How to do Research for Humanities Undergraduates: Methods, Tools, and Funding
Supplemental Text Transcript with Hyperlinks

Northwestern University, Office of Fellowships

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Video Timestamps

Introduction

- Who am I?
    - I'm Ben, Office of Fellowships graduate assistant for 2021-22. I'm a doctoral candidate in the musicology program at the Bienen school of music here at NU – and before that, I studied English Literature at Haverford College. I've dedicated a lot of time and energy to the pursuit of research, teaching, and advising in humanities.
- Why am I making this?
    - This presentation is a primer for how to do research, describing methods, tools, and funding available to humanities undergrads
    - I'm making this because I found that humanities undergraduates (like me, English BA in 2014) often have topics that captivate them, but aren't sure which research methods and tools are available to them.
    - This presentation is a component of my role working in the Office of Fellowships. It emerged from my time advising and doing intake interviews with undergraduates at NU. Through these experiences, I found that:
        - How scholars go about big research projects can feel mysterious
        - How people find funding to support those projects is even more mysterious

- This guide seeks to demystify the process of gaining research experience, doing research, and finding funding to support your research.
- There isn't a one-stop shop for all of these resources at NU. The wide array of resources available to you at NU can be a bit difficult to navigate given the decentralization of things like research grants, available across academic departments and non-academic offices.
- While working in the Office of Fellowships, I began indexing every funding resource I could find available to undergrads, and I began using this to help guide undergraduates I was advising towards appropriate grants and fellowships, offered by NU or by external organizations.
- Therefore, this presentation emerged…
- Who is this for?
  - This guide is for Northwestern University undergraduate students in any humanities field in any year of study. You might be…
    - starting a research project
    - seeking methods and tools to use to conduct research
    - looking for guidance in finding and applying for research funding
  - This is a primer, and not an exhaustive guide.

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3. **Funding for research**: internal (from NU to NU students) and external (national and regional competitions)

But first…

- What is research?
  - Research is the production of knowledge in service of a question about something in the world.
  - While in the setting of the university, you will be asked to come up with novel research questions, make new interpretations, and create projects that say something that hasn't been said before. This is to say, it also has to fit within to a discourse of other scholarship related to your own.
  - And you have access to an outrageous array of resources at your disposal (texts, scholars, courses, etc.) while in a university setting
  - Institutions like NU are referred to as research universities (a classification established by the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education) because of their prioritization of research. If you've heard NU or other institutions referred to as R1, this is a Carnegie classification that describes the highest level of commitment to research: R1 institutions dedicate a great deal of money into research, and accordingly produce a large amount of research output. https://carnegieclassifications.acenet.edu/
  - You find yourself here, surrounded by faculty, graduate students, and office, al dedicated to producing and conducting cutting edge research across disciplines. And you can benefit from this!

Methods for Research

Different methods lend themselves better to the pursuit of different kinds of research questions. In this section, I'll discuss four research method categories:

- **Archival** (and artefactual) – reading texts and looking at objects
- **Interview-based** (and survey) – talking to/hearing from people
- **Participant Observation** (ethnography) – integrating yourself into a community/engaging with individuals withing your community
- **Interpretation** (analysis, close reading) – making sense of qualitative or quantitative data using historically-informed context and theoretical models

Based upon your research question and the material you wish to study, you'll likely use more than one of these methods while working on a research project.

The questions below are about bracketing. What is the scope of your project? What are the pressing who, what, when, where, why, and how questions you seek to answer? Being thoughtful about bracketing will allow you to be more focused and specific about the premise, argument, and outcome of your research project.

1. Do you want to study an object, an event, and/or a being? (or multiple across these categories)
2. Are your objects of study historical or contemporary? Actual or hypothetical?
3. Can you study it personally/directly or will you use the accounts/analyses of others? (primary/secondary)
4. What is the intended outcome of your work, in terms of the knowledge produced and the impact it has on the world?

Primary and Secondary Sources
- The concepts of primary and secondary sources are key when considering your role as a researcher and the desired outcome of your research.
- A **primary source** is first-hand information and documentation: an interview, a description of someone's experience of an event, a creative work, letters, diaries, speeches, etc. These are original materials on which research is based.
- A **secondary source** is one that analyzes something created by someone else: academic analysis, a review, etc. A secondary source is one that synthesizes primary (and other secondary) source materials to provide commentary and/or analysis.

Archival/Artefactual
- The study of documents and ephemera, like correspondence (letters, written conversations), newspapers, diaries, minutes, financial and administrative documents, musical scores, and anything else that might be collected and organized.
- Asymmetry of archives, Foucault. If there isn't good record keeping for a topic you're investigating, this will present a challenge to your research process. Historically, as today, it

is expensive to maintain records and keep an archive. As such, the privilege of a population is reflected in the privilege of archival documentation.

- https://libguides.northwestern.edu/archives

Interviews/Surveys

- The process of talking to people about their experiences, work, or association with the topic you're studying.
- Surveys can offer a means of colleting personal accounts and stories anonymously
- Keep in mind that some research involving human subjects might require IRB approval

Participant Observation/Ethnography

- A style of placing yourself in a setting/community, through your experience of which you develop your observations
- This is more frequently used by anthropology, ethnomusicology, learning sciences, and other fields that place high value on field work, embedding a researcher into a setting in a long-term capacity

Interpretation/Analysis

- Interpretation sounds general, and it's everywhere. If you're using any of the above methods, you're also using some form of analysis, close reading, or interpretation of quantitative and qualitative data
- There are discipline-specific approaches for interpreting text, film, images, music, etc. What options are available to you in your discipline?

Outcomes: Intervention, Purpose, and Audience

Intervention:

Ultimately, research tends to consider and expound upon production and reception, respectively considering the ways something came to be (production) and the ways something is thought about (reception). Consider what gap in human understanding you are filling. How does the new idea you are contributing to the conversation intervene in contemporary discourse/understanding through considering production and/or reception.

- Production: How it's conceived and/or made
- Reception: How it's received and/or interpreted

Purpose and Audience:

And why is your research necessary? Who is your research for? It is vital to also consider the impact you want to have through any project. All research is political. What motivates you to conduct a particular research project beyond the production of new information? Consider how you want this to affect others and the world.

Of course, many research projects you will do in college are practice, perhaps more about learning the process than achieving a specific outcome. That said, being thoughtful about

purpose and audience, alongside your scholarly intervention, is precisely what makes applications for grants, scholarships, and graduate school compelling.

Tools for Research

There are many tools at your disposal to make research easier to collect, organize, and use. The following are just a few that I recommend.

Exploring: tools for exploring sources

At NU
- Libraries
  - Research support, over video chat, email, phone, or in person: https://www.library.northwestern.edu/research/research-support/index.html
- Research Guides
  - NU has a wide array of discipline- and topic-specific research guides
  - Each guide offers important references, search engines, and tools specific to a subject area or topic (for example: Chicago Government, Caribbean Studies, Comparative Literature, Abolition, Linguistics, Music)
  - https://libguides.northwestern.edu/index.php
- Interlibrary Loan
  - If you find an essay, book, or other kind of media, but cannot gain access to a digital or physical copy of it through our library, you can request a copy from another library using Interlibrary Loan
  - https://www.library.northwestern.edu/find-borrow-request/requests-interlibrary-loan/
- Archival and Manuscript Collections: https://findingaids.library.northwestern.edu/repositories
  - NU Archives
    - If you're interested in the history and legacy of NU, it is free and easy to check out the University Archives in Deering McCormick Library
    - To see their holdings, catalogued and digitized, you can use their search tools: https://www.library.northwestern.edu/libraries-collections/mccormick-library/search-tools.html
    - If you find something you want to see in person, you can book an appointment to do so: https://www.library.northwestern.edu/libraries-collections/mccormick-library/

  - Special Collections
    - The Library of Special Collections houses acquisitions, meaning, materials that are owned by NU from gifts and purchases. Of the 269 collections, over 33,000 materials have been digitized, but there are many other documents and objects to see in person: https://dc.library.northwestern.edu/

- Collections include Civil War diaries, documents from Chicago Tribune reporters, Nuremberg Trial documents, John Cage musical scores, poetry manuscripts of Anais Nin
- Scholars travel internationally to have access to materials stored at Northwestern – and they're waiting for you too!

Elsewhere
- Archives/Collections Databases/Finding Aids
  - https://about.proquest.com/en/products-services/archives_usa/
  - https://www.lib.uchicago.edu/scrc/archives/usworldwide/
  - https://findingaids.loc.gov/
- Works Cited page of a scholarly paper
- WorldCat contains all catalogued materials from all libraries: https://www.worldcat.org/
- Discipline-specific scholarly databases
- Google Scholar: https://scholar.google.com/
  - Fantastic search tool for any works
  - Especially useful for discovering what texts cite a text (e.g. a 2010 book is referenced in 12 books and 20 articles published from 2011-2023)
- Academia.edu
  - Find writing by scholars, made available by the scholar
- Scholars, professors, instructors, teaching assistants, and peers

Documenting/Collecting
NU library offers workshops, education, and recommended tools for digital humanities research: https://libguides.northwestern.edu/dh/tools
"how-to" guides about using conducting types of research and using services of the NU libraries: https://libguides.northwestern.edu/guides/howto (including how to use digital archives, how to do a literature review, how to use EndNote and Zotero, and how to synthesize evidence)

Reference Software
- Zotero (with browser plug-in)
  - Free, easy to use, and fantastic for keeping track of references, website, and any texts
  - https://www.zotero.org/
- EndNote
  - Freely available to NU Students, for storing and editing bibliographic information
  - https://services.northwestern.edu/TDClient/30/Portal/Requests/ServiceCatalog?CategoryID=83

Survey Software
- Qualtrics
  - Freely available to NU students, for crafting and conducting online surveys
  - https://services.northwestern.edu/TDClient/30/Portal/Requests/ServiceCatalog?CategoryID=83
- Google Forms
  - Freely available lightweight tool for crafting surveys
  - https://www.google.com/forms/

Tech Equipment

You can borrow a variety of nice technology from the library, just like you'd borrow a book: https://libguides.northwestern.edu/circulatingequipment

- An audio recorder
    - Your phone or a dedicated audio recorder is an essential tool for recording interviews and conducting field work
    - I use a recorder when I want to quickly capture an observation, realization, or environmental sound relevant to research
- Camera/scanner
    - Your phone or a dedicated camera or scanner is a great tool for capturing documents, text, or other visual data

Crafting
Text and Data Entry

- Microsoft 365
    - In case you don't already know, you have access to the Microsoft suite, including Word, PowerPoint, Excel, OneDrive, among other applications.
    - https://services.northwestern.edu/TDClient/30/Portal/KB/ArticleDet?ID=1929
- Scrivener
    - Writing software made for project management, with file trees and idea boards for text
    - Offers preformatted models for theses and research papers
    - https://www.literatureandlatte.com/scrivener/overview

Audio and Video Editing

- Audacity
    - Free audio recording and editing software
    - https://www.audacityteam.org/
- DaVinci Resolve
    - Free video editing software
    - https://www.blackmagicdesign.com/products/davinciresolve

Visual Design

- Prezi
    - Free presentation and slideshow making online app
    - https://prezi.com/
- StoryMap JS
    - Make a story map, using images, dates, media integration, and other data
    - https://storymap.knightlab.com/
- Timeline JS
    - https://timeline.knightlab.com/

Funding for Research

How to apply for funding? How to get paid to do research?

Money at NU in OUR, departments, NU overall
Money outside – go to OF

Research will be a component of most of your academic experiences, from discussion board posts to your capstone project. In addition to the research you conduct within your coursework, you might seek out additional opportunities as a research assistant (1:1, assisting a faculty member on their research) or pursue independent research or training aligned with your capstone project or professional/scholarly goals. This might mean traveling to a destination (archive, community, festival, etc.), engaging in intensive language study, or otherwise dedicating time and energy to the focused study of a topic. There is funding at NU for NU students (internal) and through outside organizations and institutions (external) that will support such experiences.

Internal
Within Northwestern, there are many internal funding opportunities to support research projects. This means that there is money set aside specifically to fund undergraduate research simply waiting for applicants. In addition to grants available to any undergrads, many departments and programs have additional discipline-specific grants for research. Ask your advisor or check out your department and program websites to find what they might have to offer.
This is not an exhaustive list of all available opportunities, but a good start.

Office of Undergraduate Research
The Office of Undergraduate Research (OUR) is a vital resource to know about. They offer a large number and variety of funding opportunities for undergraduates of any program. And this is a fantastic place to start out, gaining your first research experiences – and to learn more about research through workshops like the Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences Workshop, designed to prepare you to apply for independent research grants.
https://undergradresearch.northwestern.edu/resources/arts-humanities-and-social-sciences-workshop/
Internal grants, offered by an institution to their students, are generally more accessible and easier to win than national competitions. (Don't be discouraged though! Having an internal grant under your belt will make it easier to win external grants in the future.) OUR wants to help you win their grants -- they offer advising and advice to help you create strong grant proposals and applications. They will fund:
- Research during the summer
- Research during the school year
- Intensive summer language-learning
- Travel for conferences
- Research assistantships

Research Grants
- Summer undergraduate research grants (SURG):
  https://undergradresearch.northwestern.edu/funding/surg/
  - SURG Advanced, for students who have already won a SURG grant:
    https://undergradresearch.northwestern.edu/funding/surg/summer-urg-advanced/
- Academic Year Research Grants (AYURG):
  https://undergradresearch.northwestern.edu/funding/ayurg/

- o AYURG Advanced, for students who have already won an AYURG grant: https://undergradresearch.northwestern.edu/funding/academic-year-urg-advanced/
- Emerging Scholars Program: https://undergradresearch.northwestern.edu/funding/emerging-scholars/
- Circumnavigator Grant: https://undergradresearch.northwestern.edu/funding/circumnavigator-grant/

Travel, RA, and language-learning grants

Though not directly funding for research, the URAP, ULG, and conference travel grants all seek to support your ability to gain research skills (as a RA), conduct research and share it through conferences.

- Undergraduate Research Assistant Program (URAP): https://undergradresearch.northwestern.edu/funding/urap/
- Language Grant (ULG): https://undergradresearch.northwestern.edu/funding/language-grants-ulg/
- Conference Travel Grants: https://undergradresearch.northwestern.edu/funding/ctg/

Department- and program-specific

- At Northwestern, there are a wide variety of labs and ongoing research centers. While many of these are targeted to STEM majors, some are humanities: https://research.northwestern.edu/about/institutes-centers/university-research-institutes-centers.html
- Baker Program in Undergraduate Research (within Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences) offers opportunities and funding for becoming a research assistant or conducting your own research: https://baker.northwestern.edu/
- Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences Special Research Awards:
  - o Katherine L. Krieghbaum Scholarship
  - o Herskovits Undergraduate Fellowship Program
    - Research involving use of Northwestern's Africana collection
  - o Posner Summer Fellowship Program
    - Research for students from underrepresented groups
  - o Lane Environmental Studies Grant
    - Research on environmental issues
  - o Sion Asia-related Research Grant
    - Research on Asia-related topics
  - o Radulovacki Global Health Research Grant
    - Research on public health
  - o Weinberg Academic Year Grants: https://baker.northwestern.edu/grants/index.html
  - o Weinberg Summer Grants: https://baker.northwestern.edu/grants/summer-grants.html
- School of Communication Grants
  - o Media Arts Grant for Radio/Television/Film: https://communication.northwestern.edu/radio-television-film/media-arts-grant/
  - o https://northwestern.academicworks.com/opportunities/1053
- School of Education and Social Policy

- o Opportunities Fund:
  https://www.sesp.northwestern.edu/ugrad/opportunities/opportunities-fund.html
- o G. Alfred Hess Jr. Undergraduate Research Fund (SESP):
  https://northwestern.academicworks.com/opportunities/1110
- • School of Education & Social Policy
  - o G. Alfred Hess Jr. Undergraduate Research Fund:
    https://northwestern.academicworks.com/opportunities/1110
  - o SESP Undergraduate Opportunities Fund:
    http://northwestern.academicworks.com/opportunities/1132

Across NU
- o Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowships Program
  - ▪ https://www.northwestern.edu/president/about-the-office/special-projects/mellon-mays-undergraduate-fellowship/index.html
  - ▪ Graduate study towards eradicating racial disparities
- o Leopold Fellowship
  - ▪ https://historicalstudies.northwestern.edu/fellowships/leopold-fellows/
  - ▪
  - ▪ Research involving historical, archival, and documentary materials

External

The Office of Fellowships

This is where the Office of Fellowships steps in. The staff of the Office of Fellowships are ready and willing to help you craft exceptional applications for grants and fellowships offered by organizations and institutions outside of NU. They can offer individual advising to help you find the right grants, write your applications, and prepare for interviews. This is your one-stop shop for finding opportunities that can allow you to pursue lifechanging projects that take you nearly anywhere in the world.

The Office of Fellowships offers a Fellowship Finder tool which permits you to search according to search terms relevant to you. Note that this is a cherry-picked list mostly made up of larger awards – there are many many more out there. Here are some grants towards research as part of independent projects, language study, and graduate degrees (in which you would pursue research).

- o Fulbright US Student Program
  - ▪ independent research project funding
  - ▪ https://us.fulbrightonline.org/
- o Soros Justice Fellowships
  - ▪ Funding for projects that advance reform, spur debate, and catalyze change on a range of issues facing the U.S. criminal justice system
  - ▪ https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/grants/soros-justice-fellowships
- o Paul and Daisy Soros Fellowhips for New Americans
  - ▪ graduate school tuition support for new Americans
  - ▪ https://www.pdsoros.org/
- o Beinecke Scholarship
  - ▪ graduate school tuition support for first generation and low-income students
  - ▪ https://beineckescholarship.org/
- o Boren Scholarship
  - ▪ funding for study of languages less commonly taught, connected to National Security Education Program

- ▪ https://www.borenawards.org/
- o Mitchell, Marshall, Rhodes, Gates, and others…: https://sites.northwestern.edu/fellowships/uk-graduate-study/
- o Immigrants Rising, job board: https://immigrantsrising.org/resource/list-of-scholarships-and-fellowships/
- o Here is a list of additional websites to discover funding opportunities:
  - o https://www.fastweb.com/
  - o https://www.scholarships.com/
  - o https://www.studentscholarshipsearch.com/
  - o https://immigrantsrising.org/resource/list-of-scholarships-and-fellowships/