Searching the Literature
(Meet in Level 2 classroom in the main Library Building)

Guest Speaker: Ms. Sharon Giovenale (Librarian)

There are three levels in searching the literature:

First.
1. Read the popular press articles, if available: Encyclopedia, Wikipedia, Google, Scientific American articles etc., (General reading: write key questions related to your topic, important issues addressed or significant examples discussed)
2. Look-up information on the keywords from your preliminary search (above).
3. Write a short description of what you found and what you need to find.

Second.
5. Use the keywords and prominent authors’ names from the above to search in
   a. Google Scholar
   b. Science Direct
   c. SciFinder Scholar (Chemical Abstracts Service)
   d. Other science data bases such as Scopus, PUBMED etc.,

Third.
1. Make a list of review articles related to your topic. Read in a chronological order.
2. Make a list of research articles you need.
3. Write unfamiliar words, concepts or examples, and start the search as in item #1.
4. Continue the iterative process of search and collect information.
5. As the writing progresses, you will find the need to collect more information.

Remember: Writing is an exercise in discovering what is already there!

Inventory of your literature search:

a. What is the overarching idea/hypothesis central to the topic?
b. How many distinct parts are present in the topic?
c. To what degree, do you understand these parts?
d. What information do you already have on these parts?
e. What are the connections between these distinct parts?
f. What details are needed to understand each of these parts?
g. What are the chemical reactions and physical processes that you need to understand?
h. What is state-of-the-art in this area?
i. What will be the focal point of your write-up?
j. What figures, charts, and tables do you need for the write-up?

Assignment: E-mail me, one-page report on the literature search on your assigned topic, after the class.