Project Information Literacy (http://www.projectinfolit.org) surveyed 11,000 students from 57 U.S. colleges and universities and found that most college students struggle to conduct college-level research. Left to their own devices, students rely on unproductive strategies that lead to poor results. Here are their takeaways*:

UGA’s subject specialist librarians have helped many students and instructors with research assignments, gaining a window on what works, what doesn’t, and why. Let us assist you in designing an assignment that engages your students and helps them become proficient researchers and savvy information consumers!

Find your subject specialist librarian: http://www.libs.uga.edu/specialists.html

Request a session with a librarian for your class: http://www.libs.uga.edu/reference/instruction

See reverse side for a few sample assignments

Research Assignment Ideas & Examples

Below are some ideas for integrating information literacy into your assignments based on active learning principles. These exercises will not only reinforce course content but will require students to use critical thinking skills to find, evaluate and use information wisely.

Social Issues, Media Bias and ‘Fake News’
Description: Working in groups, ask students to select (or assign them) a controversial issue relevant to the course content. The groups will then find and compare articles about that issue from six types of sources: a scholarly journal; mainstream US and foreign media; reputable liberal-leaning and conservative-leaning journals; and a ‘fake news’ website. Examination of different types of sources opens the floor to discussions of bias, evidence-based reporting and reader manipulation.

Evolution of an Idea
Description: Analyze the reception of a particular idea or concept (i.e. Natural Selection, Psycho-analysis, Communism, Woman’s Suffrage, etc.) over time by finding books/magazines/journals from various time periods from the idea’s inception to the present. Students evaluate these sources to create an annotated timeline of the discourse. This assignment is a great way to compare/contrast primary and secondary sources while showing how an idea develops and changes over time.

Sample Assignment Ideas from UGA Teaching Assistants
The following ideas for discipline-specific library research assignments were developed by TAs in the Graduate School Interdisciplinary Certificate in University Teaching program.

Geography: Comparing articles on the Rwandan genocide
Description: Find 2 articles from different sources and compare description of the genocide (language, facts listed, tone). For example, compare magazine vs. peer-reviewed journal articles, articles from different countries, or articles from different periods of the genocide.

History: Piecing together a story
Description: The instructor selects a set of historical documents all relating to a particular event. She or he will then assign citations to each student. Each student is then responsible for locating that source and bringing it in to class, where the group will examine the materials and piece them together to tell a story.

Questions?
Contact your subject specialist librarian http://www.libs.uga.edu/specialists.html

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