

Kevin Angell
May 15, 2020

As I planned my senior thesis during my junior year, my Kellogg International Scholars Program mentor Professor Andrew Gould offered a piece of advice. To paraphrase, he said, make sure to answer your research question but do not solely focus on it. In other words, he warned against neglecting existing scholarship and broader understanding because of a narrow focus on my specific thesis idea and proposed methodology. Whether seeking broader context meant crossing the divide between quantitative and qualitative political science or crossing disciplines and subfields, he encouraged me to use the skills I had learned from him on my own project. For my thesis, implementing that advice meant relying heavily upon Hesburgh Library's resources.

In our previous work, Professor Gould had taught me to draw on library's resources, particularly OneSearch, the print collection, and the article databases, to identify, access, and analyze existing scholarship. Those tools became the starting point for determining my senior thesis and for studying the topic. My final thesis topic was quite specific - evaluating legislative professionalism's impact on how quickly legislatures innovate - but the library's resources proved helpful far before determining the topic. OneSearch, combined with other tools, helped me to locate existing scholarship in the broader subfield of legislative politics and led to an intriguing finding. Specially, analysis of legislative professionalism had begun to shift away from developments that took place in the 1990s and 2000s and back towards its focus during the 1970s and 1980s. This provided a new challenge because that scholarship was dominated by monographs and edited volumes rather than journal articles which are more common today. While journal articles are extremely accessible online, early monographs and edited volumes are more difficult to locate.

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Using the library's print collection and interlibrary loan service, I was able to obtain copies of the needed material. This material helped me learn from existing scholarship and to determine what areas my thesis could contribute new understanding. After identifying my specific research focus -- quantitatively testing a theorized link between professionalism and innovation using a new measurement strategy, another set of library resources proved extremely helpful, namely, Hesburgh Library's digital software and Library Guides. The Center for Digital Scholarship provided access to Stata, a specialized software which I used to build the needed dataset and conduct all of my quantitative analysis. Moreover, the Library Guides helped me access library resources to review Stata best practices. Because I had last used Stata my sophomore year, the review materials provided much needed support as I used the software.

While I had known ahead of time that I would use the library's Stata resources, two resource I did not previously know about proved very helpful: the library's CurateND collection of Notre Dame graduate school theses and dissertations and the library's LaTeX resources. Through CurateND, I was able to access previous dissertations and thesis that were not otherwise published. This led to me exploring possible quantitative techniques such as a Heckman model, which I otherwise would not have considered, and drawing on insights learned from outside of political science such as from sociology. While I did not ultimately use the Heckman model, discovering it via CurateND helped me better understand the techniques that I did use. Next, the Library Guides led me to library resources to help learn LaTeX, a document preparation software used in quantitative research that I had not significantly used before. The library's tips and its ND-specific LaTeX software package help me properly draft and edit my thesis to make sure that it presented my research in the most professional manner possible.

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Finally, the library's resources proved especially crucial to my research after Covid-19 led to the closure of campus. While I had completed the bulk of my thesis and finished the Stata work that needed to be done at the Center for Digital Scholarship, finishing my thesis still required accessing many print materials that I had located earlier in the research process. As in person access to the library was not possible, I consulted with Mark Robinson about ways to obtain access. He informed me about the library's partnership with HathiTrust which provided online access to much of the library's print collection including the specific books I needed to study. This was extremely vital to completing my thesis because it allowed me to incorporate that research into my own thesis. Without such access, it would have been nearly impossible incorporate the earlier scholarship which my work relied upon or to properly link my research to the broader discipline. I would have had to narrow my thesis and not accomplish its original goal. However, with online access to ordinarily print material and continued remote access to journal articles provided by the library's databases, I was able to properly analyze existing scholarship and draw from it to answer my research question.

In the end, my final thesis contained a wide variety of sources, many of which I would not have ever identified without the help of OneSearch nor been able to access before or after campus closed. The breadth of the library's resources and its efforts to maintain continuity despite the entirely unforeseen challenge of Covid-19 were transformative for my thesis. At every step of my thesis, from initial topic surveys, to in-depth research, quantitative analysis, and finally the drafting process, Hesburgh library provided the resources to facilitate my success. Each piece of Hesburgh Library resources, whether it be the print collection, Inter-Library loan, librarians like Mr. Robinson, or its online resources, helped me to implement Professor Gould's advice and study the broader topic not simply a narrow question. Perhaps fittingly, when I cited my last

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source, it was a decades old book located using OneSearch, first read in the library stacks,
accessed via HathiTrust after Covid-19, and cited using software learned from a Library Guide.

Regardless of the challenge, Hesburgh Library and its staff had a tool to assist me.