



AURORA UNIVERSITY

## Phillips Library

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### What is a Scholarly Journal?

Most instructors at the college or university level demand that all or most of the periodical articles you use in writing a research paper come from scholarly journals. This is especially true for upper-division courses and is absolutely essential in graduate work. We hope that the information given here will help you distinguish scholarly journals from other periodicals.

#### Characteristics of Scholarly Journals:

- Scholarly journals generally have a sober, serious look. They often contain many graphs and charts but few glossy pages or exciting pictures.
- Scholarly journals always cite their sources in the form of footnotes/endnotes and bibliographies.
- Articles are written by a scholar in the field or by someone who has done research in the field. The author's name appears at the beginning or the end of the article.
- The language of scholarly journals is that of the discipline covered. It assumes some scholarly background on the part of the reader.
- The main purpose of such a journal is to report on original research or experimentation in order to make such information available to the rest of the scholarly world.
- Many scholarly journals, though by no means all, are published by a specific professional organization.
- Many scholarly journals are "peer reviewed" or "refereed," that is, articles published in them have been subjected to a rigorous approval and editing process by other scholars in that discipline.

#### Examples of Scholarly Journals:

JAMA: The Journal of the American Medical Association

Psychological Bulletin

Journal of Marriage and the Family

Journal of Educational Research

Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science

#### Periodicals That Are NOT Scholarly Journals:

- News magazines like *Time*, *Newsweek*, and *U.S. News & World Report*. While these publications can be of great assistance in providing an introduction to a current topic, they don't provide the same analysis as scholarly journals. Articles are not usually written by scholars in the field and are aimed at a more general audience than the articles in scholarly

journals. Since such articles rely on timeliness accuracy of information must be suspect.

- Opinion magazines such as *New Republic*, *National Review*, or *Nation*. These magazines are aimed at an educated audience, but without assuming particular scholarly background. They comment on current events and offer a particular viewpoint on world affairs, politics, and cultural matters.
- Popular magazines like *Sports Illustrated*, *Health*, *Redbook*, *People*, *Reader's Digest*, or *Family Circle*. Generally, academic libraries do not carry as many of these titles as public libraries do. Popular magazines, while attractive and entertaining, do not report on original research or cite sources, and are not the kind of source to cite in the bibliography of an academic paper.
- Trade journals such as *Beverage World*, *Dealer-Scope Merchandising*, *Automotive News*, and *Progressive Grocer*. These magazines are industry specific, designed to update and inform the reader on current trends in a particular industry.

#### **A Source to Check:**

There are reference books that attempt to describe and evaluate periodical titles. If you need further information about an individual title we suggest you consult:

Katz, Bill and Linda Sternberg Katz. Magazines for Libraries. R 016.05 Mag. "...an annotated listing by subject of some 6,500 periodicals." Each entry gives: name of periodical, beginning publication date, publisher, editor, address, price, and such information as indexing, size and level of audience. Short abstracts describe the scope, political slant and other aspects of the publication. Arrangement is topical, which brings magazines and journals on similar subjects together. To find an individual title use the title index at the end of the volume.

Standard Periodical Directory. R 016.05 Sta  
Use for identifying peer-reviewed, scholarly periodicals

Ulrich's Periodicals Directory. R 016.05 Ulr  
Use for identifying peer-reviewed, scholarly periodicals.