

Critical Thinking and Source Material

Researching and Writing in Different
Disciplines

Selecting a topic:

- It should interest you
- It should meet course requirements
- It should be specific enough that you can complete a solid research paper and presentation on the topic within a semester
- Don't worry if the topic seems too controversial or too popular, the research will show you where the best academic debate is on the topic
- You may find yourself interested in a topic with two different possible focuses (or foci), use the debate in the literature to guide you

Developing the “research question”

- Consider writing on educational equipment
- General topic of “Whiteboards” or “Smartboards” can be subdivided into many different specific questions
- Ideally, having a research question will help you to narrow down your topic. It is alright if the question changes
- Your “hypothesis” should be tentative

Using Tools from Different Disciplines and finding sources from different disciplines

- Consider how the paper on volunteer motivation included research from:
 - Sociology
 - Psychology, Organizational Psychology
 - Communication
 - Philosophy/Ethics
 - Political Science
 - » It is good to include interdisciplinary research methods, qualitative text-analysis and quantitative numbers and statistics

Finding Sources

- Begin with a broad search and see what is out there
- Focus in on the most useful, most relevant
- See who is cited at the end of those sources (see who each author is in debate with, to whom each article is responding)
- What is the landscape of different views and schools of thought
- What are the frameworks
- The concept of “gateways” is what we mean by specific databases like Galileo, Academic Search Complete, Jstor, Ulrichs
- Online texts (ie., websites) are a good area to *start* with, but remember you should be using **peer reviewed** works

Opening questions:

- What are the objects of study
 - Humanities studies products, things, artifacts, texts, works of art, etc.
 - Document analysis
 - Literature research (this is one of the main reasons to begin with a literature review)

What will you find within that literature search?

- Creative responses to problems and case studies
- Concepts and theories that are described and compared with each other
- Criticism of literature that was published previously, criticism of works of art

In Humanities and Arts, research can mean a combination of:

- Information gathering, questioning and documenting
- Critique, analysis, explanation
- Conceptual work, theorizing the work by relating it to a theory proposed by someone else
- Interpreting works
- Personal narrative, personal argument, personal point of view

You might start by:

- Doing a quick Google search to see what people are already saying
- Be aware that much of what you find in this kind of search is not peer-reviewed, and therefore it should not be used in a college level paper

Sample 1:

- Topic: How do students of design use museum collections to inspire their own work?
 - Consider looking at an academic journal on arts education
 - Interviewing art students
 - Interviewing museum curators, community liaisons, docents
 - Personal narratives of design professionals about their own past experiences in museums

Sample 2:

- Topic: Crime
- Explore causes for changes in crime rates over time
- Consider looking at academic journals in Sociology, Criminal Justice, Political Science
 - School support, meals plans
 - Abortion/Roe v. Wade
 - Statistics over time compared with theories and explanations

Sample 3:

- Topic: Non-profit work
- Academic Journals in Sociology and Social Work
- Career Services Professionals
 - Interviews with people who are currently working in non-profit contexts
 - Interviews with professional social workers for comparison
 - Challenges of fund raising in difficult economic times
 - Challenges of perception, political and social connotations of working in human services

Sample 4:

- Topic: Alternative/Holistic Medicine
- Choice 1: Structure of Experiments, are alternative treatments studied through proper experiment structures and protocols
- Choice 2: Political Issue, government funding for alternative therapies and insurance company decisions about funding for patients who choose alternative therapies

Sample 5:

- Topic: Kawasaki Syndrome and/or Medical Controversies
- Check the literature to see what the major debates are:

<http://www.galileo.usg.edu/express?link=zbac>

- Kawasaki comparative research in various populations and geographic regions (Japan, Jordan, Texas, Ontario)
- Coronary Artery Disease and aneurysms linked to Kawasaki
- Genealogy and Kawasaki, parent studies

Sample 6


- Public Education
 - Assessment Controversies, AYP, “Teaching to the Test”
 - Compared with Charter Schools and/or Magnet Schools
 - Political Support and Funding of Public Education
 - Recent controversy about Philadelphia Schools in the news


[SLIPPERY ROCK AREA **SCHOOL** DISTRICT V. PENNSYLVANIA CYBER CHARTER **SCHOOL**: A FIGHT ON THE **SCHOOL**-FUNDING PLAYGROUND.](#) 

By: Hadrick, Rachel R. Widener Law Journal. 2013, Vol. 22 Issue 2, p289-305. 17p.

Subjects: **PUBLIC schools**; KINDERGARTEN; EDUCATIONAL programs; PENNSYLVANIA. Supreme Court; Elementary and Secondary **Schools**; SLIPPERY Rock Area **School** District (Slippery Rock, Pa.); PENNSYLVANIA Cyber Charter **School** (Midland, Pa.)

Database: Academic Search Complete

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[Special Education & **School** Choice: The Complex Effects of Small **Schools**, **School** Choice and **Public High School** Policy in New York City.](#)

By: Jessen, Sarah Butler. Educational Policy. May2013, Vol. 27 Issue 3, p427-466. 40p. DOI: 10.1177/0895904812453997.

Subjects: SPECIAL education; SMALL **schools**; **SCHOOL** choice; **PUBLIC** education; **SCHOOL** rules & regulations; **SCHOOL** enrollment; EDUCATIONAL change; NEW York (N.Y.)

Database: Academic Search Complete

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[CHARTER **SCHOOLS**, THE ESTABLISHMENT CLAUSE, AND THE NEOLIBERAL TURN IN **PUBLIC** EDUCATION.](#) 


By: Saiger, Aaron. Cardozo Law Review. Apr2013, Vol. 34 Issue 4, p1163-1225. 63p.

Subjects: **PUBLIC** education; NEOLIBERALISM; ACADEMIC achievement; **PUBLIC schools**; EDUCATIONAL law & legislation; CONSTITUTIONAL law; Elementary and Secondary **Schools**

Database: Academic Search Complete

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[THE **PUBLIC SCHOOL** AS A **PUBLIC** GOOD: DIRECT AND INDIRECT PATHWAYS TO COMMUNITY SATISFACTION.](#) 

By: NEAL, ZACHARY P.; WATLING NEAL, JENNIFER. Journal of Urban Affairs. Dec2012, Vol. 34 Issue 5, p469-486. 18p. 1 Diagram, 4 Charts. DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-9906.2011.00595.x.

Subjects: COMMUNITY & **school** -- United States; **PUBLIC schools**; **PUBLIC** goods; EDUCATIONAL quality; URBAN **schools**; CITIES & towns; UNITED States

Database: Academic Search Complete

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Sample 7

- Religious Studies and Comedy?
- Google search for “theology and Dante's inferno”
- Here’s what you might see:


<http://www.gotquestions.org/Divine-Comedy-Dantes-Inferno.html>

Not peer reviewed, not academic:

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Top 20 ?'s

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Is the Divine Comedy / Dante's Inferno a biblically accurate description of Heaven and Hell?

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Question: "Is the Divine Comedy / Dante's Inferno a biblically accurate description of Heaven and Hell?"


Answer: Written by Dante Alighieri between 1308 and 1321, the *Divine Comedy* is widely considered the central epic poem of Italian literature. A brilliantly written allegory, filled with symbolism and pathos, it is certainly one of the classics of all time. The poem is written in the first person as Dante describes his imaginative journey through the three realms of the dead: *Inferno* (hell); *Purgatorio* (Purgatory); and *Paradiso* (heaven).




The philosophy of the poem is a mixture of the Bible, medieval Roman Catholicism, mythology, and Middle Ages tradition. Where Dante draws on his knowledge of the Bible, the poem is truthful and insightful. Where he draws on the other sources, the poem departs from truth.

One extra-biblical source Dante drew upon was Islamic tradition (*Hadiths*) as depicted in Muhammed's "Night Journey." According to one scholar, Islamic eschatology has exercised "an extraordinary influence on Chinese and Christian thought. Among numerous popular eschatological works written by Christians, Dante's *Divina Commedia* is an example of Islamic influence" (*Islam* by Solomon Nigosian, page 152, Crucible, 1987).

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Youtube: Academic Lectures

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vk9z94jyPtM>

- Dante Public Lecture Series 2012, Department of Italian, University College Cork, Ireland.

The final lecture in this annual series was given by Dr Matthew Treherne of the University of Leeds / Leeds Centre for Dante Studies, GB. The topic of Matthew's lecture was "Dante's Theology in Poetry, Practice and Society"

21 February 2012

Dr Matthew Treherne
University of Leeds /
Leeds Centre for
Dante Studies



Dante's Theology, Part 2
by MarkChuUCC
129 views



AP, Dante, 1, Part A
by tim mcgee
203 views



Gnosis - Dante, The Divine Comedy Interpretations
by Raphael Panameno
19,515 views



Lecture 15. Gregorian Chant and Music in the Sistine Chapel
by YaleCourses
8,861 views



The Scandal of Dante's Catholicism for Contemporary Readers Part 1
by University of Dallas
957 views



Dante and Zombies: A Horror Novelist's Approach to 'The Divine'
by villanovauniversity
941 views

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Oscar-Winning Director Richard Attenbor...



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'Guardians' Knocks Out 'Turtles' at Box...



3 of 12

A 'Mormon' Elder Who Moonlights



Millennials I Taste for McDonald's

THE SATURDAY ESSAY

The Ultimate Self-Help Book: Dante's 'Divine Comedy'

'The Divine Comedy' is not just a classic of world literature. It's the most astonishing self-help book ever written

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By ROD DREHER

Updated April 18, 2014 6:38 p.m. ET



Enlarge Image

Dante's goal was 'to remove those living in this life from the state of misery and lead them to the state of bliss.' Above, 'Portrait of Dante Alighieri' by Atilio Roncaldier De Agostini/Getty Images

On the evening of Good Friday, a man on the run from a death sentence wakes up in a dark forest, lost, terrified and besieged by wild animals. He spends an infernal Easter week hiking through a dismal cave, climbing up a grueling mountain, and taking what you might call the long way home.

It all works out for him, though. The traveler returns from his ordeal a better man, determined to help others learn from his experience. He writes a book about his to-hell-and-back trek, and it's an instant best-seller, making him beloved and famous.

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Popular Press material which may be used if it is well researched

<http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424052702303663604579503700159096702>

Your best source material will always be peer-reviewed articles through:

- Galileo
- Academic Search Complete
- JStor

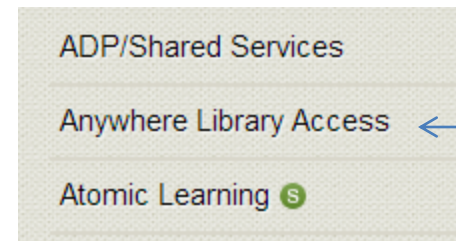
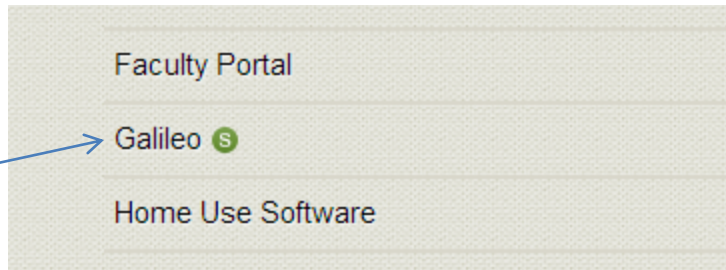


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11. CAN WE INHABIT THE MORAL UNIVERSE OF DANTE'S DIVINE COMEDY?



Academic
Journal

By: Horne, Brian. *Studies in Christian Ethics*. 2003, Vol. 16 Issue 1, p61. 11p.

Subjects: POETRY (Literary form); MORAL & ethical aspects; DIVINE Comedy (Poem); DANTE Alighieri, 1265-1321



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8. Dante's Understanding of the Two Ends of Human Desire and the Relationship between Philosophy and Theology.



Academic
Journal

By: Aleksander, Jason. *Journal of Religion*. Apr2011, Vol. 91 Issue 2, p158-187. 30p.

Subjects: PHILOSOPHICAL anthropology; DESIRE (Philosophy); DESIRE; RELIGIOUS aspects; DIVINE Comedy, The (Poem : Dante); DANTE Alighieri, 1265-1321



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1. A Meditation on Hell: Lessons from Dante.



Academic
Journal

By: Wetzel, J. *Modern Theology*. Jul2002, Vol. 18 Issue 3, p375-394. 20p.

Subjects: HELL; THEOLOGY



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3. **Dante: A New Pauline Apostle?**



Academic
Journal

By: Daigle-Williamson, Marsha. Christian Scholar's Review. Fall2010, Vol. 40 Issue 1, p39-58. 20p.

Subjects: APOSTLES; **THEOLOGY**; FICTION; BIBLE. Epistles of Paul; BIBLE. Epistles of Paul -- **Theology**; DIVINE Comedy, The (Poem); **DANTE** Alighieri, 1265-1321



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4. **DANTE AND THE SECULARIZATION OF RELIGION THROUGH LITERATURE.**



Academic
Journal

By: Franke, William. Religion & Literature. Spring2013, Vol. 45 Issue 1, p1-31. 31p.

Subjects: SECULARIZATION (**Theology**); DIVINE Comedy (Book); HISTORY As Apocalypse (Book); SECULAR Age, A (Book); **DANTE** Alighieri, 1265-1321; ALTIZER, Thomas J. J.



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5. **Dante: Reason and Religion.**



Periodical

By: Burge, James. History Today. Mar2011, Vol. 61 Issue 3, p10-15. 6p.

Subjects: RELIGIOUS thought -- Middle Ages, 600-1500; **THEOLOGY** -- History -- Middle Ages, 600-1500; WORLDVIEW; REASON; MEDIEVAL literature -- History & criticism; **DANTE** Alighieri, 1265-1321; **DANTE** Alighieri, 1265-1321. Divina commedia. English; BONIFACE VIII, Pope, ca. 1228-1303



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