Furthering Your Research: Librarian Conference Worksheet
(Preparing to write the Precis)

Before you can begin your research, you need to investigate your topic. The first thing you should do is look up your topic, using keywords, in reference materials (Gale Virtual Reference is an excellent place to start).

If your keywords are not giving satisfactory results, consider finding alternative words for the topic. Note that the titles of the reference works (books) will give you a sense of the point of view taken. For example, if you are researching a social movement such as “Black Lives Matter,” the book titled Crime and Punishment in America will have a different focus from The Sage Resistance Handbook.

As you read the background regarding your topic, think about the different angles you can take by asking some basic questions (Who are the Black Lives Matter leaders? Why did the BLM movement begin? What is its goal? etc.). As the answers come clearer, consider a more focused research question for you to answer with your research process.

At this point, you should be able to compose a summary of what you hope to discover about your topic and what thesis you are planning to support—this will become your precis.

Once you have some background information, you can begin your research. Using appropriate library databases, use keywords that will find articles and other materials that will support your thesis.

Fill out sections A-D of this form, and ask your instructor to review what you have and he or she will indicate if you need to meet with a librarian. Please bring it with you when you go to the library.

A. Your topic/research question:

B. What sources have you already found? Include the citation when possible. How will this source help you?

1. Author:
   Title:
   Journal/book title:
   Volume/issue number:
   Date:
   Page numbers:

   Summary of source:
C. What information do these sources provide that will answer (or partially answer) your research question?

D. What additional information do you need to fully answer your research question and support your thesis?

E. If there is a meeting with a Librarian:
The Librarian’s name:

What recommendations does the librarian make to take you to the next step in your research project?