

HCOL 086: Acoustemologies
Spring 2013

Research Proposal & Annotated Bibliography

Description:

In this assignment you will further refine your research topic by writing a short introduction to your topic and an overview of your research question. You will also begin your research in earnest by finding and annotating scholarly sources pertaining to your topic.

To accomplish these goals, you will write a **research proposal (approx. 750 words; no more than 1000 words)** with an **annotated bibliography of FIVE sources**, at least THREE of which are peer-reviewed scholarly journal articles and/or books. You will post your proposal and bibliography to the course blog by 11:59pm on Friday, March 1.

The following steps will guide you through the process required to produce your research proposal and bibliography.

Locating Sources:

First, take some time to learn about the expectations scholars have for high quality research. There are a number of excellent resources that will help you understand how to identify scholarly, peer-reviewed materials related to your research and how to evaluate those sources. See our course's library guide here: <http://researchguides.uvm.edu/content.php?pid=431130&sid=3527022>

You should also be sure to look at the information located at the "Books" and "Journal Articles" tabs on the research guide.

Once you are familiar with the kinds of sources you will find, it is time to run some searches. The "Focus Your Topic & Choose Your Databases" and "Develop a Keyword Search" links should be helpful in explaining how to go into the library's online databases in a strategic way. You can also consult the previous handout ("Moving from Topic to Question") to help identify material related to your topic by consulting reference works, browsing library shelves, or scrutinizing bibliographies.

Some tips to keep your research on track:

- Document the materials you locate in your research notebook—for each source include a bibliographic entry (see below) and a brief description of the source, and why you think it might be relevant for your research.
- If you find a source pertinent for your research that is not owned by the Bailey/Howe library be sure to submit an interlibrary loan request so that the material can be delivered to you in a timely manner.
- *Please note that while you are only required to annotate five sources for this assignment, you should not simply choose the first five sources you find.* You will probably have to locate and evaluate a number of sources (10? 20? 50?!—it all depends on the nature of your topic and the kinds of sources you will find) before choosing five sources to annotate that will best represent your research topic at this stage of your research.

Citing Your Sources:

Be sure to make a full bibliographic entry for each source you locate in your research notebook. Given that our work in this class is interdisciplinary in nature, you should choose a citation format that is consistent with the nature of your research. What this means is that if you are researching a topic that is humanistic in nature (i.e. most topics on religion, literature, or music) you should use the MLA style. If

your topic is based more in the social sciences (i.e. anthropology or sociology) you will use Chicago style. Other social science disciplines (i.e. psychology) will use APA style. If you are unsure, you should just choose a style and then be consistent with it.

You will find information that will assist you with creating citations here:
<http://researchguides.uvm.edu/content.php?pid=431130&sid=3527188>

Create Your Annotated Bibliography:

Now that you have located relevant sources for your research it is time to compose a bibliography of the sources you've consulted (a minimum of FIVE sources, at least THREE of which are peer-reviewed scholarly sources), annotating each citation with a concise exposition and succinct analysis of each source. The following guide to preparing the **annotated bibliography** should be consulted:

<http://olinuris.library.cornell.edu/ref/research/skill28.htm>

In particular, you should follow these instructions for creating an annotation:

“Write a concise annotation that summarizes the central theme and scope of the book or article. Include one or more sentences that (a) evaluate the authority or background of the author, (b) comment on the intended audience, (c) compare or contrast this work with another you have cited, and (d) explain how this work illuminates your bibliography topic.”

As noted above, you should choose five sources that best represent your research topic at this stage of the process. In choosing your sources you should aim to include sources that provide an overview of the scholarly work on your topic and also represent a diversity of perspectives toward your research question.

In order to complete this assignment you must fully and carefully read the journal articles, magazine articles, and such that you locate in your research. While you are not expected to read the entirety of any books you might find, you should be able to get a sense of a book’s scope of focus and central argument from reading its introduction and/or conclusion. This should suffice for the purpose of generating your annotation. You should also feel free to consult book reviews and/or critical review essays—especially ones from scholarly journals—to help you annotate a book and/or crisply frame a topic or field. If you consult book reviews you must include them in your bibliography; however they will not count towards the five sources you are required to annotate for this assignment.

Writing the Research Proposal:

Once you have completed the above steps you are ready to write your 750-to-1000-word overview of your research proposal. Note, that while this will appear BEFORE your annotated bibliography, I recommend that you complete the proposal last as the work you do to locate sources and annotate them will assist you in writing the proposal. Your proposal should expand upon your two-sentence proposal (I am studying X; In order to find out Y) by including appropriate background information on your topic, such that your readers can clearly understand what it is that your paper is focused on.

Keep in mind that your research proposal should hook and sustain the interest of your readers. To do this you need to explain why the topic is an interesting and important one, and define the parameters of your interest. To help frame your research you should consider the reading we’re doing in this class in order to place your specific topic and questions in relation to a wider field of study. For this reason you are encouraged to use course readings to help you craft a powerful opening section. Don’t forget to include a catchy and explanatory title for your proposal that gives an overview of the topic and the stakes of your research question.

Post your Research Proposal and your Annotated Bibliography to the Course Blog by 11:59pm on Friday, March 1. Additional instructions for posting these materials can be found on the blog.