



Reviews of Peer-Reviewed Journals in the Humanities and Social Sciences

We give you the scuttlebutt on academic journals—aiding you in selecting the right journal for publication—in reviews that are sometimes snarky, sometimes lengthy, always helpful. Written by Princeton University graduate students and Wendy Laura Belcher.

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Journals Ranked

Identifying the best journal to publish in is not easy. However, it is essential to select correctly, since you can only send your article to one journal at a time, never simultaneously. Based on the advice in *Writing Your Journal Article in Twelve Weeks: A Guide to Academic Publishing Success*, below are some of the ways to find the information you need to make your decision. Here's how you can find out about:

All journals in your field or discipline. For brief, online, up-to-date information about journals, *Ulrich's Periodicals Directory* is the most comprehensive. Do not use the search on the home page, but go to advanced search, select the limiters "Active," "Journal," "Academic/Scholarly," and "Refereed / Peer-reviewed" and then enter your keyword (e.g., film, gender, African history). A list of peer-reviewed journals will appear. Under each journal, you can find such information as the journal's website, publisher, frequency, and a brief review from *Magazines for Libraries*. Unfortunately, this directory is not free; your library needs to own a subscription to access it.

Journal efficiency (or, gossip about journals). For detailed information about individuals' experiences with submitting articles to various journals, including comments on length of backlog and turnaround time, editorial promptness, and peer reviewer helpfulness, see the excellent [Humanities Journal Wiki](#). Not all journals are there, but many are. The entries have to be read with a grain of salt (like any comment system, it is biased toward the negative), but trends in the behavior of the journal can become visible if enough scholars comment.

Journal prestige. Statistical information about which humanities journals are considered better than other journals is not easy to find and is not especially trustworthy. However, two places you can check rankings are the [European Reference Index for the Humanities \(ERIH\)](#) and the ranking of journals in [JStor](#) alone. You can also check out the meta-list of rankings, Harzing's [Journal Quality List](#) (the [Harzing 2015](#) list specifically), which includes many of the websites that provide rankings of journals: outside the United States, many universities compile their own rankings. Academics generally hate humanities lists, see the [Guardian](#) article on the topic. The ranking of social science journals can be found in a variety of places, including [SCImago](#), [ISI Journal Citation Reports](#), and so on.

Journal impact. For information on journals that are cited frequently, use Harzing's [Publish or Perish](#) software. It's outstanding and free. To find a specific journal's most cited articles, find its ISSN and insert it in "the Phrase" field.

Acceptance rates. Information about acceptance rates and circulation for peer-reviewed journals in the humanities is often tough to find at their websites. The best source of this information on literary scholarship journals is the [MLA Directory of Periodicals](#), which provides a wealth of other information as well. However, since the information there about acceptance rates and circulation are reported by the journal,

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these are often slightly inflated. That is, they say their circulation rate is higher than it is and their acceptance rate is lower than it is. MLA doesn't provide an acceptance rate directly; you have to calculate it by dividing the number of accepted submissions by the number of total submissions (e.g., 40 articles accepted for publication/ 100 articles submitted, equals 40 percent acceptance rate).

Topic trends. The following article analyzed 21,367 scholarly articles in literary journals from 1889–2013 to depict trends in topics over time. “[The Quiet Transformations of Literary Studies: What Thirteen Thousand Scholars Could Tell Us](#)” by Andrew Goldstone and Ted Underwood in *New Literary History* (summer 2014).

Our rankings. Using Harzing's [Publish or Perish](#) software, we found the most highly cited articles in specific journals and list those articles on the journal page. We would like to post something here about which journals, therefore, are the most cited, but we haven't done that yet. It is interesting to note that perhaps the most cited article in the humanities published since 2010 is Homi Bhabha's two-page (!) introduction to the Simone de Beauvoir special issue in *French Politics, Culture and Society*, which has been cited 1,182 times.

Questions? Email the webmaster Wendy Laura Belcher.

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