LTAM 300 – Issues in Latin American Studies
Library Instruction Session
Claudia Peterson, Reference & Instruction Librarian

Online Research Guide for this Course: [http://gouldguides.carleton.edu/ltam300](http://gouldguides.carleton.edu/ltam300)

**Formulate a Research Topic**
Your topic should be neither too broad nor too narrow.

- Too broad? It could be its own encyclopedia: “Latin American politics.”
- Too narrow? You can’t find any evidence (data or scholarship) on it, for example, “political uprisings among teenagers in the south region of Brazil in 2011.”
- Balanced: “Political participation among youth in Brazil, Argentina, and Chile since 2000.”

**Reading Notes Checklist**
Keep track of descriptive aspects that will help you find patterns

- Basic description: author, journal, date - what do these tell you, if anything?
- Central claim, thesis, argument, or issue
- Set of questions or broader context in which it is placed (broader than the specific argument)
- Theoretical or interpretive approaches employed
- Methodological approach and evidence or data used
- Discipline of the author and identifiable disciplinary paradigms
- Their observations of gaps in the literature and suggestions for further research

**Research Checklist**

- **Books in Catalyst** (reference and other) will usually provide excellent overviews of topics along with bibliographies (essential!). Start with introductions to decide what to read.
- Search for articles using a mix of multidisciplinary, Latin American-focused, and disciplinary databases. No one database “covers” all the literature.
- Do “cited reference” searching to track the scholarly conversation (SSCI and Google Scholar)

**Databases Mentioned Today** *(More on the Online Research Guide)*

- **JStor**: Full text multidisciplinary database; can also browse for Latin American Studies journals.
- **Academic Search Premier**: Can search by publications; Note that this database is NOT INDEXED in Catalyst.
- **Project Muse**: Full text archive and index of 400 scholarly journals including several top Latin American studies journals. Often a good place to start an article search for this class.
- **Social Sciences Citation Index**: Find articles based on their citation relationships with other works.
- **Google Scholar**: Good for searching across disciplines and for cited reference searching.

**Additional Latin American Studies indexes to consider:**

- **Handbook of Latin American Studies**: Selective, annotated bibliography of Latin American scholarship published since the 1930s. Online and in print. Ask for help if you don’t remember how to locate the full text of articles.
- **HAPI, Hispanic American Periodicals Online**: Library’s Latin American database.