

Sources, Citations, Quotations, Book Reviews, Your Topic, and Your Background

Edward Morey, Rough working draft September 14, 2016

Finding the articles (and books) you will review in your research paper:

The easiest path:

1. Find a topic (idea, hypothesis, findings) from the book that interests you and that you want to research in detail.
2. Read what the book says about the topic. Search the book for related sections using key words and phrases.
3. Read and absorb my sources for that topic.
4. Look through the sources they reference for additional articles and books
5. At this point you might need to narrow your topic to a sub-topic of your topic or to your topic from only one angle. (Keep thinking about how you need to relate your topic to economics.)
6. Search for additional articles and books.
 - a. You are looking for articles that are important to your topic and that I have not sourced.
 - b. Your new sources will be, for the most part, articles in academic journals and books.
 - c. Most journals are available online from the CU library at
<https://ucblibraries.colorado.edu/research/ejournalfinder.htm> I
You type in the name of a journal and it will take you to the journal's web page. Then you can find a particular article (typically by year and volume number) or search the entire journal for key words.¹ **Unfortunately this link no longer seems to work.** Someone find me the new link. Thanks.
- d. Often an article can be downloaded from the author's webpage. This is also a good way to find related and more recent stuff by this author.

¹ You have automatic access to the journals if you connecting from on campus. If you are connecting from off campus you need to set up a virtual private network.

- e. [Google Scholar](#) is the Google search engine of for all things scholarly. [Google Scholar](#)

You can use Google Scholar to search by author names, titles, topics, etc. When it finds an article it will tell you how often it has been cited, and often who has cited it. You will use it a lot. Once you identify an article you will often have to go to the library's web page to get a copy.

[Google Scholar Search Tips](#)

[Google Scholar Metrics](#)

[Google Scholar Metrics](#)

- f. It is OK to use Wikipedia, but as a place to start your research, not end it. For example a search of “suicide ethics” would have a lot of hits. Note that Wiki articles typically include a list of references.
- g. If you want to find the top journal is a field search using terms like “Economic Journals”, or Behavioral Psychology Journals”.
- h. A great source for finding research is the [Web of Science](#). It is accessed by signing in at www.webofknowledge.com/ You will need to sign up from a computer connected to campus.² You can search many ways, and it lets you do a reverse citation search (finding articles that cite an article you have).³ You can also use it to see how often an article has been cited and by whom.⁴
- i. You can search the NYTimes by topic. Relevant articles will often list researchers working in the area, or recent research finding. You can then search those articles and those papers.
- j. A good place to start with any topic that has to do with philosophy is the [Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy](#). It has survey articles on many topics (with references) and one can search by word or phrase.

² Once you do that you, you can sign up remotely using a CU VPN.

³ For example, using a source from the book you can see who cited it, finding more recent stuff on your topic.

⁴ If an article is more than five years old and has few or no citations, it is not worth your time.

7. The goal is to come up with four or five new sources to review.

General stuff about sources:

Everything you reference should either be by a well-respected expert in the field, an article in an academic journal, a government report, a well-respected and neutral journalist, a respected academic web site, or a person of influence. An academic web site that I source a lot is the [Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy](#)

A person of influence is someone who is not an expert but a person who has the power to influence policy.

For example you could quote the former President Bush on his view of the medical procedure known as partial-birth abortion, not because he is a medical expert, but because his actions contributed to its ban. He is a person of influence on the topic. On the other hand, quoting me on whether the procedure is medically safe would not be informative to your reader.

Typically you don't want to source as an expert an advocate for a cause. For example, many voluntary organizations and NGOs are advocating for something (save the whales, save poor kids, conservative and liberal organizations and websites, etc.) You can reference them as advocates for a particular belief. Be wary of statistics reported by such groups. Check them before you repeat them.

There are many things in books and articles that are opinions or perceptions, but presented as if they are facts – maybe they are. Just because Rush Limbaugh or Paul Krugman says something does not make it true. Try and cite the original source, or something close to it.

If Rush says Hillary had an affair with the Governor of NY, you can report that as something Rush said. If your reader does not know Rush, you might add some clarifying information such as “Rush Limbaugh, a conservative bombastic radio host, said, ‘ ...’”

Now one cares what Joe Blow has to say about David Hume or how neurons work unless Joe is a known expert in these areas. If you are talking about how neurons work, reference, for example, a neuroscience text book.

Distinguish between facts and research, on the one hand, and the opinions of interested parties. Interested parties will often make shit up or present stuff in a misleading way. For example imagine you don't want cockfighting banned in Louisiana. So you want to impress your reader with how much the economy will suffer if it is banned. You report that “poultry is a 2 billion dollar industry in LA” – a true statement - hoping your reader will think 2 billion will be lost if cockfighting is banned. It won't: most poultry production in LA has nothing to do with cockfighting. If you are discussing a source with a fact presented in a misleading way, note that it is misleading. In your arguments do not use facts, out of context, to mislead your readers.

A good working assumption is that much of what is on the web are opinions not facts or conclusions based on research. And most of these opinions are being expressed by non-experts with an agenda. You want to learn about a topic from neutral parties that have thought long and hard about the topic, and who have done extensive research on the topic, not from a bunch of uniformed fools, or from people whose job is to spin the facts to their employer's advantage.

Ideally your paper will provide the evidence so the reader can decide for himself whether increased dopamine increases happiness. Don't just say that it does, let the reader see the evidence, or at least give them quick access to the evidence.

How to cite and reference?

At the end of your paper you will have a section titled Sources. Follow the bibliography style I use in the book. Note how it is different for articles, book and web pages.

Every fact, finding, and quote in your text needs a citation. The only exception is stuff that everyone knows. If you do not cite where your information is coming from you are plagiarizing. And, in addition, the reader cannot examine the source.

Consider the following: You want to report that 47% of all Gubers like Gomers. Your source is Morey, E.R. (2007), “Everything you wanted to know about Gubers and Gomers,” *Journal of Stupid Economics* (27): 12-28.

In the paper you could write:

Forty-seven percent of all gubers like gomers (Morey, 2007).

Or you could write,

Forty-seven percent of all gubers like gomers (Morey, 2007, p.14).

If you are discussing, for example, an article, and your discussion has multiple sentences, you do not need to cite the article in each sentence, as long as it is obvious that you are talking about the same article.

If you source a web page, you need to be identify the author of the page (the individual, the organization, the firm, the government, etc.) and the reader should get some sense of why the information cited is not just from some kook – you should not be citing, for example, Fred Goober’s blog on who will be the next pope, unless, of course, Fred is a well-known expert on Vatican politics and then only if you are writing about Vatican politics. I have a friend who is an economist and an expert on how Popes are selected.

Put hot links in your paper when you are referencing or discussion something on the web; that way, the reader can click and see for herself. Another way to expand your paper without making it longer is to have an appendix. You could then add hotlinks in the text to materials in the appendix. Since people reading your paper have electronic access the library’s online journals, you can provide links to the articles you review.

When you put a hot link in your paper, give the link an informative name if the link itself is not informative. For example, your reader should not see something like the following (<http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdf?vid=3&hid=12&sid=3424a8fb-3c30-4faf-adb1-963cebd6a0b4%40sessionmgr2>). Rather give the link a “name” that includes the author or organization and the year, and then when one clicks on that link, one goes to the above address.

Quotations:

Quotations should be delimited by quotation marks unless the quote is long; in which case the quote can be presented in a text block (some indenting to set it off) with a different font. (See, for example, how I include longish quotations in the book.)

If someone else wrote the sentence(s) you are writing, the quotation has to be identified as a quotation and referenced. Otherwise it is plagiarizing.⁵

Life will be easier if you know something about your topic before you start your research.

For example, if you have a major or minor in psychology, you might want to choose a topic with a significant psychological component. Or not.

If your research paper is a critique of a book:

The author should have standing in their field, not just the kind of expert you see on Dr. Phil or the Fox Network. Books by well-respected academics are a good bet. This does not mean the author has to be a good economist – they have to be knowledgeable and respected at what they do (philosophy, biology, ethics, a type of religion). If you are critiquing an economics book, the author should be a well-respected economist.

Be a little wary of books by people like [Malcomb Gladwell](#). I like some of his books but keep in mind he is not an expert in the field he is writing about, so you would need to review his sources. (Compare, for example, a book on choice by Malcomb to a book on choice by [Daniel Kahneman](#), a Nobel laureate in economics.)

If you do critique a book, tell us whether you recommend it, or not, for this class, and why. That said, finding good stuff for the class is better than saying “I read x, and I would recommend it to no one.” Recommending a book does not mean you agree with everything in it.

A place to start your critique is by reading other reviews of the book. Look for review in places like the New York Times, the Washington Post, The New Yorker, The London Times literary

⁵ Note that it is possible to put any sentence in a Google Search box.

supplement, etc. Just Google the title and a bunch of review should come up. Also look for reviews in professional journals, e.g. The Journal of Health Economics often includes reviews of books about health economics.