An Insider’s Guide to Literary Research

JCC’s Online Catalog
Click on “SEARCH FOR BOOKS” on the JCC Libraries’ website (www.sunyjcc.edu/library).

Use JCC’s Online Catalog to find books in the Hultquist Library by an author or about an author’s work.

Tip: It is important to go to the shelves and actually browse through books, checking tables of contents and indexes to find information about individual stories, poems, etc. Books by an author and about that author’s work are shelved together, so it is not necessary to copy all titles and call numbers.

Reference Books
Go to the Reference Collection (look for the sign with the big red dot—hanging from the ceiling). Call numbers of books about language and literature in the Reference area begin with REF P.

Refer to the LibGuide available to ENG 1540 classes (http://sunyjcc.libguides.com/litcrit). This guide notes many of the most pertinent literary sources in the Reference Collection.

Of particular note…

• Gale Series
  o Contemporary Authors (a biographical source, not criticism)
  o NCLC: Nineteenth Century Literary Criticism
  o TCLC: Twentieth Century Literary Criticism
  o BLC: Black Literature Criticism
  o CLC: Contemporary Literary Criticism
  o SSC: Short Story Criticism
  o PC: Poetry Criticism

• American Writers, British Writers (biographical/critical articles)

• Magill Critical Survey Series—
  o Critical Survey of Short Fiction
  o Critical Survey of Poetry
  o Critical Survey of Drama
  o Critical Survey of Long Fiction

• Masterplots Series
  o Masterplots II, Short Story Series
  o Masterplots II, Poetry
  o Masterplots II, Drama

  Masterplots Tip: Use with caution; otherwise, do not use at all. Essays include helpful commentary about an author’s style and technique and about themes found in literary works. Essays also include lists of characters, plot summaries, etc., which must not be mistaken for literary criticism.

• American History Through Literature, 1820-1920 (REF PS217.H57 A84 2006)
• Columbia Encyclopedia of Modern Drama (REF PN 1861.C65 2007)
Literary Databases
Select a database from Databases by Subject (select Language and Literature from the dropdown list.) or Databases by Title found under SEARCH COLLECTIONS at the top of the Hultquist Library’s Home Page. REMEMBER: Your JCC computer login is required for off-campus access.

Literary Index
Use this online index to find out which books in the Gale series contain information about an author and that author’s work.
Tip: Search by author. Remember, you will not find full-text articles. This is an index to books in the library.
As noted on Side One of this sheet, the library owns the following Gale series:
- Contemporary Authors (a biographical source, not criticism)
- NCLC: Nineteenth Century Literary Criticism, volumes 1-7
- TCLC: Twentieth Century Literary Criticism
- CLC: Contemporary Literary Criticism
- SSC: Short Story Criticism
- PC: Poetry Criticism

Literature Resource Center
Use this online database to find the full text of many of the articles included in the Gale reference books series, those listed above as well as many others the library does not own.
Tip: Search by author. This databases provides full-text articles from the Gale series. It is a database with considerable breadth and depth, especially since it includes articles from many Gale series beyond those the library purchases. Many articles are long, so print with caution! Please ask for assistance before printing, if you have a question.

Magill OnLiterature Plus
This is an online database of full-text articles published in the Magill series.
Tip: Since it includes the Masterplots series, the cautions given on Side One of this handout must be carefully noted. Magill’s Critical Survey series are also included in this database.

Salem Online
The literature section of this database provides coverage of the complete content of printed Salem Press reference sets, including: Critical Insights: Authors; Critical Insights: Works; Critical Surveys, and Magill Literary Annuals.
Tip: Set the “Filter by” drop-down box to Literature before you search.

Twayne Authors Series
This database provides the full content of many books about individual authors and their works. Search by author.
Tip: Because this database provides access to entire books, searching may require an extra measure of patience and time. However, the content is excellent.

General Topic Databases
The following databases provide access to literary magazines and journals, with many articles available in full text:
- Academic Search Complete (EBSCO)
- ProQuest Research Library
- MasterFILE Premier (EBSCO)

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