WHY DO WE CITE?

WHY IS CITING YOUR SOURCES IMPORTANT?

Your professors will ask you to write papers or other writing assignments that require you to do research. After you do the research, then what do you do? What do you do with the information you found? How do you let your reader (professor) know where you got your information from? Why is all this even important?

When writing in academia, it is important to give credit to the sources that you got your information from for many reasons, but the main reasons are to make your research credible, to show that you know what you are talking about, to give credit where credit is due, and to serve as a resource for others.

REASON #1: TO MAKE YOUR RESEARCH CREDIBLE

When writing, it is easy to say what you think to be true, or what you believe will happen. Your reader, however, may disagree, or may not understand your point. Citing scholarly, reputable sources can only enhance the message of your paper, and adds overall credibility to your writing (For more information on scholarly sources, see the handout Scholarly versus Non-Scholarly Sources).

REASON #2: TO SHOW YOU KNOW WHAT YOU’RE TALKING ABOUT

Your professor gives you an assignment and expects you to do it. Finding credible sources, incorporating the material into your own paper, and citing the sources not only shows that you are knowledgeable about the subject matter and content, but also shows that you did what you were tasked with doing.

REASON #3: TO GIVE CREDIT WHERE CREDIT IS DUE

Chances are, the researchers and scholars you quote in your own work have spent countless hours and numerous years developing their work. Why would you not give them the credit they deserve? One day, you might stumble upon a new concept, idea, or process
that others want to know more about and/or emulate, and you will most certainly want the credit. The work of other researchers is available for all to use as they see fit and necessary, but remember to give the credit to the person who deserves it.

**REASON #4: TO SERVE AS A REFERENCE FOR OTHERS**

The sources listed at the end of your writing can serve as a resource for others who may be interested in the same topic as you. With your properly cited paper, any one should be able to locate the sources you used.