Traditional Chase

If you determine that a source is useful for your research paper, skip to the end and see if it has a bibliography or works cited. Skim through the references and judge whether any of those sources seems relevant to your paper. Then, look up the cited sources in the library’s catalog (or research databases) to see if you can access them through Hekman. (See the “Identifying and Reading Citations” tips on the back of this handout.)

Track Down the Authors

If you find a source that is particularly relevant to your research paper, also take note of the author(s). Then, conduct searches in the library’s catalog, research databases, or Google to see if the author has published anything else on your topic.

In the Databases

Many of the library’s research databases have citation chasing built into their functionality.

Cited references: If you find an interesting source in a database, see if the database lists the source’s cited references in the record. Sometimes these cited references even will be hyperlinked directly to those articles, if they can be found within the same database or database platform (e.g., within ProQuest).

Cited by: In addition to looking at the source’s bibliography (its cited references), also look for a “Cited by” link in the database record. This will lead you to more sources that have cited the original source. (Note that if many sources have cited it, this may be an indication that your source is significant or somehow important.)

You can also think of it this way: by looking at a source’s cited references, you’re able to find potentially older and/or important sources (ones the authors felt were significant enough to include in their bibliography). By looking at the “cited by” sources (those that thought the original source was important enough to cite), you may be finding newer research or academic conversations around the topic.

Using Google Scholar

Google Scholar can be helpful for tracking down the full-text of a source (again, see the “Identifying and Reading Citations” tips). Also, although it doesn’t hyperlink a source’s cited references (like the research databases may do), Google Scholar does often include a “Cited by” link next to a source.

Using Popular or Other Sources

If you’ve come across your topic while searching the web, check to see if there are references listed (e.g., in Wikipedia), and look to see if you can find those sources through Hekman Library. Or a blog or news website may discuss a scientific or scholarly study, or perhaps mention a noted academic expert on the topic; use the techniques described here to track down the original study or authors. (Note that using an actual scholarly journal article is more credible in your bibliography than only using a summary of the article!)
## Identifying and Reading Citations

### Periodical Article


*To check Hekman Library holdings, search the library catalog for the periodical title (NOT article title). Then look to see if we own the volume/year/issue that contains the article. We may have it online or in print. Or search for the article title in Google Scholar, and use the Full-Text @ Hekman link to check our local access.*

### Book Chapter / Essay


*To check Hekman Library holdings, search the library catalog for the book title or editor(s) (NOT the chapter title or author). If we own it, note the call # and locate in the library.*

### Book


*To check Hekman Library holdings, search the library catalog for the book title or author(s).*