INTRODUCTION TO UNITED STATES RESEARCH LIBRARIES

WELCOME TO NYU BOBST LIBRARY
We are excited to welcome you to the NYU Libraries. This handout provides a brief overview of many of the things you should know about us; to find out more and to get started with your research, go to the Library’s website: library.nyu.edu.

We encourage you to ask questions
Librarians expect students to have questions and ask for help. So ask us a question! There are many ways to ask for help at Bobst Library. You can ask your questions:

- By contacting your subject librarian directly. See library.nyu.edu/services to find your librarian.
- At the reference desk—Bobst main floor straight back through the atrium
- By email—go to library.nyu.edu/ask
- By SMS—text us at 646-265-1342
- By phone—212-998-2500

LIBRARY COLLECTIONS

Variety of Collections
The Library is made up of a few different collections. We have about 5 million books, 96,000 journals, and 1.5 million e-books. In addition, we have large collections of special materials such as rare and unique items, archives, media, and images. All of these items are available for use in your research.

Variety of Items
The Library has many different kinds of items, including books, periodicals, movies, sound recordings, datasets, dissertations, reports, government documents, archives, manuscripts, pamphlets, letters, diaries, and music scores.

Variety of Formats
The Library’s items are available in a variety of formats, including as print, digital, microform, CDs, VHS, and DVDs

Circulating Materials and Call Numbers
Bobst Library is an “open stacks” library. This means that users are allowed to find, retrieve, and borrow (“check out”) books on your own. You can go to the shelves and browse for other books on your topics.

The library is organized using the Library of Congress classification system. This system assigns a code to each book that consists of 1-2 letters, a string of numbers, and a date. This combination of letters and numbers represents the subject matter of the book. For instance, all books on Education are located in the “L” call number area, while books on Linguistics are often located in the “PA” area. Call numbers are usually found on the spine of the book. Once you get to know your call number, you will start to recognize where materials in “your” subject area are.

Remember that you need the book’s call number to find the book! Search BobCat to find the call number for a title that interests you: bobcat.library.nyu.edu. When you find your title’s call number, you’ll find a link to a map that indicates where the book is located. Here are some examples of what call numbers look like:

- PS3554.I33 Z63 2007
- B109.F74 .S2413 1963
- TX719 .S387 1992
LIBRARY SERVICES

Reference
The Reference Center in Bobst Library is located on the main floor. You can walk up to the reference desk to ask a librarian a question. You may use the non-circulating materials in the reference center. Books in the reference areas cannot be removed from the reference center, but you can photocopy or scan pages.

Reference services are not only available in person. You can also reach us by email, chat, text message (SMS), or telephone. Go to library.nyu.edu/ask

Reference services also include connecting with your subject librarian, also called “subject specialist.” Bobst has more than 30 librarians dedicated to specific disciplines. You can make an appointment to talk to your subject specialist one-on-one. Find out who your subject librarian is by going to library.nyu.edu/services.

Library Classes
The Library offers classes to teach students and faculty more about how to use the Library’s materials and services. You can find out what classes we offer and sign up for them at nyu.libcal.com

Circulation
The Circulation Desk is located on the 1st Floor of Bobst. Use your NYU ID Card to borrow (“check out”) materials from the Library. Go to the Circulation Desk to check out, return, and renew materials, or renew online through BobCat.

Course Reserves
Often a professor will put materials that you need for your coursework on reserve. In BobCat, the item will be marked as Bobst Reserve or “BRES.” Pick up course reserve materials at the circulation desk on the 1st Floor of Bobst. Most materials on reserve will have two-hour loan periods, meaning that you can borrow the item for two hours.

Obtaining materials not available at NYU Libraries
When the item you’re looking for is not available, there are several options for getting it, free of charge. The first is E-ZBorrow, which searches the libraries of nearby libraries and allows NYU users to place requests. Delivery time is 3-5 days. If you cannot find the item in E-ZBorrow, use the Interlibrary Loan service (sometimes called “ILL”). And we will find the item for you at another library, and you can pick it up at Bobst (or another designated NYU library).

Basic Technology Services
You can visit the Bobst Library Computer Center (BLCC) on Lower Level 1 if you need help.
- Laptops are available to borrow from the BLCC on LL1. Bring your NYU ID.
- Printing – You can use your print grant in Bobst Library. Otherwise, printing costs 10 cents per page.
- Photocopying and microform print-outs are 10 cents per page.
- Scanning (and saving to flash media) is free.
- Configure your laptop for wireless (wifi) access: http://www.nyu.edu/its/wireless/

Citation Management Tools
These tools help you organize, store, share, and format your citations and bibliographies. See guides.nyu.edu/cite.
- RefWorks (web-based)
- EndNote (desktop-based)
- Zotero (browser-based)
BobCat – bobcat.library.nyu.edu
BobCat is the Library’s online catalog and also has holdings for other libraries like The New School and Cooper Union. In most cases, you can visit and check out materials from libraries listed in BobCat. There are 5 functions in BobCat:

- **Books & More tab**: Find books, journals, audio/visual materials, NYU dissertations, government documents, archival materials, electronic resources, music scores.
- **Articles & Databases tab**: Find article databases grouped into subject categories.
- **Databases A-Z**: Find an alphabetical list of databases we own.
- **Journals**: Find a particular e-journal or article by inputting a citation.
- **Course Reserves**: Find items put on reserve by your professor.

**Database Collections**
NYU Libraries subscribes to more than a thousand databases that you can use to find articles in scholarly journals, magazines, newspapers from around the world, chapters in books, government documents, statistical data, streaming audio and video, and images. You can find the database you need by searching for it by subject or alphabetically. Some databases are considered “general” databases because they pull information from general resources. Some databases are subject-specific, meaning that they pull information from resources only in a particular subject. If you are just starting research in a field that you don’t know very much about, it is sometimes a good idea to start in a general database and then move on to a subject-specific one.

**Examples of some general databases:**
- **Ebsco Discovery Services (EDS)**: Encompasses the content of 400 databases and publishers. Source types include: academic (scholarly) journals, company profiles & reports, conference papers, government documents, dissertations, magazines, news, reports (education, health, industry, etc.), reviews, trade publications, working papers, images, audio, video and more.
- **ProQuest** – Covers a broad range of academic and general interest topics. Indexes and summarizes scholarly journal, magazine, and newspaper articles. Includes the *New York Times*, *LA Times*, *Washington Post*, *Wall Street Journal*, other historical newspapers and more.
- **JSTOR** – Another good general, full-text database for more than 1500 academic journals.

**Examples of some subject-specific databases:**
- **MLA Bibliography** (Subject: Literature)
- **PsycInfo** (Subject: Psychology)
- **PubMed** (Subject: Health Sciences)
- **ERIC** (Subject: Education)
- **Avery Index** (Subject: Architecture)
- **America: History & Life** (Subject: History)

**Full-Text Articles**
Sometimes databases will allow you to immediately get the full text of an article, and sometimes that database will not have full text available. In the case when there isn’t full text available in that database, you will an “NYU” button. Click the button to determine whether full text is available online. If full text is not available, then you can search BobCat automatically for other formats (i.e. print, microform) from within the same pop-up window. If neither format is available, then you can request the specific article through Interlibrary Loan.
INFORMATION ETHICS AND CITING SOURCES

Avoiding Plagiarism
Plagiarism is the act of taking someone else’s words, ideas, or information and passing them off as your own. If you don’t give credit to the author of these ideas in footnotes or endnotes and a bibliography, you are committing plagiarism, which is a serious academic offense.

Copyright
Everything you find that is written, whether in print in books and journals, or on the web, should be considered copyrighted. That means that you should think of it as belonging to someone else. Information that you find on the web is not free to take or use – it is someone else’s intellectual property. Any material lifted from an original source, including web resources, without proper acknowledgement or credit is considered plagiarized. It is your responsibility to know what constitutes plagiarism. Not knowing citation standards is not an excuse. When in doubt, err on the side of over-documentation and cite the source. Here is a fun tutorial about plagiarism:


How To Cite Your Sources
So now you know that in academic writing, it is important to cite your references - in other words, to acknowledge and document the authors' works which you have consulted and used in your own work. There are a number of different options for formatting citations. Certain bibliographic styles correspond to certain disciplines, and you often may have a specific style assigned to you for a project. However, the most important thing to remember is that your citation style must be consistent throughout a single paper.

Go to this library guide to get more information about how to cite your sources. Remember that different disciplines (for example, science, literature, social science) have different citing styles. We have examples of several styles here:

- [guides.nyu.edu/cite](http://guides.nyu.edu/cite)

Why Citing Sources is Important
All scholarly or academic work in the United States requires that you cite your sources, whether you are writing a long paper or a quick report. Why is citing your research so important? Citing your sources:

- Documents your research and scholarship
- Acknowledges the work of others whose scholarship contributed to your work
- Helps your reader understand the context of your argument
- Provides information for your reader to use to locate additional information on your topic
- Establishes the credibility of your scholarship
ADDITIONAL RESEARCH TIPS

- Make sure that you understand your assignment or project. If you are not sure what your assignment means, ask your professor or TA to explain it to you.
- Start your research early because library materials you need may already be checked out by another user. The Library does not always own a copy of materials you will need for your research. Allow extra time if you need materials that are not owned by Bobst Library. Interlibrary Loan is a fast service, but it can still take a couple of days.
- Meet your subject librarian! Your subject librarian will be happy to show you how to start your research. Find out who your subject librarian is by going to library.nyu.edu/services.
- Check out the Research Guide for your subject(s) to learn about important resources in your area of interest. They are a great way to become familiar with the books, journals, databases, and other research resources and methods in your field. See guides.nyu.edu.
- Keep careful and complete notes of your reference citations including author, title, place of publication, publisher, date of publication, volume, and page numbers. You will need this information for your bibliography! You can also open a RefWorks account to help you manage these citations.
- Remember that you can access many library resources from off-campus -- at your home, office, or wherever you have an Internet connection. Most databases will require that you enter your Net ID and password when connecting from off-campus.
- **ASK QUESTIONS!** All the librarians are here to help. You can ask any of us a question, even if we are not your subject specialist. We will help you find the information you need.

Another place to find help:

NYU’s Writing Center
http://ewp.cas.nyu.edu/object/writing.center
The Writing Center is a place where any NYU student can go to get help with writing. The Writing Center is located at 411 Lafayette Street, which is just a couple of blocks away from Bobst Library. All Writing Center sessions are 40-45 minutes long. Try to schedule your appointment in advance of the due date for your paper so that you’ll have enough time to revise your work after the session. There are also walk-in sessions. To find out more about the Writing Center and its policies, or to schedule an appointment, visit their website.