



**UiO** • **Faculty of Law**  
University of Oslo

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# Exploring human rights sources and using them in a thesis

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# 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)

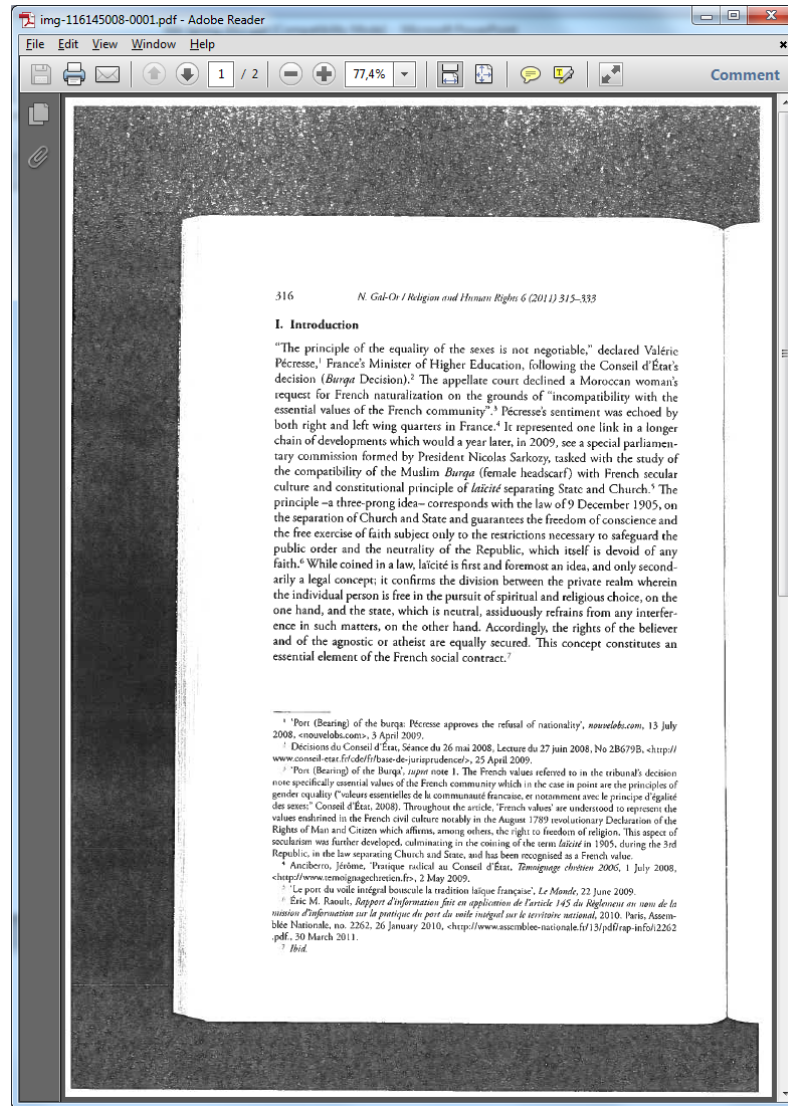
- Search with relevant key words, words in title and/or author's name, for instance:
  - *International human rights Alston*
  - *women employment China*
  - *Or precise: «The last Utopia»*
- Combine key words with AND, OR or NOT (capital letters) for a more precise search, for instance:
  - *“global 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



# 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<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> 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](http://education.exeter.ac.uk/dll/studyskills/harvard_referencing.htm)

APA: <http://www.usq.edu.au/library/help/referencing/apa.htm>

Chicago: [http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools\\_citationguide.html](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](http://www.ntnu.no/viko/en)

- Søk og skriv

<http://sokogskriv.no/english/index.php?action=static&id=40>

- 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)

What are you looking for?	Direct link
All UN documents (a searchable database)	<a href="http://www.un.org/en/documents/ods/">http://www.un.org/en/documents/ods/</a>
UN document symbols (explanations)	<a href="http://research.un.org/en/docs/symbols/">http://research.un.org/en/docs/symbols/</a>
UN human rights bodies and their documents	<a href="http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/Pages/HumanRightsBodies.aspx">http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/Pages/HumanRightsBodies.aspx</a>
UN treaties' status (ratifications, signatures)	<a href="http://treaties.un.org/Home.aspx">http://treaties.un.org/Home.aspx</a>
UN treaties (searchable by popular name)	<a href="http://treaties.un.org/pages/UNTSONline.aspx?id=1">http://treaties.un.org/pages/UNTSONline.aspx?id=1</a>
UN courts and tribunals	<a href="http://www.un.org/en/law">http://www.un.org/en/law</a>

## UN human rights documents – quick search (2)

What are you looking for?	Direct link
The 10 core international human rights treaties, with protocols	<a href="http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CoreInstruments.aspx">http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CoreInstruments.aspx</a>
Universal human rights instruments	<a href="http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/UniversalHumanRightsInstruments.aspx">http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/UniversalHumanRightsInstruments.aspx</a>
Treaty body documents (a searchable database)	<a href="http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/TBSearch.aspx?Lang=en">http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/TBSearch.aspx?Lang=en</a>
Charter body documents (a searchable database)	<a href="http://ap.ohchr.org/Documents/gmainec.aspx">http://ap.ohchr.org/Documents/gmainec.aspx</a>

## UN human rights documents – quick search (3)

What are you looking for?	Direct link
UN human rights issues	<a href="http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Pages/ListOfIssues.aspx">http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Pages/ListOfIssues.aspx</a>
Preparatory works for UN treaties, alternative I	<a href="http://www.un.org/law/avl/">http://www.un.org/law/avl/</a> (There is no single access point for the preparatory works for UN treaties. The procedure depends on the body establishing the treaty)
Preparatory works for UN treaties, alternative II	<a href="http://www.un.org/law/diplomaticconferences/">http://www.un.org/law/diplomaticconferences/</a> (There is no single access point for the preparatory works for UN treaties. The procedure depends on the body establishing the treaty)
How to make correct references to UN documents	<a href="http://ask.un.org/a.php?qid=424712">http://ask.un.org/a.php?qid=424712</a>

# Council of Europe and European Court of Human Rights



## EUROPE: Council of Europe (CoE) and European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) – quick search

What are you looking for?	Direct link
CoE human rights treaties (with ratifications and signatories)	<a href="http://www.conventions.coe.int/Treaty/Commun/ListeTraites.asp?MA=44&amp;CM=7&amp;CL=ENG">http://www.conventions.coe.int/Treaty/Commun/ListeTraites.asp?MA=44&amp;CM=7&amp;CL=ENG</a>
European Convention on Human Rights	<a href="http://www.echr.coe.int/Documents/Convention_ENG.pdf">http://www.echr.coe.int/Documents/Convention_ENG.pdf</a>
Commissioner for Human Rights (country reports)	<a href="http://www.coe.int/en/web/portal/home">http://www.coe.int/en/web/portal/home</a> (Explore – 47 member states)
European Court of Human Rights	<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>
European Court of Human Rights (cases)	<a documentcollectionid2":["grandchamber","chamber"]}"="" href="http://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng#{">http://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng#{"documentcollectionid2":["GRANDCHAMBER","CHAMBER"]}</a>

# 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/>
2. African Human Rights Case Law Analyzer  
<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

HuriSearch <http://www.hurisearch.org/>

- 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.politicalterror scale.org/>

World Bank - Data

<http://www.worldbank.org/>

Freedom in the World

<http://www.freedomhouse.org/report-types/freedom-world>

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!!



# Practice: UN documents

*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?