

How to Find a Book Review

N indicates a networked resource available to the Northwestern University Community

Book reviews--articles intended to describe and criticize a book--are written shortly after the book appears. To locate a book review, it is therefore necessary to know the date the book was published. Literary criticism, on the other hand, may be written long after the book itself, perhaps centuries later. This guide pertains only to reviews, not to criticism.

Step 1. Identify author, title and publication date of the book. You can use [NUcat](#) or [Worldcat](#) to find the publication date.

Step 2. Identify citations to book reviews. The tools below will help you identify the title of a journal and the date, volume number and page numbers where a review appeared.

Step 3. Find the article. A journal title search in [NUcat](#) will tell you if Northwestern's Library has a printed copy of the journal, or if we have online access to the full-text of the journal. If we don't have print or electronic access, you can order the review article through [Interlibrary Loan](#).

Or...

 will appear within several of the indexes below. Click on this button if full text of the item is not available in the index, to search the library system for its availability.

Book Review Indexes

Book review indexes can be found in the Reference Room in the Main Library. It is important to realize that a year or more may elapse after the publication of a book before reviews appear. Reviews for a book published in 1980 *might* be found in an index for 1980, but are more likely to be in the 1981 or 1982 edition of a book review index.

Many periodical or newspaper indexes (*EXAC*, *Reader's Guide* or the *New York Times Index*, for example) contain references to book reviews, either under the name of the author of the book or gathered together under a heading like "Books" or "Book Reviews". For more on electronic sources of book reviews see below. Sometimes it is easier to find reviews by looking in indexes compiled especially for that purpose. Some of these are:

Book Review Index. Detroit: Gale, 1965- .

Indexes every review in the more than 500 English language periodicals it covers. Especially useful is the twenty year cumulation, 1965-1984. Reviews are listed alphabetically by book authors' names, and there is an index by title. Bimonthly with annual cumulations.

Years covered: 1965-present

L 016.028 B723 Reference

Book Review Digest. NY: H.W. Wilson Co., 1905- .

Although less comprehensive than the *Book Review Index*, above, it has the advantage of containing excerpts of many of the reviews and indicating the size of the reviews. Reviews are listed alphabetically by authors of books reviewed, with indexes by title and subject. Monthly, except February and July, with annual cumulations.

Years covered: 1905-present

L 015.73 B72 Reference

Combined Retrospective Index to Book Reviews in Scholarly Journals, 1886-1974. Arlington, VA: Carrollton Press, 1979-82.

Includes journals in history, sociology and political science.

Years covered: 1886-1974

L016.0281 C731 Reference

Combined Retrospective Index to Book Reviews in Humanities Journals, 1802-1974. Woodbridge, CT: Research Publications, 1982-84. 10 vols.

Years covered: 1802-1974

016.0281 C731.h Reference

Index to Book Reviews in the Humanities. Williamston, MI: Phillip Thomson, 1960-1990.

Index reviews in approximately 470 periodicals devoted to the humanities, including any history or social science reviews which appear in these periodicals. Published annually until 1990.

Years covered: 1960-1990

016.8 I38 Reference

Internationale Bibliographie der Rezensionen wissenschaftlicher Literatur (IBR)

IBR contains over 900,000 entries about book reviews. The database is international and interdisciplinary, the reviews have been published in approx. 6,000 academic journals mainly in the Humanities and Social Sciences.

[Online access:](#) 1985-Current

Years covered by print index: 1971-2000

016.028 I62 Reference

New York Times:

New York Times Book Review Index, 1896-1970. NY: New York Times/Arno Press, 1973. 5 vols.

Years covered: 1896-1970

L051 N5321 Reference

Recent (1980-current) issues of the *New York Times* are available through [LexisNexis Academic](#). Enter the book's title followed by "and book review" in the top search box.

Earlier (1851-2001) issues of the *New York Times* are available through [Proquest Historical Newspapers](#). Type author name or book title in basic search. For books published after 1900, limit article type to "review".

Periodical Indexes and Electronic Resources as Sources For Book Reviews

Reviews can be found through several of the databases available through the Library's [Electronic Resources](#).

Note: Off-campus access to these databases is restricted to current members of the Northwestern Community. Information on off-campus access is available at <http://www.library.northwestern.edu/help/access/>

N [EXAC \(Expanded Academic Index\)](#).

Covers 1980 to the present. Under keyword option type the title of the book followed by "and book review":

Keyword search

Click in the entry box and enter search term(s)

Search for words ☒ in title, citation, abstract ☐ in entire article content

Type words to search for. You can use AND, OR, NOT. Results are sorted by date.

N [Humanities Abstracts](#)

Covers 1984 to the present. Limit to reviews by choosing “Book Review” from the “Record Type Phrase” pull down menu in the “Advanced Search” mode. (see Reader’s Guide Abstracts *below for example*)

N [LexisNexis Academic](#)

Covers 1980 to the present. Choose “Guided News Search”, then pick “Arts & Sports News” from the top pull-down menu and “Book, movie, music & play reviews” from the second pull-down menu. Expand the date range to “All available dates”.

The screenshot shows the LexisNexis Academic website with the "Guided News Search" tab selected. The interface is divided into four steps:

- Step One: Select a news category -- Entry Required**: A dropdown menu is set to "Arts & Sports News".
- Step Two: Select a news source -- Entry Required**: A dropdown menu is set to "Book, movie, music, & play reviews". A link for "Source List" is provided.
- Step Three: Enter search terms -- Entry Required**: Three search boxes are shown, each with a dropdown menu for "Headline, Lead Paragraph(s), Terms". The first box contains the text "fast food nation".
- Step Four: Narrow to a specific date range -- Optional**: A dropdown menu is set to "All available dates".

On the left side, there is a sidebar with "Academic Search Forms" (Quick Info, News, Business, Legal Research, Medical, Reference) and "Search for Other Information" (Congressional, Current Issues, Government, Periodicals Index, Statistical).

N [Readers Guide Abstracts](#)

Covers 1983 to the present. Limit to reviews by choosing “Book Review” from the “Record Type Phrase” pull down menu in the “Advanced Search” mode.

The screenshot shows the ReadersGuideAbs Advanced Search interface. The "Advanced Search" tab is selected. The current database is "ReadersGuideAbs". The search terms are "fast food nation" and "Keyword". The "Limit to:" section is set to "Year" and "Record Type Phrase" with "Book Review" selected. A line points from the "Record Type Phrase" dropdown to the "Book Review" option.

Search in database: ReadersGuideAbs (Updated: 2004-02-06)
Abstracts of articles from popular magazines

Search for: fast food nation Keyword
and Keyword
and Keyword

Limit to: Year (format: YYYY-YYYY)
Record Type Phrase Book Review

N [Social Sciences Abstracts](#)

Covers 1983 to the present. Limit to reviews by choosing “Book Review” from the “Record Type Phrase” pull down menu in the “Advanced Search” mode. (see Reader’s Guide Abstracts *above for example*)

N [Web of Science](#)

Covers 1965 to the present.

Choose “Full Search”, then “Advanced Search”. Restrict document type to “Book Review”. Type in field code and title of book (TI=fast food nation).

ISI Web of KNOWLEDGESM ISI Web of Science GO Home Log out

Advanced Search

General search fields and set combination only (click Cited Ref Search on the toolbar to add Cited Reference searches). Enter search terms (using 2-character field tags) or set numbers combined with Boolean operators.

For example: TS=(nanotub* SAME carbon) NOT AU=Smalley RE
For example: #1 NOT #2 [more examples](#)

TI=fast food nation SEARCH

Restrict search by languages and document types:

Field Tags	Booleans
TS=Topic	AND
TI=Title	OR
AU=Author	NOT
SO=Source	SAME
AD=Address	

Current Selections:
Database(s)=SCI-EXPANDED, SSCI, A&HCI
Timespan=1965-2004

The Next Step

After finding citations to the book reviews, the next step is to find the journals or newspapers where the reviews appear. First, be sure to note the full name of the journal, and the volume number, date, and page of the review. Using NUCat, the computer catalog, type in the name of the periodical from the journal title entry on the author/title/subject tab. NUCat will tell you whether Northwestern owns the periodical you need, which issues we have received, and where it is located.

There are *many* other indexes to book reviews in addition to those listed here.

Contact the Reference Department for more assistance by:

phone 847-491-7656

email refdept@northwestern.edu

or online http://www.library.northwestern.edu/reference/virtual_reference/

Reference Desk Phone: 847-491-7656 **Email:** refdept@northwestern.edu

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