

How Do Humanities and Social Science Majors Conduct Course-Related Research?

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Submitted by:

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3. What is your major?

Anthropology and Sociology		10	6%
Art and Art History		0	--
Classical Languages		1	1%
Communication		46	26%
Cross-Cultural Studies		0	--
Economics		4	2%
English and Drama		16	9%
History		11	6%
Kinesiology		25	14%
Liberal and Civic Studies		9	5%
Modern Languages		0	--
Performing Arts: Dance, Music, and Theater		1	1%
Philosophy		0	--
Politics		21	12%
Psychology		16	9%
Religious Studies		1	1%
Women's Studies		0	--
If other, including double majors, please specify:		17	10%
Total		178	100%

6. As a Humanities or Social Sciences major, what one type of research paper do you write in your classes most frequently? (Please choose one answer only.)

Argument papers about a societal issue (e.g., 4 - 6 pages)		54	30%
Literature reviews		30	17%
Case study analyses		17	10%
Theory papers (applying a theory covered in class to a topic)		29	16%
Semester-long projects (e.g., thesis)		17	10%
No answer from respondent		20	11%
If other, please specify:		11	6%
Total		178	100%

7. What is the first step you take in your own research process for a 4-6 paper in Humanities or Social Sciences course?

A. Use a textbook or other reading(s) from the class.		72	40%
B. Talk to the professor outside of class, who assigned the research paper.		22	12%
C. Use a search engine to find resources (e.g., Google, Yahoo!).		24	13%
D. Use an online a “community encyclopedia,” where anyone can contribute content and post it on the Web (i.e., Wikipedia).		6	3%
E. Use an online or print scholarly encyclopedia (e.g., Britannica).		0	--
F. Use the online resources available through the SMC Library Web site.		41	23%
G. Consult a reference librarian in the SMC Library.		7	4%
H. Visit the SMC Library and see what I can find on the shelf.		4	2%
I. Buy a book(s) that has information I can use.		1	1%
No answer from respondent		1	1%
Total		178	100%

8. What is the second step you take in your own research process?

A. Use a textbook or other reading(s) from the class.		33	19%
B. Talk to the professor outside of class, who assigned the research paper.		23	13%
C. Use a search engine to find resources (e.g., Google, Yahoo!).		36	20%
D. Use an online a “community encyclopedia,” where anyone can contribute content and post it on the Web (e.g., Wikipedia).		7	4%
E. Use an online or print scholarly encyclopedia (e.g., Britannica).		9	5%
F. Use the online resources available through the SMC Library Web site.		43	24%
G. Consult a reference librarian in the SMC Library.		7	4%
H. Visit the SMC Library and see what I can find on the shelf.		13	7%
I. Buy a book(s) that has information I can use.		4	2%
J. If other, please specify:		2	1%
No answer from respondent		1	1%
Total		178	100%

9. What is the third step you take in your own research process?

A. Use a textbook or other reading(s) from the class.	24	13%
B. Talk to the professor outside of class, who assigned the research paper.	26	15%
C. Use a search engine to find resources (e.g., Google, Yahoo!).	25	14%
D. Use an online a “community encyclopedia,” where anyone can contribute content and post it on the Web (e.g., Wikipedia).	12	7%
E. Use an online or print scholarly encyclopedia (e.g., Britannica).	21	12%
F. Use the online resources available through the SMC Library Web site.	23	13%
G. Consult a reference librarian in the SMC Library.	18	10%
H. Visit the SMC Library and see what I can find on the shelf.	25	14%
I. Buy a book(s) that has information I can use.	0	--
J. If other, please specify	3	2%
No answer from respondent	1	1%
Total	178	100%

10. What SMC Library resources do you find you helpful when you are conducting research for a 4 - 6 page research assignment? How much do you agree with each one of the following statements?

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	No answer from Respondent
SMC reference librarians are helpful to me during the research process.	4 2%	14 8%	38 21%	60 34%	61 34%	1 1%
Online databases available through the SMC library Web site are helpful to me during the research process.	7 4%	9 5%	6 3%	73 41%	83 47%	0 --
Resources that I find on the shelf in the library are helpful to me during the research process.	1 1%	17 10%	39 22%	91 51%	30 17%	0 --
In-class sessions on how to conduct research that are taught by librarians are helpful to me during the research process.	12 7%	22 12%	49 28%	68 38%	27 15%	0 --

11. How do professors help you do better at completing their research assignments? How much do you agree with each one of the following statements?						
	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	No answer from Respondent
Professors help me do better on their research assignments when they have separate deadlines for different parts of the entire assignment (e.g., introduction due first, then body due later, and so on).	14	25	14	58	65	2
	8%	14%	8%	33%	37%	1%
Professors help me do better on their research assignments when they let me turn in drafts that they comment on so that I can revise my work.	6	7	16	54	93	2
	3%	4%	9%	30%	52%	1%
Professors help me do better on their research assignments when they have one-on-one sessions where they "coach" me through the research process and make suggestions about how to proceed.	5	11	32	54	75	1
	3%	6%	18%	30%	42%	1%

12. Now let's turn to the problems you may have experienced when you are conducting research for Humanities and Social Sciences assignments. How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? I have problems conducting research...

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	No answer from Respondent
I have problems with the research process when I don't have enough information from the professor to begin the assignment.	3 2%	7 4%	17 10%	65 37%	85 48%	1 1%
I have problems with the research process when I have to start on the assignment and overcome my own tendencies to procrastinate.	10 6%	12 7%	24 13%	67 38%	63 35%	2 1%
I have problems with the research process when I have to narrow down a topic and make it manageable.	10 6%	25 14%	36 20%	72 40%	33 19%	2 1%
I have problems with the research process when I need to evaluate what constitutes a credible resource for a given assignment.	24 13%	44 25%	43 24%	49 28%	17 10%	1 1%

(Q. 12 cont'd.)	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	No answer from Respondent
I have problems with the research process when I become overwhelmed by all the information that is out there.	11 6%	30 17%	29 16%	66 37%	41 23%	1 1%
I have problems with the research process when I have to figure out how to avoid plagiarizing in my paper.	46 26%	45 25%	36 20%	34 19%	15 8%	2 1%
I have problems with the research process when I have to figure out what each professor wants in their particular assignment.	8 4%	19 11%	31 17%	83 47%	36 20%	1 1%
I have problems with the research process when I try to find resources using the SMC library Web site.	22 12%	54 30%	54 30%	39 22%	7 4%	2 1%
I have problems with the research process when I have to conform to the professor's perspective, instead of my expressing my own perspective.	9 5%	21 12%	45 25%	56 31%	44 25%	3 2%

(Q. 12 cont'd.)	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	No answer from Respondent
I have problems with the research process when I have to write the actual paper.	25 14%	53 30%	48 27%	37 21%	14 8%	1 1%
I have problems with the research process when I have to overcome my own anxiety with the research process.	17 10%	38 21%	44 25%	53 30%	25 14%	1 1%

13. On the average, how much time do you allocate for researching and collecting resources for a 4-6 page research paper for a Humanities or Social Sciences class? (Please choose one answer only.)

Under 1 hour		1	1%
1 - 2 hours		38	21%
3 - 5 hours		99	56%
6 - 9 hours		33	19%
More than 9 hours		7	4%
Total		178	100%

14. On the average, how much time do you allocate for writing and editing a 4-6 page research paper for a Humanities or Social Sciences class? (Please choose one answer only.)

Under 1 hour		2	1%
1 - 2 hours		20	11%
3 - 5 hours		109	61%
6 - 9 hours		39	22%
More than 9 hours		8	4%
Total		178	100%

15. What one-thing matters to you the most when you are working on a 4 - 6 page research paper for a Humanities or Social Sciences class? (Please choose one answer only.)

The grade I get from the professor.		78	44%
Getting the assignment finished.		36	20%
Learning something new.		12	7%
Being creative with an assignment.		18	10%
Finding the best research resources I can.		16	9%
Improving my research skills.		3	2%
No answer from respondent		4	2%
If other, please specify:		11	6%
Total		178	100%

– END OF STUDENT SURVEY DATA –