

A cross-campus group of UW-Madison's Librarians explain here how librarians can help you teach advanced library and information literacy skills.

UW-Madison Libraries

An Introduction to the Library Research & Information Literacy Component of Communication-B Courses

The Communication-B requirement specifies that students should learn to use the “core library resources specific to disciplinary inquiry.” This includes how information is produced and disseminated, as well as how to find, evaluate, and use information in a disciplinary context.

The UW-Madison Libraries offer a variety of services that can help your students be successful. We can work with you directly to develop the information literacy component of your Comm-B course and help you design an appropriate library research assignment. Here are some suggestions to consider:

- Address foundational academic research skills. Many of your students may not be familiar with academic research and the UW-Madison Libraries.
- Encourage students who were not required to complete the Communication-A requirement (e.g. due to Advanced Placement or transfer credits) to complete the Libraries@UW Sift & Winnow module, a multimedia library tutorial that introduces some of the basic resources and search strategies covered in the library module of the Comm-A course. (See: <https://go.wisc.edu/siftwinnow>)
- Motivate your students by explaining how the research assignment connects with the authentic work that scholars and practitioners do.
- Address both the practical “how to” aspects of information seeking and how research informs academic discourse in your field. Novice researchers need to learn about both research processes and the bigger picture.
- Model the ways that advanced researchers weed through and evaluate information. Talk about how you discern the quality of information sources and how different sources could be used.
- Talk about the research process (and not just the final product). Have the students reflect on key stages of the research process as part of your assignment.
- Craft assignments that require students to explore the physical and virtual library. Learning to branch out from familiar resources and seek assistance will help them to become effective independent learners.

Here are some of the ways that librarians collaborate with faculty to support students:

- **Research Assignment Consultations:** Librarians can meet with you to help craft effective research assignments that engage students, help them develop the research skills you value, and guide them to quality sources.
- **Teaching:** Librarians design and teach course-related instructional sessions focused on the skills and research strategies students need to be successful. These sessions are customized to your course and assignments.
- **Instructional Materials:** Librarians can develop research guides designed for your course, be embedded into your Canvas pages to add course-related guides, suggest library resources, develop tutorials, design short assignments, or be available to provide virtual assistance/instruction.
- **Workshops:** Each semester the library offers free workshops on topics such as conducting literature reviews and the use of citation management tools. These workshops are open to all, or the content can be customized for your course.

However you design the information literacy component of your class, consultation with librarians can help your students be successful. Contact the Program Director, Sheila Stoeckel, who can discuss your assignment and connect you with the campus library that best meets your students’ research needs.

The UW-Madison Libraries Teaching & Learning Programs Office can be reached by phone at 265-2755 and by email at libinstruct@library.wisc.edu. More information about the services provided to faculty and instructional staff is at: <https://www.library.wisc.edu/instruction-support/resources-to-support-instructors/>