Sociology 4: Beyond the Reading List
Other sources of academic literature

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 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
    - The dialectical processes of scholarly debate
- Other useful stuff
  - Conference papers and dissertations
  - Reports
- 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
  - They should contain 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 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 – 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 author(s) identify a relevant academic journal, and submit 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 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 (the following is 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 Sociological Quarterly to Rural Sociology
- 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 textual databases

Academic Support Team

Other Types of Academic 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

- **The Social Theory** database
  - Full-text primary source material: social, economic, political and philosophical treatises; plus some important secondary commentaries (typically republished journal articles)
  - “…includes the works of Max Weber, Karl Marx, Jürgen Habermas, Jean Baudrillard, Georg Hegel, Herbert Spencer, Antonio Gramsci, Mary Wollstonecraft, Georg Simmel, Emile Durkheim, Simone de Beauvoir, Michel Foucault, Pierre Bourdieu, Theodor Adorno, and thousands more.”

**NOTE:** The works contained in this database are **not** covered by *LibrarySearch*
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 sociological vocabulary (dictionaries and thesauri)
- Constructing a series of searches
  - A pencil and paper exercise
- Revise queries, based on your search results and further reading
Use the Eresources option to concentrate on non-book sources.

A simple subject search for all the sources containing the words 'criminalisation', 'social', and 'policy'.

From the Limit options in the right-hand column, you can select to view (peer-reviewed) Academic Journals (articles), and Reports, and Conference Materials.

Relevance and currency of the article content; you can Sort the result-set by both of these factors.

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, for example, you would access the Social Theory database.

Questions?

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Beyond the Reading List: Sociology

Most people do not listen with the intent to understand; they listen with the intent to reply.
Stephen R. Covey