Welcome to Syllabus Shock. Today Sammy Bearkat learns how to win at the research game.

Sammy Bearkat just got a brand new assignment.

He is going to have to write a paper, complete with bibliography, on a topic of his choice. His instructor has told the class that in order to get a passing grade they must use a variety of media. He wants them to use books, journals, magazines, and newspapers. The thing is, Sammy’s never really needed to get at that kind of information here at Sam. And let’s face it, academic libraries are far different than the public and school libraries Sammy is used to.

But Sammy is smart enough to know that, while libraries may be different, he can always depend on librarians to help him figure out his research problems.

Sammy started by signing up for a library tour at the reference desk. After that he began learning about library jargon so he could understand terms he’d see in the catalog and on signs.

He discovered how to search the library catalog to find citations to books the library owns and about the call numbering system used by the Newton Gresham Library so he could find the books he’d discovered in the catalog.

Sammy explored the library databases so that he could find journals, magazines, and newspapers. As he learned he got pretty sophisticated, and learned how and when to use the Boolean operators.
Finally, Sammy learned about Refworks so that when he wrote his paper the citations and bibliography were a breeze to insert.

Oh, by the way, in the end Sammy got an A+ because he was sharp enough to let the library faculty teach him the basics of research.

And he wants you to know that we’re here to help you too.