Fondren library is an indispensable asset to me as I work on my research projects. As a graduate student in philosophy, my research is focused exclusively on text resources. A project I’ll be focusing on in this essay attempted to understand the relationship between physical-disabilities and welfare. In order to find the relevant resources on this topic, I had to engage with both full-length monograph books and scholarly journal articles. To find the sources I needed, I used the excellent research databases Fondren has, specifically the Philosopher’s Index, Worldcat, and JSTOR. As a philosopher, naturally my favorite of these databases is the Philosopher’s Index. This database allows me to easily read many abstracts of books and articles, ignore sources that are irrelevant, and organize the important sources in bibliographies. This process is further made easy by Fondren’s wealth of journal subscriptions that makes downloading the sources a snap.

At only one point, I could not easily retrieve a particular article through the databases. To get some help I contacted the then philosophy subject librarian, Amanda Thomas. Within a short 30 minutes of sending Ms. Thomas my inquiry, she responded with the article attached. For a similar situation with a book I used Inter-Library Loans. With the combined effect of these library tools, I retrieved fifty-one high quality resources for my research project of which nine were directly relevant.

Not only was Fondren Library’s tools for finding and retrieving research invaluable but also its resources that relate to research methodology. Given the myriad of sources I was gathering for my project, I found it difficult to organize and keep track of them. I got the privilege to meet with Ms. Thomas in person to talk about my research needs and the various software packages available that could help. My research requires me to go through several sources that ultimately have little to do with a current project. Yet, I do not want to forget the sources I do engage with because they will likely be important for future research. I needed a software system to help me remember what I read before and find it easily in the future. Ms. Thomas suggested Zotero and Evernote® to meet these needs and I’ve been using them ever since. With these tools, research has (almost) become fun. Also, I am thankful for Fondren’s classes with Jane Zhao on Zotero to help researchers utilize it properly.

In order to produce good work from all the available resources in this research project, I needed a place to work for long periods. Fondren’s open study carrels offered me the opportunity to store my research material on a shelf in a cubby, a quiet place to work, and a smaller locker to store my personal items. As a result of the great resources and services provided to me by Fondren Library, I am now able to submit my research paper to various academic and scholarly conferences to advance my research and my career.