Strategies for doing historiographical research

*Find reference works containing bibliographies of key sources*
Use the suggestions below on this handout, search OBIS for an encyclopedia on your topic.

*Find a printed bibliography or annotated bibliography*
Search OBIS for the term bibliography and your subject keywords, or use the bibliography of a major world history text.

*Find a published historiography of the topic*
You don’t need to reinvent the wheel! Search OBIS for topic with keyword “historiography”.

*Find book reviews*
- JSTOR - advanced search and check the box “Reviews”
- *Academic Search Complete* - Advanced Search, limit to Document Type “Book Review”
- *Summon* – Search for the title and author of the book.

*Find works that have been cited frequently*
Use Google Scholar’s “Times Cited” feature to get a sense of how much attention the work has gotten from other scholars.

*Find “literature review” articles*
These are articles that summarize important developments and key researchers on a particular subject.

*Use your authors’ historiographies*
Find a key book on the subject and scan the preface, introduction and appendices.

*Look at who is being cited in bibliographies of books and articles*
You will find patterns, certain works or authors may be frequently cited, find which authors and works are identified in the introduction or preface.

*Identify important authors and seek other works by those authors*
Use OBIS to search for books, or databases to find articles by authors that seem to be important in your research topic area.

*Find recent scholarship*
Use the bibliography of a recent article to identify relevant sources; the author may have already collected the best scholarship on a topic and you can take advantage of that.
Reference resources

**Oxford Reference Online**
Includes Online access to *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern World*, 2008

*A global encyclopedia of historical writing* / New York: Garland Pub., 1998

*The Oxford history of historical writing* / Daniel Woolf, editor / Oxford University Press, 2011-

*History and historians in the twentieth century* / Peter Burke, Ed. / Oxford University Press, 2002
Main Library D16.8.H62427 2002

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**Cambridge Histories Online**

http://histories.cambridge.org
PDFs of every essay in the highly regarded Cambridge Histories book series, which covers all time periods, had broad geographical and thematic coverage.

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**Finding books and other materials**

**OBIS** – Catalog of Oberlin libraries’ holdings

**OhioLink Library Catalog** - statewide resource sharing system
- Do-it-yourself searching and requesting of materials held in OhioLink libraries
- Materials arrive in 3-4 business days on average
- Loan period is 3 weeks, and with up to 6 renewals

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**Find full text articles from a citation**

Search the *Journal Finder*, a tab on the library homepage search box. Enter the title of the journal (not the article)

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**Databases for finding journal articles**
**Academic Search Complete**
Large multidisciplinary database with lots of full-text.

**America: History & Life**
Database of journal articles, covering primarily the history of US and Canada

**Google Scholar**
Google’s database of books and articles use the “cited by” feature to find out how frequently, and by whom, a work has been cited.

**Historical Abstracts**
Database of journal articles, covering world history 1450-present (excluding US and Canada)

**JSTOR**
Provides searchable full-text articles starting with the first volume and usually excluding the most recent 3-5 years of a journal

**Summon**
Search engine that searches most of the content that the library has access to. Excellent for finding book reviews and locating full text.

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**Get research advice**

- Sign up for a [Research Appointment](#)
  Consult with a librarian about your research project; work on identifying sources and plan research strategies
- [Drop in](#) at the Research Desk
- [Email](#) librarians reference@oberlin.edu
- [Chat](#) with us on IM (on library homepage)
- Call us (440) 775-5031

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**In-Class Searching:**
Oxford Reference Online – search for influenza
Cambridge Histories Online – search your topic, or Islam in World History (if no topic)
Historical Abstracts – search (empire or imper*) and slavery
Summon – find book reviews of The World That Trade Created (Pomeranz and Topik)
Google Scholar – Search The Myth of Continents (Lewis and Wigen)