful conversations on social media. Her posts could be perceived as controversial … but it is an opportunity to create conversations between people and groups that normally do not share space to do so." Both of these students chose scholars who use Twitter very well and quite frequently. They were able to observe the networking and promotion value of the platform and how it might be beneficial or applicable to their own work, as E. L. stated, "I can see myself using Twitter to help with my internship."

Conclusions

"Scholarship as Conversation" continues to be a helpful frame for me as I approach the teaching of research and writing to School of Divinity students. Because community is such an important aspect of theological education, I think it resonates with our students to conceptualize research as an ongoing dialogue in which they are active participants. One of the prompts for the Research and Writing Reflection in the advanced course was to consider whether framing scholarship as a conversation changed their view of either the research or writing process. Two of the students who responded positively in their reflections, A. M. G. and A. A., stated,

> *I have been very selfish about research because I do it for a grade or for my own personal gain. I had removed the spiritual aspect of it and viewed it as an exclusively academic exercise. The writing process should be done with community and for community and it should be done in a prayerful attitude.*

and,

> *Framing 'scholarship as conversation' impacted the way that I view research and writing in a profound way… now that I look at it like that, I don't go into research looking for a right answer nor do I write thinking that I have the right answer. I am beginning to see scholarship as a marathon, not a sprint.*

For me, these comments indicate that these students have in fact internalized the dispositions and knowledge practices of this frame and can now see themselves as contributors to the larger scholarly conversation in theological studies.

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2. See the following article for a discussion of the development of LIB250: *Humanities Research Resources & Strategies*: Ellen Daugman, Leslie McCall, and Kaeley McMahan, "Designing and Implementing an Information Literacy Course in the Humanities," *Communications in Information Literacy* 5, no. 2 (April 17, 2012), *https://doi.org/10.15760 /comminfolit.2012.5.2.108*.

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