

Paper Writing Guide

for Assignments in Classes Taught by
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I. General

The purpose of this document is to guide the student through the process of creating an appropriate research paper for my classes in religion and/or history. Obviously, this guide cannot replace formal instruction in research and writing. It does attempt, nonetheless, to address common questions and pitfalls, as I have observed them through some years of teaching. Also, some issues specific to the academic style requirement of the subject areas in which I teach (religion and history) are covered. These mainly relate to citation style.

I am interested in making the paper writing process an educational one. For this reason, students are encouraged to consult with me at three points during the process: 1) bibliography creation; 2) outline of material to be covered; and 3) rough draft.

II. Plagiarizing

1. *A recent rash of plagiarized papers makes this section necessary.* Plagiarism is dishonest, unethical, and violates the College's rules for student conduct as outlined in "The Lance." For all of my classes, the following clarifications of plagiarism are enforced *in addition to* the College's policies.
2. *Plagiarism is defined as representing another person's work as your own.* This simple definition covers a multitude of academic sins, *any of which* provide cause for disciplinary action in my classes. Such action may result in—at my discretion—a zero for the assignment, immediate failure of the course, and/or referral for further disciplinary action by the College. Plagiarism results from, but is not limited to, the following common examples:
 - i. **Presenting a complete paper obtained from another source as your own.** This is the most egregious and most obviously dishonest form of plagiarism. The crime is not diminished by any superficial changes in wording. The Internet provides a ready temptation for this form of cheating.
 - ii. **Copying material from one or more sources verbatim.** That is, repeating the exact words of your source—apart from short, appropriately marked, quotes. While you may have done the work of looking up the source, outright incorporation of the material is plagiarism and academically dishonest, *whether or not the source is cited* (footnoted). Students often claim that they did not know this procedure was plagiarism, or claim they thought that citation of the source permits its outright incorporation. Well, now you know, and the excuse of ignorance *will not* be accepted! The point of research and writing is to learn about the research subject and write about it in your own words. Incorporation of blocks of material is a shortcut that avoids processing of information and synthesis. Thus, this form of plagiarism will be subject to the same penalties as others.

- iii. **Incorporation of material without giving your source.** That is, incorporating others' ideas without giving them credit. Many students seem to think that you are only required to provide citation (footnotes) when quoting directly. You must cite your source any time you incorporate ideas or information that is not common knowledge. In general, you should put the material in your own words; if you need to quote (repeat exact words for effect), use quote marks or inset the text in block quotes according to Turabian style. In either case, you must provide citation.
- iv. **Presenting another person's ideas as your own.** That is, using another person's argument, outline, or thought progression, without citation, even if you do not use their exact words. Taking the presentation or outline of another person's work and letting your readers assume you have created it is plagiarism. An example of this is using a reference article as a guide and following the same outline without giving citation to the article used. This can be avoided by giving honest, explanatory footnotes when you desire to use the same approach, or by creating your own approach to the topic.

III. Getting Started

1. *Subject matter.* If you are able to choose your topic (this may depend on the course), it is very important to choose something for which you have *or can generate* an interest. Few things are more tedious than research and writing on a topic that you don't care about.
2. *Research.* Begin reading *early*. Start with basic reference works for general knowledge and move to more in-depth sources as your research or interest expands. See below for ideas on sources.
3. *Organization.* Most recent composition training focuses on expression rather than on organization. For most research term papers in religion or history, however, it is a very good idea to organize what you want to say in an outline before you attempt the detailed wording. The points of the outline can become headings/subheadings within your paper. Students usually don't consider subheadings when they write, but they are a big help in organizing thoughts and making an efficient presentation. The less-than-thrilled reader (and this includes most professors who are grading) is also helped by subheadings (and this is good for the paper's grade).

IV. Sources

1. *Your Sources, or bibliography, are one of the most important keys to a good paper.* When grading papers, I turn *first* to the bibliography to see what sources were employed; then I read the paper itself. A weak bibliography virtually guarantees a weak score.
2. *General Hints and Clues for Finding Sources*
 - i. **Use the bibliography provided for the course.** For most courses, I have provided a bibliography of locally available sources (i.e., in the WCC library), arranged by topic (often in the order material is covered in class). You should start there. If sources on your topic are listed in the course bibliography, but not used in your paper, the results are not going to be favorable.
 - ii. **Use the standard reference resources for the area of your topic.** In biblical studies, this should always be *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*. Various specialty reference works are available for certain areas of history, biblical archaeology, ancient Near East, Dead Sea Scrolls, etc. If a course bibliography is provided, check for standard reference works listed there.

- ii. **Look for books/monographs using the library catalog.** But don't limit yourself to this. Also, think of works that may refer to your topic other than books listed specifically for that subject. For example, while you may not find individual books listed for individual figures or events, books on the history of the region they impacted will cover them. Many students report that, "the library doesn't have anything on this subject," when that simply is not true. Be diligent and resourceful.
- iii. **Search for journal articles in online search engines.** William Carey's library system subscribes to several search databases, such as UMI's ProQuest, EBSCOhost, or JSTOR. Beware of citation issues related to online databases, however (see below for this).
- iv. **Be creative.** Look for sources in the bibliographies of reference works and other sources you find. Don't forget to use textbooks!
- v. **Consult with your instructor.** I am always willing to discuss bibliography issues, but only after the student has made an effort to find sources on their own. *Do not* come into my office asking, "do you have any books on . . . ?" *Do* come into my office and say, "I have found these sources; do you know of anything I am missing?"

V. Bibliography and Citation Form

1. *You must use citations to indicate the source of information gained in your research.* Citations are not only for quoted material, but also for any significant bit of information garnered from an outside source. Indeed, quotations should only be used where the specific wording of the source adds significantly to your presentation.
2. *Turabian form:* "Turabian" form used by most humanities disciplines is the official style for religion and history; thus, citations should conform accordingly. Turabian style is determined by the latest edition of Kate Turabian's *A Manual for Writers*.¹ Although some editions of Turabian's guide allow parenthetical notes, footnote form is required for my (and virtually all other instructors') classes. For biblical studies, many issues not properly addressed for the field by Turabian have been clarified or superseded by the Society of Biblical Literature's *Handbook of Style*.² Both guides are available for reference in the William Carey College library. The following are ways to avoid common problems (pet peeves of this professor!):
 - i. **Use the correct form.** For example, *a print journal article discovered via an online search should be listed as a journal article, if at all possible, and not as an online source.* Thus, do not list ProQuest results as an online source with the ProQuest URL. Use the pagination of the print version, if that is available to you.
 - ii. **Articles in a major reference volume** (encyclopedias such as *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*) should be *cited by the author and title of the article, NOT BY THE EDITOR of the reference volume!* In other words, they should be treated as a "reference work article" (example below).
 - iii. **Be sure to include publication information** for books and reference works (see examples).

¹ Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 6th ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

² Patrick H. Alexander, et al, eds., *The SBL Handbook of Style: For Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Early Christian Studies* (Peabody, MS: Hendrickson, 1999).

- iv. **Put page numbers in citations** and in bibliographical listings for articles.
 - v. **For scripture references** do not use footnotes, but place the reference in parentheses in the body of the text using standard abbreviations for the work; i.e.: (Isa 6:1). If this follows a quote from scripture, indicate the translation used by standard abbreviation; i.e.: (Isa 7:14; NIV).
3. *Common Problems.* A common cause of confusion is the fact that different formats are used for bibliography and citation entries. A general rule to remember is: bibliographical entries are formal, with authors' last names first, and parts separated by periods; footnotes are less formal, like a continuous sentence, with authors' names in natural speech order and with parts of the reference separated by commas and with publication data in parentheses.

Take care to use the correct form for the source. For example, a print journal article discovered via an online search with pagination preserved should be listed as a journal article, not as an online source. As noted above, for major reference articles it is often better to treat them as in "Reference Work Articles" below rather than using the "Encyclopedia Article" form (with "S.v.") specified by Turabian. (This is really a specific use of the "Article/Chapter in an Edited Volume" form).

4. *Examples of bibliography and citation styles.* The following few examples are based on Turabian and/or *The SBL Handbook of Style*. For your listings and references, include all the information you can. The formats are guides, however, and some information may not be relevant or may not be present for your source. For example, do not put the edition information for first edition books. If no author is listed for your source (as in some reference articles), alphabetize by the title of the work (the title of the article or chapter always takes precedence over the title of the volume itself). When in doubt, be logical and consistent. Feel free to ask for assistance.

For each example, except for the last, there appears: 1) a bibliography template; 2) a bibliography sample; 3) a footnote template; and 4) a footnote example.

i. **Books and Monographs.**

- 1) bibliography template:

Author's Last Name, First Name. *Book Title*. xth Edition.
Translated/Edited by Soandso. Place of Publication: Publisher, Date.

- 2) bibliography example:

Ferguson, Everett. *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*. 2nd Edition. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993.

- 3) footnote template:

¹Author's First and Last Name, *Book Title*, xth ed., trans./ed. by Soandso (Place of Publication: Publisher, Date), pages.

- 4) footnote example:

¹ Everett Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 44-56.

ii. **Signed Reference Work Articles.**

- 1) bibliography template:

Author's Last Name, First Name. "Title of the Article." In *Reference Work Title*. xth Edition. Edited by Editor, page-numbers. City of Publication: Publisher, Date.

2) bibliography example:

Crockett, Bennie R., Jr. "Logos/Word." In *Mercer Dictionary of the Bible*. Edited by Watson E. Mills, 520. Macon: Mercer, 1990.

3) footnote template:

¹Author's First and Last Name, "Title of the Article," in *Reference Work Title*, xth Edition, ed. by Editor (City of Publication: Publisher, Date), page-numbers.

4) footnote example:

¹Bennie R. Crockett, Jr., "Logos/Word," in *Mercer Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. by Watson E. Mills (Macon: Mercer, 1990), 520.

iii. Journal Articles.

1) bibliography template:

Author's Last Name, First Name. "Title of the Article." *Journal Title* Volume/Issue# (Date): page-numbers.

2) bibliography example:

Crockett, Bennie R. "The Flowers of Palestine." *Biblical Illustrator* 15 (Summer 1989): 54-56.

3) footnote template:

¹Author's First and Last Name, "Title of the Article," *Journal Title* Volume/Issue# (Date): page-numbers.

4) footnote example:

¹ Bennie R. Crockett, "The Flowers of Palestine," *Biblical Illustrator* 15 (Summer 1989): 54-56.

iv. Article/Chapter in Edited Volume:

1) bibliography template:

Author's Last Name, First Name. "Title of the Article." In *Title of Book*, Edited by Editor's Name, page-numbers. Place: Publisher, Date.

2) bibliography example:

Tarn, W. W. and Charlesworth, M. P. "The Triumph of Octavian." In *The Cambridge Ancient History*, Vol. X, *The Augustan Empire*, ed. S. A. Cook, et al, 112-26. Cambridge: University Press, 1966.

3) footnote template:

¹Author's First and Last Name, "Title of the Article," in *Title of Book*, ed. Editor's Name (Place: Publisher, Date), page-numbers.

4) footnote example:

¹W. W. Tarn and M. P. Charlesworth, "The Triumph of Octavian," in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, Vol. X, *The Augustan Empire*, ed. S. A. Cook, et al (Cambridge: University Press, 1966), 112-15.

v. **Online Sources.**

1) bibliography template:

Author's Last Name, First Name (if given). "Title of Web Page or Other Item." No pages (if there is no pagination) Date of document (or Cited date accessed). Online: URL.

2) bibliography example:

"Bible Translations." No pages. 13 October 2005. Online: <http://www.wmcarey.edu/carey/bibles/translation.htm>.

3) footnote template:

¹Author's First and Last Name, "Title of Web Page or Other Item," n.p. (if no pagination) [date of document or date accessed]. Online: URL.

4) footnote example:

¹"Bible Translations," n.p. [October 13, 2005]. Online: <http://www.wmcarey.edu/carey/bibles/translation.htm>.

VI. Cover Page

The Cover Page Template on the next page must be used for research papers in my classes. This sheet contains a template that will be used in the evaluation process, but also serves as a guide to the student during paper preparation. The cover sheet may be printed as is and the relevant data filled in, or the template in Microsoft Word format may be incorporated into the student's paper. By adding his/her name to the cover page, the student affirms that they have read this document and understand what is expected of their work on the attached paper.

RESEARCH PAPER COVER AND EVALUATION FORM

Course	
Paper Title	
Name/signature <small>signature indicates student's assent to and understanding of expectations in the "Paper Writing Guide"</small>	
Date Due/ Date Submitted	

Written Paper Evaluation

area of evaluation excellent good average weak poor comments

Consultation with instructor; Paper concept						
Sources/bibliography						
Academic style/format; presentation/organization						
Correct English grammar, spelling, style, proofing, etc.						
Accuracy of information						
Depth/level of coverage						
Clarity of presentation (to an uninformed audience)						

Oral Review Evaluation

questions excellent good average weak poor comments

1 (general)						
2 (general)						
3 (general or from paper)						
4 (from paper)						
5 (from paper)						

written review grade = _____ % Grade from oral review = _____ Final Grade (written x oral %)= _____ .