ENVS 119, Energy and the Environment
Library research and information literacy assignment

The goal of this assignment is to improve the information literacy of students to reflect the American Library Association’s (ACRL) Information Literacy Standards. The assignment is in two parts. First, take the literacy assessment below to establish a baseline of information literacy. Second, follow the instructions in part two to collect the requisite pdfs and bibliographic information. Third, prepare an annotated bibliography that describes the findings and analysis of each of the articles you have collected. This assignment will be graded as one of five course assignments over the semester.

Part 1: Information literacy assessment
The following survey was developed by SJSU librarians to ensure that student-learning outcomes reflect the ACRL Information Literacy Standards.

http://libguides.sjsu.edu/content.php?pid=68667&sid=2844907

Part 2: Using SJSU resources for research on energy and environment

In this part you will be asked to conduct research using the library databases and drawing upon journals that SJSU subscribes to. You will need to use your RefWorks account and export bibliographic information so that you can prepare an annotated bibliography on the articles you find. Before starting this section, you should have a general sense of what your final paper topic will be.

1. Browse one or two issues of each of the following three journals: (1) Energy Policy, (2) Renewable and Sustainable Energy Reviews, and (3) Renewable Energy. Choose one article from each that might be relevant for a research project you might do on a particular energy source. Download the pdfs of each article and export bibliographic information to your RefWorks Account. Briefly summarize each paper in a few sentences after reading the abstract and skimming the article.

2. Find an article that describes the relationship between the energy source you may investigate for your final project and greenhouse gas emissions. You might consider using the life cycle analysis as a search term. Export bibliographic info to your RefWorks account. Briefly summarize the paper in a few sentences after reading the abstract and skimming the article.

3. Find an article that describes the relationship between your selected energy technology and water and export the bibliographic information. Your annotated bibliography entry should describe the key impacts on water described in the paper.

4. Find an article that describes the relationship between your selected energy technology and land use change and export the bibliographic information. What are the key impacts of land use change described in the paper?
5. Find a paper that cites one of the papers you have already downloaded. This is known as a cited reference search and there are several ways that you will learn to do this during library instruction. Your annotated bibliography information should note the context from which the prior paper cited. Did it advance the conversation, offer a critique, or was it just mentioned as background information?

6. Find a US Congressional hearing on the energy technology or source you will investigate. Describe the purpose of the hearing in the annotated bibliography. Try some of the following websites: http://www.energy.senate.gov/public/
   http://www.loc.gov/law/find/index.php

7. Find an article that evaluates this energy technology in the context of sustainability and export the bibliographic information. The annotated bibliography should summarize the take home message of the article?

8. Export the bibliographic information for additional articles that may be relevant for your research. You should find at least article, or more if some of the questions were not applicable to your research topic.

Part 3: Preparing an annotated bibliography.

In this final section you will take the bibliographic information and create an annotated bibliography of at least ten articles you have found as part of this assignment. For this it is important that you develop the skill of “gutting” an article. It is not necessary and sometimes not possible to read every word of every article, so it is good practice to look over an article by reading its abstract, introduction, and conclusions to surmise the main points of the article. Title your annotated bibliography in a descriptive way, for example, An Annotated Bibliography and the Environmental Impacts of Corn Ethanol. An example from my own notes is below.


Mooney and Fowler underscore the value of crop genetic diversity in supporting a sustainable approach to agriculture. In the first part of the book, a thorough historical approach begins with the origins of agriculture and points to the role of wild relatives and landraces as a source of breeding materials for modern crops. It is these landraces and wild relatives that are rapidly disappearing, threatening the base upon which agriculture has relied on since the dawn of agriculture. The authors then turn to the political questions that shape genetic technologies in the second part of the book. They primarily concern themselves with control of and concentration in the seed industry, which they see as the "prerequisite to the control of all agricultural markets" (139). It is the profit motive of new biotechnologies, which will lead to their early release and their unforeseen consequences. Thus, Mooney and Fowler point to the need to establish multiple strategies with coalitions of farmers and scientists alike to conserve what is left of crop genetic diversity in the centers of domestication.
Information literacy student learning outcomes

- Students will learn to find science-based research on important questions about energy and the environment.
- Students will engage in critical thinking by having to evaluate and interpret information in scientific journals.
- Students will use tools to organize their research articles in a way that facilitates proper referencing of research by utilizing their SJSU RefWorks accounts.
- Students will learn to find government documents that are related to energy and environmental issues.
- Students will learn the value of keeping notes on research articles in an annotated bibliographic format.