Researching Your Topic in the UMD Library

1. Connect to the UMD library website (www.d.umn.edu/lib) and enter the Databases by Subject window. Choose Biology, or a related subject, such as Chemistry and Biochemistry or Environmental Studies.

   Or, go directly to the website devoted to this class: http://libguides.d.umn.edu/biol3987.

2. Search the available databases for articles on your topic. Selection of key words and their location (in the title, abstract, topic, etc.) will be critical for the success of your search, so pay attention and experiment a bit until you start getting the results you want.

   Different databases will often return different records on the same subject, and there are also differences in the way the searches are set up, so it’s useful to use more than one. These are some good places to start:
   - Academic Search Premier
   - Biosis
   - JSTOR
   - PubMed
   - Environmental Sciences and Pollution Management

   Once you get familiar with how the search protocols work, be sure to venture into the “Advanced Search” protocols (these will have different names, but will all allow you to refine your search so that it will be much more effective and efficient).

   Google Scholar (http://scholar.google.com) provides an alternative to traditional database searches. While this is a relatively new tool, it has gained a significant following among researchers, mainly because of its linking functions.

   Many databases allow you to select records and email them to yourself, or to store them in a file for later review or to allow you to continue an ongoing search.

   Many databases also link with additional resources; citation lists, access to references, related subjects, etc. Be sure to explore all of the functionalities of the particular sites as you gather your information.

3. You have several avenues to get hard copies of articles:
   A) Use the Find It function in the various databases; this will direct you to either library resources or Inter-Library Loan
   B) Use the library’s E-journal locator to see if UMD has a subscription to the journal.
   C) Check for paper copies of the journal.
   D) Request an Inter-Library Loan copy of the article.

   (NOTE - this will take several days - plan ahead!)
1. Modified from Lyle Shannon, 2007