

Agronomy 406

World Climates

March 27, 2018

In-class workday for regional climate reports.

Team 5 Climate News presentation on Thursday (Mar 29).

Workday for regional climate reports

Start with discussion by librarian Mike Bobb on finding reference materials, then some points from me.

Work individually and with your classmates on approaches to organization, finding references, etc.

You're welcome to ask me questions.

If questions are answered on the "Standards for fact sheets" or the syllabus I may point you there instead of answering.

If you have not yet read the "Standards for fact sheets" or the syllabus **do it now.**

By the end of the workday your goal is to have:

- An annotated outline of your fact sheet, laying out a roadmap of where you will go from here.
- A selection of quality source material for possible use.

Writing your fact sheet

See "Standards for fact sheets" linked on the Canvas page.

Be sure you know requirements as to format, due dates, and other expectations.

I will give other tips between now and the due date.

If anything is unclear please ask!

Use the highest quality source material that you can find

Examples:

Peer reviewed publications.

Books from academic publishers (Cambridge University Press, Springer, etc).

Reports from recognized national or international scientific bodies:

U.S. National Academy of Sciences, science academies of some other countries, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), others

Reports prepared by government agencies – but **not** politicians or political parties.

Some ways to search for sources

Use the ISU Library catalog

- Ask a librarian for help. This means you will need to start ahead of time!

Use a search engine:

Specialized search tools such as Google Scholar are best for finding high quality material.

Try different search terms. Consider using the "site" keyword to restrict your search (site:edu, site:gov, etc).

Important: Change the number of results from the default to the highest number possible! For Google this requires setting “Never show Instant results.”

Think critically!

One definition of critical thinking: “Reflective thinking focused on deciding what to believe or do.”

Formation and checking of beliefs.

Deciding on and evaluating actions or information.

Not “criticism” in the common negative sense (nitpicking, fault-finding).

Evaluate new information against what you already know:

Does it square with what you know about the subject?

If not - then why not? Are you learning something new?

Or are there reasons to suspect the new information may be wrong? (bias, lack of expertise)

Things to watch for when evaluating sources

Who publishes it?

Who sponsors/organizes the publication? Control, ideology, etc.

Who are the writers and what are their fields of expertise?

Is the publisher a professional organization? A major academic publisher? A scammer? (Watch out for a new trend - "predatory journals.")

Be suspicious of articles that are not within a publication's normal scope.

For example, why is a medical journal publishing an article on climate models?

A checklist to guide you in evaluating sources

"Evaluation form for non-peer reviewed sources" is in the Files section of the course Canvas site (also linked from "Standards for fact sheets").

Submit this form for **every** source in your reference list except peer-reviewed journals that are indexed in the Thompson Reuters (Clarivate Analytics) Science Citation Index Expanded.

Deadlines

April 19, 9:30 a.m.: Fact sheets due by start of class (both printed and PDF).

Late submissions are accepted only in extraordinary circumstances (such as death of a family member, or serious accident/illness requiring hospitalization).

Technology problems (computer crashes, printer malfunctions etc.) are **never** "extraordinary circumstances."

April 24-26: Poster session. Will be open to the public. Schedule to be announced.



Final advice

The key to effective writing is:

Proofread

Revise

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