Topic Guide:
MLA Style

What is MLA?

MLA is shorthand for the documentation style developed by the Modern Language Association of America. This is the preferred citation style adopted by Lancaster Theological Seminary for all course work. In short, brief references to works appear in parentheses at the end of a sentence or quote with a full citation appearing in a works cited list at the end of the document.

The definitive resource for MLA Style is the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, 7th edition*, call number LB 2369 .G53 2009, available in Reference and circulating stacks. This handbook contains models and examples for citing numerous types of sources, as well as tips and tools for research, writing, and formatting papers.

The Online Writing Lab at Purdue University offers an MLA Formatting and Style Guide (https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/) a freely available and very helpful resource. Additional resources on MLA Style available in our collection are:

- *MLA Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing*, Reference call number PN 147 .G444 2008
- *A Guide to MLA Documentation*, call number LB 2369 .G532 2010

Why Cite?

Acknowledging your sources is a crucial part of creating your own work, whether you are writing a paper for class or preaching a sermon in a church. Whenever you use someone else's words, are inspired by someone else's ideas, or mention someone else's work, it is important to note that in your own work. This is called citing your sources.

When you do not cite your sources at all, or cite your sources incorrectly, it is called plagiarism. Plagiarism is a violation of academic integrity that could result in admonishment, suspension, or dismissal from the seminary. In a professional setting, plagiarism is an act of fraud and is legally actionable as such.

To learn more about plagiarism, what it is and how to prevent it, please visit http://www.plagiarism.org/.

Online Citation Builders

These free sites can help you build an MLA-styled citation that you can then copy and paste into your works cited list

- BibMe, http://www.bibme.org/mla
- EasyBib, http://www.easybib.com/
- Knight Cite, http://www.calvin.edu/library/knightcite/
- NCSU Citation Builder, https://www.lib.ncsu.edu/citationbuilder/

Parenthetical Documentation

In any kind of written work, use parenthetical references to indicate your sources. These take on the form of (Author's Last Name Page #). The reference does not contain a comma and always comes before the period, unless it follows a block quote. If the author's last name is mentioned in the sentence, then only the page number is needed.

List of Works Cited

All sources referenced are compiled at the end of the document in a works cited list. This list is arranged alphabetically by the authors' last names, and each entry is formatted with a hanging indent.

Citing a Book

Author's Last Name, First Name. *Title of Book*. Place of Publication: Publisher, Year. Print.

Citing a Journal Article

Author's Last Name, First Name. "Title of the article." *Journal Title* Volume.Issue (Year): page-page. Print.

Citing a Website

Author's Last Name, First Name. "Title of the work." *Title of the Website*. Publisher, Day Month Year of Publication. Web. Day Month Year of Access.

Citing the Bible

Title of the Edition. Place of Publication: Publisher, Year. Print. Version or Translation.

In a parenthetical reference for the Bible, the first reference must include the following: (*Title of the Edition*, Book Chapter.Verse). If the same edition is used throughout, then subsequent references will only need (Book Chapter.Verse). A list of abbreviations for biblical books is in section 7.7.1 of the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, 7th Edition*.

Citing an Unpublished Interview

Interviewee's Last Name, First Name. Type of Interview. Day Month Year of Interview.

Types of interviews can be listed as "Personal interview" or "Telephone interview."

Works by More Than One Author

For works with two or more authors, list them in the same order as they appear on the title page. The first author's name is listed with last name first and subsequent authors are listed with first name first. Separate the authors' names with commas. If they are editors, include "eds." at the end of the string of names.