The online Library Catalog provides access to books, periodicals, audio-visual materials, government documents, etc. available in the library. A quick search version is available on the library webpage and a more extensive version is on the menu under “Library Catalog.”

Finding Biographies - To locate biographies in the catalog, use the subject search and type in the last name and then the first name in the search box. This will give you materials about a person.

Finding Authors – In doing literary research, it is necessary to understand the difference between books by an author and books about an author. To find books about a particular author, use the subject search and put the author’s last name first as if you were looking him/her up in the phone book. To find books by an author, use the author search with the author’s last name first. A keyword search will yield books from both categories.

To find materials on a particular topic, you have three ways to search:

1) Keyword/Words or Phrase Search – type in one or two basic words joined together with “and” about your topic and press enter. Remember that the computer is just searching the words. For example, the terms “civil war” may bring up the United States Civil War, the English Civil War, or Spanish Civil War.

2) Title Search – type in terms you would expect to see in the title. This is a very specific search and you may not find what you need.

3) Author Search – enter the last name and the first name of the author you are searching for to get a list of all books we have by a particular author. Capitalization is not necessary. For example, to find all the books we have by Tom Brokaw, you would enter the search “brokaw tom.”

4) Subject Search – this is the most specific and sometimes the most difficult. To be successful at subject searching, you will need to know the Library of Congress subject heading for your topic. A copy of the subject headings is available in the reference room on top of the short bookcase in the middle of the room in 5 red books.

For example, topics in United States history are listed below:
- America Discovery and Exploration
- Colonial America
- American Revolution
- Civil War United States
5) Periodical Title Search – use this search to determine whether or not the library subscribes to a particular journal. For example, if you are looking for the magazine Newsweek, enter “newsweek” as a periodical title to view all the issues available at NSU libraries.

The Advanced Search function allows you more flexibility in searching. For example, you can combine an author search with a words or phrase search to find books by an author on a certain topic. Using the advanced search, you can also limit your search to a specific library or collection.

When looking at catalog records, be sure to notice locations:
- GOVDOC is the Government Documents Room, 1st Floor
- Louisiana Collection, Rare Books, or Spec-Coll is the Cammie Henry Research Center on 3rd Floor
- REF at the end of the call number indicates the Reference Room
- STACKS is the circulating book collection on 2nd Floor
- SERIALS is the Serials/Media Division on the 3rd Floor
- NEW BOOKS and READING items are in the Reading Room on the 2nd Floor

Also, remember there are three libraries in our system
- Watson Library – Natchitoches
- Shreveport Nursing Center Library
- Leesville/Ft. Polk Library

To request a book from another branch, submit an Interlibrary Loan request and the book will be delivered to the library of your choice in a few days.