



JÖNKÖPING UNIVERSITY

## Systematic Searches and Scholarly Publishing, 3 hec

### Course outline

This course is given by the University Library on behalf of JTH.

*Course coordinator:* Paola Violasdotter Nilsson

*Teachers:* Stefan Carlstein (SC) & Paola Violasdotter Nilsson (PVN)

*Examiner:* Kerstin Johansen (JTH)

*Location:* The University Library (building C).

*Maximum number of attendees:* 15.

### Schedule

Date	Content	Time	Location	Teacher
2026-02-26	Course introduction	9.00-12.00	C2032	PVN, SC
2026-02-27	Systematic searches - planning a literature review	9.00-12.00	C2032	PVN
2026-03-05	Systematic searches - searching the literature	9.00-12.00	C2032	PVN
2026-03-06	Workshop - writing a literature review protocol	9.00-12.00	C2032	PVN
2026-03-12	Workshop - searching bibliographic databases	9.00-12.00	C2032	PVN, SC
2026-03-13	Scholarly publishing - bibliometric indicators and research evaluation	9.00-12.00	C2032	SC
2026-03-19	Scholarly publishing - publishing strategy	9.00-12.00	C2032	SC
2026-04-12	Deadline for written seminar reports			
2026-04-07 -- 2026-04-12	Knowledge quizzes are open			
2026-04-27	Seminar 1	9.00-12.00	C2043	PVN, SC
2026-04-28	Seminar 2	9.00-12.00	C2043	PVN, SC
2026-04-29	Seminar 3	13.00-16.00	C2043	PVN, SC

**Lecture 1: Thursday, February 26, 9.00-12.00**  
**Course introduction**

This lecture includes practical details about the course and an introduction to its two parts: systematic searches, especially in the context of a literature review, and scholarly publishing.

The lecture content:

- Course introduction.
- Scholarly publishing: the landscape, the history of scholarly communication, peer review, and open access.
- Systematic searches and literature reviews: a brief history and an introduction to the review family.



Make sure to prepare the following before the lecture:

Read Booth et al., chapter 1 & 2; Gusenbauer & Haddaway (2021); Mering & Hoeve (2020); Ware (2008)

Skim the following articles (introduction and/or method sections only) to gain an awareness of different review types: Emonson et al. (2019); Fuller et al. (2019); Kelly et al. (2018); Tan et al. (2022).

Consider the following questions:

- How is the review question formulated? Does it comply with the specified method?
- Is the search reproducible?

This will be discussed during class.

**Lecture 2: Friday, February 27, 9.00-12.00**  
**Systematic searches – planning a literature review**

This lecture discusses what a systematic approach means and how to plan for conducting a review that aims to be systematic during all steps of the process. Finally, we prepare for a search strategy by looking into different database characteristics.

The lecture content:

- How to define the scope and formulate a review question.
- How to structure the review question into concepts.
- How to choose an appropriate review method.
- Characteristics of bibliographic databases.



Make sure to prepare the following before the lecture:

Read Booth et al., chapters 3 & 4

**Lecture 3: Thursday, March 5, 9.00-12.00**  
**Systematic searches – searching the literature**

This lecture focuses on building a block search strategy based on concepts, using Boolean operators and other database-specific tools. Also, how to recognise and apply controlled vocabulary terms, and utilise supplementary search methods, including searching for grey literature.

The lecture content:

- Specificity and sensitivity.
- Database search techniques.
- Block search strategy.
- Controlled and uncontrolled terminology.
- Supplementary search methods.
- Standards for reporting searches.



Make sure to prepare the following before the lecture:

Read Booth et al., chapters 5, 6 & 10

**Workshop 1: Friday, March 6, 9.00-12.00**  
**Writing a literature review protocol**

During this workshop, we will practice how to write a literature review protocol as a tool for planning the review process and/or for publishing.



Make sure to prepare the following before the workshop:

Bring a review question for a literature review, and your search terms structured into concepts.

Read Booth et al., chapter 4, The Review Protocol, (pp. 116-117); Chang & Slutsky (2012)

**Workshop 2: Thursday, March 12, 9.00-12.00**  
**Searching bibliographic databases**

During this workshop, we will practice how to search selected bibliographic databases using blocks from the previous workshop. Both subject-comprehensive and subject-specific databases will be used.



Make sure to prepare the following before the workshop:

Bring search blocks based on your review question and search concepts.

**Lecture 4: Friday, March 13, 9.00-12.00****Scholarly Publishing - Bibliometric indicators and research evaluation**

In this lecture, we will explore bibliometrics—the study of publications and research collaborations—with a particular focus on one of its key tools: journal indicators. We will also examine how bibliometrics is used to assess university research and individual researchers.

The lecture content:

- What is bibliometrics?
- Research evaluation
- Journal indicators



Make sure to prepare the following before the lecture:

Read Nilsson (2016, September 28); Nilsson (2016, September 29)

**Lecture 5: Thursday, March 19, 9.00-12.00****Scholarly Publishing - Publishing strategy**

In this lecture, we will walk through a step-by-step publishing strategy—from setting initial goals and requirements to exploring techniques and tools for identifying and evaluating suitable journals. We will also cover various approaches to open access publishing and discuss what to consider after your article is published. Finally, we will address the issue of predatory journals and publishers.

The lecture content:

- Journal selection
- Matching manuscript with journal.
- Journal assessment
- Open access routes
- Predatory publishing
- Research communication



Make sure to prepare the following before the lecture:

Read Abdi (2021); Börchers (2021); Committee on Publication Ethics (2019); Knight & Steinbach (2008); Tripathy et al. (2017)

## Examination

### Written report (two parts)

#### Systematic searches

Plan for a literature review of your own. Choose a *specified area of interest* and formulate a *review question for this examination report*. Describe the subject briefly (just in a few sentences, enough for the readers to gain a general understanding). Then, follow the steps below:

- a) What is the purpose of your review? How comprehensive does it need to be? Reflect on sensitivity and specificity.
- b) What is your review question?
- c) Find the concepts and describe inclusion and exclusion criteria for each of them.
- d) Revisit a) and decide which of the concepts your search strategy will be built on. Motivate your choice.
- e) Make a table and list synonyms for the concepts you decide to include.
- f) Choose a bibliographic database.
- g) Check for thesaurus terms. If available – add to table e). Make sure it is possible to separate them from the uncontrolled terms.
- h) Build a search using block strategy. Report the number of results for each block and the final combination.
- i) Reflect on whether the results align with your aim.

#### Publishing strategy

Identify and present a selection of suitable journals for your article and evaluate them according to the publication strategy outlined below:

- a) What is the aim of your publication? Consider such things as timeliness, requirements, your own ambitions, etc.
- b) How did you identify potential journals in which to publish?
- c) How did you assess the journal candidates? Consider such aspects as:
  - Aims and scope*
  - Author guidelines*
  - Editorial board*
  - Earlier articles and article authors*
  - Databases in which they are indexed*
  - Journal indicators and possible impact*
- d) Explore the open access routes that can be taken regarding the article.
- e) Include a short description of possible ways to disseminate and communicate your article once it has been published.

*Upload your report to Canvas, 2026-04-12 at the latest.*

### Seminars, Monday 27 – Wednesday 29 April

You will attend *one* of these seminars. Each student will be given another student's report to review. When reviewing, adopt a constructive but critical attitude toward the report under review. Consider the following questions:

Systematic searches:

*Do you find the described process logic? Does the choice regarding including or excluding concepts seem relevant?*

*Are the steps transparent and easy to follow?*

*Is the search possible to replicate?*

*Do you find the result in line with the described aim regarding sensitivity/specificity?*

Publishing strategy:

*Is the publication's purpose clear and aligned with key goals and constraints?*

*Has the student clearly explained how journals were found, and which were identified?*

*Has the student evaluated potential journals using key criteria to ensure they fit with the article?*

*Has the student considered and evaluated the open access routes relevant to the selected journals?*

*Is there a realistic plan for disseminating and communicating the article after publication?*

The review is to be presented *orally* (no PowerPoint presentations needed) during the seminar. The reviewer is expected to lead the conversation, but all students should participate in the discussions.

### **Knowledge quizzes**

Quizzes with questions on systematic searches (including basic patent search for JTH students) and scholarly publishing are available on Canvas during a limited time.

### **Re-examination**

Re-examination will be available during the next course sessions (December 2026 and April 2027). Ask the course coordinator for details.

### **Literature**

Abdi, H. (2021, April 28). To communicate or not to communicate science. *Curie*. [PDF in Canvas]

Booth, A., Sutton, A., Clowes, M., & Martyn-St James, M. (2022). Systematic approaches to a successful literature review (Third ed.). SAGE.

Börchers, S. (2021, March 8). Boiling down science for the public without oversimplifying. *Curie*. [PDF in Canvas]

Chang, S., & Slutsky, J. (2012). Debunking myths of protocol registration. *Systematic Reviews*, 1(1), 4. <https://doi.org/10.1186/2046-4053-1-4>

Committee on Publication Ethics. (2019). *Discussion document: Predatory publishing*. <https://doi.org/10.24318/cope.2019.3.6>

Emonson, C., McGillivray, J., Kothe, E. J., Rinehart, N., & Papadopoulos, N. (2019). Class Time Physical Activity Programs for Primary School Aged Children at Specialist Schools: A Systematic Mapping Review. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 16(24). <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph16245140>

Fuller, C., Ondeï, S., Brook, B. W., & Buettel, J. C. (2019). First, do no harm: A systematic review of deforestation spillovers from protected areas. *Global Ecology and Conservation*, 18. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gecco.2019.e00591>

Gusenbauer, M., & Haddaway, N. R. (2021). What every researcher should know about searching - clarified concepts, search advice, and an agenda to improve finding in academia. *Research synthesis methods*, 12(2), 136–147. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jrsm.1457>

Kelly, P., Williamson, C., Niven, A. G., Hunter, R., Mutrie, N., & Richards, J. (2018). Walking on sunshine: scoping review of the evidence for walking and mental health. *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, 52(12), 800-806. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bjsports-2017-098827>

Knight, L. V., & Steinbach, T. A. (2008). Selecting an Appropriate Publication Outlet: A Comprehensive Model of Journal Selection Criteria for Researchers in a Broad Range of Academic Disciplines. *International Journal of Doctoral Studies*, 3, 59-79. <https://doi.org/10.28945/51>

Mering, M., & Hoeve, C. D. (2020). A Brief History to the Future of Open Access. *Serials Review*, 46(4), 300-304. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00987913.2020.1850041>

Nilsson, S. (2016, September 28). Factor that influences research careers. *Curie*. [PDF in Canvas]

Nilsson, S. (2016, September 29). The use of impact factors in the research community. *Curie*. [PDF in Canvas]

Tan, Y., Sun, Y., Lang, C., & Wen, Y. (2022). The Impact of Using Mobile Phones on Gait Characteristics: A Narrative Review. *Applied Sciences*, 12(12). <https://doi.org/10.3390/app12125783>

Tripathy, J. P., Bhatnagar, A., Shewade, H. D., Kumar, A. M. V., Zachariah, R., & Harries, A. D. (2017). Ten tips to improve the visibility and dissemination of research for policy makers and practitioners. *Public Health Action*, 7(1), 10-14. <https://doi.org/10.5588/pha.16.0090>

Ware, M. (2008). *Peer review: benefits, perceptions and alternatives*. Publishing Research Consortium. [https://ils.unc.edu/courses/2015\\_fall/inls700\\_001/Readings/Ware2008-PRCPeerReview.pdf](https://ils.unc.edu/courses/2015_fall/inls700_001/Readings/Ware2008-PRCPeerReview.pdf)

### **Additional reading**

Newman M., Gough D. (2020) Systematic Reviews in Educational Research: Methodology, Perspectives and Application. In: Zawacki-Richter O., Kerres M., Bedenlier S., Bond M., Buntins K. (eds) Systematic Reviews in Educational Research. Springer VS, Wiesbaden. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-27602-7\\_1](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-27602-7_1)