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Sensitive Research Topics: Librarians Don't Judge; Ask for Help

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Sensitive Research Topics: Librarians Don't Judge; Ask for Help

By Zachary Lewis

Researching a controversial topic can be a deeply personal experience. Finding unbiased articles, analyzing the issue from multiple perspectives and presenting a fair argument are often complicated processes. Not only that, the sensitive nature of a contentious topic can sometimes keep students from asking for help with their research.

In my years as a librarian, I've been warned by students that a topic might be too embarrassing — or might even make me angry. I've met students who dance around their topic, trying to figure out my particular stance before revealing theirs.

The truth is: *When you ask a librarian for help, your opinion is the one that matters.*

When seeking research help, it's important to realize that librarians are information professionals. Libraries are frequently referred to as “the great equalizers” because they provide information to broad audiences of people regardless of their race, gender identity, religion, political affiliation or other identity. Whatever the topic of your research, we're dedicated to ensuring that you find the quality information you're looking for. It's our job to help eliminate any barriers you might encounter — not to act as barriers ourselves. While our personal beliefs may not always align, we believe in you. Your voice is a powerful one, and as information professionals, we value what you contribute to existing bodies of research. As you work toward connecting leadership and service to scholarship here at UD, you'll find that the most sensitive topics are often the ones worth championing.

Institutions of higher learning are places of great growth and change. The University of Dayton offers students the

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opportunity to challenge their beliefs and search for deeper understanding in a safe, nurturing environment. Selecting highly debatable topics for your research is a great way to do this. Don't be afraid to explore all aspects of your topic. You may even find that your stance evolves as you delve into the research process. I can't count the number of times my outlook on an issue has changed as I learned more and more about it — something that happens regularly as I continue to assist students with research. The beauty of the research process lies in its cyclical nature; shifts in perspective are par for the course.

Next time you find yourself struggling to find information on a particular topic, don't hesitate to ask for help. Stop by Roesch Library for some extra support and encouragement. Whether you just want someone to discuss your topic with or need assistance developing a research strategy, you can book an appointment with a librarian [here](#) or on Isidore. We look forward to growing and learning alongside you!

— Zachary Lewis, assistant professor and student success librarian

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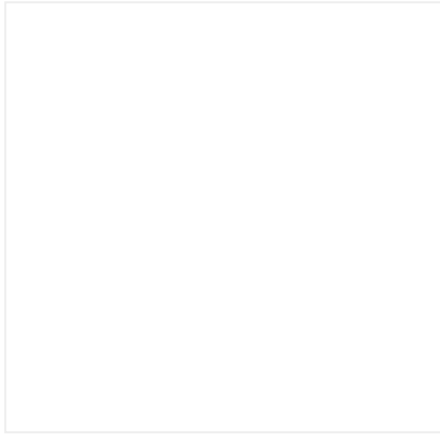
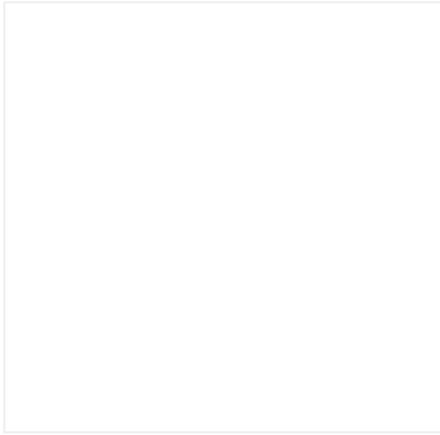


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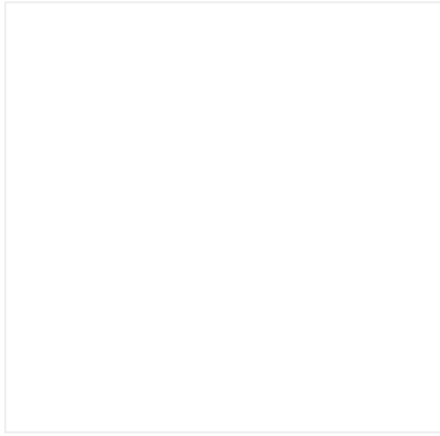
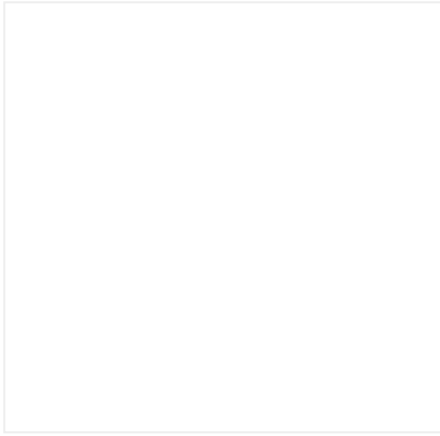


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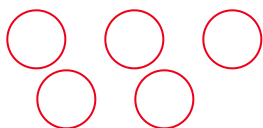
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