Information Literacy Standards for First-Year Students

**Information Literacy is . . .**
- a way of defining and thinking about the Research Process
- a life skill needed for your college career and beyond
- above all, a PROCESS!

To be information literate, you need to . . .

1. **Know the nature and extent of the information need.**
   - Choose and focus a topic.
   - Develop a thesis statement or research question.
   - Read background information on the topic.
   - Recognize that knowledge can be organized into disciplines that influence how information is produced and accessed.
   - Distinguish and choose information intended for scholarly or popular audiences published in books, journal and magazine articles, or on the Internet as appropriate to the topic.

2. **Access the needed information.**
   - Know when to use the library catalog, article and reference databases, or the Internet to find and retrieve print and electronic books and articles, web pages, and other documents.
   - Know how to refine searches by using a range of search strategies, including subject terms, Boolean logic, truncation, advanced search screens, and other aids available in an online catalog or database.
   - Understand the organization of information in the physical Library and online.
   - Access the best available information for the research need regardless of format.

3. **Evaluate information and its sources critically.**
   - Examine and compare information from various sources to evaluate reliability, validity, accuracy, authority, timeliness, and point of view or bias.
   - Summarize main ideas, analyze the structure and logic of arguments, recognize bias.
   - Synthesize main ideas, reconcile differences, select usable information from sources consulted.

4. **Use information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose.**
   - Select information to include in final product.
   - Cite, quote or paraphrase sources appropriately and accurately.
   - Organize paper, presentation or other project appropriately and effectively.
   - Demonstrate whether a hypothesis is valid or a research question has been answered.

5. **Use information ethically.**
   - Use standard techniques of quotation and documentation.
   - Understand the concept of intellectual property.
   - Demonstrate an understanding of what constitutes plagiarism.