

What are Scholarly Books?

For your assignment, you've been asked to look for scholarly books on your topic. But what is considered a scholarly book? In this short tutorial, you will learn about scholarly books.

Scholarly books are written by scholars, like your professors, who are discipline experts. Scholars write scholarly books to share in-depth information about a specific topic or event within their specific field of expertise to add further discussion and critique.

You may use scholarly books to explore subject areas generally to find background information or definitions on a specific topic. Scholarly books take longer to write and publish than scholarly articles because they are so much longer, often requiring more work. Scholars may discuss the overarching topic and then, branch off into subtopics to develop greater discussion.

Books can be an excellent resource to explore the topic more broadly. For instance, you will notice that scholarly books often include references or citations to other similar work in the field to contribute to the conversation. Find and read relevant sources cited in your book to gain a more complete understanding of your topic. By including scholarly books in your assignments, you'll be able to support your research with high quality, concrete evidence.

Scholarly books can be distinguished from popular books. Popular books are usually intended for the general public to read, mostly for entertainment, but it won't provide in-depth coverage of the subject matter. Whereas scholarly books are published for specific academic audiences for sharing in-depth knowledge on a particular subject.

Please note that one problem with scholarly books is that they may include dated information due to the length of time to publish. For example, if a scholar would like to discuss the creation of Tiktok trends and the impact on the Z and Alpha generation in 2021, the scholar will take maybe years to complete a full manuscript, which may take another year, or more, to be accepted, edited, and published by an academic publisher, such as a university press, in 2024. By that time, those trends may no longer have current impact on those generations.

If you need help finding scholarly books, ask a librarian!