Award for Undergraduate Research Submission Essay

During my HIST208O class, I used many library resources. The resources I used were interlibrary loan services, help from librarians to find books, online catalogs to read previews of books and find their location in McKeldin, and a class spent with a librarian teaching our class how to find sources. My paper would not have been possible without all that the library had to offer.

Worked into our class schedule, was a meeting with a librarian in a small workroom in McKeldin. Our professor and the librarian made plans ahead of time to compile resources on the early Middle East, so we would have somewhere to start with our research. The librarian even put the sources under a tab on the library website, so they would be easy to find later. He was very kind during our two hour session, answering our questions about what publications were most reliable, how to skim sources, where to find different things in the library, and how to navigate the online catalog. Without his instructions I would have been so lost in finding sources just navigating the library resources by myself.

The online catalog the University of Maryland offers is amazing. I found books, journals, webpages, and even documentaries with information about the Middle East, Islam, menstruation, and so much more. The most useful part of the website is all of the filters you can put onto your searches. Pressing a button can make sure your sources are only from the last five years, or are only peer reviewed. This is super helpful when a paper has requirements for recent sources, or sources from scientific journals or other specific places. The online catalog also generates citations for you in APA, MLA, Chicago, and so many other versions or citation styles. This is a lifesaver if you don't have the time to format a citation, and I used it very often in my early mini papers for the class when we had to write about sources we might use for the final paper.

The online catalog has a feature called Interlibrary Loan. This feature was so amazing. How it works is if a book or other source you want is at another school, you can request it be sent to McKeldin for pick up. The shipping was way faster than I expected, and I used this tool for 3 of the books I used in my final paper, and a few other books I read just for background knowledge. This feature opens up another world of resources outside of our own Maryland libraries, and is super useful for students to know. I am always telling my friends to request books if they can not find them online, because the librarians are so kind and helpful about getting you a book you need checked out.

Finally, the library in and of itself is a resource. There were many times I found a book in the online catalog, had the number, and was going onto the shelves to look for it, and had no such luck. A librarian stocking the shelves or just walking by would always stop to help me. I swear the librarians can sense when students need help or do not understand how the Dewey

Decimal system works. The library has a vast number of seating options to choose from while you write research papers, or just chill and talk with your friends. I love the second floor named ‘Terrapin Learning Commons.’ This floor has great vibes for studying because it has just the right amount of background noise from students enjoying themselves that getting your work done is so wonderful. They have tons of computers in this area, and you can use it to write research papers or look at the online catalog, both of which I did very often. If you need more quiet though, the study carrels on higher floors are super nice. Overall, the library helped me write this paper because it provided me with a space to be productive and learn a ton over the course of the Spring 2022 semester.

The University of Maryland library system’s amazing resources made it possible for me to write my HIST208O paper. I am immensely proud of this paper, I even got a 100 on it! I did so well on this paper thanks to the generosity of librarians, the features of the online catalog like search filters and the Interlibrary loan, and the community McKeldin library provides. Doing work in the library is so cozy for me and I could not imagine being more supported in my school work anywhere else. The University of Maryland shows they care for their students through how helpful the library is in providing resources, warm smiles, and comfortable seats!