I’m Kristen Hoffman, librarian for Psychology and Scholarly Communications. I met with you previously in Social Ecology of the Family, where I addressed library services, general PsycINFO searching techniques, searching within specific journals, and locating full text. For a review of that content, take a look at the Related Guides.

For this course, I’ve created this guide found at spu.libguides.com/mft_theory. In this course, as well as in Graduate Research I, you’ll be working on an extensive theory paper. This paper includes a scholarly critique of your chosen theory, where you’ll write about its unique contributions, strengths and limitations, and how it addresses issues of culture, gender, development, socioeconomic status, and elements of the ORCA stance. Aim to use at least 2-3 scholarly sources per lens. These can sometimes be challenging to find, so as you’re reading about your theory this summer, keep track of any sources that may fit into elements of the scholarly critique.

This guide will direct you to resources and offer searching suggestions for identifying these scholarly sources. As you begin your searching process, it may be helpful to read an overview of your theory in a reference book, like the ones listed here. For any eBooks, choose View It and click the link to access the full text. You may need to sign in with your SPU username and password. These not only offer a nice summary of the theory, they also supply references or further readings which may be great sources for your critique.

Other books or reference sources may be useful as well. I’ve listed a few recent books on the Bowen tab, but search for others in SPU Primo both on the theory (using a phrase such as bowen theory OR bowen family systems) as well as sources specific to aspects of the critique. For example, when considering the cultural lens, take a look at books like the APA handbook of multicultural psychology, which has a couple chapters on marriage and family therapy theories. If you need to request books through Summit, remember to Sign in first. And if you find a book on your theory that you think we should purchase for our library, please email me your suggestion.

To locate articles on Bowen theory for your scholarly critique, use several different databases, and try various terms or phrases, since different databases may use different terminology. For example, PsycINFO uses the term “Family Therapy” rather than “Bowenian Therapy,” so you could try searching for that phrase as a subject, or for related terms like “family systems,” multigeneration* (remember that the asterisk will search for all endings of the word), intergeneration*, or bowen*. Then add in other concepts that relate to the various aspects of your scholarly critique.

It can be difficult to know what terms to include, but the Thesaurus can guide you to some that may be helpful. For example, to begin a search on how this theory addresses issues of culture, search for culture in the Thesaurus. Culture has various related terms, such as cross cultural psychology, multiculturalism, racial and ethnic groups, and sociocultural factors, as well as numerous narrower terms, noted by the plus sign. Any of these may help you find articles about the concept of “culture” even though may not even mention that as a term. To search for a subject term and all narrower terms, check the box marked “explode.” Here I’ll select several that might apply and add them to the search. Keep in mind that these subject terms have been assigned to articles, which helps narrow your search quickly to that topic, but may narrow too much so that you have few results. If that’s the case, try searching for similar concepts, such as cross cultur* or multicultur* or rac* or ethnic* using the Select-a-Field option. To search even more broadly, change the drop-down option to All Text, which will search within the full text of the article if available. And if you’re finding that you need to narrow further, try limiting to a subject as
major heading, which will be the primary or secondary focus of the article, limit by classification here or by adding in the codes: 295* or 3313 for marriage and family or group and family therapy, and by checking the box for Academic Journals. For other suggestions on how to narrow or broaden your search, take a look at the PDF included on the Bowen tab.

If you’re having a difficult time finding articles, search many EBSCO databases at once using Choose databases, or search all ProQuest databases by selecting Research Library Complete from the list of library databases. Keep in mind that when you search within multiple databases at a time, you’ll only be able to search within fields that are common across databases, such as Select a Field, All Text, Author Title, and Subjects. In this case, it’s best to search by keywords with asterisks using the Select a Field option, since the databases use different subject terms.

If you’re having trouble locating the full text of any resource, follow the suggestions here under “where’s the full text?” And feel free to contact me by phone, email or in person with any questions or to set up a research consultation appointment.