CEPC 0904
Professor Jack Hester
Due July 28, 2021 at 11:59pm EDT

Homework 6 — Starting Your Literature Review

20 points
Submission link: *https://canvas.brown.edu/courses/1085057/assignments/7835336*
Submit as a Word document or PDF

Literature reviews are an important part of any research study in which you find and summarize key articles related to your topic. You learned about systematic reviews in the first week of this course. The idea of a literature review is similar, but the literature review is a little bit less formal and structured. Literature reviews help you find background information about your topic, which in turn lets you frame your study and project in the context of the existing research landscape and figure out who else (if anyone) has worked on the same topic as you. If someone else has worked on your topic, you can evaluate their methods and results as well as state how your project is unique and important. If you're doing a qualitative study, try to find sources that might explain why your topic or project is important, or past work that's similar to yours. Regardless of your research plan, you might gain some insights into what works and what doesn't work as you read through other peoples' research.

Normally, we might take a trip to the library where you could look through books and talk with a subject librarian. But because this class is online, we're confined to the resources available to us on the internet. There are two sites I suggest using: the Brown library (https://library.brown.edu/) and Google Scholar (https://scholar.google.com). Both allow you to search by keyword to find articles and papers. Brown will also allow you to access digital books and often allows you to find sources that you might otherwise have to pay for. If you want to find an exact match to a term or phrase, you can surround it with quotation marks and these search engines will make sure the sources it finds contain that exact word or phrase.

There are a couple of best practices to keep in mind as you conduct your search: newer articles are often preferred (especially in the sciences) and sources from peer-reviewed journals and well-known books from high-quality publishers are typically much more reliable than a website or non-peer-reviewed paper you might find online. If you are conducting a qualitative study, you will typically prefer "primary sources," which can be thought of as direct accounts, interviews, or the original work or document. But, you should still look for other works or studies that are on similar topics. You will work through a couple of steps below to get your review underway. The findings of a literature review are often summarized in the introduction section, and sometimes the results are compared to your results in the conclusion section.

For those of you who already submitted this assignment early in the course, you can use those sources but you need to update your submission and submit it to the correct Canvas link.

First, list at least five keywords or phrases that you will use to search for articles. These can include terms that are central to your research question, parts of your research question, or questions and words that are similar.

Second, perform a search using the tools above. Make note of the sources you find, and evaluate them to make sure they seem reputable. Pick at least five solid sources and list them below. I encourage you to import them into Zotero or other citation management software, as this will make your citations much easier and help you keep track of what you've found. You can provide the full citation here, or you can just list the url or document/book name, the authors, and its publication date.

Third and finally, did you find a study or project that's similar to yours? If so, how is yours different? (You don't have to provide highly specific methodological differences here, but think about them for when you write your introduction section).