The Research Process

Step 1: Define the research question
- In research, you enter into a broader conversation to a question that is substantive and relevant
- What is the question?
- How extensive is the discussion to be?

Step 2: Identify high-quality material that is relevant to your question
- Start with your textbook or reference books (high-quality but older sources)
- Consider handbooks and other reference sources (provide standard information and bibliography of high-quality, but older, sources)
- Identify books
  - Use UD/WTS (high quality, more items, more recent, broader perspective)
  - Use WorldCat.org, GoogleBooks for comprehensive view
- Identify articles and book chapters
  - Use Communication & Mass Media Complete and Communication Abstracts for a scholarly communication perspective
  - Use other databases (Business Source Premier, ERIC, PsycINFO, etc.) for related disciplines’ scholarship and non-scholarly perspectives

Step 3: Evaluate the material
- Skim material to determine if it is relevant to your research question Are the author(s), publisher(s), journal(s) reliable and credible?
- Is it timely, if timeliness is important?
- Is there a bibliography of credible sources?

Step 4: Physically locate material
- Books
  - UD Library (Use Request Item in each book record to place a hold)
  - Interlibrary loan
- Articles
  - If not at UD Library, interlibrary loan (Use the Find It! feature)

Step 5: Read to answer, refine, change the research question
- Does the material help change, focus, deepen your understanding?
- Does it help turn your research question into a focused thesis statement?