

A MANUAL FOR WRITING TESTS AND PAPERS

Presented to

The Students of Presbyterian College

for

All Religion and Philosophy Courses of Instruction

by

The Department of Religion and Philosophy

Presbyterian College

2010

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I. PREFACE

Communicating well is a hallmark of an educated person. Learning to communicate effectively is central to a liberal arts education. This brief guide is offered to you by the Department of Religion and Philosophy to assist you in the work of expressing well—through papers and exams—both that which you have learned and that which you have to contribute to the conversations of these disciplines.

The Department of Religion and Philosophy commends as a guide for all term papers and research projects the work by Kate L. Turabian entitled *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* (6th ed., Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996). Other important resources for writing are listed at the end of this guide in the bibliography. Writing instructions for particular assignments are provided by the courses' instructors.

This guide is a general introduction to the most common elements of style that students will encounter and employ as they prepare papers to submit in any course offered by this department. Students should consult Turabian and their instructors whenever they have questions about matters not covered in this general introduction.

This brief manual of style does not address every stylistic issue one may encounter. Rather, it is a guide to assist students as they face perplexing decisions regarding the format of their papers and the proper notation their sources. Like a trail guide, the student's paper should lead the reader to a particular destination while pointing out helpful sights along the way. Students should be careful to cite constructive works that have helped them reach a particular insight or understanding.

II. WRITING TESTS AND EXAMS

In every course offered by the department, students write essays for tests and exams. The following comments are offered to help students write well under pressure.

A. Helpful Tips

- 1. Write legibly.** The instructor has no choice but to count illegible answers wrong.
- 2. Always read the question carefully, and be sure that you do everything that the question asks for.** Are there several parts to the question? If so, be sure to deal with each part (e.g., "Identify and explain the significance of. . .").
- 3.** Pay special attention to words such as "**Compare**," "**Contrast**," "**Discuss**," and "**Explain**." If you are asked to compare A and B, it is not sufficient simply to describe A in one paragraph and B in another; show how they are similar to each other (comparison) or different from each other (contrast).
- 4.** To make your points clear in an essay answer, it is helpful to number the points or **start a new paragraph for each point**. You do yourself a disservice by combining the entire answer in one paragraph, because this makes it more difficult for the instructor to recognize your several points (and most essay answers should have multiple points to make).

B. Overcoming the Most Common Problems

The two greatest shortcomings in student answers are (1) failure to elaborate on an answer sufficiently to convince the teacher that the student really knows and understands the material, and (2) failure to be specific.

1. FAILURE TO ELABORATE:

It is not enough to give brief, general answers, even if what you write is correct. Often a student will write statements that are correct (frequently memorized from the lecture) and then is surprised when the grade on the answer is low. In order to receive a high grade, the student should not only state things correctly, but must also go into enough detail to demonstrate a solid grasp of the topic.

It is helpful to follow **THREE SIMPLE STEPS** to build a good answer to an essay question:

- (a) **STATE the correct answer as clearly as possible**, preferably in your own words. If you simply repeat memorized statements from your notes in the teacher's words, this gives the impression that you are simply

regurgitating points without real understanding. Most of you were able to memorize and recite in kindergarten or elementary school, so if this is the only intellectual gift which you display on a test, you should not expect a high grade in a college course.

(b) **RE-STATE the correct answer in different words.** This is especially important if you began your answer with a memorized statement. Unless you can filter an idea through your own mind and express the idea in your own words, it is doubtful that you have understood the idea.

(c) **Give EXAMPLES or ILLUSTRATIONS** to make the answer clearer.

Example

Question: *"The Hebrew nation was a latecomer on the stage of ancient history." Explain what is meant by this, and tell why it is true.*

Answer: **Many of the other nations had been around for years before the Hebrew nation was formed. Israel did not get started until about 1290 BC.**

While this answer is correct in what it says, it does not demonstrate a very extensive grasp of the material. The student should be able to say a lot more about each sentence in the above answer. Notice how the following answer shows a much better grasp of the material and is better able to persuade the instructor that the student understands:

Answer: **This statement means that among the nations of the ancient world, there were other countries, such as Egypt and Mesopotamia, which grew and flourished long before the 'birth' of the Hebrew nation. By the time the Israelite nation was organized, Egypt and Mesopotamia had been around for many centuries, and both had achieved a high degree of civilization. The Hebrew nation did not exist anywhere near the 'dawn of history' and did not have a culture nearly as ancient as the cultures of her neighbors in the Nile valley and the Tigris-Euphrates valley.**

Egypt, in the early third millennium BC, had developed engineering skills adequate to construct great pyramids, built of enormously heavy stones. Mesopotamia, likewise, produced a rather sophisticated civilization many centuries before the Israelite nation saw the light of day; literature of a high quality was produced during the Sumerian period, which occurred nearly a thousand years before the birth of Israel. . . .

2. FAILURE TO BE SPECIFIC:

The other great fault of many students' answers is that the answer, while correct and perhaps even lengthy, is too vague or general. Be as specific as possible. One way of doing this, of course, is to give examples.

Instead of simply saying, "**Part of the diversity of the Bible is that it contains diversity of genres,**" tell specifically what some of the genres are (laws, genealogies, love poems, letters, etc.) and give examples of each one.

Instead of simply saying, "**The creation stories show both that humans are great but also that mortals should be humble,**" tell specifically how the stories in Genesis 1 and 2 make these points: for example,

"Genesis 1 relates that humans have been created in the image of God, more like God than anything else in all creation, and God gave humans the command to have dominion over all creation. In Genesis 2, the man is made from the ground which God had created, and the writer stresses the lowliness of this creature by the Hebrew words used; 'adam was made out of the 'adamah."

III. WRITING TERM PAPERS

Upper level courses in the Religion and Philosophy Department require students to submit term papers. This portion of the manual is offered to assist students in this important work.

A. The Completed Paper: Page Format and Content

Term Papers should include the following: (1) the title page; (2) the main body of the paper; and (3) the bibliography. **Honors Research Papers** should include the basic components of a term paper with certain additions so that it includes the following: (1) the title page; (2) the table of contents; (3) a list of illustrations (if any); (4) acknowledgments (if any); (5) a list of abbreviations (if any); (6) the main body of the paper; (7) appendix (if any); (8) the bibliography.

1. The **title page** should include the following: (1) the title of the paper; (2) the professor and department to which it is being submitted; (3) the course title; (4) the name of the writer; and (5) the date submitted. See the title page of this manual.

Where a table of contents is used for an Honors Research Paper, it should show the main divisions of the paper and the page number on which the treatment of each main topic begins. See the sample table of contents in the appendix of this manual.

2. The **main body** of the paper should be double-spaced with indented paragraphs, except for block quotations, notes, captions, and long headings, which should be single-spaced with a blank line between items. All papers shall use one inch side-margins and a 12-point font. Page numbers must always be used (see Turabian, *A Manual for Writers*, 1.4 and 14.6-9 for pagination instructions). For lengthy projects, such as the Honors Research Paper, division and subdivision headings may be needed. Headings should be centered and should reflect divisional relationships (see Turabian, 1.16, 4.6-12). Complete **footnotes or endnotes** (see course instructor) are required (see Turabian, 8 and 14.13-17). See the Appendix A of this manual for examples of quoted and cited material.
3. The **bibliography** should list all of the works cited as well as any other relevant resources consulted for the research and writing of the paper. Students will find Turabian to be especially helpful for properly documenting their sources (see Turabian, 9 and 11). Sample bibliographic forms are also given in Appendix B of this manual.

B. Responsible Research

1. Distinguish between **primary** and **secondary** sources.
 - a. Primary sources may be:
 1. the religious or philosophical texts themselves (such as the Bible, the Koran, the Bhagavad-Gita, Plato's Republic, etc.).
 2. original essays by prominent scholars (e.g., Karl Barth, Paul Achtemeier, etc.).
 - b. Secondary sources are:
 1. discussions of the primary texts by scholars, etc.
 2. discussions of the original essays of certain scholars by others.
2. Secondary sources are the obvious place to begin in the study of a topic. Let the secondary sources then lead you to the appropriate primary sources.
3. DO NOT rely on just one commentator's interpretation of the primary sources; try to locate several studies of any given text (such as the Biblical creation stories, or Mohammed's experience of being called) in order to gain a sense of the range of perspectives and interpretations.
4. Examine the indexes of books to see where in the book your topic is discussed.
5. Search for materials related to your topic in the college library (Thom Cat) and on the World Wide Web. In searching, try using a variety of terms which might relate to your topic. For example, if you are writing on the role of women, try searching for materials on "woman," "women," "females," "gender," etc.

C. The Challenge of Managing Sources

One of the most challenging aspects of writing a term paper is managing one's sources properly. This section addresses when and how to give credit to others who have contributed to your own thinking and perspective on a particular topic.

1. The Problem of Plagiarism

"If you fail to acknowledge borrowed material, then you are plagiarizing. Plagiarism is literary theft. When you copy the words of another, put those words inside quotation marks, and acknowledge the source with a [footnote or endnote]. When you paraphrase another's words, use your own words and your own sentence structure, and be sure to use a [footnote or endnote] giving the source of your idea. A plagiarist often merely changes a few words or simply rearranges the words in a source." -*Harbrace College Handbook*

2. A Simple Solution: Honesty

In order to participate in any conversation, one must know what has already been said. Good term papers show clear evidence of the author's consideration of other "voices" from persons who have contributed to the conversation of a given topic. As you read, take notes of other persons' insights and identify on the notes the source of each quotation or your summary of it.

The following is a passage from Page Smith's *A New Age Begins: A People's History of the American Revolution*:

So ended the confused, tension-filled and finally bloody encounter that is known as the Boston Massacre. That is no worse is a tribute to the British military discipline and coolness of Captain Preston. It is also a tribute to the patriot leaders, who kept the mob from exploding into greater violence. Finally it is a tribute to Thomas Hutchinson, who acted with great decision and courage. But last of all, it is a testament to the folly of the English government in adopting policies that could make the colonists so hate the mother country that such violence was inevitable.

Suppose you wrote in a paper: *The Boston Massacre was a violent confrontation of British soldiers and American citizens.* **Although this is general historical information, you gained this knowledge from some source. You should acknowledge such general information at the end of the paragraph. You may include in a single footnote or endnote all such references from the preceding paragraph.**

Suppose you wrote in a paper: *The Boston Massacre was inevitable considering the folly of British policies toward the colonies.* **Here you must cite a source, even though you are not directly quoting the author, because the information you give is the interpretation and understanding of a particular author. The footnote or endnote should appear at the end of the sentence in which you use the understanding of a particular author.**

Suppose you wrote in a paper: *The Boston Massacre demonstrated the folly of the English government in adopting policies that could make the colonists so hate the mother country that such violence was inevitable.* **You must enclose the underlined material in quotation marks because it is taken directly from the source. The footnote or endnote for quoted material should appear immediately after the closing quotation marks.**

A good rule: **If you copy more than three consecutive words of text put those words within quotation marks.**

3. How to Cite Sources

In order to give credit where credit is due, do not fail to cite the sources from which you get information.

- a. You must use footnotes (at the bottom of each page) or endnotes (at the end of the paper.)
- b. The first citation must be complete. For example: Page Smith, *A New Age Begins: A People's History of the American Revolution*, (New York: Penguin Books, 1965), 342.
- c. Thereafter, the citation may be abbreviated. For example: Smith, 342. If you are using more than one book by Smith, an appropriate abbreviation would be: Smith, *New Age*, 342.
- d. If you cite the same source from the same page in an immediately following note, you should use *Ibid.* If you cite the same source but a different page, you use *Ibid.*, 343.
- e. If you use essays from an edited collection, be sure to cite each individual essay separately in your bibliography. In citations (endnotes and footnotes) cite the specific essay being referenced.
- f. In addition to footnotes or endnotes, your paper must have a bibliography. In a bibliography the works cited in the paper are listed in alphabetical order by the last name of the author. Style and punctuation differ for bibliographic entries. See Appendix A for the most commonly used notation forms.

D. Tips on Outlining

1. State the specific purpose—the principal point of your presentation.
2. Subdivide the specific purpose into logical parts or main points.
 - a. Are the main points subordinate to the specific purpose? (The specific purpose is a whole; the points you make should be parts of the whole.)
 - b. Are the main points made of approximate equal value?

- c. Are points made divided according to one method or pattern?
 - i.. Chronological
 - ii. Physical parts of the whole
 - iii. Topical parts of the whole
 - d. Do any parts overlap?
 - e. Are there enough points to cover the specific purpose?
- 3.** Subdivide each point into subpoints.
- 4.** Outline conclusion.
- a. Summarize for clarity.
 - b. End smoothly.
- 5.** Outline introduction.
- a. Get reader's interest with attention material.
 - b. Provide background to facilitate audience understanding.
 - c. State purpose.
 - d. Preview the main points.
- 6.** Plan transitions.

APPENDIX A

Sample Notation Forms

The following examples from Turabian illustrate notational (N) and bibliographical (B) reference entries. See the appropriate pages in Turabian for additional examples and explanations.

Single Author

- (N) ¹John Hope Franklin, *George Washington Williams: A Biography* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), 54.
- (B) Franklin, John Hope. *George Washington Williams: A Biography*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985.

Two Authors

- (N) ²Robert Lynd and Helen Lynd, *Middletown: A Study in American Culture* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1929), 67.
- (B) Lynd, Robert and Helen Lynd. *Middletown: A Study in American Culture*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1929.

Three Authors

- (N) ³Mary Lyon, Bryce Lyon, and Henry S. Lucas, *The Wardrobe Book of William de Norwell, 12 July 1338 to 27 May 1340*, with the collaboration of Jean de Sturler (Brussels: Commission Royale d'Histoire de Belgique, 1983), 42.
- (B) Lyon, Mary, Bryce Lyon, and Henry S. Lucas. *The Wardrobe Book of William de Norwell, 12 July 1338 to 27 May 1340*. With the collaboration of Jean de Sturler. Brussels: Commission Royale d'Histoire de Belgique, 1983.

Edition Other Than First

- (N) ⁴M. M. Bober, *Karl Marx's Interpretation of History*, 2d ed. Harvard Economic Studies (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1948), 89.
- (B) Bober, M. M. *Karl Marx's Interpretation of History*. 2d ed. Harvard Economic Studies. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1948.

Editor or Compiler as “Author”

- (N) ⁵Robert von Hallberg, ed., *Canons* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 225.
- (B) von Hallberg, Robert, ed. *Canons*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984.

Book in a Series

- (N) ⁶Ellen Pollak, *The Poetics of Sexual Myth: Gender and Ideology in the Verse of Swift and Pope*, *Women in Culture and Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), 124.
- (B) Pollak, Ellen. *The Poetics of Sexual Myth: Gender and Ideology in the Verse of Swift and Pope*. *Women in Culture and Society*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985.

Component Part by One Author in a Work by Another

- (N) ⁷Mary Higdon Beech, “The Domestic Realm in the Lives of Hindu Women in Calcutta,” in *Separate Worlds: Studies of Purdah in South Asia*, ed. Hanna Papnanek and Gail Minault (Delhi: Chanakya, 1982), 115.
- (B) Beech, Mary Higdon. “The Domestic Realm in the Lives of Hindu Women in Calcutta.” In *Separate Worlds: Studies of Purdah in South Asia*, ed. Hanna Papnanek and Gail Minault, 110-38. Delhi: Chanakya, 1982.

Article in Dictionary or Encyclopedia

- (N) ⁸*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th ed., s.v. “Blake, William,” by J. W. Cosyns-Carr, 2:241-57.
- (B) *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th ed. S.v. “Blake, William,” by J. W. Cosyns-Carr.

OR

- (N) ⁸J. W. Cosyns-Carr, “Blake, William,” in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th ed., 2:241-57.
- (B) Cosyns-Carr, J. W. “Blake, William.” In *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th ed.

Article in a Journal

- (N) ⁹Richard Jackson, "Running down the Up-Escalator: Regional Inequality in Papua New Guinea," *Australian Geographer* 14 (May 1979): 180.
- (B) Jackson, Richard. "Running down the Up-Escalator: Regional Inequality in Papua New Guinea." *Australian Geographer* 14 (May 1979): 175-84.

Article in a Magazine

- (N) ¹⁰Bruce Weber, "The Myth Maker: The Creative Mind of Novelist E. L. Doctorow," *New York Times Magazine*, 20 October 1985, 42.
- (B) Weber, Bruce. "The Myth Maker: The Creative Mind of Novelist E. L. Doctorow." *New York Times Magazine*, 20 October 1985, 42.

Article on the Web

- (N) ¹¹Peter H. Hobbie, "How to Track Hurricanes and Tropical Storms," www.hobbie@presby.edu, p. 3. (Determine a page if possible by printing the document)
- (B) Hobbie, Peter H. "How to Track Hurricanes and Tropical Storms," www.hobbie@presby.edu,

APPENDIX B

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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- . "Finding the Way to Paul's Theology: A Response to J. Christiaan Beker and J. Paul Sampley." In *Pauline Theology*, ed. Jouette M. Bassler, vol. 1, 25–36. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991.
- . "Omne Verbum Sonat: The New Testament and the Oral Environment of Late Western Antiquity." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 109 (1990): 3–27.
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- . Review of *Galatians: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Churches in Galatia*, by H. D. Betz. In *Recherches de Science Religieuse* 69 (1981): 601–2.
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- Aristotle. *The Art of Rhetoric*. Translated by John Henry Freese. The Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1926.
- . *Poetics*. Translated by Stephen Halliwell. The Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995.
- Augustine. *On Christian Doctrine*. Translated by D. W. Robertson, Jr. The Library of Liberal Arts. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Educational Publishing, 1958.

APPENDIX C

Abbreviations of the Names of Biblical Books (with the Apocrypha)

Gen	Cant	1-2-3-4 Kgdms	John
Exod	Isa	1-2 Esdr	Acts
Lev	Jer	4 Ezra	Rom
Num	Lam	Tob	1-2 Cor
Deut	Ezek	Jdt	Gal
Josh	Dan	Add Esth	Eph
Judg	Hos	Wis	Phil
Ruth	Joel	Sir	Col
1-2 Sam	Amos	Bar	1-2 Thess
1-2 Kgs	Obad	Ep Jer	1-2 Tim
1-2 Chr	Jonah	1-2-3-4 Macc	Titus
Ezra	Mic	Pr Azar	Phlm
Neh	Nah	Sus	Heb
Esth	Hab	Bel	Jas
Job	Zeph	Pr Man	1-2 Pet
Ps (pl:Pss)	Hag	Matt	1-2-3 John
Prov	Zech	Mark	Jude
Eccl	Mal	Luke	Rev

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR WRITING

Alexander, Patrick H., John F. Kutsko, James D. Ernest, et al, eds. *The SBL Handbook of Style For Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Early Christian Studies*. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1999.

Harris, Muriel. *Prentice Hall Reference Guide to Grammar and Usage*. 5th ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2003.

Strunk, William, Jr. and E. B. White. *The Elements of Style*. 3rd ed. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1979.

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