Suggested research strategies for the final paper

As mentioned earlier, analysis of your primary source should always include some material bibliography (as practiced in our Houghton visit) and textual analysis (typically with special attention to front matter of all kinds). Recommended additional research methods for contextualizing a primary source include (though not all are possible in all cases):

- Printing history. You should know the printing history of the source you are studying—when and where did it appear, in addition to the edition you are able to study here. You do not have to look at all the different editions in order to get some sense of them; use on-line catalogs from the relevant national library (e.g. British Library, Library of Congress) or collective catalogs like KVK is best for European libraries for a good collective catalog—available in “catalogs beyond Harvard.”

- Biographical context of author, but also of dedicatee, printer or others named in front matter when possible. There are a number of printed biographical dictionaries by country (France, England, US); but the most complete resource is the SAUR biographical index—consult Widener Reference desk on how to use it—you start with a printed index of names by country which refers you to collected biographical entries on microfiche (which you can print out). For obscure older figures, consider using a historical biographical dictionary (a genre that starts in the 17th ct): e.g. Moreri, *Grand Dictionnaire Historique*, which is available on e-resources at ARTFL, under “dictionnaires d’autrefois” or Zedler, *Universallexikon* available on line at [http://www.zedler-lexikon.de/](http://www.zedler-lexikon.de/)

- Sources: consider following up on the sources cited in your text, ideally using editions of the sources which would have been available to your author (rather than or in addition to modern editions of the same texts), to get a sense of the resources on which your primary source was drawing.

- Other comparable texts: one very effective way to contextualize a text is to compare it with other works which are comparable in some way-- whether in the same genre, or by the same author, or on the same topic, or from the same place, or in a different language or format… depending on the issues you are trying to study.