Introduction to Databases

What is Library Database?
- A library database is a searchable, electronic collection of articles, books, and other materials such as theses, e-books, and podcasts.
- Not all databases are the same, which is why the library has over 100 different databases in our collection.
- Do not assume that everything an assignment requires will be in one database. Each database contains different resources (scholarly and trade journals, magazines, newspapers) and additional content not found in others.

Choosing the Right Database
- All databases CANNOT be searched across at once!
- To access the Library’s Databases, go to the Library homepage, and click the Databases link on the left hand side of the page.
- Select Subject Listing of Databases to see all of our databases grouped according to subject. For example, if searching for information in the subject of criminal justice, select a database under the CRIMINAL JUSTICE/FORENSIC SCIENCE/NATIONAL SECURITY section.
- For a detailed description of each database, select the link Annotated Listing of Database.

Searching
- The first step is determining the QUESTION that needs to be answered. A topic could be, “Is the death penalty moral?”
- In order to search for relevant information on this topic, determine the KEYWORDS for the search.
- Determine the key words and phrases that you would expect to be in the article.
- Once the keywords have been determined, think of SYNONYMS or RELATED TERMS to expand the results.

EXAMPLE:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Keywords</th>
<th>Synonym</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Death Penalty</td>
<td>Capital Punishment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moral</td>
<td>Ethical</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- When performing a search, DO NOT TYPE THE WORDS IN A LONG STRING: it is NOT like Google. The database will not be able to understand your request; words and phrases must be separated.
- Put phrases into quotation marks, so the terms are searched together within the document, and not as individual words.

EXAMPLE: “Death Penalty” “Capital Punishment”

Truncation
- Truncation is the addition of a symbol at the end of a word stem in a keyword search to retrieve variants containing the root.
- It is particularly useful in retrieving both the singular and plural forms of a word in the same search

EXAMPLE: Moral* will retrieve results for moral, morals, morality, morale, etc.

This is the search string to type into your database:
("death penalty" or "capital punishment") and (moral* or ethic*)

- Note: Put synonyms in parentheses or in separate search bars found in the advanced search (see above – this search will look for: death penalty and moral*, death penalty and ethic*, capital punishment and moral*, and capital punishment and ethic*).

For more information about Databases, visit our LibGuide titled, Databases. To access our LibGuide collection visit the Library homepage, and on the left side of the page select the link, “Guides.” Once you entered the LibGuides homepage, select the “How Do I Use…” tab (section) and Databases is listed.

To learn more about searching strategies, pick up our handout, “Advanced Searching Strategies- Boolean Operators.”