

SOCI 315 – Research Methods

Nancy Alzo

Crumb Library

8/9 September 2010

Good to know...

- Help is available when researching by connecting with the Reference Librarians – in person, chat, e-mail or make an appointment for a research consultation
- Interlibrary Loan (ILL – aka ILLiad) service obtains books and articles from other libraries when the material is not readily available at SUNY Potsdam

Getting Started

- What resources are you looking for?
 - Type?
 - How many?
 - Time frame?
 - Topic?
 - What search terms describe your topic?
 - Be flexible
 - How does your topic determine an appropriate library database?
 - “Start by Subject” - Sociology

Sociological Abstracts

- ...“abstracts and indexes the international literature in sociology and related disciplines...since 1952.” – journals, books, book chapters, etc.
- Coverage is focused on core sociology journals with inclusion of other journals where sociologist also publish.
- What is meant by “indexing”?
- Why is an abstract of value to the researcher?

Controlled Vocabulary

- Identification and consistent use of terminology to provide analytic subject indexing of database entries
- Thesaurus provides list of terms, scope notes, and relationships between terms – Broader, narrower, related terms
- Using the thesaurus to select search terms and specifying the subject or descriptor field for searching those terms allows the researcher to utilize the analytic work that has already been done

Limiters

- Use choices appropriately to ensure results that meet your assignment criteria
 - Date Range – last ten years – 2000 - 2011
 - Limit to
 - Journal Articles
 - English (?)
 - Other options -- for other types of material, searching specific journal content, etc.
- Link to the thesaurus – Search Tools at top or bottom of template

Boolean Searching

- Combine concepts using “and”
 - Dogs and Cats
- Include viable related terms using “or”
 - Dogs or Cats
- Exclude unwanted concepts using “not”
 - Dogs not Cats
- “And” and “Not” narrow search results
- “Or” broadens search results

Results

- Use the abstracts to assess the relevance of results
- Use the descriptors to identify terms for viable alternative concepts – edit your search
- Article Linker to access the article
 - BearCat for journals physically located in Crumb Library
 - Article level links to full text or pdfs in other dbs
 - Interlibrary loan when necessary

Using Bibliographies and Tracking your Work

- Citations in bibliographies are important resources
 - Citation Linker checks the Article Linker database for citations you enter
- Mark and save/e-mail results and searches
- “My Research” accounts – more to come...