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In winter quarter I was assigned a research paper discussing an issue related to the criminal legal system. There are a lot of things I could discuss, but I knew I wanted to write something about women's experiences in prison. I began by using the libraries online database to search around for potential sources and topics. This database is a helpful resource because it allows me to search for key words and filter for certain source types. For example, I can search "mistreatment of women in prison" and filter for peer-reviewed journals. Through this searching I was able to narrow down my research to discuss the experiences of pregnant incarcerated women. In the past I had mainly used online sources, but several of the sources I found for this project were only available as physical books. I hadn't had experience borrowing books from the libraries on campus, and I wasn't entirely sure how to find them. I started in the Odegaard library and asked an employee for help, they then explained how I can find books in the library. While searching I remembered that, of course, books of similar topics would be shelved together. This allowed me to find books tangentially related to pregnancy and incarceration that I wouldn't have found otherwise. These resources, in both the Odegaard and Suzzallo and Allen libraries, allowed me to write a more well-rounded analysis.

While searching through the library database provided an extremely helpful starting point, the books I borrowed from the library greatly impacted my research. I was able to find sources on the various forms of mistreatment of women in prison, but I also found a book on how the crack epidemic affected motherhood. This allowed me to weave a much larger story on the interactions of the criminal legal system and motherhood. Online sources I found through the library database showed that huge portions of incarcerated women are there for drug related crimes, which makes sense with the given context on the demonization of drug use among women. Had I not gone to

the Odegaard library, I would not have found that book and been able to draw these connections. This broader understanding of issues pregnant incarcerated women face made for a more well-developed paper.

This broader research base also remedied an issue I sometimes have when looking for sources on women's issues. It can often be difficult to find sources that are contemporary and high quality, especially if they're on a sensitive topic. This can be frustrating and feel like running into a wall. However, having a broader research base allowed me to have more to synthesize, rather than just a breadth of examples of women's mistreatment. Additionally, by writing about interactions between motherhood and the criminal legal system, I could use slightly older sources without them being considered outdated. For example, one of the books I used, *Dehumanizing Discourse, Anti-Drug Law, and Policy in America: A "Crack Mother's" Nightmare*, was published in 2002. But this book discusses policy from the 1980's-90's, which is still relevant when understanding how vulnerable mothers become incarcerated.

This research project was challenging, but I feel the long process allowed me to grow academically. Not only did this project expose me to an issue that has much broader implications than I was expecting, but the research process itself showed me how to find those broader implications. The course this assignment was for, United States Courts and Civil Liberties, generally gave me a new understanding of how civil liberties function in the US. This assignment was a huge part of gaining that deeper understanding, and I feel like a more well-rounded student because of it.