PSC 338 Finding Information in Steen Library

Whether you use the library catalog, the Internet, or the electronic databases, you need a search strategy. So, develop a keyword statement by writing your topic in the form of a question, and circling the keywords. Here are examples:

**What is America’s policy toward China in the South China Sea?**

*Or*

**What is US policy toward ISIS?**

Now, think of synonyms and different spellings. Here is a search strategy or search statement that uses Boolean operators (AND, OR), nesting (use of parentheses), and phrase searching (use of quotation marks):

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“foreign policy” AND (ISIS OR “Islamic State of Iraq” OR ISIL)
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(try using synonym “International relations” in place of “foreign policy”)

You can begin with the Library home page and do a SteenFind search. It helps you find material on your topic, from print books—to e-books—to government documents—to video clips—to magazine, journal, and newspaper articles.

**Articles & more**

Showing 1 - 20 of 20615 for search: ""foreign policy" AND (ISIS OR Islamic State of Iraq OR ISIL)"

- **1Select this record**

  **United States deepens its engagement with ISIL conflict**
  by Julian Davis Mortenson
  Published in The American Journal of International Law (01-01-2015)
  “...The rise of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) has led to renewed U.S. military action in the Middle East. ISIL is the latest incarnation...”

  Journal Article

- **2Select this record**

  **The United States, Iraq and the Islamic State: Challenges and policy options**
  by Kelly, Andrew
  Published in Flinders Journal of History and Politics (2014)
  “...Tensions in the Middle East have reached new heights in recent months as the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria...”
**Research Guides**

The Research Guides give the most in-depth coverage of journals in your field of study. They have fewer articles in popular magazines and newspapers and more in scholarly journals. Databases generally considered the best sources for a discipline are listed in the Research Guides. Here is an example of the Guide for Political Science.

**Political Science Complete** provides full-text for over 500 publications and indexing to nearly 2000 journals. Also contains many full-text books, monographs, and conference papers.

**JSTOR-Scholarly Journal Archive** This is a trusted archive of important scholarly journals.

**Opposing Viewpoints in Context** Utilizes many different sources to provide information on multiple sides of controversial topics worldwide.

**Congressional Research Service (CRS) Reports** This legislative agency (CRS) provides policy and legal analysis of topics under discussion by committees or members of Congress regardless of party affiliation. The reports are collected and made available by a number of free sites, including UNT Digital Library.

Try **Google Scholar**. It tames the Internet by limiting search results to scholarly material (i.e. peer-reviewed articles, etc.). To use it, go to the Database A-Z list through Quick Links, or find it listed on many of the Research Guides. That way, there will be links to the full-text of the articles to which the Steen Library has access.
How do I locate the article when I have a citation?

United States deepens its engagement with ISIL conflict  
by Julian Davis Mortenson  
Published in The American Journal of International Law (01-01-2015)

1. Go into the Quick Links and find Journals@Steen.
2. Enter the Journal title and hit Search

4. Compare the date needed with the available dates listed for each database.
5. Choose the database that will provide the date you need.
6. Follow the link to the appropriate database; use the year list on the right side of the screen and select the year, and then the volume needed. Now look for the article title or the page numbers for the article.
7. If there is not an electronic match for your journal title and date:  
a. Look for a link that says “in Stephen F. Austin State University's Print Holdings.”  
b. Note the dates listed for the print journal housed in the Steen Library print holdings.  
c. If we have the year needed, then click on Stephen F. Austin State University's Print Holdings, find the call number, and retrieve the journal. Issues of the journals are upstairs: A-N call numbers on 4th floor; P-Z call numbers on the 3rd floor.
8. If you need the article and we don’t have it, use Interlibrary Loan (found in Quick Links). Register with the SFASU interlibrary loan system called ILLiad. It is FREE! Then, you can request the article you need.
What’s a Peer-Reviewed Journal Article?

Peer review is a process that journals use to ensure the articles they publish represent the best scholarship currently available. When an article is submitted to a peer-review journal, the editors send it out to other scholars in the same field to critically assess the quality of the scholarship, its relevance to the field, methodology and research design and its appropriateness for the journal. Usually the process is a blind review (the author’s name is not on the manuscript).

Publications that don’t use peer review (*Time, Parents, Popular Science*) just rely on the judgment of the editors as to whether an article is accurate. You can’t rely on them for solid scientific research.

How do I know if a journal is peer reviewed?

Usually you can tell just by looking. A scholarly journal is visibly different from popular magazines. If you have the actual journal in hand, check the front matter for a statement that the journal is “refereed” or “peer reviewed”. You can also check the title in [ULRICHSWEB online database](https://ulrichsweb.com) to verify that it is peer reviewed.

Finding Peer-Reviewed Journals and Journal Articles

There is not a comprehensive source for identifying all peer-reviewed journals. Most of the databases to which the library subscribes flag the peer-reviewed journals; however, they do not necessarily identify which of the articles is original research. The databases include editorials, meeting announcements, book reviews and even letters to the editor. None of these would qualify as a scholarly journal article.