

## Just In Time Research Help By Richard Kearney



Where did the last 14 weeks go? The semester's almost over!

You're ready to wrap things up ... but there's that assignment you haven't gotten around to starting yet. What to do?

Most likely that unfinished assignment is something that requires independent research rather than a textbook exercise or a creative writing essay.

The bottom line is you don't have time to waste, so you need to be efficient about using the time you have.

Our librarians have spent many years helping thousands of students complete research assignments against tight end-of-semester deadlines. We offer the following tips to help you:

**1) Get Clear on Your Topic, Fast** – Nothing wastes more time than failing to settle on a topic. There is no “perfect” topic. Don't agonize. No one is expecting you to break new ground in research. It doesn't matter if someone else has already written about the topic.

The only issue is whether you can learn something new. Need help deciding? Ask your professor, or ask a librarian. Then make a decision, and stick with it.

**2) Scale Your Paper to Your Timeframe** – You have, at most, only a few weeks to complete your paper. How long does it have to be? How much time do you *realistically* have to work on it? Be honest with yourself! Then make sure you're not biting off more than you can chew.

If you're just getting started, forget about that comparative study – focus on one thing. Look at two or three variables, not five or six. Use an existing source of survey data rather than administering your own questionnaire. Why try to write the entire history of the U.S. war in Vietnam in ten pages when you can write about one specific event during the war?

Need help getting that paper down to a size that makes sense? Cheng librarians are just a click away on our chat box. Or give us a call. Or visit!

**3) Get Help to Identify and Obtain the Information You Need Fast** – One problem with the modern information glut is that it sometimes makes finding what you want a challenge.

Yes, we know about Wikipedia too, but that's not going to fly.

If you're not sure whether the information you want is available, or accessible, get in touch with the Cheng Library. If you don't know where to start looking, talk to us!

We'll help you with the skills for conducting a successful search, save you time, and we'll be nice to you in the process because you don't need more stress. And you don't need to get stressed over finding information. Save your time and energy for reading and writing, not searching.

We hope you'll take advantage of what we can offer you at this crucial time.

After all, we want you to end the semester with your assignments done and the grades you want. Isn't that the best way to start the summer?

On behalf of the entire Cheng Library staff, I wish you a successful conclusion to your semester and a great summer!