Oberlin Library Research FAQ
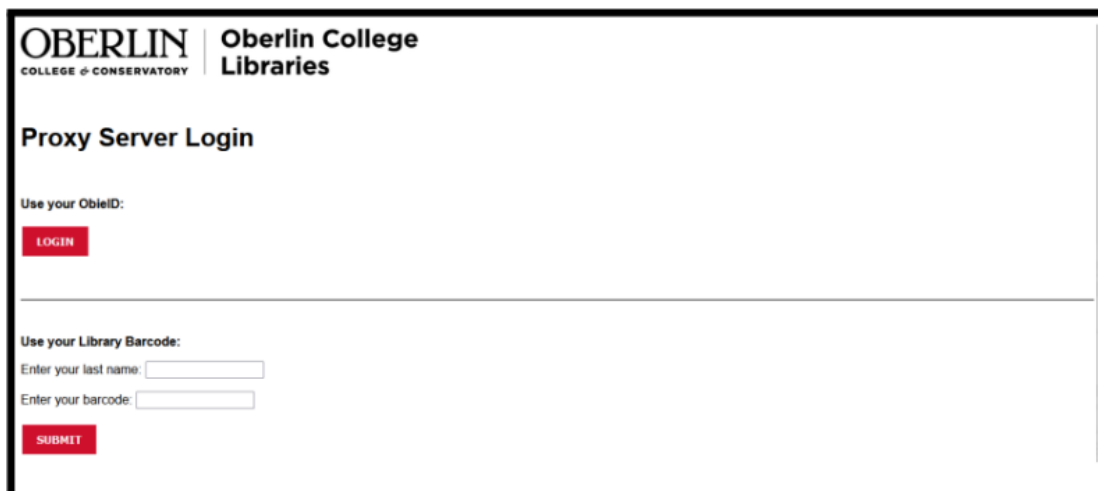
1. *"I don't have a library account"*

Oberlin library sends an email directly to the email account provided to Pioneer by scholars. This email contains instructions about how to create your Obie account, or Oberlin Library account. Make sure you check your Junk/SPAM folders as the email sometimes ends up there. If you haven't received the email contact your PCA or send a message to info@pioneeracademics.com.

2. *"What is the Library website?"*

http://libraries.oberlin.edu/

3. *"I don't understand how to login to the library"*

Logging in to the Oberlin Library can be somewhat counterintuitive. You will login using a service called EZProxy and your Obie account information. Once you have set up your account, there is no need to login **before** conducting research. Simply go to the Library and begin your research. When you encounter materials that are exclusively for Oberlin Students, at that point you will be asked to login. A screen will appear that looks like this:

Click on the red "LOGIN" button beneath the Proxy Server Login. You will be redirected to a screen where you will sign in using your Obie account. If this is your first time using EZProxy, you will be prompted to set up a second factor authentication by downloading an authenticator app on your phone. We recommend using Google Authenticate, Microsoft Authenticator, or Okta. Once you have downloaded and set up the app on your phone, you will be prompted to scan a QR code to link your app to the proxy server. Once you have done so, click "Next" on the screen below:
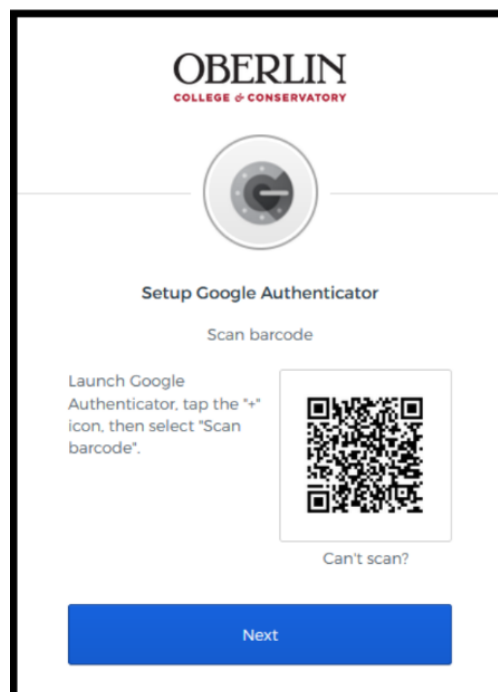

Depending on which authenticator app you selected, you will be asked to authenticate your sign-in. The app will either generate a multi-digit code or will send a push notification to your device. You will need to complete this process each time you login to the library website unless you check the "remember me" box when you login.

Once you are logged in, you will be automatically redirected to the resource you were trying to access.

4. *"An item I would like to read requires an OhioLink account"*

Oberlin College is a member of a library consortium called **OhioLink**. Many of the digital materials in their collection are housed in this consortium. While scholars are conducting research they may run into some difficulty accessing these materials. Below you will find a step-by-step solution to these access issues.

Normally, when a scholar is conducting a search and finds a useful article, there is a link on the left that says "**PDF Full Text"** or "**HTML Full Text**."
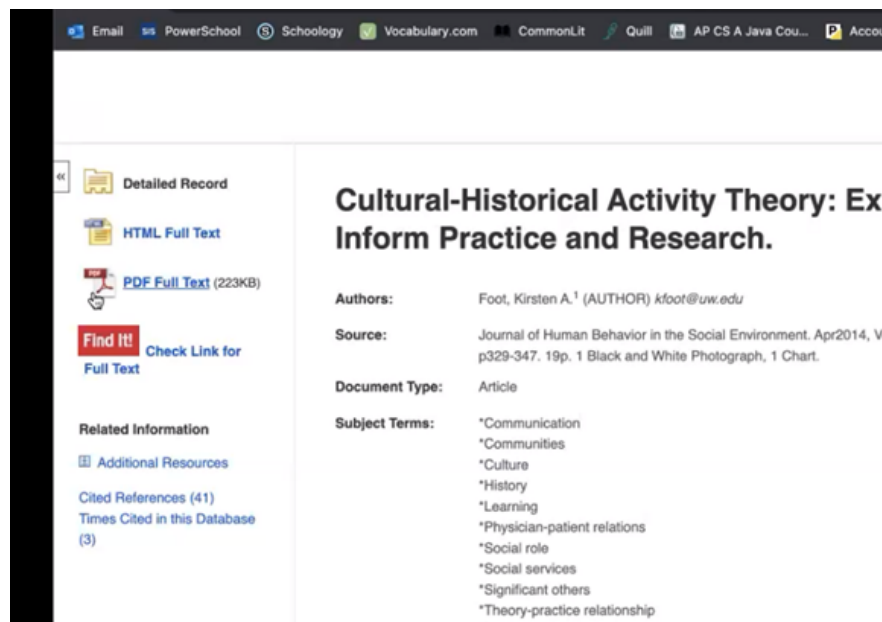
These sources, like the one in the image above, can be opened with the Oberlin account login info. However, for materials housed in the OhioLink system, like the one in the image below, there will only be the Red **"Find It"** option:

This link will take scholars to a screen with an icon that says **Full Text Online**:

If a scholar clicks this, it will take them to the OhioLink login page and ask them to sign in using their name and a barcode:

The Oberlin ID and password do not work on this login screen.

However, there is a way to bypass this failure. On the homepage of the Oberlin Library, click on the **Research Tools** bar at the top, then click on **Journal Finder**. Here you can search for the specific journal that the material you are trying to access was published in:

Once you find the journal, you can click **View in Browzine** to access and browse the journal. You will want to find the **specific volume and edition**, and then look for the desired article. Once located, you will see a little **chainlink icon** below the article that says **Link to Article** when you hover over it:
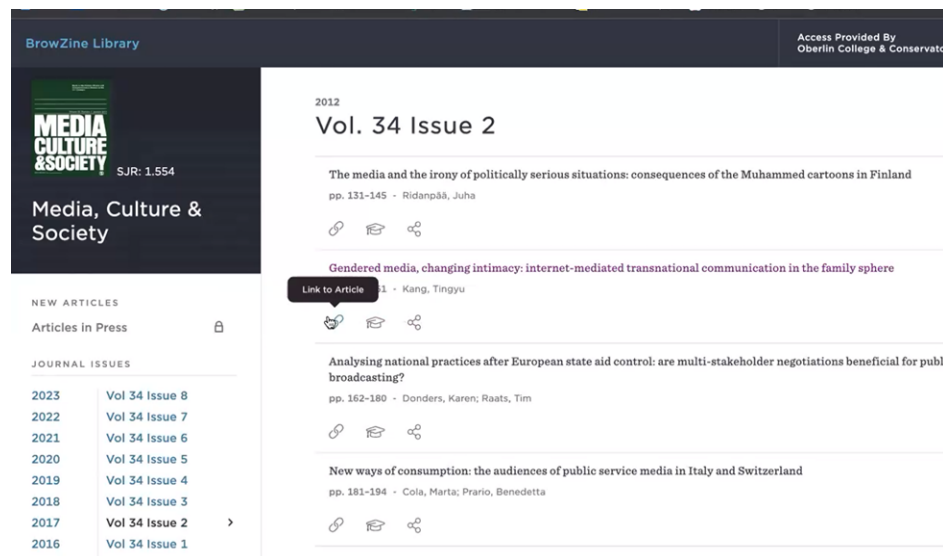
If you click this link it will take you into the OhioLink system and you will see an option on the left to access a PDF of the article:
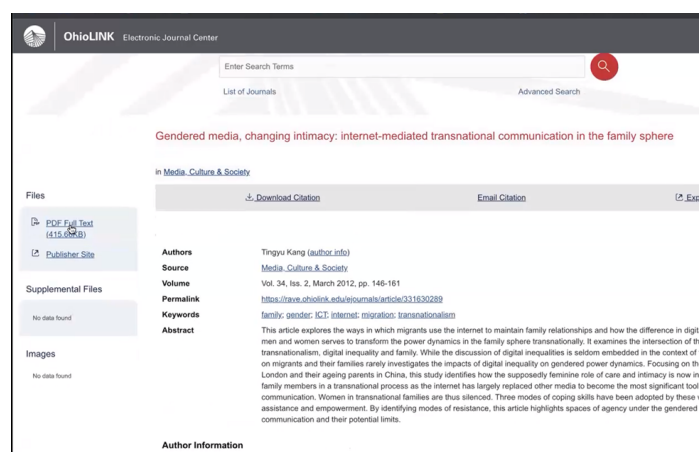
Problem solved!

5. *"I need to use Interlibrary Loan"*

> Unfortunately, Pioneer scholars do not have access to the interlibrary loan feature of the Oberlin Library. If the Oberlin Library does not have access to something, neither do Pioneer scholars. If there is a resource you need to access outside of the library, ask your professor. Professors are <u>NOT obligated</u> but are sometimes willing to find and share materials with scholars that are difficult to access.

6. *"How can I speak with a librarian?"*

> Librarians are brilliant and very helpful resources for conducting research. Most of them have graduate degrees in library science and are extremely knowledgeable about the resources and procedures involved in academic research, writing, and publishing.

> Scholars can ask questions of Oberlin Librarians by clicking on the red "ASK A LIBRARIAN" tab on the right side of the Oberlin Library homepage.
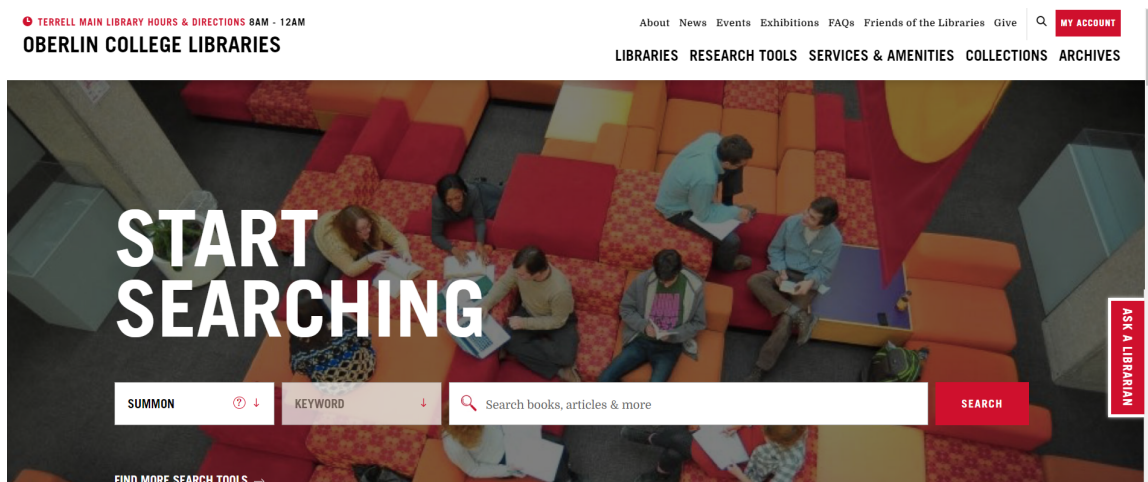
> In addition, many research librarians are subject area experts. Social scientists use different techniques than humanists. Librarians are aware of these differences and specialize in understanding these differences. At most academic librarians, you will find a list of subject area librarians to whom you can direct disciplinary specific research questions. A list of Oberlin subject

area librarians can be found here:
https://libraries.oberlin.edu/services-amenities/services/services-for-faculty/research-support/find-your-liaison

7. *"How do I get targeted, reliable results about my topic?"*

Oberlin Library has access to hundreds of thousands of scholarly materials. Conducting research always requires initial phases of limiting what results get generated by our search techniques. Here are some tips on how to do so:

Use Databases:

To limit the number of results that we get from a search, you should begin by using appropriate **academic databases**. Unlike big search engines like Google Scholar that utilize crawling and indexing functions on the keywords, search results conducted in these databases will return materials that have been *catalogued* and *curated* by subject experts. This will ensure that the materials your search retrieves are appropriate for the discipline you are working within and that material that is not appropriate will be excluded.

Use the Journal Finder to find Topical Journals:

In addition to utilizing databases, it can be useful to use the **Journal Finder** feature on the Oberlin Library website. Many research topics will have academic journals that are exclusively devoted to that topic. Browsing these topic-specific journals can be a good way to narrow down your topic and discover what kinds of topics other researchers in the area have been focused on. If, for example, you are in a philosophy cohort and decide you are interested in the work of Immanuel Kant, you probably will want to browse some of the Philosophy journals devoted to the study of Kant's work, influence, and legacy like *Kant-Studien* or the *Kantian Review*. A quick review of the bibliographies of articles found in these journals will also give you further pathways to explore.

Refine your Search Keywords:

Refining your keywords is another crucial part of finding good material. Here are some things to keep in mind about refining your keywords.

For many fields, the ideal keywords may be **discipline specific technical jargon**. It can take some time and experience to learn what these technical terms are. For example, if you are writing an ethics paper, you may need to use the technical terms "normative," "value," "moral," or "virtue." While all of these words are similar, they are very specific technical terms and depending on your research topic, one may be more appropriate than another. Sometimes a quick conversation with your professor or a subject area librarian can help you figure out what technical terms would be good keywords for your search.

As you find literature that is useful for your topic, take note of the keywords used in the **abstract**. Sometimes journals require authors to specify a few keywords and these are listed in or near the abstract. Usually these are carefully chosen by the author because they are words often utilized in other literature on the subject. These can be an excellent guide for finding relevant literature. If the keywords are not listed, authors are usually still selective in their abstract word choice. Pick your keywords from abstracts you have already found. Similarly, if you're utilizing any books, check the **index** for keywords. Sometimes you will find tacit acknowledgement of tricky keywords in index entries that reference other index entries. For example, if you are looking for literature about hopefulness and find a book that is relevant, you may discover in the index that the entry for "hope" directs you to the entry for "faith." This is an indication that in the literature, authors may use the word "faith" more often.

Sometimes refining your keywords requires **picking words that are more specific** or **trying synonyms**. Adding specificity might require using terms that are used in less contexts, or that have fewer meanings, or are more targeted to your topic. For example, if you are researching religious attitudes

or practices, you might refine your keywords by specifying religions. Use "Judaism" or "Christianity" instead of "religion." If your results are still too broad, you could get more specific: "Protestant," "Roman Catholic," etc. Similarly, synonyms can often produce different sets of results. These are easy to find with a quick search.

<u>Reach out to your Professor:</u>

Finally, if you are really struggling to find material and have tried many of these strategies, reach out and ask your professor. Your professor is already an expert in the literature on your topic and should be able to provide you with guidance about how to refine your search techniques or help you search for the best resources to inspire your research methods.