

Writing Handbook

2020-2021

North Park Theological Seminary

For additional assistance please contact:

- Your course professor, to interpret an assignment
- Kris Bruckner, NPTS Writing and Academic Support
kbruckner@northpark.edu to give feedback on writing style and thesis formatting.
- Dr. Stephen Spencer, NPTS Seminary Librarian
srspencer@northpark.edu to assist with sources for research papers and projects
- Brandel Library Website <https://library.northpark.edu/>

INTRODUCTION

North Park Theological Seminary is a graduate institution, with high expectations regarding written assignments. The following information will help you understand the paradigm for many aspects of your work and the academic expectations of your professors. The strategies for time management, reading for meaning, etc., will also help you to work in a measured, efficient manner-- to avoid a backlog of work at the end of the semester.

You are responsible for the information in this handbook regarding style and formatting of your papers, including citations. It is essential to begin your work with a clear understanding of the specific expectations for your papers regarding form. It is also essential to remember that any paper in any class should be a direct, specific, and clear response to the assignment given by your professor. If you are unclear on an assignment, always begin by reading the syllabus carefully, and then by asking clarifying questions of your professor.

North Park Seminary uses Turabian style for all papers, unless you instructed otherwise by your professor. You should purchase the latest edition of Turabian and refer to it for the details of proper formatting. Use the sample pages at the end of this document to see what a page with footnotes and a bibliography should look like. If you are using parenthetical notes, use a reference list at the end of the paper, rather than a bibliography.

Kris Bruckner kbruckner@northpark.edu provides academic support for all seminary students and can assist you with writing or reading questions or issues you may have. Her blog posts on seminary writing can be found at <https://www.theorange.blogspot.com>. The one credit class (online) Academic Writing is an additional resource for those looking to go deeper in improving their writing for seminary work. Register for MNST 6105 II during the fall or spring semesters.

Dr. Stephen Spencer, srspencer@northpark.edu (#6241) the theological librarian, can assist you with research for papers or projects.

The seminary website has additional online resources that may be helpful, including a digital version of this handbook <https://www.northpark.edu/seminary/academics/student-resources/>

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STUDY STRATEGIES FOR SEMINARY WORK

Time Management During the Semester

- **Start early by analyzing your syllabi and divide each assignment into parts (reading, projects, or papers).** Break tasks into small, manageable pieces, and then complete each one. Make the results measurable so you can see your progress.
- **Set specific goals for each unit of time.** When you fill in your schedule, be specific about what you plan to accomplish in each research or writing session.
- **Utilize periods of maximum alertness.** Work during the time of day you feel most alert, refreshed, and relaxed. After 1½ hours to 2 hours of study, take a break to maximize concentration.
- **Utilize odd hours of the day for studying.** Plan and establish the habit of using small bits of time for reading, planning, pre-reading, pre-writing, etc.
- **Do it now.** If you notice yourself procrastinating, plunge into a task. Even a small step forward will move you down the road to completion of your assignment.

Essential Questions Before, During and After You Read

What is the bibliographic information for the book, chapter, or article?

- If you are doing reading or research for a paper, create a full citation
- Include the title, author, editor, page numbers, publisher, and date

What is the title?

- What does it tell you about the topic or subject?
- What do you already know about the subject?
- What do you expect it to say?

Who wrote it?

- What are the author's credentials or affiliations (where do they work, have degrees from)?
- What might be his/her prejudices or perspectives?
- What is the author's other work related to the subject?

What information is crucial to you?

- What are the main points, or theses (scan table of contents and sub-headings)?
- What is the evidence that the author gives to sustain the thesis or theses?

Once you have finished the article, chapter or book reflect on:

- How does it relate to what you already know and to your assignment?
- Did you find the argument convincing on its own terms?
- Can you think of information that makes you doubt the main point(s), even if the essay argued it well?
- How does the essay relate to other things you have read, that is, how does it fit in the historical literature?

GUIDELINES FOR WRITING PAPERS

- **Start early.** Have an organized timetable for reading and research (35%), writing (40%) and editing (25%).
- **Read your syllabus, and all related course supplements, before you begin.** If your paper is based on course reading, be sure you understand the nature of your writing assignment before you begin to read. A summary or precis requires primarily a description of the author's points and arguments, not your opinions.
- **When you analyze or critique an author's work, your response should deal with how effectively or convincingly they made their case,** not whether you thought it was a worthwhile project.
- **Organize your material** into a detailed outline. You will write more clearly and efficiently if you know exactly what you are going to say.
- **Avoid long (or frequent) quotations.** Use a direct quote only if it states a point more powerfully than you could in a summary or paraphrase.
- **All sources must have a citation (parenthetical or footnote).**
- **Edit your work.** After you have written a rough draft, allow time to re-write for flow, logic, and clarity (global revision). Then edit for spelling, grammar, etc. (local revision). **Professors expect a document free of careless mistakes.**

Format Guidelines

- **For papers of more than 5 pages, include a title page,** with centered title, your name, course name, professor's name, and the date. Shorter papers should have this information on page 1, single spaced, in the top left-hand corner.
- **Double space your paper** on one side only, with one-inch margins, Times New Roman, 12-pt. (**A thesis requires the left-hand margin to be 1.5 inches, to allow for binding.**) If your professor instructs you to single space, use block paragraphs, with a double space between each paragraph. No indentation is necessary if you are using block paragraphs.
- **Use quotation marks** around exact quotes of one or two sentences. Quotes of 3-5 sentences should be indented and single-spaced in block form, and double spaced before and after the quote. Quotes longer than 5 sentences should generally be avoided. Introduce quotes smoothly and appropriately into your text (See pages 8 and following)
- **Source citations.** Any research that appears in your paper must be given proper credit. If you do not clearly show the source of your information, it will be considered **plagiarism**. This is a very serious offense, and may result in failing a course, or in the case of repeated incidents, expulsion from seminary. (See p. 10)
- **Include proper documentation of sources.** Follow the Turabian 8th edition style guide unless you are instructed otherwise. Turabian allows for the use of either footnotes/bibliography or in-text parenthetical/reference list citations. Carefully read pages 8 and following for more details.
- **Include a bibliography (if you are using footnotes) or a reference list (if you are using parenthetical notes)** that properly lists all your sources. (Pages 8ff.)
- **Use proper grammar, spelling, and punctuation.** Do not use contractions.

- Use **gender inclusive language** when referring to people in general. Use he or she interchangeably, never he/she. Be courteous and sensitive to your audience.

A Few Reminders Concerning Turabian Citation Style

- While the body of the paper is in 12-pt. font, footnotes should be in 10-pt. font, indented five spaces on the first line, single-spaced within, and double spaced between.
- The second time you cite a source in your paper, and for consecutive uses, you may use an abbreviated note.
- *Ibid.* should only be used when a fuller citation appears on the same page, or just above the note. Do not use *ibid* to refer to a note on the prior page.
- When biblical books appear in parenthesis and footnotes, they should be abbreviated. See the summary below for correct abbreviations.

Academic Writing Style: Write with Verbs in Mind

Your writing is expected to **DO** something—to have some sort of action. The following verbs will help you use movement and direction in your writing and will also help you do what is asked in an assignment which uses one of these terms.

- **ANALYZE** Break into separate parts and discuss, examine, or interpret each part.
- **COMPARE** Examine two or more things. Identify similarities and differences.
- **CONTRAST** Show differences. Set in opposition.
- **CRITICIZE** Make judgments. Evaluate comparative worth.
- **DEFINE** Give the meaning; usually a meaning specific to the course. Determine the precise limits of the term to be defined.
- **DESCRIBE** Give a detailed account. Create a picture with words. List characteristics, qualities, and parts.
- **DISCUSS** Consider and debate or argue the pros and cons of an issue. Write about any conflict. Compare and contrast.
- **ENUMERATE** List several ideas, aspects, events, qualities, reasons, etc.
- **EVALUATE** Give your opinion, taking the measure of an argument or position. Include evidence to support the evaluation.
- **ILLUSTRATE** Give concrete examples that demonstrate the point.
- **INTERPRET** Comment upon, and describe relationships. Explain the meaning, then evaluate its implications.
- **OUTLINE** Describe structure of the main ideas, characteristics, or events.
- **PROVE** Support with facts (especially facts presented in class or in the course texts). Use logical arguments with warrants.
- **STATE** Explain precisely.
- **SUMMARIZE** Give a brief, condensed account. Include conclusions. Avoid unnecessary details but include key elements.
- **TRACE** Show the order of events or progress of a subject or event.

Guidelines for Research and Integrative Papers

- **Always begin by carefully reading the details of your assignment.**
- **For a research paper, decide on a thesis or topic** for your project *before* you begin your research. What specific question will you ask of each source?
- **Focus and limit your research** to make your *writing* easier. Do not seek out or include information outside of your chosen topic.
- **Compile a working bibliography.** Use books, articles, and/or reliable websites and any other pertinent resources. Be sure to keep excellent bibliographic information for each source, to avoid plagiarism.
- **Begin reading in your subject, assessing, and taking notes as you go.** Ask yourself pertinent questions about the author's assumptions, premises and beliefs. Be aware of how an author or source fits within the larger body of material on the subject. Take notes, paraphrasing and summarizing important facts and concepts. Note additional sources provided by the author, as these may prove useful in your own research. Keep your notes organized.
- **Prewrite.** Brainstorm, free-write, make lists, draw diagrams; use whatever strategy works for you to begin making connections between the ideas and information you've been reading.
- **Select the cluster of information and ideas which most interest you.** This will help you restrict a broad subject.
- **Be issue-oriented.** Stick to *your* points. Don't try to simply summarize your research. Exclude extra information which does not directly pertain to your argument. Be focused, clear and specific.
- **Be logical and persuasive.** Think about your paper as an opportunity to convince your reader. Make an argument and keep your voice distinct from that of your sources.
- **Balance the discussion.** If scholars debate the issues involved, you should analyze and critique the main positions. (i.e., summarize a position, and then give the pros and cons)

INCORPORATING OUTSIDE SOURCES EFFECTIVELY

When to use Turabian Parenthetical Notes/Reference List Style

When you are writing a shorter paper, or one in which the entire class is responding to the same book, lecture or article, use Turabian in-text parenthetical notes, (author's last name, date of publication, comma, page number) and a reference list at the end of your paper. You may also use this style for a longer paper with few sources, such as an integrative paper or project with largely in-class sources (those assigned by your professor. Your professor may also state a preference for a certain citation style, and you should always follow this guidance as a priority.

Here is a link that explains and gives examples of this style:

<https://www.library.georgetown.edu/tutorials/research-guides/turabian-paren-guide>

When to use Turabian Footnote/Bibliography Style

For longer papers (more than 5-6 pages), research papers, and those papers with sources you have found for your project, use footnotes and a bibliography. Here is a link that summarizes and gives example of that style. See the Turabian Style Guide for more details.

<https://www.library.georgetown.edu/tutorials/research-guides/turabian-footnote-guide>

Weaving Outside Sources into your Paper

Outside sources provide proof of or support for your argument and demonstrate your awareness of expert information on your topic. You can use a summary, paraphrase, or direct quotation to bring in an outside source, *weaving* that source into your own writing. You must connect the outside source to what you are saying by introducing the source and explaining its relevance, creating a smooth, integrated, logical document. Do not let the sources "write" the paper, but rather interpret and analyze the various positions you have found in your research. **Incorporating and citing sources correctly is how to avoid PLAGIARISM.**

The most frequent way to use an outside source should be through paraphrase or summary of the source's comment, opinion, or argument.

Paraphrase

Paraphrase is the most common method used to incorporate an outside source into your own words and syntax. As with a summary, the author's ideas must be accurately restated. A paraphrase generally *expands* the original statement, perhaps explaining it more fully. As with a summary, you must introduce and integrate the source into your argument smoothly, yet distinctively. Use a footnote at the end of the source's idea.

Summary

A summary is a condensed version of a larger section of work, such as a chapter of a book. A summary shortens the original material significantly, but it must include both the context and all of the original author's key ideas. A summary must be objective, representing the author's ideas with precision. Your analysis should not be included within the summary, but rather precede or follow it. Summarize the author's idea, and THEN have a "conversation" with his argument. Your comments should follow the footnote, so that the reader does not confuse what the original author said with what you think about it. Use summary sparingly and be careful to rework the author's ideas in your own words and syntax. A summary should be introduced in the text and followed with a footnote.

Guidelines for Summary and Paraphrase

- Read the original passage at least three times to ensure that you understand the author's meaning. Be sure to read the passage in context.
- The paraphrase or summary must be written in your own words. Put the original away, allow some time to pass and then write your paraphrase from memory. It should not "sound like" the original but should "mean" the same thing.
- Write a paraphrase of the paraphrase. This will also help you to remove your words from those of the original author.
- When working with more than a few sentences, follow the order or sequence of ideas in the original.
- Capture all the essential meaning. To keep from leaving something out, count the ideas in the original, and then count the ideas in your paraphrased version.
- Do NOT twist, alter, or change the author's intended meaning.
- Aim to capture the author's meaning as exactly as possible, but in your own words. Your paraphrase or summary should blend in smoothly with everything else you have written in your paper.
- NEVER make a "mirror image" of the style in the original passage. Do not just fill-in-the-blanks with synonyms. Paraphrasing is not an exercise in word substitution, but an act of translation. This means you need to change the syntax, sentence structure or word order, as well as how it is said.
- Use a footnote, endnote or parenthetical citation following your summary or paraphrase to give proper credit to the source. Even though it is not a direct quotation, the idea belongs to someone else and must be acknowledged to avoid plagiarism.

Direct Quotations (use less frequently)

You use a direct quotation when you intend to comment on the passage directly – especially a biblical text or piece of literature, when you are appealing directly to authority, or when the language of the original cannot be surpassed; you couldn't say it more clearly, succinctly or with more style.

Guidelines for Direct Quotations

- Choose a quote that supports your point with force. It should be interesting, well-stated, full of evidence, and a strong reinforcement to your argument.

- A direct quotation should be identical with the original. If you leave out words in the beginning, middle or end of a quotation, indicate this deletion by using ellipses. “. . . like this.” “You should . . . like this.” “A great man once . . .”
- Introduce quotations carefully. Introduce a quotation by citing the author’s name and then using an appropriate verb, such as: states, asserts, explains, or demonstrates.
- If only part of the quotation is relevant to your paper, you may use a portion of a sentence. However, the sentence the quotation fits into should make sense as a complete sentence.
- When quoting material that is quoted (a quote within a quote), use single quotation marks inside the double quotation marks. In the citation, this material would be indicated by the following: (quoted in Author’s last name, page number).
- Use quotation marks for a quote within your text. Such quotes should be no more than 2 sentences long. If you use a longer quote (3-5 sentences) insert it in block form and single space. Double space before and after the block quote. There are very few occasions when you will use a quote which is longer than 5 sentences.
- Use properly formatted citations for the source of your quote. See Kate L. Turabian’s *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, for details.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the intentional or accidental use of someone else’s ideas or words without giving that person credit. It is not only blatant or obvious “borrowing,” such as copying a lengthy passage from a book or article. It also includes a variety of subtle forms of academic dishonesty including, but not limited to:

- Copying another author’s syntax, language, or wording without giving credit
- Failing to document the source of ideas or language another author has used
- Failing to document the original source of ideas or language you first used in another paper
- Having someone else write your paper for you
- Getting too much help on a paper
- Turning in a paper you wrote for another class

It is simple enough to eliminate plagiarism by giving credit where credit is due. Simply note to whom ideas and passages belong and where you encountered them. If information is common knowledge, or is found in several different sources, then you do not have to cite it. If it is not, or you are unsure, cite it.

**COMMONLY USED ABBREVIATIONS
FROM THE SBL HANDBOOK OF STYLE**

Hebrew Bible	HB
Old Testament	OT
New Testament	NT

Abbreviations of Modern Versions of Scripture (SBL Handbook of Style)

American Standard Version	ASV
Jerusalem Bible	JB
King James Version	KJV
New Living Translation	NLT
New American Standard Bible	NASB
New English Bible	NEB
New International Version	NIV
New Jerusalem Bible	NJB
New King James Version	NKJV
New Revised Standard Version	NRSV
Revised English Bible	REB
Revised Standard Version	RSV
Today's New International Version	TNIV

Abbreviations of Old Testament Books (SBL Handbook of Style)

Genesis	Gen
Exodus	Exod
Leviticus	Lev
Numbers	Num
Deuteronomy	Deut
Joshua	Josh
Judges	Judg
Ruth	Ruth
1-2 Samuel	1-2 Sam
1-2 Kings	1-2 Kgs
1-2 Chronicles	1-2 Chr
Ezra	Ezra
Nehemiah	Neh
Esther	Esth
Job	Job
Psalms	Ps/Pss
Proverbs	Prov
Ecclesiastes	Eccl
Song of Songs	Song
Isaiah	Isa
Jeremiah	Jer
Lamentations	Lam
Ezekiel	Ezek

Daniel	Dan
Hosea	Hos
Joel	Joel
Amos	Amos
Obadiah	Obad
Jonah	Jonah
Micah	Mic
Nahum	Nah
Habakkuk	Hab
Zephaniah	Zeph
Haggai	Hag
Zechariah	Zech
Malachi	Mal

Abbreviations of New Testament Books (SBL Handbook of Style)

Matthew	Matt
Mark	Mark
Luke	Luke
John	John
Acts	Acts
Romans	Rom
1-2 Corinthians	1-2 Cor
Galatians	Gal
Ephesians	Eph
Philippians	Phil
Colossians	Col
1-2 Thessalonians	1-2 Thess
1-2 Timothy	1-2 Tim
Titus	Titus
Philemon	Phlm
Hebrews	Heb
James	Jas
1-2 Peter	1-2 Pet
1-2-3 John	1-2-3 John
Jude	Jude
Revelation	Rev

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR SEMINARY WRITING

General

Barber, Cyril J., and Robert M Krauss, Jr. *An Introduction to Theological Research*.

Core, Deborah. *The Seminary Student Writes*.

Hacker, Diana. *Rules for Writers*.

Lunsford, Andrea A. and Ruskiewicz, John J. *Everything's an Argument*.

Murray, Donald M. *The Craft of Revision*.

Strunk, William, and E.B. White. *The Elements of Style*.

Vyhmeister, Nancy Jean. *Quality Research Papers for Students of Religion and Theology*.

Williams, Joseph M. *Style: Ten Lessons in Clarity and Grace*.

Yaghjian, Lucretia B. *Writing Theology Well: A Rhetoric for Theological and Biblical Writers*.

Style Manuals

Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association.

Turabian, Kate L. *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 8th edition.

Useful Links for Seminary Studies

<http://www.northpark.edu/Seminary/Academics/Student-Resources>

http://www.wts.edu/resources/westminster_center_for_theolog/become_writerhtml.html

<http://www.enterthebible.org/>

<https://www.workingpreacher.org/>

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>