History 4:
Beyond the Reading List

A PDF of this presentation is available at:
http://libguides.gre.ac.uk/HPSS/inductions

Purpose

- Beyond the reading list...
- To acquaint you with the wide range of academic and professional resources that you may also legitimately use as source material for your essays and seminar presentations
  - ...and which you will be expected to use in your final-year dissertation (no reading list!)
  - So these (re)search skills need to be developed as early as possible
Programme

- Academic legitimacy
  - The Library Service’s collection
  - The primacy of the academic, scholarly journal article
    - The publication process; format and frequency
  - The peer-review process for academic journals
    - Historical debate ~ the dialectical process
- Other useful stuff
  - Conference papers and dissertations
  - Primary sources: text and multi-media
- Themed subject searching using LibrarySearch
  - Basic search techniques
  - The currency of discovered information
“I’m not allowed to read *that*...”

- The student’s *possible* prior experience: a controlled or otherwise limited reading environment
- The perceived exclusivity of the reading list:
  - You must read these texts
  - and *by implication only*
  - You must not read anything else
- The limitations of any reading list
  - There will list essential, key texts, but...
  - Otherwise they are indicative only of the available academic literature
    - Their introductory nature – to acquaint you with the scope of a historical theme or debate but not entirely to encompass it

The Library Collection

- Print and electronic collections
  - Books: the gradual migration from print to electronic
  - Journals: almost entirely electronic
  - Conference papers, dissertations: almost entirely electronic
- The University and its Library Service subscribe to a considerable number of electronic databases (collections) of full-text documents and other media
  - Carefully selected to match the teaching requirements of our courses
  - Ludicrously expensive – consequently, very little of this material can be found on Google
  - ...and you’re paying for it – so use it
Origins and Destinations of a Journal Article

One or more academics conduct research and write a good first draft of their prospective article

The (lead) author identifies a relevant academic journal, and submits their prospective article to the journal's Editor

The Editor accepts (or declines) the article, and circulates it to a number of approved experts for review (the peer-review process)

After possibly several iterations of review, rewrites and resubmission, the article is either published or formally rejected
Publication: The Peer Review Process

- A critical assessment of the validity of a journal article’s content; moderated by the journal editor; undertaken by fellow academics and professionals (the peers)
- Validity does not imply objectively definable correctness
- Timeliness – this can be a convoluted process taking anything from a few months to several years

Academic Journal Articles

- Structure (a highly schematic topography)
  - Abstract
    • A short summary of the coverage and key findings
  - Introduction
    • Describes the motivation for undertaking the article, its organisational structure, and its general conclusions
  - Methodology
    • The techniques used to gather data – quantitative; qualitative; theoretical
  - Results / Discussion
    • Presentation and interpretation of the results; considers the impact of those results on our current understanding of the phenomenon under analysis
  - Conclusion
    • Summarises the key findings; and considers the implications of those findings for future research
- General and specialised coverage
  - From the Cambridge Historical Journal to The Sports Historian
- Typically published monthly or quarterly (or sometimes even less frequently because of their highly specialised focus)
The Journals Sub-Collection & LibrarySearch

- We hold comparatively few print journals
  - These tend to be older academic titles
- The vast majority of our journals are held in numerous individual electronic databases
- The purpose LibrarySearch is therefore to rationalise the search process by allowing you to simultaneously cross-search multiple journal and other secondary-source databases

Other Types of Resource
Other Text Documents: Secondary

- **Conference Materials** (Proceedings and Papers)
  - Collections of academic papers given at a themed or regular, institutional conference
  - Often constitute the early research findings of one or more academics, and so presage formal publication in a peer-reviewed journal

- **Dissertations** (and Theses)
  - Masters’ theses and PhD dissertations
  - By definition, contain considerable original research data and findings

- **NOTE**: LibrarySearch gives access to some but not all of these documents

Other Text Documents: Primary

- Taking into account that the distinction between primary and secondary sources is not entirely unproblematical...

- **Artemis Primary Sources**
  - The publisher Gale’s unified database that encompasses the 17th & 18th Century Burney Collection, 19th Century UK Periodicals, and British Library Newspapers (mid-18th to mid-20th century)
  - National and regional newspapers; pamphlets and other media

- **Historical Texts**
  - This database “brings together three historically significant collections for the first time: Early English Books Online (EEBO), Eighteenth Century Collections Online (ECCO) and 65,000 texts from the British Library 19th Century collection”
  - Primarily monographs but also some periodicals and serials

- **NOTE**: LibrarySearch does **NOT** give access to these databases. (Access is described later in this presentation.)
Other Documents: Multi-Media

- **British Library Sounds**
  - Contains “recordings [that] come from all over the world and cover the entire range of recorded sound: music, drama and literature, oral history, wildlife and environmental sounds.” We shall ignore the wildlife.

- **MediaPlus (JISC)**
  - Contains video, audio and image files.

- **Historic Digimap**
  - Contains the UK Ordnance Survey maps from 1843 to 1996.
  - You will need to register with the database.

**NOTE:** LibrarySearch does NOT give access to these databases. (Access is described later in this presentation.)

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**Themed Subject Searching Using LibrarySearch (LS)**
Before the Search: Terminology

- The need to identify all the themes and concepts relevant to an essay question
  - **Note:** This applies also to seminar and presentation topics
- Describing those concepts using appropriate terminology
  - Identifying keywords in the essay question
    - **Note:** Some themes and concepts may not be explicitly stated in an essay question (implicit assumptions?)
  - Identifying synonyms that also describe the phenomena
  - Using a professional, historical vocabulary (dictionaries and thesauri)
- Constructing a series of searches
  - A pencil and paper exercise
  - Revise queries, based on your search results and further reading

**LS: Example Subject Search**

Use the **Eresources** option to concentrate on non-book texts

A simple subject search for all the texts containing the words ‘marxist’ and ‘historiography’

From the **Limit** options in the right-hand column, you can select to view (peer-reviewed) **Academic Journals** (articles), and **Dissertations**, and **Conference Materials**
Relevance and currency of the article content; you can Sort the result-set by both of these factors.

Example search: feminist historiography

You can also specify a (publication) date range.

1. In the LibrarySearch result-set record, click on the View Content link;
2. An intermediate screen will offer one or more links to the database(s) containing the article;
3. The source database will typically contain a link to a PDF version of the full-text article.
Further Sources of Information and Assistance

- If you have any problems accessing electronic resources, such as electronic journal articles, please contact:

  librarysearch@gre.ac.uk

  You should also contact your academic Librarian: Fraser Nicolaides

  nf02@gre.ac.uk

- The Academic Skills team can also help you with analysing essay questions and seminar topics; see http://libguides.gre.ac.uk/academicskills/assignments or email: academic-skills@gre.ac.uk

Access to Databases

LibrarySearch
LibrarySearch’s constituent and other databases
Access: University Portal / My Learning

Link to LibrarySearch; or go directly to: http://librarysearch.gre.ac.uk

The A-Z directory of individual databases

Access: The Directory of Databases

Lists all the individual databases, across all disciplines, to which the University subscribes. This is where you would access those databases not covered by LibrarySearch: Artemis Primary Sources; Historical Texts; British Library Sounds; Historical Digimap; MediaPlus, etc.