Library Research Workshop

for Political Science Graduate Students

Instructor
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Summary

Workshop Description
The goal of this workshop is for Political Science graduate students to learn to use library resources effectively. Strategies for selecting and using appropriate tools to retrieve information for graduate-level research in their subject area will be emphasized.

Learning Outcomes
At the end of the workshop, students will:

1. Have an awareness of the services available from the library

2. Be familiar with different types of information and its sources

3. Be able to select an appropriate tool to retrieve information for their research topic

4. Be able to construct and execute search strategies using information resources

5. Be able to retrieve print and electronic full-text items from the results of a search

6. Be able to retrieve a known item from a citation

Place and Time

The workshop will take place on October 15, 2008 from 3:30-5:00 in the Humanities and Social Sciences Library's 28-seat Cyberthèque classroom, where each student can use a computer to complete hands-on exercises. Students are welcome to bring their own laptops. Additional sessions may be offered according to student interest.

Students can reserve a place by sending an e-mail to megan.fitzgibbons@mcgill.ca.

Rationale

This workshop for graduate students will introduce the range of specialized research tools available from the library, offer strategies for selecting resources, and impart practical searching skills, all within the context of the Political Science discipline. These basic abilities, in accordance with standards for information literacy, provide a foundation on which higher level research skills can be developed throughout students' careers in academia.

It is hoped that future workshops will be built on this initial model, so student and faculty feedback will be formally and informally collected. Suggestions are also extremely welcome during the planning process.

Topics

The workshop will include hands-on exercises in database searching in addition to a presentation by the liaison librarian. The following topics are proposed:

1. Services available from the library, including individual consultations with librarians, Interlibrary Loan, government documents, the Electronic Data Resources Service, off-campus access to electronic resources, making recommendations, and personal library accounts
2. Strategies for conducting advanced searches in the library catalogue
3. Primary versus secondary sources
4. Techniques for evaluating materials
5. The concept of bibliographic databases and why they should be used, as well as tools like Google Scholar
6. Selection of an appropriate tool to retrieve a particular type of information
7. How to identify appropriate article indexes and databases from the library's website
8. How to construct a search in an article database, such as Web of Science and Factiva
9. Methods for revising search strategies when needed
10. How to retrieve a print or full-text item from the results of a search