

Jaiya McMillan: 2020 Research Award Entry Essay

Writing this research paper was one of the most difficult parts of my first semester here at Hollins. It was the first time that I had ever written an in-depth research paper, and at first, I didn't know where to start. Luckily, I had both my advisor and Rebecca, the librarian, to help me with each step. I started with a primary source document from Simon Bolivar, provided to me by Professor Nunez. I then attended a couple of in-class research sessions with Rebecca to learn how to use Onesearch, how the books in the library are arranged, and how to write a Chicago-style paper. These research sessions were extremely useful, as I used all of the tools I had learned in them while writing my paper. The library tool I utilized the most was Onesearch, which helped me find the five books I cited in my paper. I did, however, use many more books from the Wyndham Robertson Library and the library at Roanoke College (through the Inter Library Loan system) to help with background knowledge and chronology. My research plan was a little disorganized at first, but with the help around me, I got on track in no time. I started with my primary source document and looked for more background research on its author and time period. I already knew I was interested in researching a more modern Venezuela, so I also pulled books on Communism and Socialism in Venezuela from the late 1950s to 2013. From here, I skimmed through the 12-15 books looking for keywords that I was planning on incorporating into my paper. I did encounter some obstacles with this method. It was very time consuming, and I would only find keywords about half of the time. To overcome this, I used Onesearch to narrow my search and find sources that would be more relevant to my paper.