

The Center for Latin American Studies Guide to Library Research

prepared by Lisa Gardinier, December 2009

Basic search tips

Boolean operators (AND, OR, NOT) – The three basic Boolean operators are AND, OR, and NOT. Instead of typing a search like you would in Google, e.g., *argentina development*, most catalogs and databases return better results when Boolean operators are used, e.g., *argentina AND development*. Boolean operators are also helpful in creating more complex search queries, e.g. (*argentina OR chile*) AND (*development OR desarrollo*), and start to look something like math equations.

Truncation – Most databases use an asterisk (*) to truncate words. For example, *argentin** would return the same results as *argentina OR argentine OR argentinian*...

Multilingual searching – Many databases have at least some foreign language content, usually Spanish. If you construct your search query, you can search in multiple languages at once, e.g. *development OR desarrollo*. It can't hurt to add bilingual search terms using OR.

How to find...

The University of Arizona Libraries provide a [Latin American Studies Subject Guide](#) that you will find helpful. Most of the resources listed in this guide and numerous others are accessible through this convenient resource.

Books

UA Library Catalog (sabio.library.arizona.edu) – Searches all books in all UA libraries, as well as journal titles (both print and electronic), electronic books, and audio and visual media.

NetLibrary and ebrary – FT – Electronic book collections. Content depends upon UA Library's subscriptions and acquisitions.

Handbook of Latin American Studies (HLAS – loc.gov/hlas ; hlasopac.loc.gov) – While HLAS' strength is in journal articles, it does include book chapters. The records for book chapters may help find content that would otherwise be invisible in library catalogs and

WorldCat. See Journal articles for more about using HLAS.

WorldCat (worldcat.org) – WorldCat is a catalog, including books, journal titles, some freely available online material, and all formats of audio and visual media, reflecting the holdings of over 10,000 libraries in over 80 countries. Use WorldCat to identify items not held by the UA Library and then to place an interlibrary loan request. WorldCat is also the best resource for identifying books published outside North America and Europe, as these are often held by fewer libraries. WorldCat is available in two interfaces. The older interface has more features and is accessible through the library, logging in with your UA NetID as you would for the other databases. The other, worldcat.org, is a newer interface but with less features, and is freely available. It is intended for quick, simple searches. See Dissertations and theses for more about WorldCat.

Tips:

- Pay attention to subject headings. Most anglophone libraries use Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH) which, unfortunately, does not always reflect everyday terminology and/or prefers just one of multiple common terms. For example, *Latinos* is not a LCSH. *Hispanic Americans* is, as well as *Mexican Americans*, *Cuban Americans*, *Brazilian Americans*, etc. If you search under *Latinos*, you will miss a lot that is described as *Hispanic Americans*. Likewise, if you only search under *Hispanic Americans*, you will miss a lot described with more specific terms, like *Mexican Americans*, and vice versa. In short, be mindful of your search terms and the descriptive terms a library catalog or database might be using.
- Don't overlook encyclopedias as things of the past. While a general encyclopedia like Encyclopedia Britannica might not be of much help to you, specialized encyclopedias such as, for example, the *Encyclopedia of Latin American Politics* or the *Oxford Encyclopedia of Mesoamerican Cultures*, can give you well-written and well-cited overview articles and biographical sketches, written by experts in

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the field. Even such specialized encyclopedias are increasingly available as electronic books, so a trip to the library is not always necessary to consult one. Especially on lesser-known topics, articles will be more in-depth and more reliable than Wikipedia!

Dissertations and theses

University of Arizona Electronic Theses and Dissertations (etd.library.arizona.edu) – FT – Master’s theses and Ph.D. dissertations completed since 2005 at the University of Arizona.

ProQuest Dissertations & Theses – FT-some – Includes more than 2.4 million citations for doctoral dissertations and master’s theses, including more than 1 million available in full-text. Dissertations since July 1980 include a 350-word abstract. Master’s theses since 1988 include a 150-word abstract.

Networked Digital Library of Theses and Dissertations (NDLTD – ndltd.org) – FT-link – NDLTD is a database of theses and dissertations from major universities worldwide. Records link back to the home institution’s repositories, similar to the UA Electronic Theses and Dissertation above.

Electronic Theses Online Service (EThOS – ethos.bl.uk) – FT-some – EThOS from the British Library is a database of over 250,000 British dissertations and theses from over 100 participating universities. Nearly 17,500 are available for immediate full-text download. Many print or microfilmed theses can be requested to be digitized at no cost, pending a 10- to 90-day backlog. To download theses, you must create a free individual account.

WorldCat – WorldCat has records for dissertations and theses, from B.A. honors theses to Ph.D. dissertations. To search for theses, use the Advanced Search. Enter your search terms and, lower on the page, select Thesis/dissertation from the Any Content drop-down menu in the Subtype limits. More often than not, the records for theses include nothing more than bibliographic information and assigned subject headings. Increasingly, universities are making them accessible online, usually through their library’s website. If it is available only in print, you can try requesting it through interlibrary loan but, as many theses are only held by one or two libraries, ILL requests are often denied. Still, WorldCat is a valuable

resource for identifying existing resources on a topic, whether theses or published books and media.

Cybertesis (www.cybertesis.net) – Cybertesis is a product of the Universidad de Chile’s Sistema de Servicios de Información y Bibliotecas. Theses from 32 universities in Latin America, Europe, and North America are linked from the search results.

Journal articles

Handbook of Latin American Studies (loc.gov/hlas ; hlasopac.loc.gov) – HLAS began in 1935 as a yearly selective annotated bibliography, compiled by the Library of Congress’ Hispanic Division since 1939. All volumes are searchable through the basic interface at loc.gov/hlas. Volumes 50 through current (1990-) are searchable through a new interface, HLAS Web (hlasopac.loc.gov). HLAS contains citations for books, book chapters, and journal articles in English, Spanish, and Portuguese. It contains only the annotated citations and does not link to the full text.

Hispanic American Periodicals Index (HAPI) – FT-some-link – HAPI includes more than 275,000 journal article citations, indexing over 500 journals on Latin America. Journals are from Latin America, North America, and around the world, in English, Spanish, Portuguese, French, German, and Italian. No full-text is available in HAPI but over 60,000 articles are linked to full-text outside of HAPI. Click through the Article Linker or Journal Website logos for full-text access from other sources. HAPI supports Boolean searching but assumes truncation. For example, “argentin” would return results including “argentina”, “argentine”, “argentinian”, etc., without using the asterisk (*) necessary in other databases. Finally, HAPI maintains a thesaurus of subject headings. Pay attention to the subject headings in your search results and consult the HAPI Thesaurus for other search terms.

Publicaciones y Revistas Sociales y Humanísticas (PRISMA) – FT – PRISMA combines the unique content of HAPI with full-text and links to full-text when available. As it is supported by a different company than HAPI, its search algorithm is different. You may get very different results from the same search terms in HAPI and in PRISMA.

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- America: History & Life
- Historical Abstracts
- History Cooperative

Other databases:

HLAS, HAPI, and PRISMA are specific to Latin American studies. Databases intended for other disciplines will also have content on Latin America.

- General
 - Academic OneFile
 - Academic Search Complete
 - Arts & Humanities Citation Index
 - Directory of Open Access Journals (doaj.org)
 - General OneFile
 - Google Scholar (scholar.google.com)
 - Humanities International Complete
 - IBZ – Internationale Bibliographie der Zeitschriftenliteratur
 - JSTOR
 - Project Muse
 - Social Sciences Citation Index
 - Wilson OmniFile
- Anthropology
 - Anthropology Plus
 - AnthroSource
- Art & Architecture
 - Art Abstracts
 - ARTbibliographies Modern
 - Art Index Retrospective
- Business & Economics
 - ABI/Inform
 - Business Source Complete
 - EconLit
 - Health Business Full-Text Elite
- Communication
 - Communication & Mass Media Complete
- Education
 - ERIC (eric.ed.gov)
 - Wilson Education Full-Text
- Gender Studies
 - Gender Studies Database
 - GenderWatch
- Geography
 - GeoBase
 - Water Resources Abstracts
- History
 - America: History & Life
 - Historical Abstracts
 - History Cooperative
- Literature & Linguistics
 - Caribbean Literature
 - Latino Literature
 - LLBA: Linguistics and Language Behavior Abstracts
 - MLA Bibliography
- Performing Arts
 - International Index to Music Periodicals
 - International Index to the Performing Arts
 - Music Index Online
 - RILM Abstracts of Music Literature
- Philosophy
 - Philosopher’s Index
 - Poiesis
- Political Science
 - Air University Library Index to Military Periodicals
 - PAIS International
 - Political Science Complete
- Psychology
 - PsycINFO
- Public Health
 - PopLine
 - SPORTdiscus
- Sciences
 - CAB Abstracts
 - Science Citation Index
- Sociology
 - Sociological Abstracts

Tips:

- If you are having difficulty with a particular database, check for a help or search tips page. Some databases also have training handouts and tutorial videos posted either on their help page or on their corporate business site.
- Many databases by default sort search results with the most recent results first. You can usually change that to most relevant first.

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Journal articles from Latin America

HLAS, HAPI, PRISMA, WorldCat, and library catalogs may have substantial content published in Latin America. The following resources focus almost exclusively on Latin American publications.

Latin American Periodicals Tables of Contents (LAPTOC) – lanic.utexas.edu/larrp/laproc.html – LAPTOC contains over 325,000 citations for articles from over 950 journals published throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. It does not classify or describe the articles but simply provides citations, contributed by member libraries. Foreign language searches in LAPTOC are helpful, as most of the journals are in Spanish or Portuguese. Search results return journal titles first and then individual articles. For example 'development OR desarrollo' returns journals such as Ciencia y Desarrollo and then articles with either development or desarrollo in the title. Articles are made available via interlibrary loan from member libraries. Additionally, check UA Libraries' e-journal list for full-text availability from other databases.

ProQuest Latin American Newsstand – FT – Includes full-text access to Latin American news sources from the US, UK, and 13 Central and South American newspapers, some back to 1998. Most of the content is in Spanish and Portuguese so searches in those languages will be more fruitful than English-language search terms.

Scientific Electronic Library Online (SciELO) – scielo.org – FT – SciELO is a database of open-access journals published throughout Latin America, covering all disciplines. Being open-access, everything is available in full-text. Founded in Brazil, most of the major Latin American countries, plus Spain, have SciELO portals. The main site, scielo.org, searches content from all the individual SciELO portals. As it does cover all disciplines and lacks an advanced search interface, you will probably have to refine your results by broad disciplines on the results listing, especially if your search term can be applied to the hard sciences (e.g., desarrollo económico, desarrollo biológico).

Citas Latinoamericanas en Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades (CLASE – www.dgbiblio.unam.mx) – FT-some-link – CLASE is maintained by the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México's libraries. Dating to 1975, CLASE has records for over 270,000 journal articles from over 1500 Latin American and Caribbean journals. When available, a link is included to the full-text article. CLASE covers the social sciences and humanities while the Índice de Revistas Latinoamericanas en Ciencias (PERIÓDICA) is UNAM's science database and also linked from the UNAM Dirección General de Bibliotecas' website.

Tips:

- Even though databases like SciELO and CLASE are based in Latin America and the bulk of their content and interfaces are in Spanish or Portuguese, Boolean operators are still the English words AND, OR, and NOT. Also, don't worry about accents or the tilde when searching in Spanish or any other language.

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