Sociology 5: the Key Thinkers essay

Beyond the reading-list: academic legitimacy &
Advanced database search techniques

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

Purpose

- To re-introduce you to the Library’s scholarly collection
- To improve the efficiency and effectiveness of your searches. To achieve this:
- To introduce you to a range of search techniques that can be used in LibrarySearch, but which have much wider applicability
Programme

- Academic legitimacy: using the whole collection
- Academic resources
  - Primary and secondary readings: theorists and commentators
  - Multimedia: Box of Broadcasts
- Advanced search techniques
  - LibrarySearch (Eresources)
  - Academic Search Premier
    - A constituent of LibrarySearch
- Access to databases
- Assistance
“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

Academic Resources
The Library Collection

- Print and electronic collections
  - Books; eBooks; academic journal articles; conference papers; (PhD) dissertations; professional magazine articles; documentaries; official statistical data...

- The Library Service subscribes to a considerable number of electronic databases (collections) of full-text documents and other media
  - Ludicrously expensive; very little of this material can be found on Google
  - ...and you’re paying for it!

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Peer-Reviewed Journal Articles

- **Academic, scholarly journals**
  - Often research based
  - Theoretical/conceptual (as opposed to simply documenting a social occurrence or phenomena)
  - Quality assured; 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
Other Text Documents

- **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 many but not all of these documents

Primary Source Documents

- **The Social Theory** database
  - Full-text primary source material: social, economic, political and philosophical treatises; plus some important secondary commentaries (typically republished academic 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
Multimedia Sources: BoB

The **Box of Broadcasts** database of radio and television transmissions

**Access:** Portal / My Learning / Online databases and academic journals / Box of Broadcasts

“Only programmes from the nine most popular channels [BBC 1; BBC 2; BBC 4; ITV; Channel 4; Channel 5; More 4; BBC Radio 4; and BBC Radio 4 Extra] are automatically recorded. For all other channels, users have 30 days to request a programme before it’s gone forever.”

**NOTE:** The programmes contained in this database are not covered by LibrarySearch

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**BoB:**

- **documentary record**

  - **Full text Transcript** (of variable quality, but useful for quotation purposes)
  - Create and **Add to Playlist** - saved to your account
  - **Information required for a citation** (more later)
LibrarySearch: Eresources

Phrase searching
Truncation

LibrarySearch: Example Eresources Search

Eresources: typically journal articles, conference papers, etc.

Sort and Limit by (Date, Language, Source Type, etc.) options

What's the (potential) problem with this type of search?
LibrarySearch: Phrase

- To improve the precision of your result set, it might be appropriate to define all or part of your search statement as a **Phrase** (as distinct from a series of disaggregated keywords)
- To do this, enclose each term within “quotation marks”. For example, “*conflict theory*”.
- The system will then retrieve only those items where the search words appear next to each other in the specified order. This typically gives you a smaller, more relevant result set.

LibrarySearch: Truncation

- Conversely, use **Truncation** to expand the coverage of any search term
- To apply truncation, use the star (*) symbol
- For example, by entering the search term: `cultur*` the system will simultaneously search for the terms: `culture`; `cultures`; `cultural`; `culturale`; `curation`; etc.
  And `functional*` will search for: functional; functionalist; functionalists; functionalism; etc.
Eresources Search Results

Phrase search using “quotation marks”.

Click on the circle-x button to de-select the Also search within article full text option.

Impact on search results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>conflict theory functionalism</td>
<td>19,659</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“conflict theory” functionalism</td>
<td>994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>deselect ‘...within...’ option</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Still too many? Add further keywords or use Advanced Search.

LibrarySearch: Advanced Search

Subject Terms
Advanced Search: Interface

Input a string of words and/or a single phrase. This example should identify works about both Simmel and Marx.

Exclude words – use with extreme caution or not at all, especially when searching within full text. Why?

As appropriate, select type of resource, language and/or physical library.

We are not searching for a specific author or title, but have added a single (“phrase”) Subject term

Subject Terms are a list of the main concepts or themes discussed in an article

Advanced Search: Results

Our pre-formatted search terms

Note: You still have the Sort By and Limit options, and the facility to deselect the default Also search within full text parameter
Subject Terms: Focussed Searching

This is an example record from LibrarySearch. It includes citation data, an abstract and descriptive keywords (Subject Terms). Similarly structured records will also be found in the individual databases that comprise the source content of LibrarySearch.

The full list of Subject Terms associated with a specific article. (If relevant, one or more may be incorporated into your subsequent searches.)

The Abstract briefly describes the main concepts and findings of the article. Subject Terms are a summary distillation of those main concepts.

Academic Search Premier
Subject Terms
Thesaurus
Smarter searching within individual (LibrarySearch source) databases:
- Use field limiters;
- Identify subject terms from the thesaurus of **Subject Terms**

The drop-down menu of field limiters. Note especially: **Title; Subject Terms** (derived from the thesaurus); **Author; People** (authors / theorists as a subject); and **Geographic Terms**

Note the use of the “phrase” and truncat* search techniques

The full list of **Subject Terms** ascribed to this specific article
Some databases allow you to search the thesaurus, which lists all available **Subject Terms**

Click on the **Subject Terms** option

Enter your search term (and select term location: **Begins with**; **Contains**)

Tick the required **Subject Term(s)**; change the **OR** connector to **AND**; and click the **Add** button

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**Access to Databases**

- LibrarySearch
- LibrarySearch’s constituent and other databases
- Support with access
Access: University Portal / My Learning

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

The A-Z directory of individual databases; including Academic Search Premier (a constituent of LibrarySearch)

Access: The Directory of Databases

Lists all the individual databases, across all disciplines, to which the University subscribes. Many, but not all of these, are covered by LibrarySearch.

Academic Search Premier

...and further down, the Box of Broadcasts and Social Theory databases
Although you’ve selected **Academic Search Premier**, the system doesn’t take you directly to the database:
1. Click on the **Psychology/Sociology Databases** link in the menu;
2. To access the full suite of advanced search tools, click on the **Title List** link.

3. Select **Advanced Search**
4. Enter your search terms, select the required field limiters and other search parameters as necessary: peer-reviewed only?; language?; search within full-text?... etc.
Support

For help with identifying relevant databases and constructing efficient and effective searches, please email your School librarian:

Fraser Nicolaides
nf02@gre.ac.uk

If you encounter problems accessing LibrarySearch or any of its constituent databases, especially from off campus, first consult the supplementary login instructions at:

http://libguides.gre.ac.uk/e-resources/offcampus

Otherwise, please email the technical support team:

librarysearch@gre.ac.uk

Dr Jones’ Top Ten Tips
...well, four actually: 1-2

1. Use the whole collection (academic legitimacy)
   - Going beyond the reading list
     - From (e)books to journal articles, conference papers, PhD dissertations, and non-textual resources such as TV broadcasts

2. Use advanced search techniques to focus on the most relevant materials
   - “Phrase searching” (to reduce the coverage of your search words)
   - Truncatio* (to expand the coverage of a search word)
   - Subject Terms (which may be “phrased” or truncated*)
     - ...and the database-specific thesauri that allow you to identify Subject Terms (for example: Academic Search Premier and Humanities International Complete)
   - Limit the scope of your LibrarySearch search to article metadata (title / subject terms / abstract)
     - Deselect the Also search in within article full text option

...well, four actually: 3-4

3. Consider using LibrarySearch’s constituent databases, and thereby access their advanced-search features
   - Academic Search Premier and Humanities International Complete
     - Both are produced by the same publisher, so have essentially the same functionality
     - Use the access procedure described in this presentation to ensure you enable that functionality

4. Ask for help (Library and/or Academic Skills)
   - The only stupid question is the one that goes unasked