A literature review is the overview and critical evaluation of a body of literature with regards to a research question. Rather than discussing each source one after another, it analyzes the literature as a whole in order to present the field of study's major ideas, theories, concepts and debates and to reveal the gaps in the literature. It helps not only to establish the validity of a research project, but also to formulate a clear research question. A literature review can be a paper in itself or be part of a larger research project.

This resource is not exhaustive and does not replace the writing instructions given in class. In case of doubt, consult the professor before structuring your paper as it is indicated here.

### Structure of the Paper

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Introduction</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Context</td>
<td>Get the reader's attention and introduce your topic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thesis</td>
<td>Formulate the central idea of your paper in the form of a specific, argumentative and explanatory thesis. (Research question)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outline</td>
<td>List the main sections of the paper in the order that they will be covered.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Body</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ideas</td>
<td>Present the trends and themes in the literature with regards to your topic. Organize the sections of the paper in a logical order so that the reader can easily follow it. If your paper is long, section headings are a good way to specify its structure.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- What is known and unknown? How are the sources similar or different? Which sources are the most convincing? Why? Overall, what does the literature tell you?

**If the literature review is part of a larger project, make sure that its thesis is related to your research question, as its purpose is to show the gaps in the literature that justify your project.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conclusion</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>Summarize the information that you have drawn from the sources in an attempt to show the gaps in the literature.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final thought</td>
<td>Make a final comment that supports your thesis in a memorable way.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Writing Process

## Following the instructions

Read the instructions at least twice to make sure that you understand them.

## Planning the paper

### Evaluating the sources

Note recurrent ideas, theories, concepts and debates.

- What is the argument? Is it well developed and defended? Does the methodology allow the author to effectively address the topic? Does the theoretical framework allow the author to draw relevant and convincing conclusions? Is the author biased?

### Comparing the sources

Identify dominant trends and themes.

- What are the main topics, key terms, arguments, methodologies and theoretical approaches? What are the shared results?

### Establishing the thesis

Formulate the central idea of your paper, i.e. your research question.

Ex.: Although some historians make a correlation between the Ukrainian Catholic and Orthodox churches and the retention of Ukrainian culture and language by Ukrainian immigrants in Canada, little has been said of the role of the Roman Catholic Church in the development of Ukrainian communities in Canada. (Central idea)

Ex.: How has the Roman Catholic Church shaped Ukrainian Canadian identity? (Research question)

### Making an outline

Organize your ideas in a clear and coherent way. This will help you to establish the structure of your literature review.

### Writing the paper

Follow the outline and respect the word limit stated in the instructions.

### Editing the paper

#### Focusing on content

Read the introduction and conclusion first; then read the body to make sure that each idea is related to the thesis.

#### Focusing on structure

Read the entire paper to make sure that each section (introduction, body, conclusion) is complete.

#### Focusing on language

Correct grammar and sentence structure mistakes.

#### Focusing on references

Edit the in-text references and bibliographic entries last in order to avoid plagiarism.