

Meri Rose Ekberg

Library Information Session

Philosophy 341: Contemporary Moral Issues, Spring 2016

Description: Students must complete a 5-7p paper in which they evaluate and critique an argument on a contemporary moral issue, using philosophical and informative sources. They will arrive with 2-3 topics in mind, and need to refine to a focused topic and learn about philosophy sources.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the session, students will be able to

1. Locate and navigate philosophy sources in order to evaluate their topics
2. Use advanced search and refine options to narrow their results
3. Analyze and select appropriate subject terms to improve search results
4. Compare and contrast article databases in order to find relevant articles
5. Name 3 ways they can get help from a librarian

Before students arrive:

- Write name and contact info on board
- Pull up library website, course page, slides
- Turn on projectors, make sure computers are working

SLIDE 1: Intro (1 minute)

- My name is Meri Rose. I am studying to be a library instructor and I was given the opportunity to lead your session today. With me is Rebecca Payne, a reference librarian here at Memorial library who will be assisting me.
- Is it correct that you are at the starting phases of your paper on contemporary moral issues? Raise your hand if you have multiple topics you are considering.
- Today I will show you how to find and navigate some resources that will help you explore the topics you are interested in, and narrow down to a focused research question.

SLIDE 2:Goals (1 minute)

- Today we will cover how to:
 - Explore a database you can use to get an overview of topics and the moral issues surrounding them
 - Locate subject specific article databases for your topic
 - Learn how to use advanced search tools to find relevant articles
 - Compare and contrast databases
 - Find out how to get help from a librarian
 - We will also have time for independent research with Rebecca and I here to help
- If you have questions at anytime, please feel free to raise your hand of interrupt me.

Meri Rose Ekberg

Library Course Page (1 minute)

- I would like to begin by mentioning the library course page, which I have pulled up here.
- This page provides resources to help you with your research, and can be accessed through your “My UW” page. I won’t go through this in detail, but I want to make sure you are aware it is here for you to use.

Research Process and Article Databases (2 minutes)

- I am going to model the research process using a sample topic I selected under the umbrella of contemporary moral issues. I decided to focus on **gun control**, because this is a topic I have been hearing a lot about in the presidential campaign.
- To begin, please **go to the library home page** and follow along with me as I show you a few sources you can use.
- **Click on Catalog - select Databases - select browse by subject type**
- UW Madison has access to hundreds of databases, so it is important for you to know how to access those which will be most helpful for your field
- From here you want to map your topic to a particular subject. Because I know your professor wants you to focus on philosophy sources, we will use that. However you might want to consider using sources outside of philosophy depending on your topic.
- **Scroll down and select philosophy**
- As you can see, there are a lot of options here, and it can get a little overwhelming. One tip I have when you are selecting a database is to focus on the **CORE** section first, as these are typically going to be enough for your papers unless your topic is very specialized or you are writing something very detailed.
- I don't know much about the moral issues surrounding my topic, gun control, so I am going to **start with PhilPapers**, a resource that provides me with a variety of sources to give me an overview of the topic and that will also show me how much scholarship on my topic exists in the field of philosophy

PhilPapers (5 minutes)

- Again, please follow along with me.
- On the top of the page is a search bar where you can type in keywords, so I am going to **enter gun control**.
- This brings back a list of articles, but the aspect I want you all to focus on for now is located at the very top where it says “**Bibliography: Gun Control** in [Social and Political Philosophy](#)”
- If you click on “Gun Control” it brings you to a page with a brief **summary** of this topic, specific to the field of philosophy. It also provides a **list of related terms** I might want to look into, and a bibliography of recommended sources.
- As you are trying to select between different topics you have in mind, you might want to use a source like this to get an overview of the current arguments surrounding your different ideas, and check to see if there is a lot of information about it, or very little.
- If I select an article on this list, for instance “**The Moral Right to Keep and Bear Firearms**” I am provided with an **abstract**, as well as a **list of keywords** I could take note of to use

Meri Rose Ekberg

later on in my research. For my topic, I might want to consider using “right to bear arms” as a possible phrase I want to use when searching.

- If I decide I want to read this article, and I see there is no full text, I can scroll down and select the **Find it at UW Madison button**, which is located here (point out button under Though your library).
- Navigate to find it page (no full text available) and select **request a copy**.
- So now that I have explored my topic a little bit using PhilPapers, and I think it is going to be a good, relevant and interesting topic, the next step is to move on to other key databases for finding philosophy sources
- Now I am going to show JSTOR, a broader article database that provides full text sources from many different subjects.
- Let’s **return to the library home page**, and the fastest way to get to JSTOR is to select the **top 10 databases** button on the right hand side of the main library page.
- **Select JSTOR**

JSTOR (6 minutes)

- Click on **advanced search**, because this is going to give you more refining options so you get better search results right at the start
- So for my topic, I am going to **type in “Gun Control”** as my first keyword
- Does anyone know **why I used quotation marks** around these words?
 - It will search for those words as a phrase, in that exact order
- In the next row I am going to **type in Moral***, because my paper needs to focus on the moral aspects of this issue, so this might help me narrow my results
- Does anyone know **what the star or asterisk does here?**
 - It will search for words with the root Moral, (morality, morally)
- I am also going to **limit to articles**, because I don’t want to end up with a lot of book reviews or other materials at this point in my research.
- You could also limit by date, here, if you ended up with a lot of sources, but I’m not going to bother for now because it does not matter as much in the field of philosophy as it does in science or medical searches.
- When I enter this search I end up with **1,256 results**, which is high. When I look through the list I see that I am getting some relevant things, and some that are focused more on the politics of gun control.
- I am going to show you how you can further limit your results in JSTOR in order to focus on a particular subject area, in our case philosophy.
- **Select modify search** and return to this page. If you **scroll down**, you can **select philosophy**, and it will search only within philosophy journals. This is one of the best features of JSTOR, and I highly recommend you use it.
- Press enter
- I get **56 results**, a much better number for me to begin searching through. The first two I can immediately see look the most relevant. The first is published in a Journal called “Ethics” and the other in “Social Theory and Practice.”

Meri Rose Ekberg

- When I select **“Is there a right to own a gun?”** I am provided with the article right there, because JSTOR is a database of all full text articles. I can then download the article or use the email function if I want to access it later.
- When I read through this earlier I found that this author is arguing that we have a right to bear arms because the benefits of private gun ownership outweighs the harms. This sounds like an argument I would be interested in evaluating and critiquing.
- Now that I have learned more about my topic, and found an argument I want to examine I can continue the research process by trying a more subject-focused database.

Philosopher's Index (5 mins)

- **Return to the library home page**
- **Drop down menu -- databases -- philosophy -- philosophers index**
- It automatically opens to the advanced search page, and I am going to get started by redoing the search I did in JSTOR. **Type in “gun control” AND moral*, select articles, press enter**
- I ended up with **only 1 result**, so I need to broaden my search, which I can do by adding additional terms. If I **select this result**, I can **see a list of SUBJECT TERMS** that were tagged to this article. I can **mine this list for words** to use in my search, what words do you see on this list that I might want to consider adding?
- ETHICS, RIGHTS, GUNS
- **Go Back, and Click modify search**
- I can **change my search to guns, and add Ethic***, since these two terms are sort of getting at the same idea, right?
- I can also **add Rights or “right to bear arms”**, because the argument I am critiquing is the that there is a right to have guns, so I should focus on this for now. The articles on control I will use as supporting evidence for my critique of this argument.
- when I enter this search I end up with **15 results**, and If I select one that looks relevant, like **“Fundamental Rights and the Right to Bear Arms”** the record provides me with information on where this article is published, as well as full text of the article.
- If it was not available full text in this database, I could **select the Find It button**, which would tell me if it is available in another database.
- In the upper right hand corner I can **download the article, cite it or email it to myself for later**. But if I found a lot of useful article and I did not want to email each to myself individually I could send one email to myself and fill it with the permalinks to this article, which can be found under the **DOCUMENT URL located here**.
- It is important to know that you cannot use the URL at the top of the page to access these article later, because they operate through a proxy and are only valid for your session.

SLIDE 3: Activity 2 (10 mins)

- What I would like to do now is give you an opportunity to **compare the two article databases we just looked at, JSTOR and the Philosopher's Index**, and see how they differ.

Meri Rose Ekberg

- Please **partner** with the person next to you, I am going to pass out a **worksheet** you will fill out together. You will turn this worksheet in at the end of the session, and this will serve as record of your attendance.
- Start by **sharing** with your partner the topic you are most interested in, and then **brainstorming keywords** together that you will use to search. Select one of your topics to use first, and then one of you will search for in JSTOR and the other in the Philosopher's index, **using the same keywords**.
- Compare the results you get and answer the related questions on the worksheet.
- After 5 minutes I am going to ask you to **switch to your partner's topic and also flip-flop databases**.
- At the end I will ask you all to share your findings, and any struggles you had. If no one talks I will call on people to share, so please be prepared.
- I would like you to switch now, regardless of where you are, try searching on your partner's topic.

Share

- Did the databases have any of the same articles?
- Where they searching any of the same journals?
- How did they differ?
- Did you have any issues?

Help (2 minutes)

- The last thing I am going to tell you about before we move onto individual research time is how to get help when you need it. It is normal during the research process to have questions. Librarians are here to help, and can be contacted in many different ways.
- On the top of most library pages is **the ASK button**. If you click this, it gives you different options for getting help.
 - in person: around the corner at the reference desk
 - online: email or chat
 - by phone
 - Show ask a librarian button and demo chat if time
- This is very useful if you are unsure of which database to use, or struggling to find good keywords.

SLIDE 4: Independent Search Time (10-15 minutes)

- Now you will have the rest of the time to search for yourselves.
- Here is an overview of some of the tips I covered for you to look at while you are working.
- Rebecca and I will be walking around providing assistance, and if you need help raise your hand and we will come over.