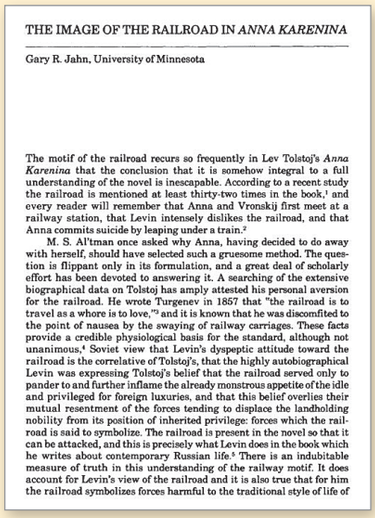
How to cite course materials

PROBLEM: Sometimes you will be assigned to work with materials that an instructor has uploaded to a course Web site or has handed out in class. Complete publication information may not always be given for such sources. A PDF file or a hard-copy article, for instance, may have a title and an author's name but give no other information. Or a video may not include information about the creator or the date the video was created. When you write a paper using such sources, how should you cite them in your own work?

EXAMPLE: Perhaps your instructor has included a PDF file of an article in a collection of readings on the course Web site (see image at right). You are writing a paper in which you use a passage from the work.



THE IMAGE OF THE RAILROAD IN *ANNA KARENINA*

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The motif of the railroad recurs so frequently in Lev Tolstoj's *Anna Karenina* that the conclusion that it is somehow integral to a full understanding of the novel is inescapable. According to a recent study the railroad is mentioned at least thirty-two times in the book,[1] and every reader will remember that Anna and Vronskij first meet at a railway station, that Levin intensely dislikes the railroad, and that Anna commits suicide by leaping under a train.[2]

M. S. Al'tman once asked why Anna, having decided to do away with herself, should have selected such a gruesome method. The question is flippant only in its formulation, and a great deal of scholarly effort has been devoted to answering it. A searching of the extensive biographical data on Tolstoj has amply attested his personal aversion for the railroad. He wrote Turgenev in 1857 that "the railroad is to travel as a whore is to love,"[3] and it is known that he was discomfited to the point of nausea by the swaying of railway carriages. These facts provide a credible physiological basis for the standard, although not unanimous,[4] Soviet view that Levin's dyspeptic attitude toward the railroad is the correlative of Tolstoj's, that the highly autobiographical Levin was expressing Tolstoj's belief that the railroad served only to pander to and further inflame the already monstrous appetite of the idle and privileged for foreign luxuries, and that this belief overlies their mutual resentment of the forces tending to displace the landholding nobility from its position of inherited privilege: forces which the railroad is said to symbolize. The railroad is present in the novel so that it can be attacked, and this is precisely what Levin does in the book which he writes about contemporary Russian life.[5] There is an indubitable measure of truth in this understanding of the railway motif. It does account for Levin's view of the railroad and it is also true that for him the railroad symbolizes forces harmful to the traditional style of life of

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STRATEGY: Look through section MLA-4b for a model that matches the type of source you're working with. Is it an article? A chapter from a book? A photograph? A video? The model or models you find will give you an idea of the information you need to gather about the source. The usual required information is (1) the author or creator, (2) the title, (3) the date the work was published or created, and (4) the URL for sources on the Web.

CITATION: For your citation, you can give only as much of the required information as you can find in the source. In this example, you know the source is an article with an author and a title, so you can use item 13a (basic format for an article). Because you don't have much other information about the source, it is a good idea to include the description "Course materials" and supplementary information about the course (such as its title or number and the term).

author: last name first — article title — supplementary information

Jahn, Gary R. "The Image of the Railroad in *Anna Karenina*." Course materials,

EN101, Fall 2013.

NOTE: When in doubt about how much information to include or where to find it, consult your instructor.

Source: Hacker/Sommers (Bedford/St. Martin's, 2016, 2014).
These guidelines are adapted from the *MLA Handbook*, 8th ed. (2016).

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