Topics for Week 4
Notes from class, January 28, 2013, with some explanations added.

Main Topics for the Week
Our main topics this week will be looking more closely at types of sources, understanding where and how sources are stored (databases), and learning techniques for searching for useful sources.

Sources
These are the most common types of sources that you are likely to use in your research:

- Reference works (Encyclopedias, Dictionaries, Atlases, Almanacs). These were the focus while writing the Preliminary Research Report. Now they will become less important.
- Periodicals
  - Journals
  - Magazines
- Conference proceedings
- Books
- Interviews that you conduct yourself
- Websites
- TV programs, videos, films
- Government documents
  - Reports
  - Hearings (where witnesses testify before a Congressional committee, government commission or agency, etc.)
  - Basic data, like census or crime statistics
  - Laws
  - Court cases (rulings, decisions, opinions)

Databases
Databases are collections of information organized in some way (in [academic] categories, for ease of access). The databases that we use will be electronic databases that store articles from magazines, newspapers, scholarly journals, and the like.

- Google Scholar (subjects [science, arts, education, etc.], keywords [designated by some person as important in the source]). This is a useful database but often you cannot access the articles it contains because you must be a subscriber to that specific journal.

These are databases that the College subscribes to, so you have access to all the articles in them. Not all entries have the full text; some include only the publication information and the abstract, or summary.
But you can read everything that is in the databases, including the full text of tens of thousands of articles.

- Academic Search Complete—a mix of scholarly and general interest articles
- ProQuest—a mix of scholarly and general interest articles
- JSTOR—exclusively peer reviewed scholarly articles
- Gale Virtual Reference Library (GVRL). As the name implies, this databases contains mostly reference works, useful for background but less so for in-depth research such as you are conducting now.

**Search Techniques**

These were covered in later classes. See the website under “10 Sources” for various handouts on search techniques.