

Writing Handbook

2022–2023

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*North Park Theological Seminary*

## CONTENTS

Academic Expectations & Resources	1
Study Strategies	2
Guidelines for Writing Papers	3
Incorporating Outside Sources	6
Commonly Used Abbreviations from the SBL Handbook of Style	9
Resources for Seminary Research and Writing	11

## ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS & RESOURCES

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, and other components of the seminary studies will also help you to work in a measured, efficient manner and 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 prompt 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 (9th) of *A Manual for Writers* by Kate 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. Sample research papers in Turabian style can be found in both [notes/bibliography](#) and [parenthetical citations/references](#) and other helpful examples can be found on Purdue University's Online Writing Lab at <https://owl.purdue.edu/>.

In addition to this Writing Handbook, many resources are available to you as NPTS students:

- The university Writing Center provides academic support for all North Park students and can assist you with writing or reading questions or issues you may have.
  - You are welcome to attend drop-in hours (in person or virtually) with an undergraduate Writing Advisor to work on any writing assignment at any stage of the process, contact a professional Writing Coach to make a one-time appointment, or request to be paired to work regularly with a Writing Coach.
  - For more information, please see the [Writing Center website](#) or contact Writing Center director Melissa Pavlik ([mpavlik@northpark.edu](mailto:mpavlik@northpark.edu); [schedule a meeting here](#)) or assistant director Tony Pizzaro ([apizzarro@northpark.edu](mailto:apizzarro@northpark.edu)).
- The Seminary's one credit asynchronous course MNST 6105-II Academic Writing is an additional resource for those desiring to grow further in their writing.
- Seminary liaison librarian Evan Kuehn ([ekuehn@northpark.edu](mailto:ekuehn@northpark.edu); [schedule meeting here](#)) can assist you with research for papers or projects or connect you with someone who can.
- The seminary student resources page includes additional resources, including a digital version of this handbook <https://www.northpark.edu/seminary/academics/student-resources/>.
- Your course professor is always the primary resource for interpreting specific assignments—and will be glad to hear from you with any questions or uncertainties!

## STUDY STRATEGIES

### *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 1.5–2 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.
- **Attend “Procrastinators Anonymous.”** These dynamic study sessions sponsored by the Writing Center focus on study skills (such as notetaking and following the rubric) or break into small groups to catch up on reading, discuss class content, or build community. The group meets in front of the Writing Center in Brandel Library as well as by Microsoft Teams. For information or to attend, contact Tony Pizarro ([apizarro@northpark.edu](mailto:apizarro@northpark.edu)).

### *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 (place of work, doctoral degree)?
- What might be his/her/their 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, research, annotating, and brainstorming (35%), writing an early draft (20%), revising and rewriting (20%), and proofreading and editing (25%).
- **Read your syllabus and all related course supplements before you begin.** Be sure you understand your writing assignment before you begin to read. A summary or precis assignment, for example, 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.**
- **Organize your material** into a detailed outline. You will write more clearly and efficiently if you know exactly what you are going to say. Use your professor's assignment prompt to understand what sections of material should be included in your outline.
- **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*

- **Double space your paper** 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.**) No indentation of paragraphs is necessary if you are using block paragraphs.
- **Use quotation marks** around exact quotations. Quotes longer than four sentences should be indented and single-spaced in block form, and double spaced before and after the quote. Quotes longer than five sentences should generally be avoided. Introduce quotes smoothly and appropriately into your text. (See pp. 8ff. below.)
- **Source citations.** Any research that appears in your paper, whether verbatim or paraphrased, 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 below.)
- **Include proper documentation of sources.** Follow the Turabian ninth 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, and check out these [Turabian Tip Sheets](#).
- **Include a bibliography (if you are using footnotes) or a reference list (if you are using parenthetical notes)** that properly lists all your sources (pp. 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-point font, footnotes should be in 10-point 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, and/or reasons.
- **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 Citations/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 citation (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 are two links that explain and give examples of this style:

[Parenthetical Citations in Turabian Style](#)  
[References List in Turabian Style](#)

### ***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 are two links that explain and give examples of this style:

[Footnotes in Turabian Style](#)  
[Bibliography in Turabian Style](#)

See the Turabian Style Guide's [Turabian Style Online Tip Sheets](#) for more details.

### ***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. Generally such quotes should be no more than two sentences long. If you quote more than four sentences, insert it in block form, single space. Double space before and after the block quote. There are very few occasions when you will use a quote this long.
- 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, 9th Edition* for details. The 9th edition of Turabian's guide aligns with the 17th edition of the *Chicago Manual of Style*.

### ***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.

One way to better understand how to format and cite in your own paper is to take a look at a model paper as an example. Use the links below from Purdue's Online Writing Lab to view, download, and even print these sample papers as references for how to organize and complete your own paper in these styles:

[Sample Paper with Parenthetical Citations and References Page](#)  
[Sample Paper with Footnotes and Bibliography](#)

## COMMONLY USED ABBREVIATIONS FROM THE SBL HANDBOOK OF STYLE

Before referring to the *SBL Handbook of Style* [student supplement](#) for discipline-specific questions not covered by your Turabian manual/CMOS, take a look at some basic tips and commonly used abbreviations here:

- **Capitalization:** It is standard is to use lowercase for “divine pronouns” but upper case for proper names (God, Yahweh). Use lowercase for the adjectives “biblical” and “scriptural,” but uppercase for the proper nouns “Bible” and “Scripture.”
- **Stand-alone abbreviations:** BCE, CE, and Bible translations (NIV, NRSV, see below) may occur without spelling these out at the first appearance. In other cases, the first instance should be spelled out (and in most cases always spelled out for formality, e.g., write “New Testament” instead of “NT” in papers.

### *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
1–3 John	1–3 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, 9th 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.wts.edu/resources/westminster_center_for_theolog/become_writerhtml.html)

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

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

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