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Teaching Philosophy Statement

My teaching philosophy is shaped by twenty years working in numerous outstanding academic libraries covering the whole spectrum – from community college to senior college to an Ivy League research library. I have taught Information Literacy (IL) classes across the variety of undergraduate and graduate disciplines in both science and general academic areas. I have taught classes to high school students enrolled in College Now program and to SEEK students, too. My teaching philosophy is student centered, because I believe that in every step of the learning process, the students must be motivated to acquire and build up knowledge instead of solely memorizing facts. My teaching philosophy is driven by the belief that no two students are alike in strengths, weaknesses, background or motivation and as a result, the learning experience must be a dynamic process that not only engages the students but also provides them with skills they can apply across fields and disciplines. In my teaching IL classes or providing research consultations and assistance with capstone projects I have tried to relate the material – information retrieval using the Library catalog and subscription databases – to a practical problem so the students can relate and apply new knowledge to their educational background and professional goals. Although the actual content of the IL classes librarians cover is largely determined by the subject specific courses we are invited to teach, I always make sure to give students a short introduction to the concepts of research, Boolean operators basics and critical evaluation of information. I take time to highlight the difference between a database and a search engine, as well as the difference between scholarly or peer reviewed journals and popular magazines. In addition to the "content" challenge of conveying maximum information into a one-shot IL session, this past year the "format" challenge arose and I had to re-think and change my teaching style and IL handouts to reflect adequately the new reality of online teaching. I changed the handouts format, replacing the hyperlinks with multiple step-by-step screenshots in case students lose their Wi-Fi connection during the class or need to replicate the searches on their own afterwards. Another teaching tool I rely on are the research guides – one stop web resources (books, journals, databases, and web sites) on a particular subject or discipline - since they are an extension of the librarian's online presence. Students today have all the knowledge and technology at their fingertips, so technology should be an integral part of the learning process and it is the instructor's role to challenge students by stimulating their intellectual curiosity, by encouraging to take a step out of their comfort zone and check out a new information resource or explore new features of the familiar ones. My goal is to keep students engaged and excited about the material. When choosing the examples for demo DB searches I try to select a controversial topic that will catch students'

attention, but I am very cautious not to overstep the line by choosing some "polarizing" topics that might alienate or exclude students with non-Western cultural background. For a class to be effective, the instructor must always be flexible and aware of students' diversity and their relationship to the material. I believe that exams and library related assignments are not simply a tool to assign a grade at the end of the semester, but a way for engaging students in processing huge amounts of information for the purpose of information triage while paying most attention to the most valuable information by applying critical thinking methods. Some assignments emphasize on developing quantitative skills, other stress developing qualitative skills, but all should develop writing and analytical skills so students will master skills that would be useful across a wide range of disciplines. The positive feedback I get from faculty via email afterwards are proof that my teaching philosophy and approach resonates with York community. The OT Department Appreciation Award, I received in December 2019, is a recognition of my efforts assisting OT students with their capstone projects and an inspiration to work harder.

Students are renowned for their diverse backgrounds, perspectives, and circumstances. Sometimes the challenge results from their difficulty of learning a second language. During my time at CUNY, where the student demographics vary hugely with a much greater portion of the student body coming from underrepresented backgrounds, I frequently see students struggling in silence and feeling hesitant to ask questions during class or seek help. I made it my mission to reach out to those students by extending my availability outside of the classroom and offering to provide assistance via phone and email. The follow up questions and feedback I frequently get via email are an intangible recompense proving the success of the IL session, but my real reward is that with each IL session I have taught I have had the chance to learn, adapt, and improve.

Ultimately I can say that I am really happy when students leave the library confident that they have acquired new knowledge and they feel motivated to learn more and take on new academic challenges.

Information Literacy Classes taught:

ENG 125 (Composition I: Introduction to College Writing)
CLVD 100 (Introduction to Multicultural Studies)
WRIT 301 (Research and Writing for the Major)
WRIT 302 (Research and Writing for the Sciences, Mathematics, and Technology)
WRIT 303 (Research and Writing for Professional Programs)
PSY 330 (Foundations of research Methods in Psychology)
SKWK 350 (Social Research I)
FINC 100 (Fundamentals of Personal Finance)
BIO 140 (Human Biology)
BIO 201 (Biological Principals I)
CLS 351 (Clinical Chemistry)
OT 321 (Occupational Analysis)

OT 518 (Research Seminar I)
HP/PE 365 (Research in Health and Physical Education)
HPGC 102 (Public Health)
HPPA 500 (Introduction to E-Portfolio/Orientation)

OER Workshops for faculty:

OER Nuts and Bolts
OER: The Problem, the Solution, the Challenge
OER in STEM Disciplines

Student Orientations:

New Nursing Students Orientation: Welcome to the York College Library
(https://libguides.york.cuny.edu/c.php?g=632042&p=8550268)
Prof 101: Welcome to the York College Library
OT New Students Orientation: Welcome to the York College Library
Pharmaceutical Science Orientation: Welcome to the York College Library

Research Guides (LibGuides):

Academic Works @ https://libguides.york.cuny.edu/academicworks
Astronomy @ https://libguides.york.cuny.edu/astronomy
Biology @ https://libguides.york.cuny.edu/biology
Chemistry @ https://libguides.york.cuny.edu/chemistry
COVID-19 @ https://libguides.york.cuny.edu/COVID-19
ENG 125 @ https://libguides.york.cuny.edu/ENG125
Environmental Science @ https://libguides.york.cuny.edu/environmental
HPPA @ https://libguides.york.cuny.edu/HPPA
Nursing @ https://libguides.york.cuny.edu/nursing
OT (Occupational Therapy) @ https://libguides.york.cuny.edu/occupationaltherapy
OER (Open Educational Resources) @ https://libguides.york.cuny.edu/oer
Pharmaceutical Science @ https://libguides.york.cuny.edu/pharmaceutics
Physics @ https://libguides.york.cuny.edu/physics
Systematic Reviews @ https://libguides.york.cuny.edu/systematicreviews

Refereed Conference Proceedings (in field of teaching):

Tzanova, Stefka. "Application of Cloud Technologies in Science Education." New Perspectives in Science Education International Conference. March 18, 2021

Sample Information Literacy Handout:
    CLS 365 IL session handout

Information Literacy Session for CLS 351

Welcome to the virtual York College Library
https://www.york.cuny.edu/library
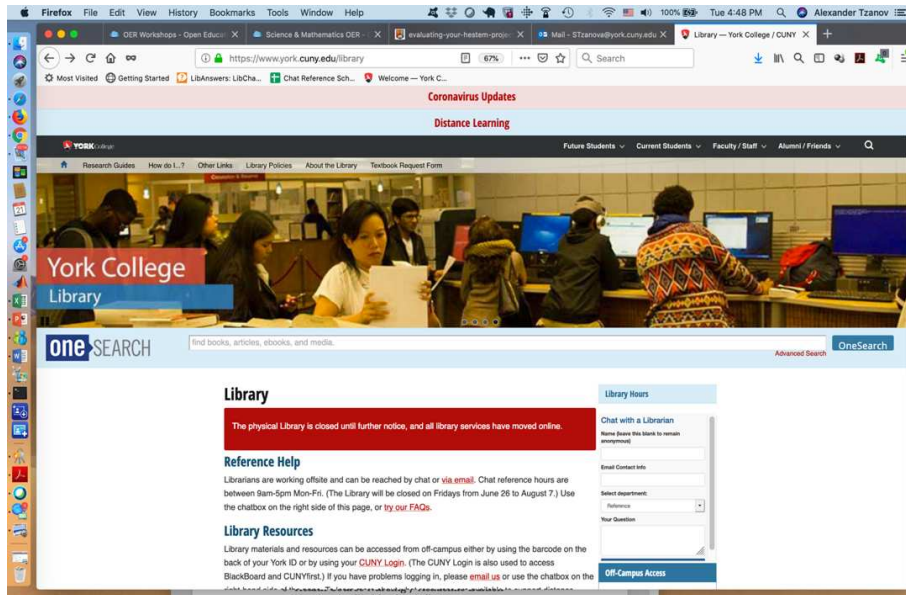
- **Remote Access**:

  - CUNY login (CUNYFirst and Bb) or SSL VPN
 - Barcode will still be used to borrow materials when the Library opens

- **Reference Assistance:**

  - **Library Chat & via Email**

 - **Online Research Consultations by appointment**

- **Goodbye CUNY+, Hello OneSearch!**
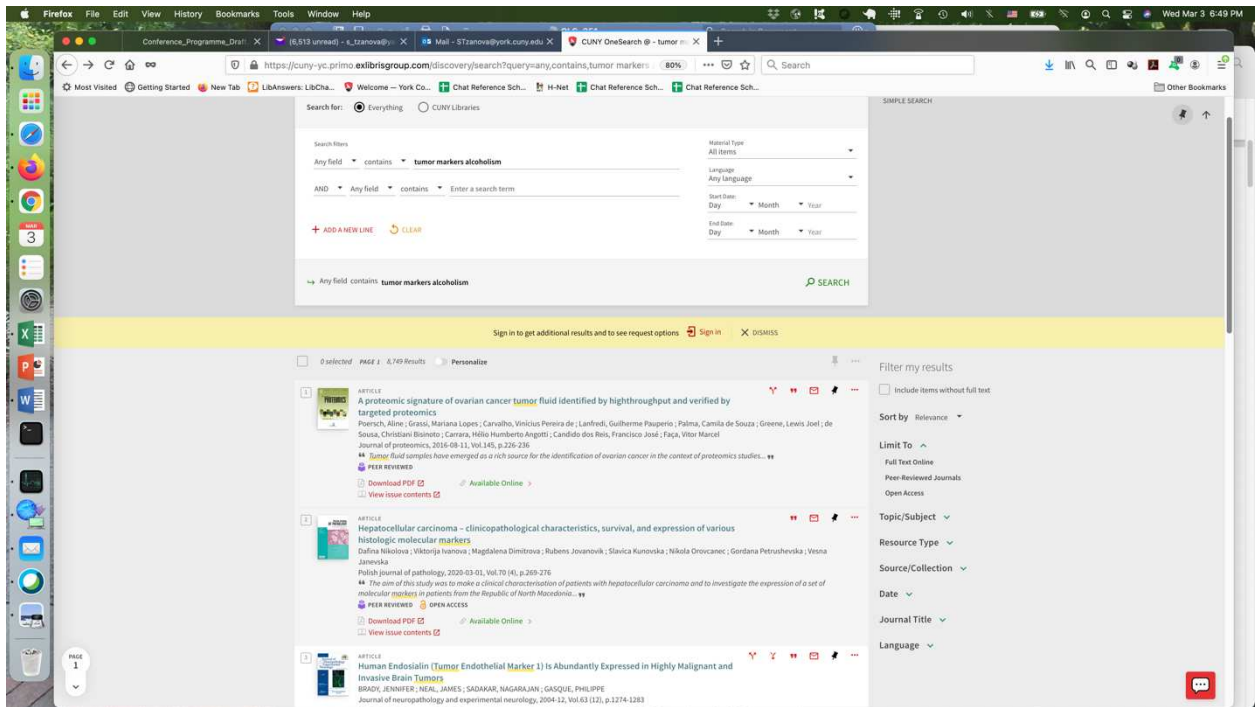
  o **Article Record in OneSearch**
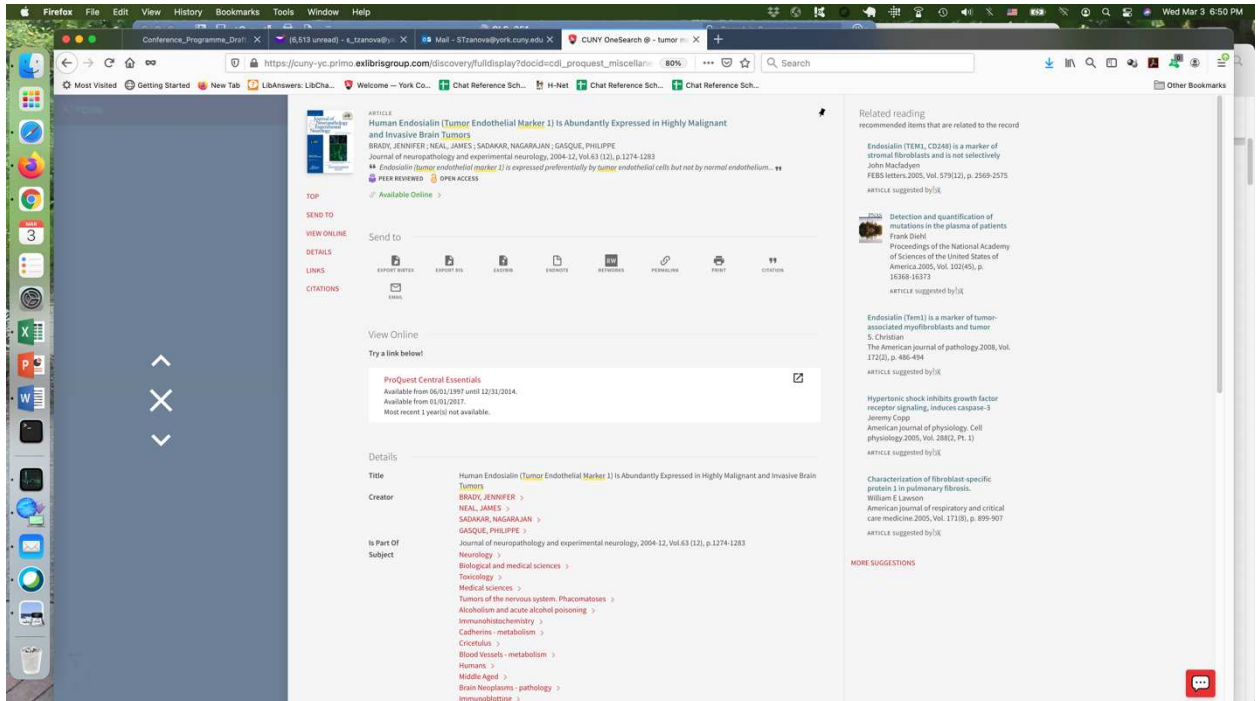
  o **OneSearch Libguide** @ https://libguides.york.cuny.edu/catalogs
  o **OneSearch Basic Search** @ https://youtu.be/JfC2VbR_kU0
  o **OneSearch Advanced Search** @ https://youtu.be/SybbjX94Ytg
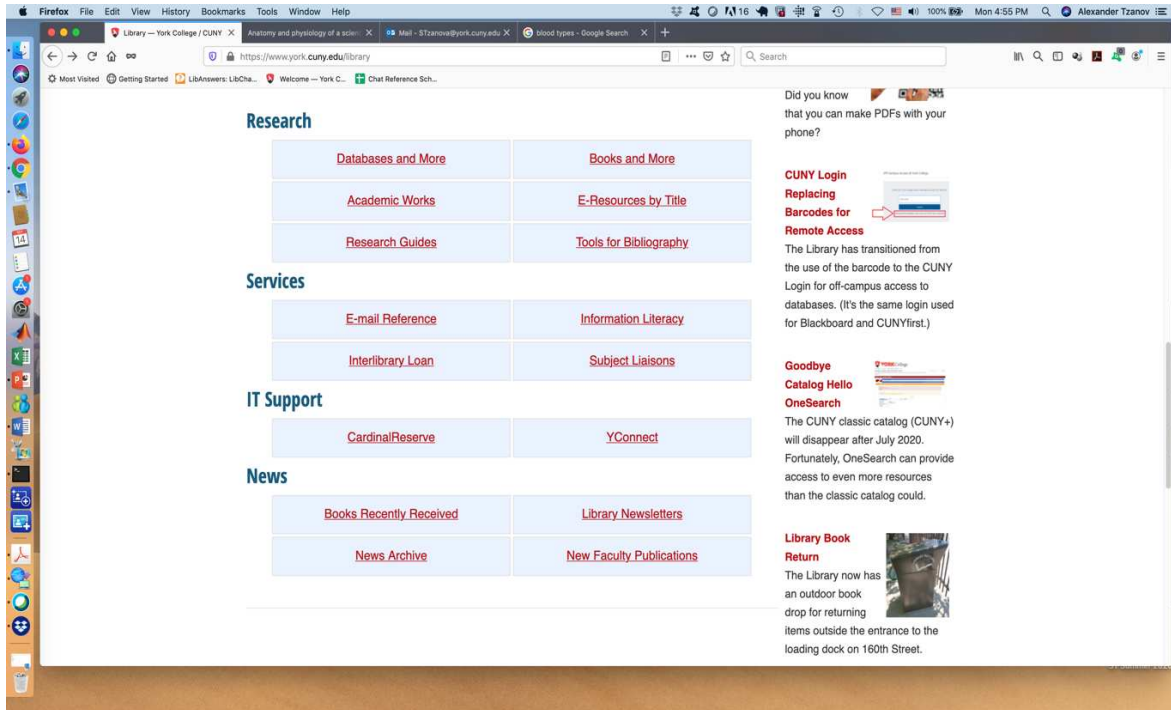
- **Databases**:

- A-Z List of 200+ Library Databases (Databases and More)
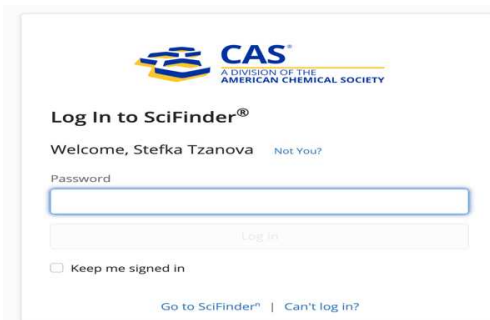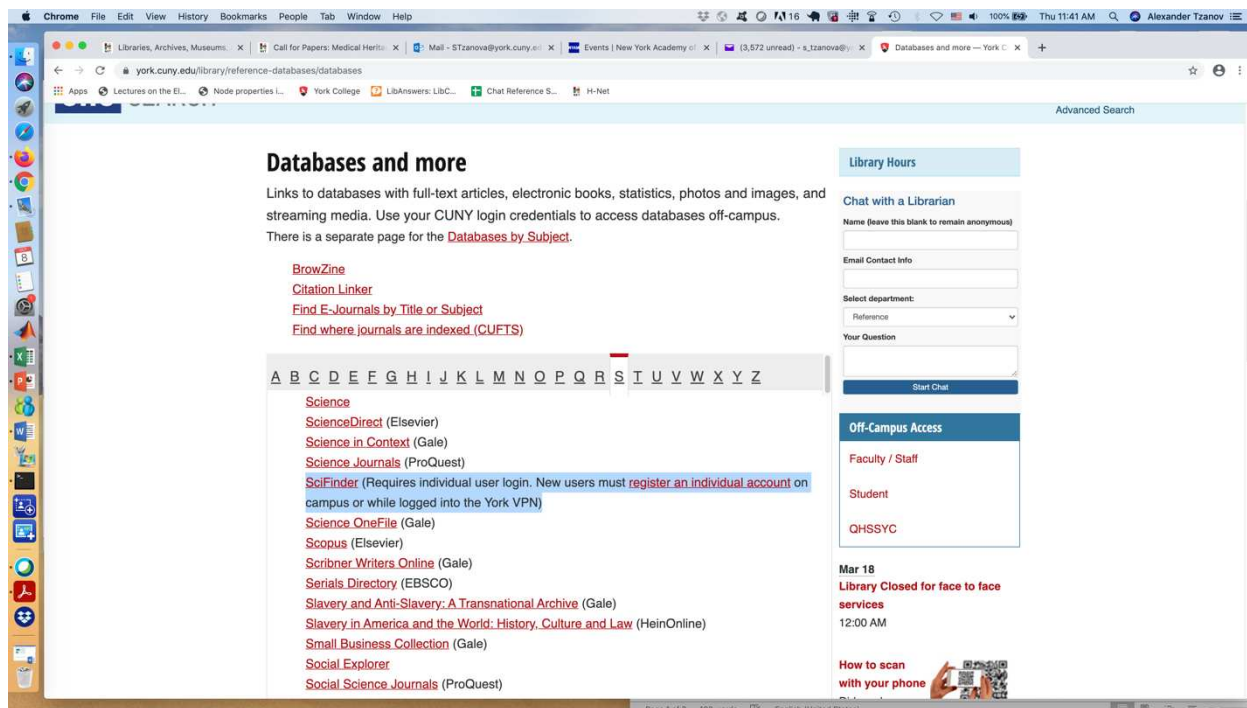
- **(Some) Sciences Databases:**

    o **MEDLINE** (EBSCO)

    o **SciFinder** (CAS/ACS)

    o **PubMed Central & PubChem** (NIH/NLM)

    o **ScienceDirect** (Elsevier)

    o **Health and Medicine** (Gale)

    o **CINAHL** (EBSCO)

    o **SpringerLink**

    o ****e-Journal portal: American Chemical Society Journals (ACS)**

    o ***Google Scholar**

- Searching MEDLINE

- Article Record in MEDLINE

- **Searching SciFinder**
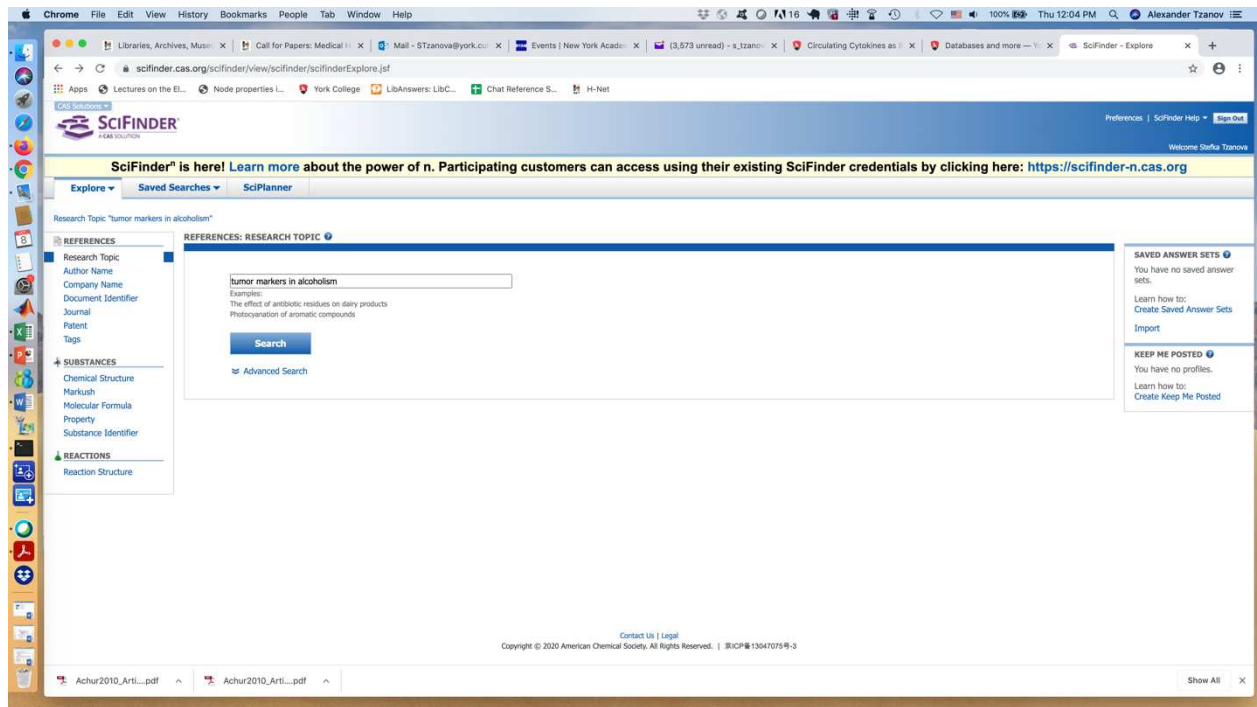
- ○ **"Research Topic Candidate Selected" in SciFinder**

o **Research Topic References in SciFinder**

o **Article Record in SciFinder**
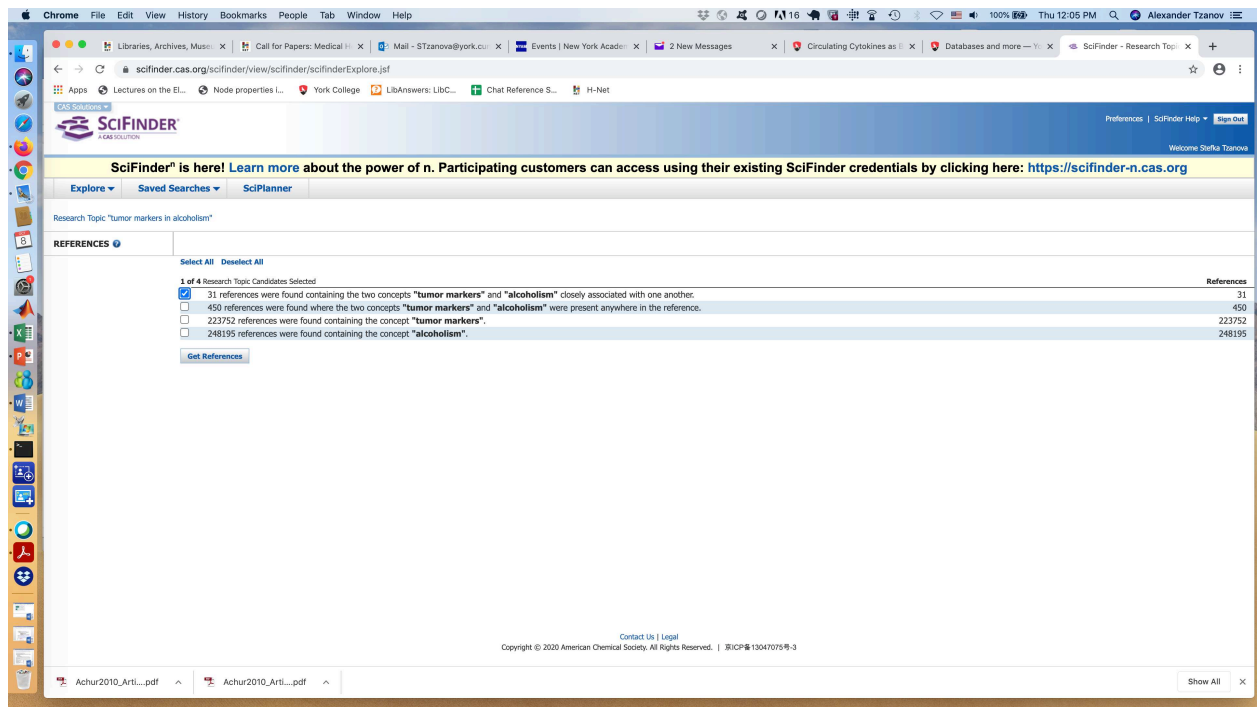
- **Searching ScienceDirect**
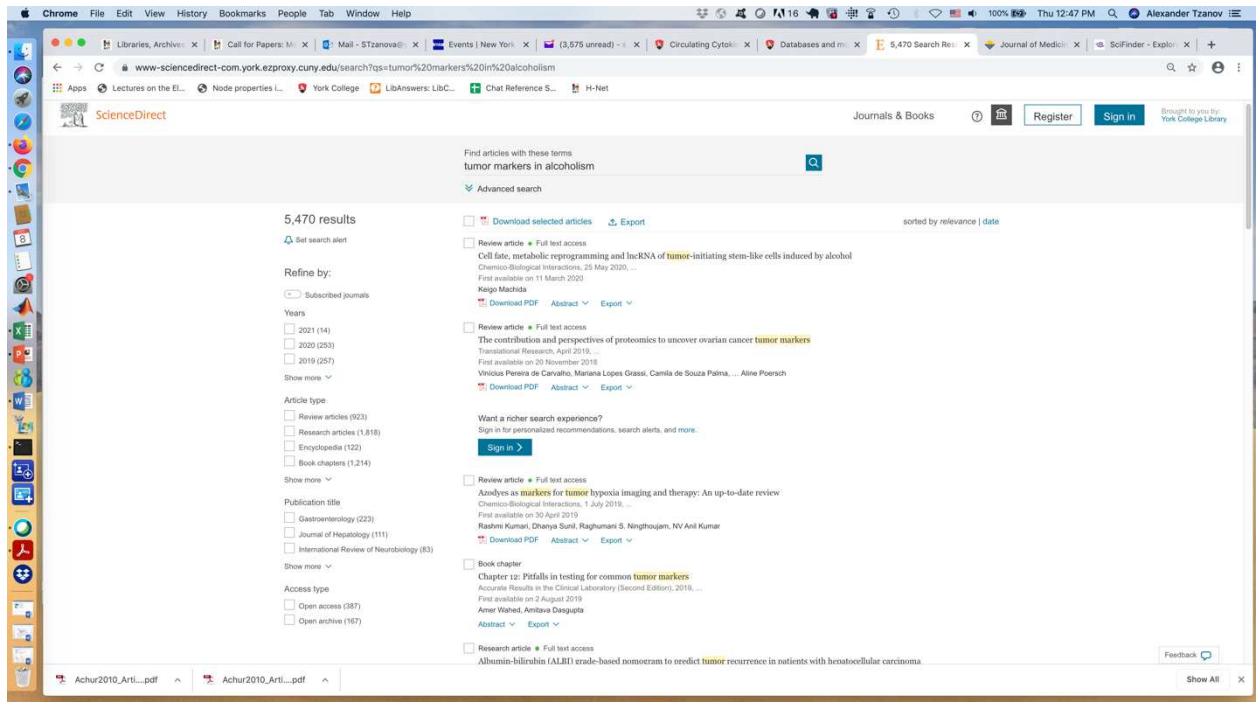
  o **Article Record in ScienceDirect**
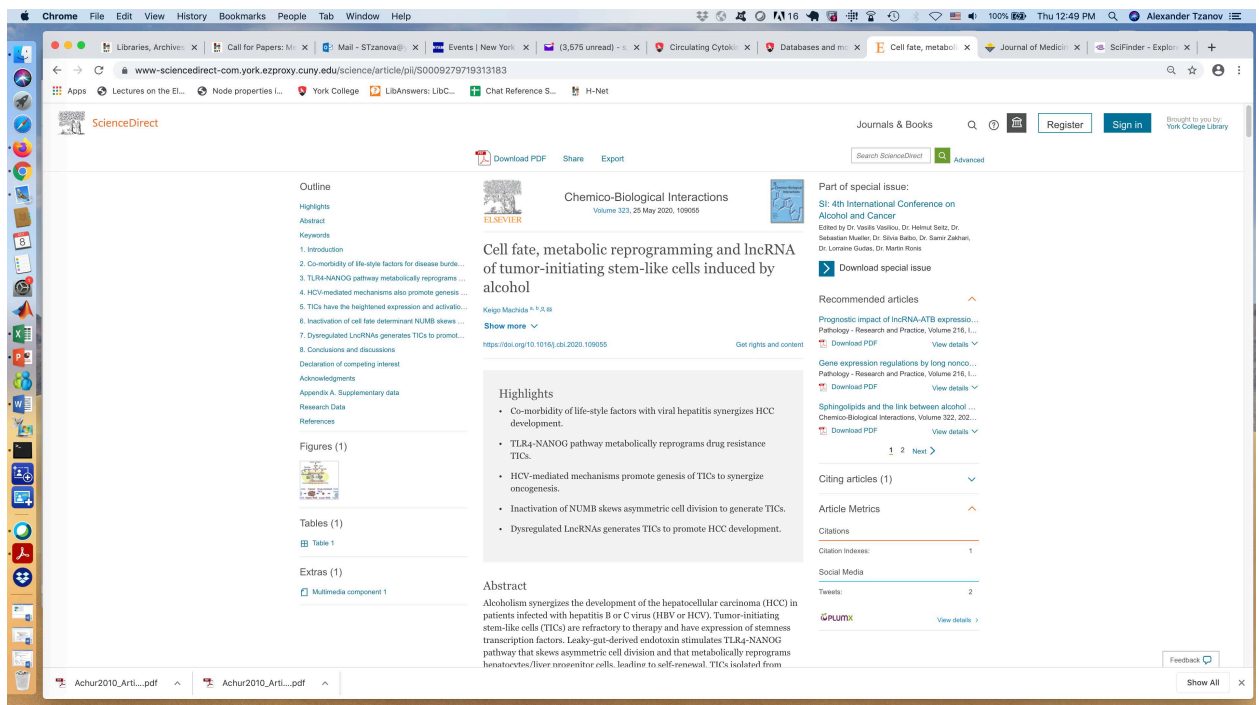
- **Searching PubMed Central**
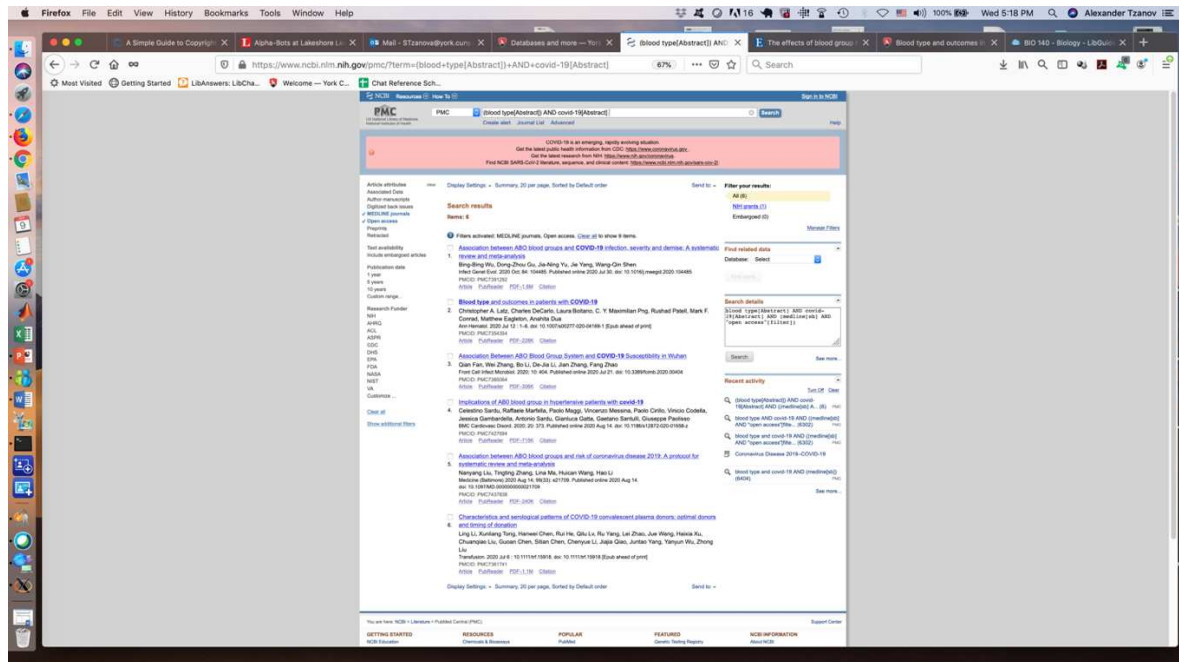

  o **Article Record in PubMed Central**
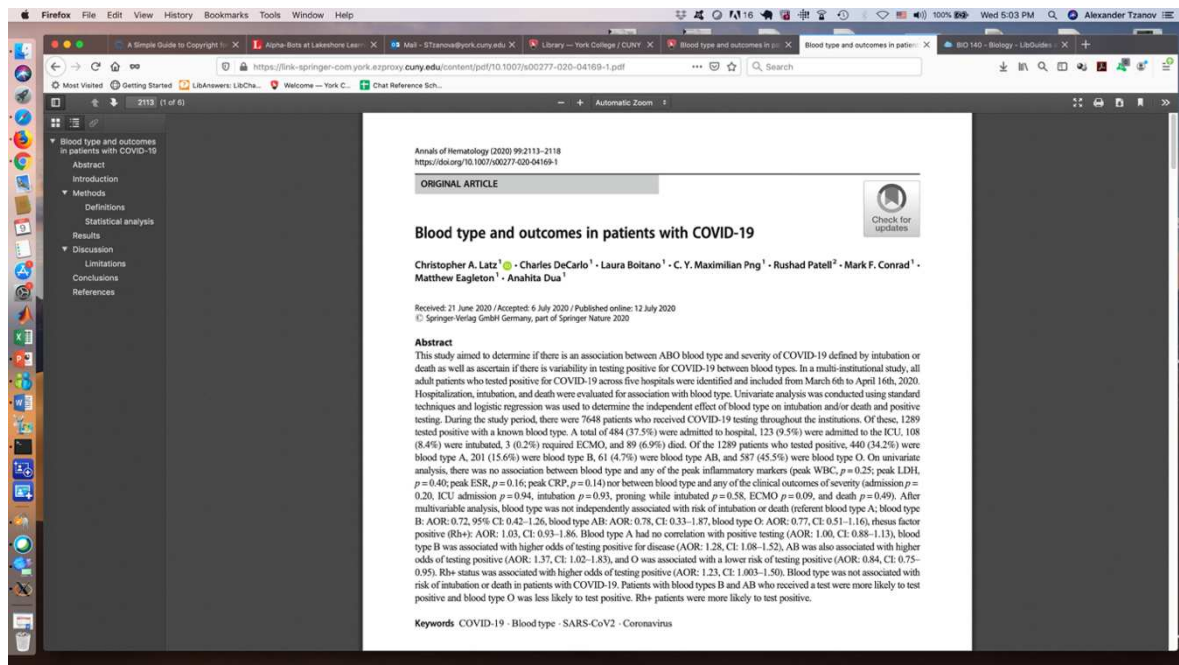
- **Searching Health and Medicine**


o **Article Record in Health and Medicine DB**

- **Searching eJournal portal – ACS Journals**

o **Article Record in ACS Journals** DB

- **Searching *Google Scholar**
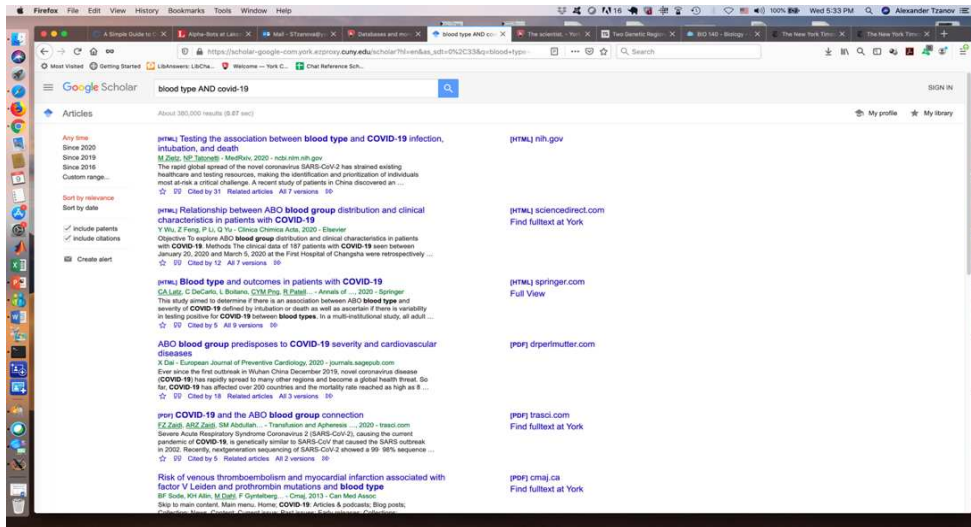
Confused? Go to Research Guides @ http://libguides.york.cuny.edu/

Help From Home Library Resources @ https://libguides.york.cuny.edu/help

Databases By Subject @ http://libguides.york.cuny.edu/DatabasesBySubject

Biology @ https://libguides.york.cuny.edu/biology

Chemistry @ https://libguides.york.cuny.edu/chemistry

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