

Workshop Descriptions

1. Introduction to Western Libraries

An overview of services and materials provided by Western Libraries, including a look at the library catalogue, locating materials in the library, requesting items from other institutions (Interlibrary Loan), using the library from off-campus, and “just what do librarians do, anyway?”

- Interpret catalogue records (particularly call numbers and locations) to find materials in Western Libraries and online
- Search the library catalogue for known items
- Search the library catalogue for items on a topic
- Set up an account in RACER and submit Interlibrary Loan requests
- Connect to library resources from off-campus
- Determine when to contact your subject librarian for assistance with library research

2. Scholarly Communication Process

A look at the scholarly communication cycle, with an emphasis on sci-tech information. We'll also explore the implications of the peer review process for academic publication, and discuss issues surrounding open access to information.

- Identify types of information produced at various points in the scholarly communication cycle
- Discuss the peer review process
- Identify key issues around open access to information

3. Search Strategies

Get the experts' advice on how to find information effectively. You'll practice developing search strings, following the 'information trail' of footnotes and bibliographies, finding review articles, and getting to the full text of the articles.

- Identify keywords on a topic
- Distinguish between keyword and subject searching
- Conduct cited reference searches using various sources
- Use database limiters to narrow or broaden search results
- Identify review articles and/or meta-analyses
- Obtain the full text of e-journals
- Determine when results are only available in print

4. Selecting Subject Databases

How do you know which sources to search? How many sources should you search? This session will include more hands-on practice, with an emphasis on comparing the search strategies and results from various sources.

- Identify article databases in your subject area
- Identify general article databases
- Distinguish the content included in various databases
- Compare search results from several databases
- Discuss reasons for choosing subject databases

5. Identifying Key Research Papers

Now that you're a pro at finding journal articles, how do you know which ones are most important in your area? Learn how and when to use citation counts and journal impact factors, and explore qualitative approaches to determining an article's relative importance.

- Find an article's "times cited" using various sources
- Find a journal's impact factor using Journal Citation Reports
- Discuss the validity and implications of using citation counts and impact factors to determine an article's quality
- Use professional judgment and other clues to gauge an article's relative importance

6. Library Research for the Literature Review

It all comes down to this – the backbone of your thesis or dissertation. Review how to develop search strategies, search databases, and identify key research, and learn how to put it all together so you have a comprehensive literature review.

- Combine search strategies and database choices to develop an overall plan for finding information
- Assess the comprehensiveness of the information you find

7. Keeping Current with Scholarly Literature

The work you do today can be affected by a result published tomorrow. Learn how to set up search alerts so that you are automatically notified about new papers in your area. Explore the differences between table of contents alert services, saved searches in subject databases, RSS feeds and e-prints.

- Set up table of contents alerts and topic alerts using various sources
- Find e-prints in your area of research

8. Writing the Research Paper

First comes research (in the lab and the library), then comes writing. Learn about the sections of a research paper, the appropriate tone to use in your writing, and how to fix common mistakes in style and grammar.

- Identify the sections of a research paper
- Identify an appropriate tone to use in writing
- Avoid common mistakes in style and grammar

9. Ethical Use of Information

As you search for the information you need, you will need to be aware of the ethical and legal uses of information. This session will cover practical aspects of plagiarism and copyright, and how they will affect you as students and researchers.

- Explain whether a given example constitutes plagiarism
- Correctly cite references
- Describe how copyright affects your use of information sources
- Identify the rights you have with respect to information they produce

10. Introduction to RefWorks

RefWorks is web-based bibliographic citation management software that is licensed for Western students. With this tool you can save, search and format references you find in database or catalogue searches. The session will cover setting up a RefWorks account, importing from databases, creating manual references, formatting bibliographies, and more.

- Import references from various databases and catalogues
- Create references manually
- Select an appropriate output style
- Use the Write 'n Cite feature
- Create a bibliography