Slide 1

WRTR 1313

Spring 2021
Brentney Hamilton

Have open before presentation:

- Library home page
- WRTR research guide
- PPT slides

Slide 2

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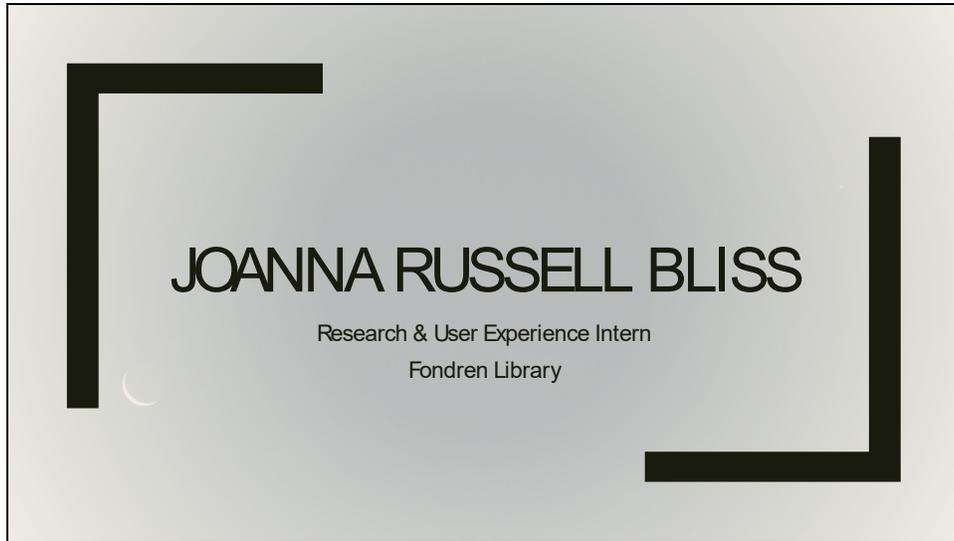
My name is Joanna Russell Bliss, and I am a Research and User Experience Intern at Fondren Library. I'm also a graduate student at UNT, where I'm studying Library Science.

TYPES OF SOURCES

Primary	Secondary	Scholarly	Peer-reviewed
Written at the time of the event by an eye-witness	*Offers an analysis of what happened*	*Written by an academic*	*Reviewed by experts in the field*
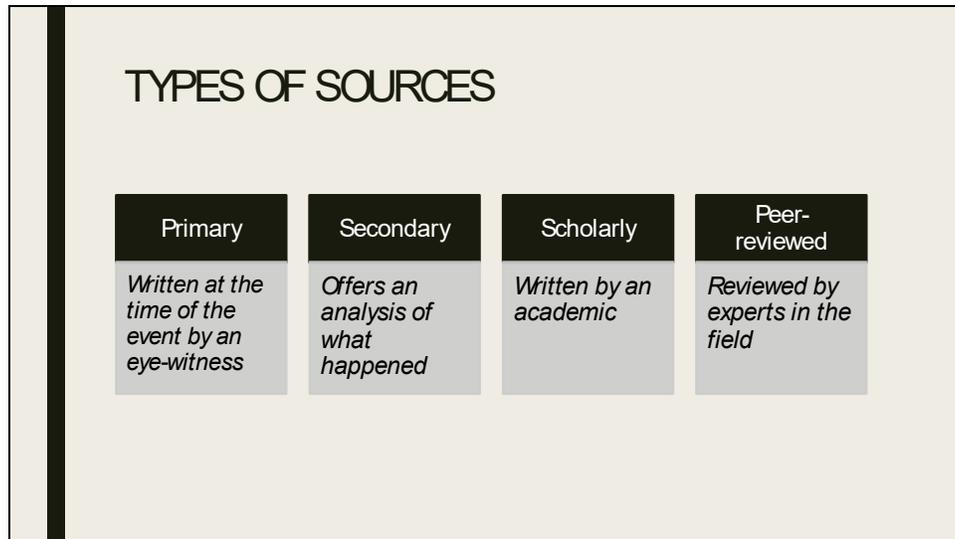
I want to start today by going over what was covered in the research module in Canvas. As we talk about these concepts, I'll ask you to respond with a thumbs up or to type something in the chat. You can also unmute to contribute to the conversation or ask questions. This time is for you guys to be comfortable with what you'll need to do in order to research and complete your paper for this class.

So let's go over the types of sources that you'll be using for this assignment. Please enter your description of these terms into the chat as I ask about them. What are primary sources? What about secondary sources? These types of sources will work well for your background and historical context section of your paper.

What is different about a scholarly source? Or a peer-reviewed source? These are what you'll need for your literature review.

Why is it important to gather different sources on the same topic? Think about when you read an article about a topic. Are all of the citations about the same thing? Not usually. They use different resources for different ideas, and the author connects those ideas.
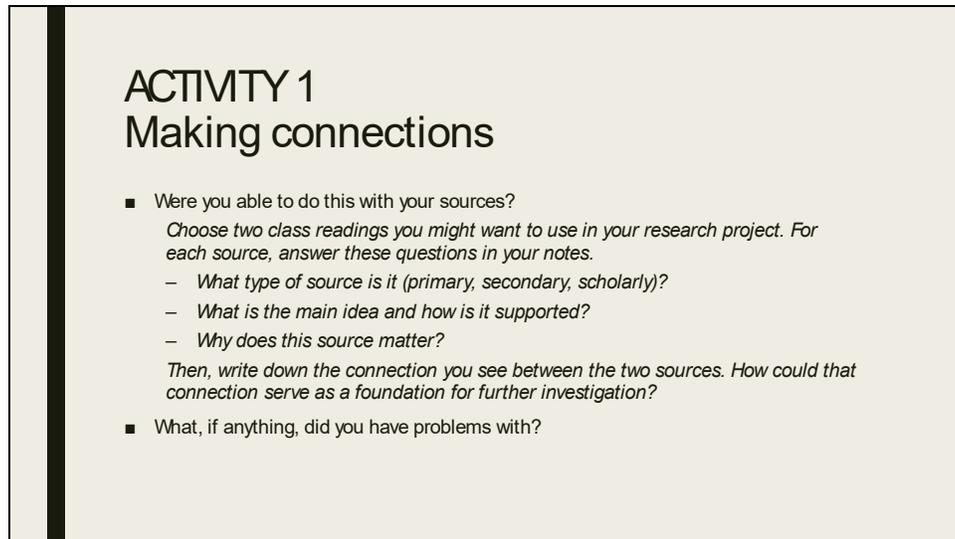
ACTIVITY 1
Making connections

- Were you able to do this with your sources?

  Choose two class readings you might want to use in your research project. For each source, answer these questions in your notes.

  – *What type of source is it (primary, secondary, scholarly)?*

  – *What is the main idea and how is it supported?*

  – *Why does this source matter?*

  Then, write down the connection you see between the two sources. How could that connection serve as a foundation for further investigation?

- What, if anything, did you have problems with?

This is why making connections between your resources is important. As you collect resources and see how they relate to each other, you can start to visualize how your paper will come together – your paper is the narrative that links these different resources and explains your perspective on your topic.

Do these concepts make sense to you? Did anyone struggle to label their resources or to make a connection between two of them? Can I get a thumbs up if you were able to see a connection or common idea between two of your foundational sources?

Remember too that one way to find primary sources is to look through secondary sources and then look up the source they mention for the conspiracy theory. This is also a way to find your way to related scholarly resources.
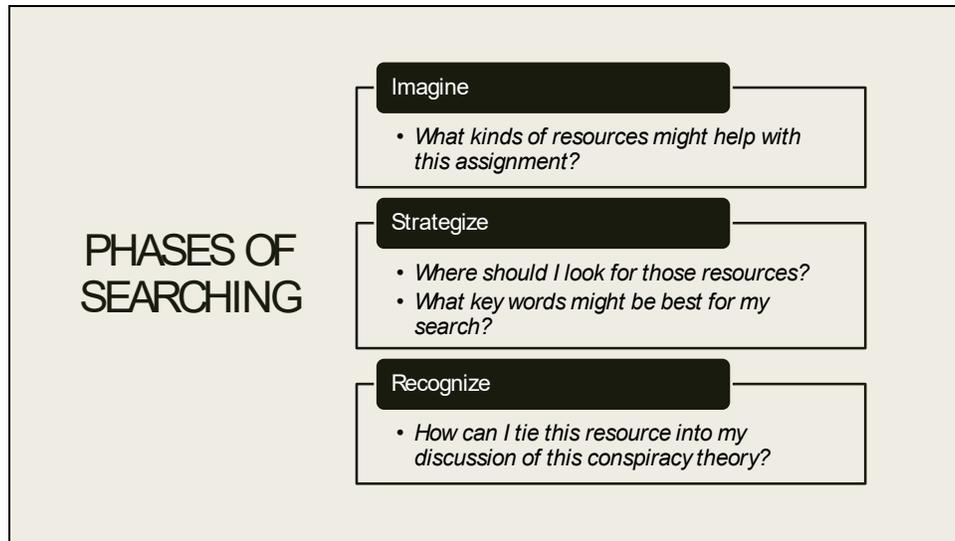
What were the three phases of searching mentioned in the module? Put them in the chat.

Are you starting to see how these steps can help you build a collection of resources that will help you build your paper? (Give me a thumbs up if this makes sense.)

OK, once you are ready to start searching, where is the first place to start? (If they say Google, agree that is a good place to get background information on the topic, but where should they search for scholarly resources for their paper?) What was recommended in the module? Type it into the chat, please.

Library search is a great place to begin. The one challenge is that searching for something general, like "conspiracy theory," can give a huge number of results. Being able to filter by copyright year or using the subject headers can help to narrow to resources that are more helpful. I'm going to show you how to do that in just a moment.

What else was mentioned in the module? Yes, the research guide created for this specific class. This is particularly helpful if you're struggling with what to write about. There are several resources in the guide that can help you explore conspiracy theories as you consider various topics.

One other resource you should be aware of is our list of research guides on various topics. If you're researching the psychology of conspiracy theories, the databases in our Psychology guide would be helpful. If you're researching how conspiracy theories affect political campaigns, the PoliSci guide would be helpful. And there are also other helpful guides, like one on citations, that can be useful as you write and edit your paper. I will show you what these look like in just a moment.

So here are some things to remember as you search, especially in databases. Quotation marks help to search for a specific phrase – if you're searching a library catalog or a database, make sure to use them to look for a phrase or idea that has multiple words, like "conspiracy theory." Note that these systems don't process searches the same way that Google does; you have to think in keywords or key terms. I'll discuss this more in a moment.
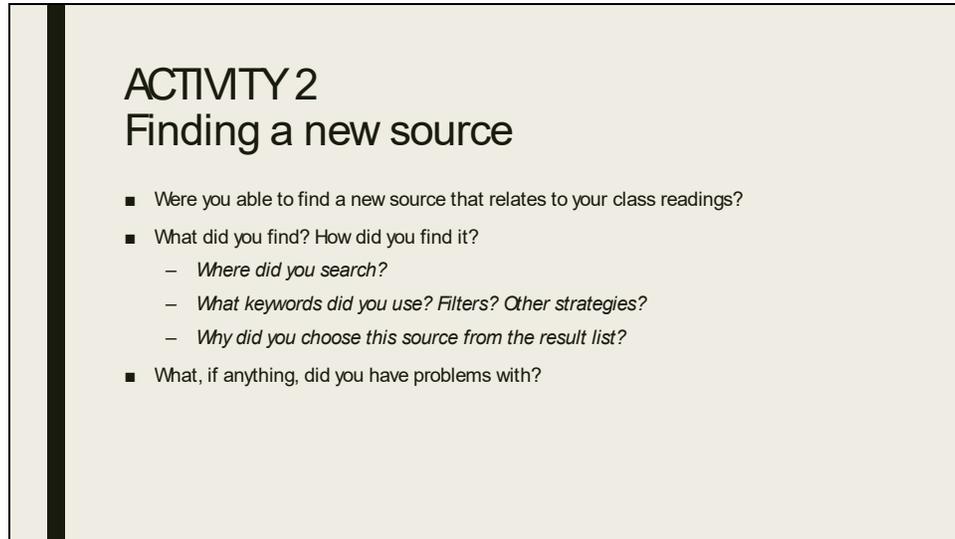
ACTIVITY 2
Finding a new source

- Were you able to find a new source that relates to your class readings?
- What did you find? How did you find it?
    - *Where did you search?*
    - *What keywords did you use? Filters? Other strategies?*
    - *Why did you choose this source from the result list?*
- What, if anything, did you have problems with?

OK, so you understand types of sources. Did anyone search for a new source to connect with the foundation sources? Give me a thumbs up if you did. Type in the chat where you searched/found it.

For those of you that haven't started searching, let's do a few things together to explore the library catalog and searching databases.

- Open library search and search for "conspiracy theory" and "political campaigns"
- Show how to limit results by type of resource, excluding a category like "reviews" and limiting by copyright year.
- Open a listing and show them how it gives an overview of the title and links to other listings through author and subject header.

Show them the research guide for WRTR 1313.
- Note that it has links to a lot of the resources recommended in the module, including the search tips I listed before.
- If they are struggling with choosing a topic, show them the "Conspiracies and Conspiracy Theories in American History" book that's available through the guide. Show how to access resources off site, by logging in via Duo.

Research guides: One of the reasons we have research guides is that there are a lot of databases that house articles and scholarly articles. It can be challenging to know where to begin. Some of these articles may come up in the everything search, but not all. Think of it as when you buy something new, like a bike. You can go to Amazon and search for "bicycle," but you'll get bicycles, and bicycle seats, and bicycle helmets. And the people reviewing the bicycles are not necessarily experts. When you head to a database that's targeted for your subject area, it's like going directly to a bike shop and talking to experts at the shop about your purchase.

Go back to the library home page and show the link for research guides.

- Open the Political Science guide.

- Open the guide for American politics.

- Open Political Science Complete.

- Show how there are a couple of ways to enter search terms, and that suggested terms may be helpful.

    - Compare "conspiracy theories" and "political campaigns" as entered in 2 separate boxes and in the same box with quotes.

    - Show what happens when you change "political campaigns" to "campaigns" and auto select "campaigns and elections".

    - Counsel that research is about playing with these terms to see what works best for your topic.

- When search results come up, point out the key terms that are labeled for each article, and show how to see what is available through SMU. Show how to limit to what we have access to.

EVALUATING SOURCES

The quality and usefulness of a source is determined by two characteristics: its reliability and its appropriateness for your intended use.

Why is reliability important for your assignment here? Type your thoughts into the chat. As you look for new information, you need to ask yourself, Who has created this information? What is their motive?

For example, I'm going to show you two graphics here. I want you to look at the citation and note who created the graphic. If you don't know about the group, search for it. Here's the first one. What can you tell me about the group that created it? Put it in the chat. (If no one finds it, here's a story about how the graphic is a hoax: https://factcheck.afp.com/old-hoax-about-us-crime-statistics-recirculates-online-anti-racism-protests-continue)

OK, here's the 2nd graphic. Who created that graphic? If it's hard to see, it's the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

As you find information on your conspiracy, ask yourself who is publishing or circulating the information? Are they trustworthy? And why are they creating the information in this manner?
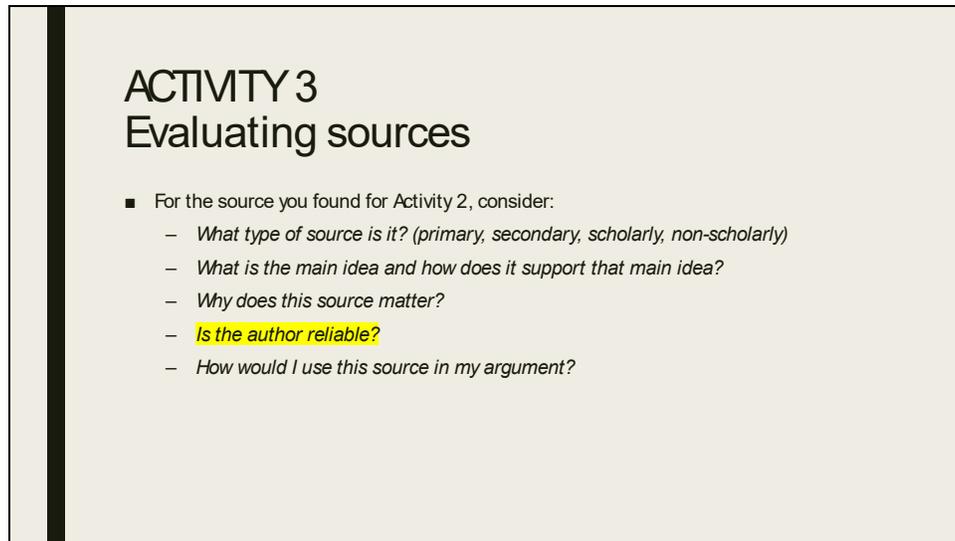
ACTIVITY 3
Evaluating sources

■ For the source you found for Activity 2, consider:
– *What type of source is it? (primary, secondary, scholarly, non-scholarly)*
– *What is the main idea and how does it support that main idea?*
– *Why does this source matter?*
– *Is the author reliable?*
– *How would I use this source in my argument?*

So as you search for resources, particularly if you're not searching scholarly databases or the library catalog, you need to think about reliability and how this fits into your paper.

As a reminder, the module asked you to apply these questions to the source you found in activity 2. I've added the question about reliability. Give me a thumbs up if this makes sense.
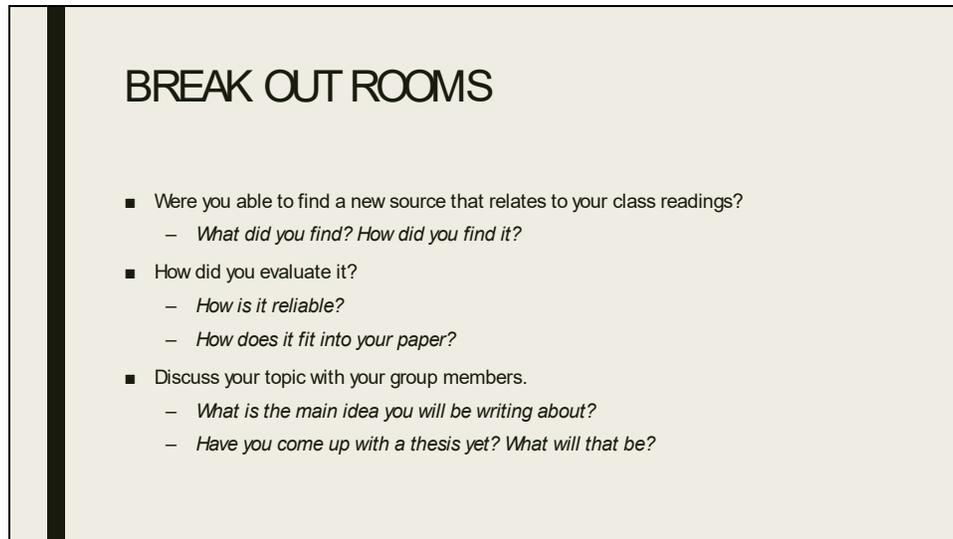
BREAK OUT ROOMS

- Were you able to find a new source that relates to your class readings?
    - *What did you find? How did you find it?*
- How did you evaluate it?
    - *How is it reliable?*
    - *How does it fit into your paper?*
- Discuss your topic with your group members.
    - *What is the main idea you will be writing about?*
    - *Have you come up with a thesis yet? What will that be?*

So let's talk about what you found in your research. These are the questions I'd like you all to discuss in the break out rooms. I will join each one to see where you are in the research process and to discuss where you might be having some challenges with your topic or research.

In particular, I'd like each of you to explain your topic to your classmates – what's your main idea? What are the points you're going to discuss, using the connections you've found? (Think of each connection as the central idea for a paragraph.) What have you found so far – for either the historical context section or the lit review? Then help each other search for new resources – given their topics, where should they search? What keywords might work? How does what you find fit into your topic and your paper?

Split them into 3 break out rooms. Join each one for about 10 minutes.

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What's the most valuable thing you learned today? Put it in the chat.

To review, these are good places to search or use as you look for sources.
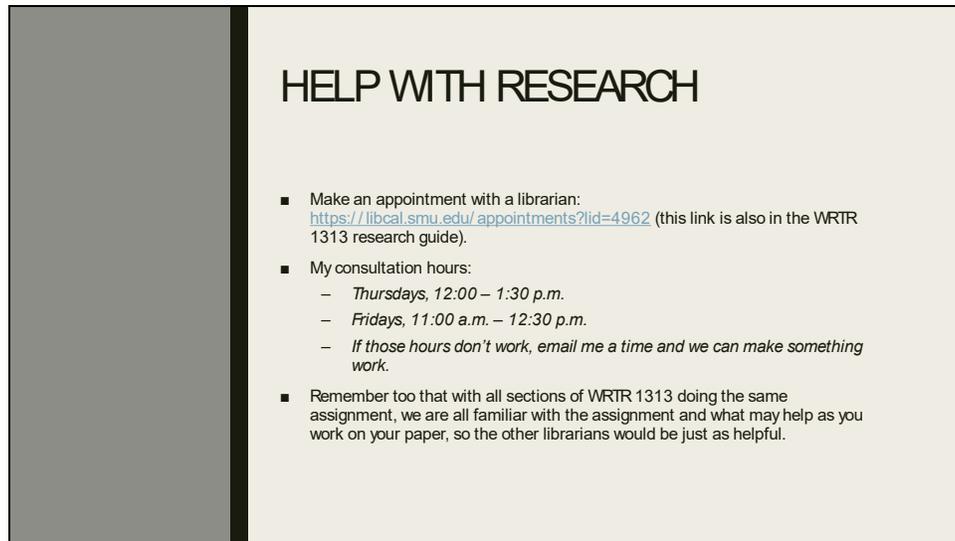
We are here to help! You can make an appointment with me or another research librarian for a 30-minute consult to discuss your topic and research.
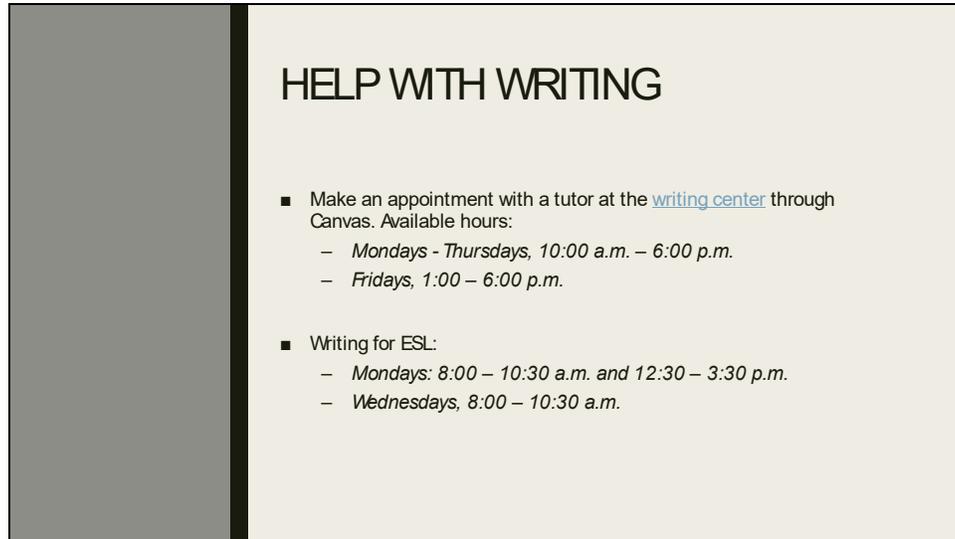
HELP WITH WRITING

- Make an appointment with a tutor at the writing center through Canvas. Available hours:
  - *Mondays - Thursdays, 10:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.*
  - *Fridays, 1:00 – 6:00 p.m.*

- Writing for ESL:
  - *Mondays: 8:00 – 10:30 a.m. and 12:30 – 3:30 p.m.*
 - *Wednesdays, 8:00 – 10:30 a.m.*

The writing center is also available for one-on-one consultations. For now, it is through Zoom, but hopefully in the fall they can return to meeting with students at the ALEC.
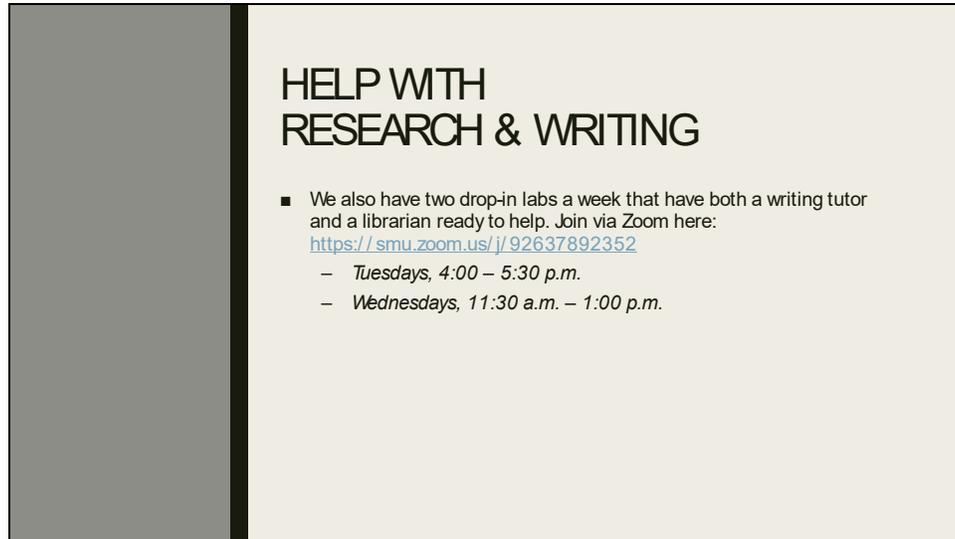
And finally, we do have drop-in help as well. SMU Libraries has partnered with the Writing Center to do 2 drop-in labs a week. Again, this is via Zoom this semester, but hopefully in person in future terms.

GOOD LUCK WITH YOUR RESEARCH!

joannab@mail.smu.edu

libcal.smu.edu/ appointments?lid=4962
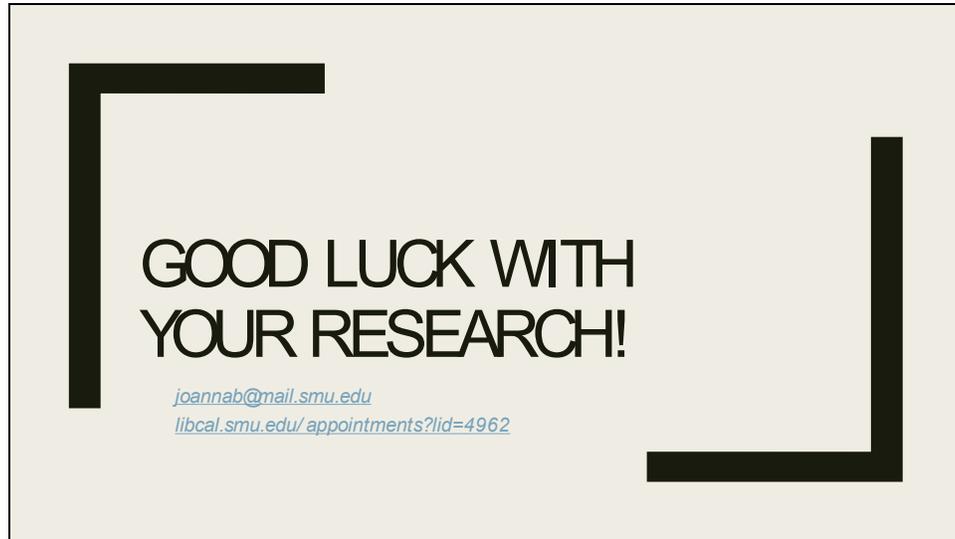
This is my contact information. Your instructor has it as well, along with a copy of these slides for you. Please reach out to us with any questions. We are happy to help as you get used to research within the college realm.