Finding Secondary Sources
History 1B03
The Americas and the World

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Session Outline

Developing Research Skills in…

1. Using Databases to find scholarly articles
2. Using the Library Catalogue to find scholarly books

Questions?
Any time during the session!

History 1B03 Secondary Sources
Three main types of articles

- Newspapers (daily)
- Magazines (weekly)
- Scholarly Journals (e.g. monthly, quarterly)
Scholarly Journal Articles

- Written by and for researchers
- Long and in-depth
- No advertising
- Can be “peer reviewed” or “refereed”
- Include references or bibliographies
Use Databases to find Articles

• McMaster Library subscribes to 500+ online databases
• Determine an **appropriate database** to search
• Databases show “what exists” but not necessarily “what’s in the library”
• Some databases display
  – **full text** of the articles
  – **citations** (references) only
  – **abstracts** (summaries) of articles
Connecting to Databases

• Start at the Library home page
  – [http://library.mcmaster.ca](http://library.mcmaster.ca)
  – click on the **Databases** tab > **Databases by Subject** > **History**

• MAC ID Authentication required?
  – from libraries, technology centres, home: **yes!**
  – from residence: **no!**
Databases for History

- America: History & Life
- Historical Abstracts
- Humanities Abstracts
- JSTOR
- Project Muse
Searching Tips

- Use “and” to combine keywords and phrases
  e.g. slavery and abolition
- Use “or” for synonyms
  e.g. freedom or liberation or emancipation
- Use an asterisk “*” to search plurals and different endings
  e.g. slave* searches slave, slaves, slavery
Searching Tips

• Use “Limits” to make your search more precise
  e.g. Language – English
  e.g. Document Type – Articles

• Search by “Subject” and find on-topic articles
  e.g. Abolition movement
Databases for History

- America, History and Life
  - Covers the history of the United States and Canada from prehistory to the present
  - Over 2000 journals
Databases for History

• Historical Abstracts
  – Covers the history of the world from 1450 to the present
  – Excludes the US and Canada
  – Over 2000 key historical journals
Databases for History

- Humanities Abstracts
  - Subject coverage includes art, folklore, history, philosophy
  - Over 500 sources including scholarly journals and specialized magazines
Databases for History

• JSTOR
  – Digital archive of full text journals in the areas of Arts, Business, Economics and Sciences
  – Historical only; excludes the most recent issues until a certain number of years have passed (3 to 5 years)
Databases for History

• Project MUSE
  – Online international access to the full text of over 300 scholarly journals
  – Coverage includes the arts & humanities, social sciences and mathematics
The “One Good Article” Strategy

• to **focus** your search
• find **1 good article**
• use language from **subjects** (or descriptors), **authors** to get more
Do We Have the Article?

• Look for a full text link e.g. Fulltext: [Project Muse | Ebsco]

OR

• click get it! to see whether the library has an online or paper subscription to the journal

• we may have:
  – one or more online subscriptions
  – one or more paper subscriptions
  – or both, or neither
What if “get it!” doesn’t work?

• If get it! doesn’t appear, or doesn’t work:
  • open another browser
  • go to the Library Catalogue
  • do a Journal Title search to find the record for the journal
Session Outline

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1. Using Databases to find scholarly articles

2. Using the Library Catalogue to find scholarly books

Questions?
Any time during the session!
Library Catalogue

• What’s in the Library Catalogue?
  • Everything that the 4 McMaster libraries own
• Search by
  • Title
  • Author
  • Subject
  • Anywhere… and more!

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Library Catalogue

- 3 options to search
  - Basic, Advanced, Browse
- Break your topic into keywords and phrases
  - e.g. Slave trade in the Americas
  - slave trade, americas
Library Catalogue – Scholarly books

- Use the words “collections”, “collected works”, “editor”, “edited” in your search
  - e.g. anti slavery, collections
  - e.g. slavery, editor
- Check to see if the publisher is from a University Press
  - e.g. Princeton University Press

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Locating a Book

- Check Location
  - e.g. Mills Bookstacks
  - e.g. Mills Reserve
- Check Availability or Status
  - e.g. Check shelf
  - e.g. Checked out

History 1B03 Secondary Sources
Mills Book Locator Slip

McMaster University Libraries

History 1B03 Secondary Sources
Session Recap

Developing Research Skills in...

1. Using Databases to find scholarly articles
   - History Databases e.g. America: History & Life

2. Using the Library Catalogue to find scholarly books
   - Library Catalogue – Basic, Advanced
   - Search “Anywhere” when using words like “collections”, “edited”

History 1B03 Secondary Sources
Questions?

Need Help? Just Ask!

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