Exploring human rights sources and using them in a thesis

Head Librarian Kirsten Fuglestad, Norwegian Centre for Human Rights, 21th January 2016
Agenda

- Search strategy and basic search techniques
- Plagiarism and reference practice
- Search for human rights literature and documents
Develop a search profile for the topic

- Define topic, research question
- Define geographical area, time period
- Formulate search terms / key words
- Define sources (next slide)
Define documents types and their sources

When searching for information on a human rights topic – various document types may be relevant.

1. **Legal documents from international and regional organizations**: treaties, covenants, statutes, protocols, conventions etc.

2. **Documents from monitoring bodies**: decisions, concluding observations, recommendations, country visit reports etc.

3. **Jurisdiction**: judgments/decisions from courts and tribunals

4. **NGOs**: reports, opinions etc.

5. **Articles and books**

   Choose sources / databases for each document type
How to evaluate documents

• Relevant
• Reliable / quality assurance (which institution or author?)
• Current (up to date?)
• Objective (or biased?)
• What purpose (factual / commercial / political?)
Basic search technique: Truncation

Truncate = in order to include word variations in the search, replace letter(s) with * or ?

violat* finds documents that deal with violate, violation, violations, violator etc.

wom*n finds documents that deal with woman and women
Basic search technique: combination of key words

Keywords: a AND b
each document must deal with both topic a and topic b

Keyword: a NOT b
each document must deal with topic a, but not topic b

Keywords: a OR b
each document must deal with topic a or topic b
Search tips

• More is less!
  – The more key words entered, the less hits

• No hits?
  – Try removing some key words
  – Try other key words / synonyms
  – Check if spelling is correct
ORIA – books, articles (online and paper)

• Search with relevant key words, words in title and/or author’s name, for instance:

  – *International human rights Alston*
  – *women employment China*
  – *Or precise: «The last Utopia»*

• Combine key words with AND, OR or NOT (capital letters) for a more precise search, for instance:

  – “global warming” OR “climate change”
  – *(Irish OR Celtic) AND culture*
  – *mathematics NOT algebra*
About citations, references and plagiarism

- What is plagiarism?

- What is a reference in a scholarly work?
Plagiarism and referencing

• Plagiarism = the practice of taking someone else’s work or ideas and passing them off as one’s own. It is literary theft and the greatest «academic sin».

• Referencing = referring to other publications in your own text. The references are cited in the running text, and in a reference list - usually at the end of the document.
I. Introduction

"The principle of the equality of the sexes is not negotiable," declared Valérie Pécresse, President of Higher Education, following the Council of State's decision (Juge Decisions). The appellate court declined a Muslim woman's request for French nationality on the grounds of "incompatibility with the essential values of the French community." Pécresse's sentence was echoed by both right and left-wing spokespeople in France. It represented one link in a longer chain of developments which would begin in 2009, as a spectral parliamentary commission formed by President Nicolas Sarkozy, tasked with the study of the compatibility of the Islamic Halal (female halal) with French secular culture and constitutional principle of duty separating State and Church. The principle of the equality of the sexes was no longer an issue; it was now a question of the French community and its constitutional values. The freedom of conscience and the free exercise of faith added to the restrictions necessary to safeguard the public order and the integrity of the Republic, which itself is doomed to any failure. While coined in a law, it is not a foregone conclusion and only secondarily a legal concept; it signifies the division between the private realm wherein the individual person is free in the pursuit of spiritual and religious choice, on the one hand, and the state, which is neutral, and thus confines any interference in such matters, on the other hand. Accordingly, the rights of the believer and of the agnostic or atheist are equally secured. This concept constitutes an essential element of the French social contract.
Quotations 1

**Direct quotation** (do not overdo it!)
- Quotation marks and reference
- Literal rendition
- Omissions: marked with …
- Additions: in square brackets [ ]

Example:
S. Moyn says in his book *The last Utopia* that «War is always a contest of words as well as of wounds». 
Quotations 2

Indirect quotation (paraphrase or translation)
   – Reference

Example:
S. Moyn claims in his book *The last Utopia* that wars are about winning the truth as well as fighting in the battle field.¹

¹ *Moyn*, *The last Utopia* p. 48.
Always show your sources in references, because:

• you avoid plagiarism
• it shows that you have academic integrity
• it adds credibility to show that you have used well-known, quality sources (peer-reviewed journals etc)
• it provides academic transparency

and……….
it shows that you have been able to find the right and relevant sources for your topic

it shows that you know the academic conventions of footnotes and bibliography

it provides access to the sources on which your work is founded
What must be cited?

• Any direct quotation (use quotation marks) (not too much!)

• Your own formulation of other’s ideas - paraphrasing / indirect quotation

• Statistics, charts, tables put together by someone else
What need not be cited?

- Common knowledge (Norway has common border with Sweden, Finland and Russia)
- Facts available from many sources (World War II ended in 1945)
- Your own ideas and discoveries
Footnotes and reference list

• Use footnotes and references in the text and create a literature list

• Be precise, it must be easy to identify the text to which you are referring

• Choose one format for your footnotes and reference list

Examples of reference formats:

Harvard: http://education.exeter.ac.uk/dll/studyskills/harvard_referencing.htm
Chicago: http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html
There are many more…..
Save the references

- Create a reference file as early as possible in your work (manual or EndNote)
- Make notes / references while reading
- Save electronic prints
- Save search terms and author’s names which you have used when searching in data bases
- Save search results (print-outs)
Web sites with useful tips on writing a thesis:

- Viko
  www.ntnu.no/viko/en
- Søk og skriv
- PhD on Track
  http://www.phdontrack.net/
United Nations and human rights
UN documents: Dag Hammarskjöld Library (UN)

http://www.un.org/depts/dhl/

Research guide – By subject – Human rights

Links to UN human rights bodies (including their documents)
UN documents: United Nations

http://www.un.org/

Resources/services – Documents – ODS

UN Treaty Collection – Status of treaties - Chapter IV
## UN human rights documents – quick search (1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What are you looking for?</th>
<th>Direct link</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UN human rights bodies and their documents</td>
<td><a href="http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/Pages/HumanRightsBodies.aspx">http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/Pages/HumanRightsBodies.aspx</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN treaties’ status (ratifications, signatures)</td>
<td><a href="http://treaties.un.org/Home.aspx">http://treaties.un.org/Home.aspx</a></td>
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<td>What are you looking for?</td>
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<tr>
<td>The 10 core international human rights treaties, with protocols</td>
<td><a href="http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CoreInstruments.aspx">http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CoreInstruments.aspx</a></td>
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<td>(There is no single access point for the preparatory works for UN treaties. The procedure depends on the body establishing the treaty)</td>
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Council of Europe and European Court of Human Rights
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<th>What are you looking for?</th>
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<tr>
<td>Commissioner for Human Rights (country reports)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.coe.int/en/web/portal/home">http://www.coe.int/en/web/portal/home</a> (Explore – 47 member states)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Court of Human Rights</td>
<td><a href="http://www.echr.coe.int/Pages/home.aspx?p=home&amp;c=">http://www.echr.coe.int/Pages/home.aspx?p=home&amp;c=</a></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| European Court of Human Rights (cases)                        | http://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng#"documentcollectionid2";"GRANDCHAMBER","CHAMBER"
The Americas

- Inter-American Court of Human Rights
  http://www.corteidh.or.cr

- Inter-American Commission of Human Rights
  http://www.cidh.oas.org/DefaultE.htm
Africa

1. The African Union’s Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights
   http://www.achpr.org/

   http://caselaw.ihrda.org/

3. African International Courts and Tribunals Website
   http://www.aict-ctia.org/
Asia

Asian Human Rights Commission
http://www.humanrights.asia/about

ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR)
http://aichr.org/
Documents from NGOs


- Specialty: Documents from NGOs
- Functionality: many criteria for refining searches in left column
- Updated?
Examples of statistics / graphs web sites

The Political Terror Scale - PTS data http://www.politicalterrorscale.org/

World Bank - Data http://www.worldbank.org/


Corruption Perceptions Index http://www.transparency.org/research/cpi/overview

Rule of Law Index http://worldjusticeproject.org/rule-of-law-index
Sage Research methods

• http://srmo.sagepub.com/
Good luck with your thesis!!
Imagine that you want to write a thesis on the rights of the child in Pakistan.

1. Find relevant UN treaty. Where?
2. Has Pakistan signed and ratified this treaty?
3. Find relevant UN treaty body and their documents. Where?
4. Find concluding observations from this treaty body about the rights of the child in Pakistan. Where? How many?
5. Find this document: CRC/C/PAK/CO/3-4. Where?
Practice: Council of Europe documents

Imagine that you want to write a thesis on ECHR article 14: Prohibition of discrimination.

1. Where do you find the text of ECHR article 14?
2. Where do you find ECHR cases treating this article?
3. How many judgments with violation of article 14?
4. Where do you find CoE documents per member country?