ECO320: Economic Analysis of Law
Research Resources & Strategies

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Online Course Research Guide

https://guides.library.utoronto.ca/eco320

- Guide includes:
  - Links to all resources discussed today
  - Link to presentation used today
  - Contact information
Key Steps In The Research Process

- Background research
- Focus your topic
- Use appropriate resources
- Keyword search strategy
- Build your research question

NOT A LINEAR PROCESS
Key Steps In The Research Process

TOPIC: LEGALIZATION OF MARIJUANA

Credit: Ryan Bushby [CC BY 2.5 (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.5)], from Wikimedia Commons
Key Step: Background Research

• Start with some **background research** to develop a broad understanding of your topic before you focus

• Use
  • **Websites** (with caution – and just for background)
  • **Reference works** (e.g. handbooks, encyclopedias)

• **Books**
Key Step: Focus Your Topic

• Think about
  • Geography
  • Specific events, e.g. new legislation, court rulings
  • Time period
  • Population, e.g. medical marijuana users, youth
  • Technology, e.g. hydroponics, synthetic, medical-grade
  • Economic concept or model
Key Step: Build Your Research Question

Topic: Legalization of marijuana

Focused Topic: Legalization’s impact on the pricing of marijuana

Research Question: Which economic model best explains marijuana pricing in a legal market?
Key Step: Keyword Search Strategy

• Identify key concepts in your research question

Which economic model best explains marijuana pricing in a legal market?
Key Step: Keyword Search Strategy

• All concepts should be matched to at least one or more search term
• Search terms can be:
  • SYNONYMS
  • NARROWER TERMS
  • BROADER TERMS
  • RELATED TERMS
• Not all concepts may need to be searched, e.g. ‘economic model’
Key Step: Keyword Search Strategy

EXERCISE: Generate a list of keywords associated with *marijuana* using synonyms, broader, narrower and related terms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Synonyms</th>
<th>Cannabis, weed, pot …</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Broader terms</td>
<td>Drugs, recreational drugs, intoxicants, illegal substances, controlled substances, medicinal herbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrower terms</td>
<td>Cannaboids, THC (psychoactive substance), medical marijuana, edible(s), smokeable(s), buds (plant parts)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Related terms</td>
<td>Hemp, opioids, opiates, hashish, narcotics, dispensary/ies,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Key Step: Use Appropriate Resources

• Appropriate resources for your term paper include:
  • Scholarly books
    • You might already have found some through your background research!
  • Scholarly articles

HINT: It’s often easier to find relevant, quality scholarly articles through the library’s resources
What is a Scholarly Article?

A. Lab Tested, Stoner Approved
B. The International Journal of Drug Policy
C. The Walrus

The Strongest Strains on Earth!
### What is a Scholarly Article?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Popular articles</th>
<th>Scholarly articles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Written by journalists or professional writers</td>
<td>• Written by experts (faculty, researchers, scholars), with credentials provided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Written for a general, non-scholarly audience</td>
<td>• Written for experts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Use language easily understood by general readers</td>
<td>• Use technical language that is discipline-specific</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Tend to be shorter</td>
<td>• Tend to be longer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Rarely cite sources</td>
<td>• Include a bibliography or references</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Do not have abstracts</td>
<td>• Usually have an abstract</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• May refer to research but is not intended for scholarly communication</td>
<td>• Report results of original research or analyzes or interprets other research</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from:
Peer-Reviewed Articles

• Most **but not all** scholarly articles will be peer-reviewed
• Peer review involves an assessment of the article by a panel of experts prior to publication to determine:
  • Originality
  • Validity
  • Methodology
  • Significance
• Functions like **quality assurance**
Peer-Reviewed Articles

- Peer-reviewed articles can co-exist in the same journal/issue as non-peer-reviewed articles, which may include:
  - Editorials or commentary
  - Book reviews
  - Letters to the editor
- Determine peer-review status by researching JOURNAL, not article
  - Ulrich’s
  - Journal website > ‘Submissions’ or ‘Guidelines for Authors’
Scholarly Article Databases

• Databases aggregate articles from many journals and tag or index these to make your research easier.

• Databases often provide filter to screen for peer-review or scholarly articles, which search engines don’t.

• Start with EconLit and then branch out to other databases.
Evaluating Articles: Scholarly Article Indicators

CAN PRICE GET THE MONKEY OFF OUR BACK? A META-ANALYSIS OF ILLICIT DRUG DEMAND

CRAIG A. GALLETT
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SUMMARY
Because of the increased availability of price data over the past 15 years, several studies have estimated the demand for illicit drugs, providing 462 estimates of the price elasticity. Results from estimating several meta-regressions reveal that these price elasticity estimates are influenced by a number of study characteristics. For instance, the price elasticity differs across drugs, with its absolute value being smallest for marijuana, compared with cocaine and heroin. Furthermore, price elasticity estimates are sensitive to whether demand is modeled in the short-run or the long-run, measures of quantity and price, whether or not alcohol and other illicit drugs are included in the specification of demand, and the location of demand. However, a number of other factors, including the functional form of demand, several specification issues, the type of data and method used to estimate demand, and the quality of the publication outlet, have less influence on the price elasticity. Copyright © 2013 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

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JEL Classification: D12; I18

KEY WORDS: illicit drug price elasticity; meta-analysis

REFERENCES


Citing Your Sources

TIPS

✓ Always acknowledge another’s ideas and words by citing your source
✓ If in doubt, cite it
✓ Be consistent with the style you use
✓ Take advantage of built-in citation generation tools associated with library resources
Need Help?

• Drop in at the reference desk
• Live ‘Ask a Librarian’ chat service
• Email: askutml.utm@utoronto.ca
• Phone: 905-828-5237

OR...
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