Psychology: Library Resources for Conducting Your Research

START HERE: http://guides.lib.montana.edu/psy

PsycInfo – is the online version of Psychological Abstracts and provides access to the international literature in psychology and related behavioral and social sciences, including psychiatry, sociology, anthropology, education, pharmacology, and linguistics. Includes citations to books, book chapters, dissertations and journal articles, some of which are full text.

Tips for maximizing your searches in PsycInfo:

THESAURUS – use to find specific search terms; click on the SEARCH TOOLS tab and then click on the THESAURUS tab (see below). Once in the thesaurus, type in a term to see if you find your search term; you may need to use a related search term, but the thesaurus will help you zero in on specific search terms relevant to your searches. If you don’t find your search term in the Thesaurus, you can still use that term when doing KEYWORD searches. When you search with specific terms that you find in the Thesaurus, you can change the drop-down menu to DESCRIPTOR search for a more exact, efficient search on your topic.

Another way to find specific search terms (DESCRIPTORS): run a keyword search, such as this.

View your results; when you find a citation that looks relevant to your topic, open up the full record and view the DESCRIPTORS listed in that record, as shown below.
Once you identify specific DESCRIPTORS relevant to your search, you can go back to the Advanced Search screen and type in those terms to run a new, more exact search; change the drop-down menu from KEYWORD to DESCRIPTOR to make your search more specific. Note that you may have to use a combination of DESCRIPTORS and KEYWORDS for some searches because there may not be an exact descriptor for articulating a piece of your search query.

For example: in the search below, I want to find articles on the concept of BODY SATISFACTION or BODY DISSATISFACTION, a concept a little different than body image. So, I typed these two alternative terms in as KEYWORDS in combination with females and eating disorders as DESCRIPTORS:

Below is a full record display from the above search that illustrates how a term you’re searching, may not be a DESCRIPTOR and thus needs to be searched as a KEYWORD. The closest DESCRIPTOR related to body satisfaction/body dissatisfaction in this citation is Student Attitudes, but that still doesn’t get at my search topic, but searching it as a KEYWORD worked to retrieve relevant citations, such as this:

Other databases for finding research articles: Depending on your topic, you may need to search other databases in addition to PsycInfo, especially if you’re doing a comprehensive literature review; practically no topic is fully covered in a single database. For example, if you’re researching a health-related topic, such as eating disorders, you will find research in medical and nursing journals indexed in these databases, in addition to PsycInfo: CINAHL, MEDLINE, and Web of SCIENCE (WOS). Note that Web of Science (WOS) is an interdisciplinary database across the sciences and social sciences, and it may lead you to relevant articles not indexed in PsycInfo, Medline or CINAHL.

Use the Research in Psychology Guide for linking to PsycInfo and other relevant databases, as well as for exploring relevant websites (tip: use the APA website to explore possible research topics):

http://guides.lib.montana.edu/psy

Have questions or want to make sure you’re maximizing your searching?
Contact your Library Liaison, Mary Anne Hansen, for a research appointment: 994-3162, mhansen@montana.edu, or stop by the Reference Desk in the library and ask for help!