

Columbia Bible College Term Paper Guide

2008-2009

College students are expected to write research essays that conform to certain academic standards. The following guide is based on the 2003 MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, 6th ed. [REF 808.027 G437 2003] with some adaptations. Instructors at Columbia will want you to follow these format requirements or another standard such as the APA format for psychology courses. Please check with them if you have any questions.

The Research Paper

Many of the courses at Columbia require students to write term papers or essays. The following suggestions will provide assistance in how to tackle the task of writing a research paper.

1. Choosing a Topic

Many course syllabi will include a list of topics to provide a breadth of choice. Sometimes the choices are less defined.

- a) Choose a topic that interests you.
- b) Choose a topic that can be handled adequately within the limitations of the essay.
- c) Choose a topic that will expand your knowledge in the area of your interest.

2. Collecting Research Sources

The library provides a wide range of information sources in print and electronic format. Develop a method of recording the data you collect as well as how you will organize your material for future writing. Record the publishing information from each source so that you can include it in the Works Cited section of your paper. Begin gathering information on your topic by:

- a) Checking the CBC library online catalogue for titles and ideas that relate to your topic.
- b) Checking the online databases through the library home page for information on current periodicals that deal with your topic.
- c) Checking the books and periodicals that relate to your subject. Glance through the contents to see if they will be useful to you. Especially look at the table of contents, preface and index.

3. Taking Notes

Using the sources selected, begin gathering information on your topic. In your own words, write down key ideas given by the authors, unless you find a good quotation, fact or figure which you wish to quote. Record the page number carefully so you will not have to go back to that source again. One suggestion you may find helpful is to write the topics on the upper left hand corner of your cards/papers to keep your material well organized.

4. **Organising Your Notes**

After completing the research, begin by reviewing what you have learned about the subject. What does your research support? Your conclusion becomes your thesis statement (e.g., “The key theme in the book of Genesis is not creation but that of covenant”). Once you have stated your thesis, organize all of your research notes in a way that supports your thesis. This organization is the foundation of your outline where you state in point form the key points and arguments in your paper. If you have some material that is not important for proving your thesis, you should omit it, unless it can be used as background information. All of the paragraphs should relate to your thesis statement.

5. **Writing the First Draft**

Using the materials you have organized, begin writing the first draft. Your main goal is to get your ideas down on paper in proper progression. Write your paper as briefly as possible using one key statement for each paragraph. Expand and explain these key sentences. Identify source materials using parenthetical notes giving the author and page number. Be sure quotes are accurately taken from sources.

Your paper should include the following:

- **Introduction**

In a few sentences introduce the subject area or the issue that your thesis statement is addressing (e.g., “The key theme of the biblical book of Genesis seems to have baffled many commentators. Each one suggests a different alternative”). You may want to refer to a few specific examples to support this claim and then it is time for your **thesis statement**. This statement is describing what you want to accomplish in your paper (e.g., “While many Christians think only of creation when the word Genesis is brought up, the key theme of covenant plays a much more central role. This paper will examine the book of Genesis to demonstrate this central role that covenant plays in each of the sections of the book”).

It is essential that you know what you want to accomplish in the paper. **Keep your thesis clear and concise, since it is the foundation on which your paper is built.** Some types of papers may have multiple objectives in which case your paper may be better served by a purpose statement (e.g., “This paper will...”).

- **Background**

There may be some background information that is essential for understanding your paper. Keep this section brief and concise so that it does not overwhelm the main part of your paper.

- **Body**

Here you include the most significant arguments in favour of your thesis and argue against other options that are considered possible. You need to show that you are aware of other options. Each paragraph should be tied together with the paragraph before it so that it does not feel like you are jumping around. Paragraphs should “hold hands” with each other which is done by means of transitions (e.g., “A second argument against” “In addition to the claim that” “Besides the cultural background, authorship questions also need to be explored”).

- **Conclusion**

In this short section, the thesis should be restated and the supporting arguments summarized. The reader should, hopefully, be convinced and feel that the purpose of the paper has been accomplished.

- **Works Cited**

List all the sources that you have cited in your paper, following the examples in the “Works Cited List” section below.

6. **Quotations and Parenthetical Notes**

College level research papers require the proper use of quotations and parenthetical notes, which list the author and page number for the source of the quotation/idea [e.g., Biblical wisdom literature can be compared to that found in Egypt, even though “Egyptian does not have a word for ‘wisdom’ per se...”(Arnold 291).]. You as a writer are showing where you received your information and giving credit for special ways of saying certain things. Try to use direct quotations sparingly. You are the author of the paper so most of the words should be yours.

Direct quotations [“Paul’s use of the word slave is unusual in Philemon”(Smith 75)] or even indirect quotations—where you borrow the idea but not the exact words--should normally **not** introduce or conclude a paragraph. They should fit nicely into the midst of your paragraph and support or illustrate what you are trying to say. Direct quotations are also used when you are borrowing a unique expression from another source. When you state some special knowledge which most College level students would not normally know, you should include a parenthetical note to send a reader with questions to another source. This protects you in case the information is actually incorrect or controversial. Now the reader will have to argue with your source rather than with you.

7. **Revising the Draft**

After completing the first draft, read your essay critically. Fill in the details, make adjustments where necessary and make sure noting has been done properly at appropriate places. Read the entire paper out loud and change any spots with awkward grammar. If possible, have someone else proofread it for you and revise as necessary. Check the format information below to make sure that your paper follows Columbia’s format standards.

The Exegetical Paper

An exegetical paper is a type of research essay which seeks to interpret or explain a certain Biblical text or group of texts. It is a combination of independent primary source research (which means the Bible) and secondary source research (which means commentaries and journal articles about the Bible). The following steps should prove helpful:

- **Introduction**

This short section of your paper should get the reader’s attention and focus the topic of your paper (e.g., “Few texts in the New Testament are as difficult to interpret as Ephesians 5:22-33.”). After several sentences of introduction, one should include a purpose statement (e.g., “This paper

will follow the exegetical process to determine the central message of this text for its original audience, identify several key theological themes in the text, and suggest possible applications for Christians today.”). In addition the introduction may include a thesis statement based on the outcome of your research.

- **Determine the Text Unit**

If you have been given a specific group of verses this step might be unnecessary, but if not, you need to determine where a given text begins and ends.

- **Compare English Versions**

Read through the text in a number of good English versions. Note any significant differences between the versions and any comments in the footnotes of these versions about other possible ways of translating the text into English.

- **Create a Structural Outline**

While there are several possibilities here, you should be able to outline the text based upon either content (e.g., theme 1,2, and 3) or literary structure (e.g., vision, rhetorical question, etc.).

- **Identify the Genre of the Text**

Determine whether the text is poetry, historical narrative, parable, prophetic woe oracle, etc.

- **Research the Text**

Explore the intended audience as well as cultural and historical background questions that are relevant to the meaning of the text. However, keep this section of the research brief. The heart of the research section is clarifying any questions, difficult words or phrases that are in your text. Try to explain the logic of the text and how it fits together. Answer as many questions about the text as you can. Explore any key words that occur in your text and relate these words to the central themes of the text.

- **Relate the Parts**

In a paragraph, summarize the way the text fits together. For example: “After a description of how useless wooden idols are (vv.1-4), Isaiah goes on to describe the power and awesomeness of God (vv.5-10). He concludes the text with a statement about how God will crush all these useless Assyrian gods (vv.11-13).”

- **Construct a Focus Statement**

A focus statement is a one to two sentence summary of the message of the text for those we think were the original audience. For example: “Isaiah tells King Ahaz and the people of Judah to trust only Yahweh in the midst of the threat from both Israel and Aram. All other forms of security are worthless.”

- **Explain the Theology**

What does the text seem to be teaching about the nature of God, about following God, or about the way God sees humanity? Include a number of paragraphs here with one theological insight in each paragraph. Demonstrate how this theological insight shows up in your text and how this theological insight relates to the rest of that biblical book as well as to the theology of the rest of the Bible. Is it a key theme in the rest of the book? Does the rest of the Bible affirm it strongly?

- **Apply the Text to the Present**

Often the best approach here is to look back to the theological insights noted above, and process how they could be applied at either the individual or church level today. If a key theological insight is that “God is deeply concerned for social justice,” a number of paragraphs could be devoted to evaluating how committed the church is--or individual Christians are--to pursuing social justice as a high priority, and suggesting ways to demonstrate more commitment.

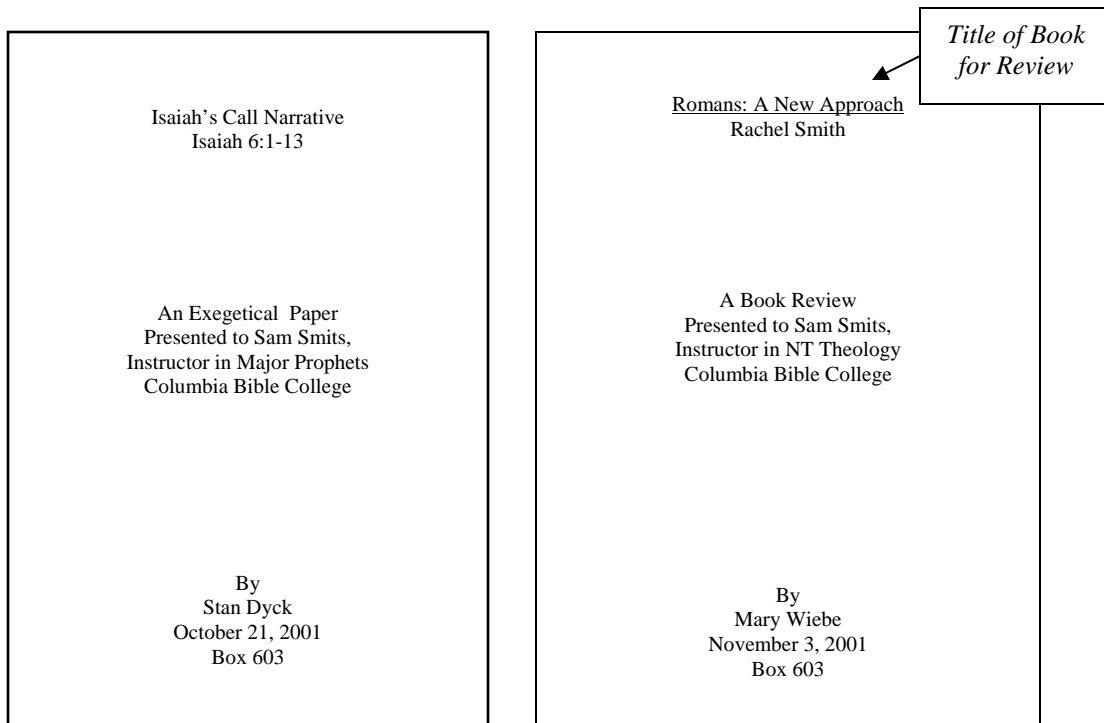
- **Works Cited**

List all the sources that you have cited in your paper.

Format of Papers

While each instructor will evaluate Research Essays and Exegetical Papers a little differently, clear organization, careful explanations, and proper format will have a significant impact on your overall mark. The following describes format expectations here at Columbia.

- **Title Page**



- **Page Layout**

Margins: 1 inch (2.5 cm.) on left, top, right and bottom.

Font: Use a reasonable font size (e.g., Times New Roman 12). Do not change font size or style within the paper.

Spacing: Double space between lines; indent paragraphs ½ inch (5 spaces). Omit all extra spacing between paragraphs or between sections of the paper.

Pagination: Place page numbers (numbers only) in upper right-hand corner of paper. Your last name may be included before the number. The essay begins with page 1—but it is preferable to omit the number on the first page and include the number only on page 2.

Titles: The first letters of first words, last words, and all important words are capitalized in titles. Titles of books are underlined. Chapters of books, articles, or songs are encased with quotation marks (e.g., “Fly Me to the Moon”).

Headings: If headings are included, they should be underlined and flush with LH margin. They should not, however, take the place of transitions. If all the headings were removed from the paper, the paper should still be clearly understandable.

- **Language**

Even though you should not try to be artificially “scholarly” in your choice of words, your vocabulary needs to be more formal than that used in everyday speech. Avoid contractions (e.g., isn’t, aren’t), colloquialisms (e.g., “kicked the bucket”), and the use of first person (“I”, “me”) except in journals and the personal reflection sections of book reviews or papers.

We encourage the use of inclusive language when in our writing we are referring to both male and female. Use words like humanity, humankind, persons, people, all and everyone rather than man or mankind. Also, use inclusive terms when referring to groups that include both male and female (e.g., fire fighter rather than fireman or layperson rather than layman, etc.). Since the English language does not have an inclusive third-person pronoun that means both male and female, try to find an alternative way of expressing the idea without having to use a male pronoun. For example, replace “A man shows his love for God by...” with “People show their love for God by...”

- **Word Usage**

Abbreviations: Abbreviate books of the Bible in the parenthetical notes.

Gen.	1 Kgs.	Ecc.	Obad.	Mt.	Col.
Ex.	2 Kgs.	Song Sol.	Jon.	Mk.	1-2 Thess.
Lev.	1 Chr.	Is.	Mic.	Lk.	1-2 Tim.
Num.	2 Chr.	Jer.	Nah.	Jn.	Tit.
Dt.	Ezra	Lam.	Hab.	Acts	Philem.
Josh.	Neh.	Ezek.	Zeph.	Rom.	Heb.
Judg.	Esth.	Dan.	Hag.	1-2 Cor.	Jas.
Ruth	Job	Hos.	Zech.	Gal.	1-2 Pet.
1 Sam.	Ps.	Joel	Mal.	Eph.	1-2-3 Jn.
2 Sam.	Pr.	Amos		Phil.	Jude
					Rev.

- **Plagiarism Policy**

Plagiarism involves not giving credit to another for their work or claiming their work as one's own. It is a form of theft manifested most often in improper citation of sources in a paper; it could also include handing in a paper written by someone else and claiming it as their own.

The College views acts of plagiarism as a serious academic infraction. However, the College tries to differentiate between accidental and deliberate plagiarism. Accidental plagiarism would include situations where someone was unaware of the "citation rules" regarding intellectual property or accidentally missed a citation or two. Deliberate plagiarism would include not citing direct quotations or ideas taken from another writer or in extreme situations, handing in someone's paper as one's own. Deliberate plagiarism normally involves some level of "intent to deceive."

In order to avoid plagiarism, be careful to note the source of all direct quotes of another writer's words, all unusual ideas and expressions that are borrowed from another writer, and facts which are not common knowledge.

Deliberate plagiarism will be dealt with according to the procedures outlined in the academic integrity policy section of Columbia's Academic Manual.

- **Direct Quotations**

Direct quotations are reproduced exactly as in the original (wording, spelling, punctuation—with the exception of internal quotation marks as in the example below). An ellipsis (. . .) indicates the omission of part of the quotation. Use three spaced periods to indicate the omission of a section in the middle of a sentence and four to signal an omission at the end of a sentence: "And God said, 'Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds. . . .' And it was so" (Gen.1:24 NIV). The omission of any words must not, however, change the meaning of the quotation.

Any changes in the quotation (e.g., italicizing a word) must be followed by the expression in brackets [e.g., "It is *beyond argument* that the book of Hebrews uses some specifically Pauline expressions" (Smith 45 emphasis added).].

If you add any words to clarify something or to make it consistent with the grammar of your sentence, you must put [brackets] around what you have added to show that it was not in the original quote (e.g., "While God loved her [Hagar], there was still room for God's displeasure.").

Grammar or spelling errors within the quotation should remain unchanged but be followed by [sic] to indicate that the error is in the original and not a result of your copying (e.g., "The lion apparently desired to chase it's [sic] tail.").

- **Block Quotations (Longer Direct Quotations)**

Direct quotations longer than four typed lines should be indented from the LH margin ½ inch. They are normally preceded by a colon, are double-spaced, do not require quotation marks, and **the parenthetical note comes after the final punctuation**. The example below deals with a section from Deuteronomy 20:

The two most basic covenantal principles of Israel's life under God were: love for Yahweh (6:5) and love for one's neighbor. This vertical and horizontal duality was fundamental to the covenant dynamic. Love . . . for God can be seen operative in the opening challenge of 20:1-4, but is there any way that love for neighbor can be operative in the context of war? (Wright 227)

- **Indirect Quotations**

Indirect quotations are when you are giving credit to someone for an idea or special information but you are not using their exact words. No quotation marks or block quoting is needed but a parenthetical note is still provided [e.g., Loving God and loving one's neighbour were the central covenantal foundations for Israel's everyday life (Wright 227).].

- **Documentation of Quotations**

All parenthetical notes from direct and indirect quotations include the author's name and the page number—when the source has page numbers (Smith 45). If there are two works by the same author, include the author's name and a short abbreviation of the title to distinguish it (Wilson, *Jesus* 75). If the section introducing the quote includes the author's name, there is no need to include it in the parenthetical note. For example: Smith argues that there is “virtually no evidence against Pauline authorship of chapter three” (45). The quotation mark follows the quote and the sentence period follows the note.

If you are quoting an author already being quoted in a book or source, indicate the author's name in the sentence and indicate where the quote can be found in the parenthetical note. For example, Rebecca Isles argues that “there is widespread support for understanding this text as opposing the views of the Judaizers” (qtd in Smith 59).

When there is no author given, cite enough of the title to clarify to which work you are referring (Eerdmans Handbook 124).

If you are quoting the Bible directly, cite the text references and for direct quotations include the version used. For example, (Rev.3:10 NIV).

If the source has two or three authors, identify each by name and then provide the page number (Smith, Anderson, and Kelley 451). If the work has more than three authors, give the first author's last name followed by et al. (Long et al. 32).

If the source does not have a page number (e.g., online magazine, newspaper, or website), you need to refer to the appropriate key word which begins the entry in the Works Cited list (e.g., author or title) and place the initials n.p. (no page) beside it. For example, (Messini n.p.) or (“Archaeology for Today” n.p.).

For other examples of the parenthetical note format, see Chapter Six (pp. 237-260) of the 2003 MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, 6th ed. [REF 808.027 G437 2003].

Works Cited List

Alphabetise all reference works, including microfilms, journal and newspaper articles, and private letters by author's last name or first main word of title for anonymous works, ignoring definite and indefinite articles like "A" and "The" when alphabetizing. If there is more than one work by an author, put them in alphabetical order according to title. Single space within an entry but double space between entries. Include only those sources cited in the paper. Indent the second and all subsequent lines in each citation five spaces. Capitalize all main words in the title and the subtitle.

- **Books**

One Author

Shenk, Calvin E. Who Do You Say That I Am?: Christians Encounter Other Religions.
Scottsdale: Herald, 1997.

One Author Commentary from a Commentary Series

Wright, Christopher. Deuteronomy. New International Biblical Commentary. Peabody:
Hendrickson, 1996.

Commentary Series



Two or Three Authors

Hayes, John H. and Stuart A. Irvine. Isaiah: The Eighth-century Prophet. Nashville:
Abingdon, 1987.

Craigie, Peter C., Page H. Kelley, and Joel F. Drinkard, Jr. Jeremiah 1-25. Word Biblical
Commentary. Dallas: Word, 1991.

More than Three Authors

Fowler, H. Ramsay, et al. The Little Brown Handbook: First Canadian Edition.
Scarborough: Harper Collins, 1994.

No Author Given (Check Carefully for initials or any other hint of an author)

Eerdmans Handbook to Christianity. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977.

The Holy Bible: New International Version. Colorado Springs: International Bible Society, 1984.

Editor as "Author"

Dyck, Cornelius J., ed. An Introduction to Mennonite History. Scottsdale: Herald, 1981.

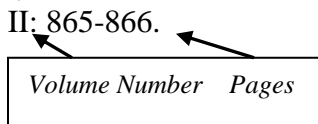
Section of a Multi-Author Work (Including those in Multi-Volume publications)

Wessel, Walter W. "Mark." The Expositor's Bible Commentary. Ed. Frank E. Gaebelein. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984. VIII: 603-793.

- **Articles in Encyclopaedias, Bible Dictionaries, etc.**

Signed Articles (Most articles have initials at the end linked to a contributor's list. Notice the inclusion of volume number and pages covered by the article.)

Nixon, R.E. "Lamb of God." The Illustrated Bible Dictionary. Leicester: IVP, 1980. II: 865-866.



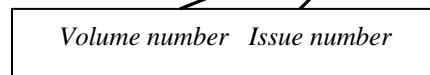
Unsigned Articles.

"Ecclesiastes." Eerdmans Handbook to the Bible. Ed. D. Alexander and P. Alexander. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973. 362-365.

- **Articles in Journals, Magazines, Newspapers**

Gowan, Donald E. "Wealth and Poverty in the Old Testament." Interpretation 41.4 (October 1987): 341-353.

- **Book Reviews**



Goertzen, Gaylord L. Rev. of The Unnecessary Pastor: Rediscovering the Call, by Marva J. Dawn and Eugene H. Peterson. Direction 30.1 (Spring 2001): 110-111.

- **Lecture/Speech/Address**

Unger, Walter. "Lecture on C.S. Lewis." Modern Christian Thinkers Class. Columbia Bible College, Abbotsford. 14 Nov. 2000.

- **Film or Video Recording**

Menno Simons. Ill. Lorie Barkman. Nar. Burton Buller. Kindred Productions, 1996.

- **Sound Recording**

Chapman, Steven Curtis. "I Will be Here." The Live Adventure. The Sparrow Corporation, 1993.

- **Electronic Sources**

CD-Rom Source

If the CD-ROM contains material available in print format in the CBC Library, try to quote from that version since then you will be able to include a page number.

Braunmuller, A.R., ed. Macbeth. By William Shakespeare. CD-ROM . New York: Voyager, 1994.

Online Book

Pascal, Blaise. Pensées. Trans. W. F. Trotter. [1910.] 29 Apr. 1997
<gopher://gopher.vt.edu:10010/02/130/1>.


Online Article in a Scholarly Journal

Calabrese, Michael. "Between Despair and Ecstasy: Marco Polo's Life of the Buddha." Exemplaria 9.1 (1997). 22 June 1998
<http://web.english.ufl.edu/english/exemplaria/calax.htm>.

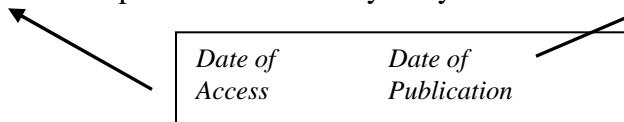
Online Article from a Database – Library Subscription Service

Weaver, Alain Epp. "Two Kingdoms, Two Loyalties: Mennonite Pacifism in Modern America." The Christian Century. 5-12 Jan. 2000: 34-36. Proquest Religion Database. Proquest LCC. Columbia Bible College Lib., Abbotsford, B.C. 15 Feb. 2001 <http://proquest.umi.com/>.

(If there is no author given, list the article by the title)

Online Article in a Magazine or Newspaper

Rabey, Steve. "Old Wisdom for New Times." Christianity Today 23 April 2001.
14 May 2001 <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2001/006/31.107.html>.


Web Sites
Entire Internet site, no author but has an editor

Postmodern Culture. Ed. Lisa Brawley. 2002. 24 Oct. 2002
<http://www.virginia.edu/pmc/>.

Personal Homepage

Weiner, Mary. Home page. 28 Dec. 2000. 14 May 2001
<<http://www.divorce.com/index.html>>.

Author and title of document

Brennan, Andrew, and Yeuk-Sze Lo. "Environmental Ethics." 03 Jan. 2008 [Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy](#). Ed. Edward N. Zalta. 2007. Center for the Study of Lang. and Information, Stanford U. 06 May 2008
<<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ethics-environmental/>>.

- **Maps** (Brock University Map Library & ALA format)

Map in a Topographic Series:

Canada Surveys and Mapping Branch. [Manning Park, Sheet 92H/2](#) [map]. Edition 2. 1:50,000. Canada 1:50,000. Ottawa: Department of Energy Mines and Resources, 1979.

Map on a Single Sheet

British Columbia Ministry of Forests. [Chilliwack Forest District](#) [map]. Edition 2. 1:250,000. 1cm=2.5 km. Victoria: Ministry of Forests, 1992.

Interactive Reference or Thematic Map (a map generated from a site, by adding, subtracting, or changing layers, i.e. Google Earth)

European Space Agency. [Abbotsford](#) [map]. 2008. Generated by John Doe; using Google Earth Plus 2007. (generated March 3, 2008).

This guide is based on the [MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers](#), 6th ed. and provides only selected citation examples for common types of sources. For more detailed information please consult the print version of the [Handbook](#) in the Library at [REF 808.027 G437 2003].

Sample Works Cited Page

Works Cited	
Book Source	Alexander, Rebecca J. <u>The Book of James: An Overview</u> . Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998.
No Author Title Main Entry	<u>Eerdmans Handbook to Christianity</u> . Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977.
Journal Article	Gowan, Donald E. "Wealth and Poverty in the Old Testament." <u>Interpretation</u> 41.4 (October 1987): 341-353.
Signed Article From a Bible Dictionary	Martin, R.P. "Judas Iscariot." <u>The Illustrated Bible Dictionary</u> . Downers Grove: IVP, 1980. II:830-831.
Online Article From a Database Library Subscription Service	Weaver, Alain Epp. "Two Kingdoms, Two Loyalties: Mennonite Pacifism in Modern America." <u>The Christian Century</u> . 5-12 Jan. 2000: 34-36. <u>Proquest Religion Database</u> . Proquest LCC. Columbia Bible College Lib., Abbotsford, B.C. 15 Feb. 2001 < http://proquest.umi.com/ >
Commentary in a Series	Wright, Christopher. <u>Deuteronomy</u> . New International Biblical Commentary. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1996.
Second Source from Same Author	---. <u>An Eye for an Eye: The Place of Old Testament Ethics Today</u> . Downers Grove: IVP, 1983.