

Research Tips for Spanish Language and Literature

This is considered a very basic guide, step-by-step, for students doing research in Spanish literature. We will start with finding books in RBD Library through the online catalog, known as AubieCat.

First we go to the library homepage: <http://www.lib.auburn.edu/>

- 1) If you know the exact title of a book you want, you can enter that title directly into the search box that is labeled “Search Catalog.” Never enter a beginning article for a title search. Thus,

“A Study of Spanish Poetry” should be entered as “study of spanish poetry.” (NOTE: catalog search is not case sensitive)

“La historia de una mujer” should be entered as “historia de una mujer.”

- 2) If you want to search for books by a particular author, you can also do that from the “Search Catalog” box, but you must change the “TITLE” in the drop-down menu to “AUTHOR”, and you must enter the author’s last name first (which is sometimes tricky with Spanish names).

Thus: “storni” <Author>; or if you want to be more precise: “storni, a” <Author>

- 3) Usually, we do not know in advance the name of a particular book, but we want to find critical works on Spanish poetry or on a particular author. In that case it is better to go to the Advanced Search, which you can do by clicking the “Books and Articles” link on the library homepage, under FIND. This allows us a default search by KEYWORD, but we can change that to SUBJECT or AUTHOR later, if needed. The default KEYWORD search box includes a drop-down menu which selects ALL OF THESE. It is usually best to leave this as it is, because this tells the search engine to look for all of the words in your search. (There could be times you would want to change this to AS A PHRASE, which specifies a phrase search: that is, the words have to appear together in the catalog record.) Here are some examples:

You could enter: “spanish american poetry” as a KEYWORD search.

Or you could change the same search to a SUBJECT search. (Today, 9/20/06, AubieCat gives 264 books for the KEYWORD version of this search, but only 168 through a SUBJECT search. While I always try KEYWORD first, the SUBJECT search is better in this case. Since the KEYWORD search looks for our three words *anywhere*, it will also give us a book of English poetry that happens to have the words “Spanish” and “American” somewhere in the full catalog record of the book. Perhaps in the name of the publisher or in the name of one of the poem titles, which might be listed in the table of contents. See *The complete poems of Kenneth Rexroth* in the Full Record view and you will see what I mean.)

4) So try some of the following searches and see which results are closer to what you want. Here are several different combinations you can use:

Spanish American poetry <all of these> <keyword anywhere>
Spanish American poetry <as a phrase> <keyword anywhere>
Spanish American poetry <all of these> <subject>
Spanish American poetry <as a phrase> <subject>

Spanish poetry <all of these> <keyword anywhere>
Spanish poetry <all of these> <subject>
Spanish poetry <as a phrase> <keyword anywhere>
Spanish poetry <as a phrase> <subject>

Now what if we want to find critical works? Just add the word criticism, thus:

Spanish poetry criticism <all of these> <keyword anywhere>
Spanish poetry criticism <all of these> <keyword anywhere> (NOTE: better not to make this a PHRASE search, unless you do a PHRASE search for “Spanish poetry” on one line and then put “criticism” on the second line below.)

You can do the same combinations with author names or titles of works, thus:

Storni criticism <all of these> <keyword anywhere>
Storni criticism <all of these> <subject>
Voragine criticism <all of these> <keyword anywhere>
Voragine criticism <all of these> <subject>
Rivera criticism <all of these> <keyword anywhere>
Rivera criticism <all of these> <subject>
(NOTE: it would not be helpful to do a search for “rivera” as <author> combined with “criticism” because Rivera is not the author of the book about Rivera’s works. In that case, it makes more sense to use his name as a <keyword> or <subject> search.)

Here are a few more to play with:

“Spanish poetry”
“Feminism OR women”

You could combine these two topics, but maybe you could benefit by looking for books on “feminism AND literature.” It might be that a discussion of feminism in American literature or German Literature would be useful to your topic, also. Other terms that might be useful: “cultural criticism,” “Marxism,” “religion,” etc. combined with “poetry” or “literature.”

This guide has addressed only the challenge of finding BOOKS on your research topic. Another guide will address the problem of finding critical articles in journals.