ETCAsia
EVANGELICAL THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE OF ASIA

Academic Manual

October 2025

Preface

This manual provides essential information you will need for your studies and our community life. Please consult it if you are unsure about something. If you still have questions, the college staff are happy to help you.

The manual will be updated from time to time with new information and so you should check every now and then as to whether you have the latest version (see the bottom of each page for the version number).

The latest version will be available through Moodle at https://etcasia.edu.sg/moodle.

If you note things below that need amending, please email: registrar@etcasia.edu.sg.

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Studying at ETCAsia

Accreditation

ETCAsia has applied for membership with the Asia Theological Association and is pursuing accreditation with them. The college is expected to be accredited by 2024.

Courses

The college currently offers the following diplomas/degrees.

Graduate	Master of Divinity (MDiv)		3 years
	Graduate Diploma in Ministry (GDM)	Same as MDiv (1st year)	1 year

All degrees can be completed full or part-time, with certain restrictions as to the total duration taken. The GDM is to be completed within five years, and the MDiv within ten.

The GDM largely equates to the first year of the MDiv and may be completed part-time or through evening courses (though there may be some subjects only offered during the day).

For a reduced fee, the college allows people to audit courses (i.e. attend as students and be involved in normal college life but not complete assignments).

Graduation Criteria

Students are required to obtain a specified number of credits to fulfil their course requirements.

Credits are assigned to each subject, depending on the number of hours per week allocated to it.

	GDM	MDiv
Total credits required to graduate	30	90

Degree structure

MDiv and GDM degrees

The number of credit points for each module is reflected beside its title.

Year 1 / GDM (core subjects)			
Pre-Semester			
LA1 - Greek 1 (Intensive)	2		
Sem 1		Sem 2	
LA2 - Greek 2	3	LA3 - Greek 3	3
OT1 - OT Introduction 1	3	OT2 - OT Introduction 2	3
NT1 - NT Introduction 1	3	NT2 - NT Introduction 2	3
TH1 - Foundations for Systematic Theology	2	CH1 - Church History Overview	3
BT1 - Biblical Theology 1	1.5	BT2 - Biblical Theology 2	1.5
GM1 - Mission	1.5	GM2 - Foundations for Gospel Ministry	3

Subjects in years 2 and 3 are offered once every 2 years on rotation.

(If year 2 subjects are offered this year, year 3 subjects will be offered the following year. Hebrew is offered every year for second-year students.)

Year 2			
Pre-Semester			
LA4 - Hebrew 1 (Intensive)	2		
Sem 1		Sem 2	
LA5 - Hebrew 2 or GM9 - Field Experience A (i)	2	LA6 - Hebrew 3 or GM9 - Field Experience A (ii)	2
OT3 - OT Narrative (Samuel)	3	OT8 - Isaiah	3
NT8 - 1 Peter	3	NT3 - John	3
TH2 - Creation and Revelation	3	TH3 - God and the Gospel	3
CH3 - Evangelicalism: West and East	3		
GM5 - Gospel Proclamation and Spiritual Formation C	2	GM6 - Gospel Proclamation and Spiritual Formation D	2
Year 3			
Sem 1		Sem 2	
OT7 - Pentateuch	3	OT6 - Psalter	3
NT7 - Ephesians	3	NT5 - Romans	3
TH4 - Salvation	3	TH5 - Church and Eschatology	3
CH2 - The Reformation	3	PE1 - Introduction to Ethics	1.5
GM3 - Gospel Proclamation and Spiritual Formation A	2	GM4 - Gospel Proclamation and Spiritual Formation B	2

Assessments and Examinations

Assessments

Deadlines

The deadlines for assessments are advised in class. All assignments are to be submitted online via Moodle following the instructions by the lecturer concerned. It must be submitted before 5:00 pm on the due date.

It is also recommended that the student keep a copy of the assignment until it is graded.

Format

Where an assignment is handed in on time, but is not in an acceptable format, the lecturer shall return the assessment. Students will have one week to resubmit it in an acceptable format, without changing the content of the assignment.

Extensions

Due to additional work for faculty and in fairness to all students, extensions are generally neither encouraged nor permitted. In the event where students need to request for an extension, they must fill in the form via the link below. Here are some guidelines for assignment extensions:

1. Reasons for extension must be due to **exceptional, unforeseen circumstances** that are out of the student's control.
2. Requests for extensions for all non-medical related reasons must be submitted **at least five working days before the actual due date**.
3. Requests for extensions on medical grounds must be accompanied by the **softcopy of a medical certificate**.
4. **The Registrar and Lecturer** will give approval for the extension.

Link to extension request: https://www.etcasia.edu.sg/request-for-extension/

Penalties for late work

If an assessment is handed in late, the following adjustments will apply.

- The assessment will be reduced at the rate of 3% of the total possible marks for the assessment piece per calendar day, up to 14 days late.
- Should the work be submitted over 14 days late without a medical certificate, it will be awarded a mark of 0.

Supplementary Assessments

Students who have failed assessments will have to redo and submit the assessment within the semester.

Examinations

Student Situation on Exam Day

Students are required to remain in the exam hall for the first 30 mins of the exam. Students who are late will not be admitted into the exam hall after the first 30 minutes.

Students who are late, NOT due to major MRT/Bus breakdowns etc. will not be given allowance and will end the exam at the same time as everyone. Students who need to leave in the case of an emergency need to obtain permission from the principal or the lecturer.

Major MRT Disruption (affecting majority of students)

In the event of a major MRT disruption, the principal, or, in his absence, the Chief Invigilator, shall decide whether the examination should be postponed to a later time or date.

Special Cases

Students with special circumstances can approach the Registrar to request alternative arrangements for exams. An original medical certificate from a doctor (in Singapore) must be submitted for accidents/injury/sickness.

Leave of Absence from Examination

1. A student who is absent without a valid reason from the semestral examination for a subject shall be awarded no marks for the exam.
2. If a student has a valid reason for missing the examination, he can apply for leave of absence (LOA) from semestral examination a day before the exam by emailing the Registrar. For unforeseen circumstances, such applications must be submitted within 2 working days from the day of absence.
3. For leave of absence due to illness, only medical certificates issued by medical practitioners registered with the Singapore Medical Council will be accepted. (Exception: Malaysian students residing in JB may submit medical certificates issued in JB.)
4. Where students are granted leave of absence from the semestral exam, they may be required to retake the exam or even the unit. In the case of the latter, the student may apply to the Principal to be exempted from attending classes for the subsequent sitting and/or to be allowed to carry forward his past in-course assessed component marks. The application will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The application procedure may be obtained from the Registrar.
5. A student shall only be granted one deferment for each of the subjects that he is taking.

Supplementary Exams

Students who have failed examinations may take a supplementary exam the first week of the following Semester. Students must score 40% and above to qualify for a supplementary exam.

Results

Release of Results

Results of marking will be released online through Moodle.

Marks and Appeals

Students who wish to inquire about the mark awarded for an assessment should speak to the relevant lecturer. In the case of individual assessments, the lecturer has the discretion to reconsider the mark given if they so wish.

If, after this discussion, students wish for a reassessment, they should let the Registrar know. The assessment could be re-marked by another faculty member or person considered appropriate by the Principal.

The fee for re-marking each assessment item will be $50. The outcome of the reassessment will stand, irrespective of whether the final mark is higher or lower than the original score.

Academic Transcripts

For audit students, transcripts are not supplied. For all other students:

- At the end of each semester, if required, students can request unofficial transcripts from the Registrar.
- At the completion of the course, students will receive an official course transcript.

Calculation of Grade Point Average

A grade point average (GPA) is given on your academic transcript. The calculation formula is:

∑ (Grade Point of Unit × Credit Points of Unit) / Total Credit Points

Explanation of Grades:

Grade	Meaning	Percentage Mark	Grade Points
HD	High Distinction	85+	4
D	Distinction	75-84	3
Cr	Credit	65-74	2
P+	Pass+	58-64	1.5
P	Pass	50-57	1
F	Fail	0-49	0

Other codes appearing as grades:

Audit	Audit
Withdrawn	Withdrawn
TC	Transfer credit

The Library

The Library, Librarians, and Every Student

We have various people volunteering in the library. We need them and we want them to find their work as easy as possible. Please treat them kindly and with respect.

There are things to note about the library.

- Most of our books are being catalogued and labelled using the Dewey Decimal Classification System (hereafter 'Dewey').
- The books have also been grouped according to type of book (e.g. New Testament commentaries are all together, they are then grouped around main books of the New Testament and finally, they are ordered by author names).

We do not have a formally appointed librarian. This means that every student is, in some sense, their own librarian. Please use the KOHA system to "Check out" the book(s) you've borrowed and "Check in" the book(s) upon returning them. After "Checking in", students can conveniently leave all returned books in the designated book drop corner.

The student library team will provide training for new students on the use of KOHA system.

The student's access to the library will be disabled after graduating.

Borrowing Books

To borrow books, please use the KOHA system to check the books out.

Link: http://www.library.etcasia.edu.sg

Note that the following limits apply.

A **maximum** of 20 items on loan at any one time. The loan time is limited to **two weeks**.

Terms of use:

- If you need the item for longer, renew the item on no more than two occasions.
- Items with a request on them are not renewable.
- It is the individual responsibility of students to return items on time or renew them before they are overdue.
- Overdue fees are chargeable at $1 per day. Students with overdue fees/fines of $15 or more are not able to borrow any other items until the items are returned and the fines are below $15.
- Please do not deface any library material by underlining text or by adhering sticky labels, Post-It tags, etc.

Closed Reserve Books

Closed Reserve Books are books that are in significant demand for various reasons, usually because they are key books for a subject. Such books may only be borrowed after 4pm in the afternoon and must be returned before 10am on the next day. If any closed reserve books are borrowed on a Friday, students are to return them the following Monday, 10am. Fines may be liable if returns are not made in a timely manner.

Guidelines for Assignments

The following guidelines apply to all written work at ETCAsia (except where otherwise specified by the lecturer). For bibliographies and footnotes all ETCAsia assessments will follow the formatting style of:

> *The SBL Handbook of Style, Second Edition*. 2nd Edition ed. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014.

You can find a brief overview of this here. This book is on closed reserve in the ETCAsia library. If you use bibliography software (like *Zotero* recommended below) then the formatting explained below will be automatic. Just make sure you set your style for citing to "Society of Biblical Literature 2nd edition (full note)".

Presentation of Essays

Introduction

Your essay is marked primarily on content. However, presentation is important, and it should reveal clear thinking and careful organisation. Using a standard format (SBL2) will assist both you and the marker. Careful attention should also be given to spelling, grammar, and punctuation.

Page layout

Note the following requirements for layout of essays and assignments at ETCAsia:

- Present your essay in **pdf format** formatted for A4 paper in a black readable font (like Calibri).
- Your lines should be **double spaced** (so comments can be written in them by the marker).
- Leave an **extra line** between paragraphs (to make space for comments).
- Block quotations should be in a **smaller font**, **single spaced**, and **indented 1.0cm** from both left and right margins. And leave a **one-line space** both above and below to contrast it with the rest of the text. For example:

  > Here is a block quote, that is in a smaller font, single spaced and indented 1cm from left and right from the margins. There is also a one-line space above and below this block quotation.

- **Footnotes** should be single spaced within the note itself.
- **Margins** should be as follows (so the marker can write comments easily):
  - Both **right** and **left** margins should be at least **2.5cm**.
  - For **top** and **bottom** margins, allow **2.5cm** in the body of the essay.
- **Number all pages** consecutively at the top right corner or the bottom middle of the page.

Word Limit

The essay should keep to the set length, within 10% variation. This count does not include title page, abstract, footnotes or bibliography. However, it does include appendices and any discussion in the footnotes. Footnotes should not exceed 25% of the prescribed essay length.

Failure to keep within the requirements for length shall be considered grounds for returning the essay for rewriting or a reduction in the mark for the assessment.

Note carefully that all common (and uncommon!) ways of cheating with will be met at the discretion of the marker with either:

1. A half grade reduction in marks, or
2. Returning the essay unmarked to the student with a request to resubmit the essay with proper formatting and required word length within 24–48 hours.

Spelling

Spelling should be consistent. Choose an appropriate dictionary and stay with it. A standard and world recognised dictionary should be used.

Quotations and quotation marks

Double quotation marks are to be used (e.g. “This is a sentence in double quotes”). **Single quotation** marks should be used for a quotation within a quotation or for highlighting a word or phrase being discussed.

The following conventions should also be observed:

- All quotations should be **accurately reproduced**, including original spelling, punctuation and abbreviations.
- Where there is a **misspelling** in the original quotation, it should be indicated by typing ‘[*sic*]’ immediately after the error.
- **Footnote numbers** should not separate a word from any punctuation that follows the quotation (e.g. quotation marks, commas, full stops, etc.) but should come after that punctuation: like this.[27] Notice the footnote comes after the full stop. Wherever possible, they should be placed at the end of a sentence. Do **not** put two footnotes together in a sentence like this.[28] [29] Rather put the content of both footnotes in one footnote.
- If **some words are to be omitted** from the original source, this omission should be indicated by three spaced stops “…” known as ellipsis marks.
- **References to biblical quotations** should be placed within parentheses within the text of the essay rather than being placed in footnotes. That is, put the references like this (Gen. 1:2; Ex. 3:1) not in a footnote.
- The **name of a bible book** should be in full in the main text of the essay, but it can be abbreviated in parentheses. For example: “1 Corinthians [**not** 1 Cor.] speaks of meat sacrificed to idols (1 Cor. 8).” See the SBL2 documentation for the standard abbreviation of biblical book names.
- *Italics* should be reserved for titles (of books and periodicals) and foreign words or phrases which are not common in English.

Dashes and their Use

It is important to distinguish between the various uses of dashes. In general, the rules are straightforward and outlined in places such as the Chicago Manual of Style (CMS).

- A **hyphen** (-) joins two things that are intimately connected such as compound words and numbers (e.g. social-economic forces; centuries-old debate; or ISBN 978-1-58983-964-9
- An **en dash** (–) connects things that are related to each other by distance (e.g. page range such as pages 55–68 or Gen 15:1–3, although an en dash should never be used if the words "from" or "between" precedes the first element of a pair of numbers such as "from 1990 to 1991" or "between 1990 and 1991")
- An **em dash** (—) if overused, can be very distracting to the reader and should be used sparingly. It is used to indicate an additional thought or even as a substitute for something that is missing (e.g. "I know who you are—the Holy One of God!"). Two or three em dashes joined are also often and rightly used when an author is repeated in a bibliography, as below:

Robinson, Donald W. B. *Josiah's Reform and the Book of the Law*. London: Tyndale, 1951.

——. *The Hope of Christ's Coming*. Beecroft, NSW: Evangelical Tracts and Publications, 1958.

——. *The Meaning of Baptism*. Second ed. Beecroft, NSW: Evangelical Tracts and Publications, 1958.

——. The Church of God: Its Form and its Unity. Punchbowl: Jordan Books, 1965.

General format

An essay should consist of the following essential features, each to begin on a fresh page.

Title Page

The title page should be repeated on each copy of your essay. It should contain your Student number, course and unit, the full title of the essay, the date submitted, the number of words in the body of the essay, and a signed and dated disclaimer.

Please note that unless a lecturer specifically requests it, **your name should not appear anywhere** on the Title Page or within the essay proper.

The following sample should be followed:

Student number:	Xxxxxxxxxxxx
Course	MDiv/etc
Unit	BS3
Title/Question	'The author is of no relevance in biblical hermeneutics.' Discuss.
Word count	1905
Date Due	dd/mm/yyyy
Date Submitted	dd/mm/yyyy
Disclaimer	
I, the person whose Student Number is noted above and who represents the original author acknowledges that this following essay, of which I have kept a copy, is entirely my work and all sources of ideas and expressions are duly acknowledged in footnotes or endnotes.	

Abstract

The second page of your submission should contain an abstract. An abstract is a piece of continuous prose, not numbered or bulleted points, and should be about 150 words in length. It is **not an introduction** but is designed to give a **synopsis, or summary, of the argument** of the essay (i.e. a bird's eye view of the whole).

The Essay

The essay proper should consist of the following three elements:

- A clear **introduction**. This introduction should identify how you understand the question, the issues that will be discussed, and the method of approach that will be used.
- The **body** of the essay, setting out in a clear and concise way the subject under discussion as outlined in the introduction.
- A **conclusion** that summarises what you have said and draws necessary conclusions.

The essay should be in your own words. Lengthy quotations of primary or secondary sources should be avoided. It is best to put an author's ideas in your own words. This shows you have understood the author. Where an author's argument is expressed in your own words or alluded to, make sure you acknowledge this in footnotes.

24 Golden Rules for Writing Well

1. Don't abbrev.
2. Check to see if you any words out.
3. Be carefully to use adjectives and adverbs correct.
4. About sentence fragments.
5. When dangling, don't use participles.
6. Don't use no double negatives.
7. Each pronoun agrees with their antecedent.
8. Just between you and I, case is important.
9. Join clauses good, like a conjunction should.
10. Don't use commas, that aren't necessary.
11. Its important to use apostrophe's right.
12. Never leave a transitive verb just lay there without an object.
13. Only Proper Nouns should be capitalized. also a sentence should begin with a capital letter and end with a full stop
14. Use hyphens in compound-words, not just in any two-word phrase.
15. In letters compositions reports and things like that we use commas to keep a string of items apart.
16. Watch out for irregular verbs that have creeped into our language.
17. Verbs has to agree with their subjects.
18. Avoid unnecessary redundancy.
19. A writer mustn't shift your point of view.
20. Don't write a run-on sentence you've got to punctuate it.

21. A preposition isn't a good thing to end a sentence with.
22. Avoid cliches like the plague.
23. 1 final thing is to never start a sentence with a number.
24. Always check your work for accuracy and completeness.

Notes and Bibliographies

Purpose

Please **do not use endnotes**. Always use footnotes as they are much easier to navigate for a reader. The purposes of footnotes are:

- To refer to the sources from which you have derived facts, opinions, or quotations.
- To add comments, explanations, examples, and allusions to differing views of other authors.
- To supply evidence of facts stated in the text and other material which is relevant to the argument but which would interrupt its flow if included in the main text.

A bibliography shows the reader the sources you have consulted or which have influenced your thinking. Note that it is not necessary to refer to the Bible in the bibliography.

Plagiarism

Failure to acknowledge your sources is a **serious breach of academic standards** and may be considered plagiarism. You should ensure that all direct quotations or allusions to the work of others are acknowledged.

Plagiarism is when you take someone's words or ideas and present them as your own. Plagiarism may be deliberate or inadvertent but it is always serious. Some common examples of plagiarism are:

- An author's exact words are used in part or in whole without any indication that this is being done and/or without a reference to the work.
- Another person's ideas are presented without acknowledgment that this is what you are doing. This includes ideas which are quoted directly, summarised, or expressed in your own words.
- Ideas are presented from sources that you have no record of.
- Someone else's work is copied and submitted as your own. Note that in this case both students may be penalised as it may be difficult to ascertain which work was original.
- A work is submitted that has been written by someone else.

Plagiarism is easily detected these days by sophisticated software.

Bibliographies

The main difference between the presentation of an entry in a bibliography and a footnote/endnote is as follows. In a bibliography the following applies:

- The author's **surname** is placed first (because alphabetisation is appropriate for a bibliography, but is not required in footnotes).
- The **publishing details** are not placed within brackets as in the notes.
- **Journals** and **series titles** should be written out in full.
- **Abbreviations** such as 'trans.' and 'ed.' should be written out in full (i.e. 'translated by' and 'edited by').
- Only essays and journal articles require **page numbers** to be given.
- When there are **several works** by the same author, it is usual to substitute repeats of the author's name by two to three em dashes (as demonstrated above).
- It is customary to break the bibliography into **primary** and **secondary sources** where relevant. Some teachers may occasionally require alternative or additional sections within bibliographies.

Bibliography entries should be single spaced but separated from each other by a double space. The first line of a citation begins at the left margin and subsequent lines are indented by a consistent number of spaces or tabs. Citations should not be numbered and multiple-line citations should not break across pages.

Greek and Hebrew

Greek and Hebrew, where used, should **not** be transliterated (unless in a citation from another author). Pointing of Hebrew is not necessary unless it is exegetically significant. All breathings should be included in Greek.

Standards and conventions for Notes and Bibliographies

The following (SBL2) conventions should be followed in all references:

- **Author or Editor.** Full names rather than initials should be used if possible; a space should be left between initials; ancient works may be listed under the name of either the ancient author or the modern editor, with consistent practice adopted for all ancient works cited.
- **Title.** Despite how it is presented in the source, a colon should precede every subtitle and all words should be capitalised except articles, conjunctions and prepositions (see the *SBL Handbook* for variations when citing titles in foreign languages).
- **Publishers.** Names should be abbreviated unless ambiguity or awkwardness would result; references to 'Press', 'Publishing Company' and the like should be omitted (except in the case of University Presses); ampersands ('&') should be used instead of 'and' (e.g. Hodder & Stoughton).
- **Place and date of publication.** List only the first place when several are mentioned, even if the second is linked to a second publisher. If the place is not well known, you should add a reference to the state or country (e.g. 'Brunswick, Vic'). When the place of publication is unknown use 'n.p.' ('no place'). Where the date of publication is unknown, use 'n.d.' ('no date') or estimate the century or decade (e.g. '18 ?' or '200_?').

- **Volume and page numbers.** All numerals should be Arabic; volume and page numbers are separated by a colon (e.g. 1:96–97). Give a full range of pages; don't use *p.* or *pp.* or *f.* or *ff.*

Most Latin terms that were once used in referencing (e.g. 'ibid', 'loc. cit', 'op. cit') are now no longer used.

In the following sections, samples are given for some of the more standard types of works that will be referred to. For each work type, three examples are given:

- The first occurrence in a footnote.
- A subsequent occurrence in a footnote.
- The same reference in the bibliography.

Examples

Books

One author

1. Paul A. Barker, *Deuteronomy: The God Who Keeps Promises* (Brunswick East, Vic: Acorn, 1998), 16.

4. Barker, *Deuteronomy*, 18.

Barker, Paul A. *Deuteronomy: The God Who Keeps Promises*. Brunswick East, Vic: Acorn, 1998.

Two or three authors

14. Anthony F. Campbell and Mark A. O'Brien, *The Sources of the Pentateuch: Texts, Introductions, Annotations* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 25.

18. Campbell and O'Brien, *Sources*, 28–29.

Campbell, Anthony F. and Mark A. O'Brien. *The Sources of the Pentateuch: Texts, Introductions, Annotations*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993.

More than three authors

5. Bruce C. Birch et al., *A Theological Introduction to the Old Testament* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1999), 123.

13. Birch et al., *A Theological Introduction*, 15.

Birch, Bruce C., Walter Brueggemann, Terence E. Fretheim and David L. Petersen. *A Theological Intro- duction to the Old Testament*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1999.

A translated volume

12. Gerhard Maier, *Biblical Hermeneutics* (trans. Robert W. Yarborough; Wheaton: Crossway, 1994), 28.

16. Maier, *Biblical Hermeneutics*, 56.

Maier, Gerhard. *Biblical Hermeneutics*. Translated by Robert W. Yarborough. Wheaton: Crossway, 1994.

A revised edition

15. Andrew Reid, *Postcard from Palestine* (2nd ed.; Sydney: Matthias Media, 1997), 78–80.

35. Reid, *Postcard From Palestine*, 56.

Reid, Andrew. *Postcard From Palestine*. 2nd ed. Sydney: Matthias Media, 1997.

Commentaries in general

Citing commentaries can be complex. They are normally cited in the same way that any other book might be (with the exception that the series of which it is a part should also be cited). The *SBL Handbook* notes that since "editors of commentary series usually acquire rather than edit, the names of general editors need not be included in bibliographic or note references."

25. George R. Beasley-Murray, *John* (WBC 36; Waco: Word, 1987), 123.

56. Beasley-Murray, *John*, 156.

Beasley-Murray, George R. *John.* Word Biblical Commentary 36. Waco: Word, 1987.

A single volume of a multivolume commentary in a series

Here there are two ways to approach the task. The first is to use the entire multivolume work as the basis for citation. This is the preferred approach.

4. Mitchell Dahood, *Psalms* (3 vols.; AB 16–17A; Garden City: Doubleday, 1965–1970), 3:127.

7. Dahood, *Psalms*, 2:121.

Dahood, Mitchell. *Psalms*. 3 vols. Anchor Bible 16–17A. Garden City: Doubleday, 1965–1970.

Alternatively, individual volumes may be used as the basis for citation. Again, whichever style is chosen, consistency should be observed.

Books

One editor

3. Richard Lischer, ed., *The Company of Preachers: Wisdom on Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 9.

7. Lischer, *The Company of Preachers*, 8.

Lischer, Richard, ed. *The Company of Preachers: Wisdom on Preaching*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002.

Two or more editors

56. Craig Bartholemew, Robin Parry and Andrew West, eds., *The Futures of Evangelicalism: Issues and Prospects* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 2003), 14.

61. Bartholomew, Parry and West, *The Futures of Evangelicalism*, 16.

Bartholomew, Craig, Robin Parry and Andrew West, eds. *The Futures of Evangelicalism: Issues and Prospects*. Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 2003.

Articles in books

An article in an edited volume

12. Edmund P. Clowney, 'Preaching Christ From All the Scriptures', in *The Preacher and Preaching: Reviving the Art in the Twentieth Century* (ed. Samuel T. Logan Jr.; Phillipsburg: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1986), 168.

16. Clowney, 'Preaching Christ', 165.

Clowney, Edmund P. 'Preaching Christ From All the Scriptures'. Pages 163–91 in *The Preacher and Preaching: Reviving the Art in the Twentieth Century*. Edited by Samuel T. Logan Jr. Phillipsburg: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1986.

An article in an encyclopaedia, dictionary, or lexicon

For major encyclopaedias and dictionaries, you may use standard abbreviations for the work in the footnote. You should still cite the article in full in the bibliography (as in the following example).

34. Peter Balla, 'Challenges to Biblical Theology', *NDBT* 20–27.

39. Balla, 'Challenges to Biblical Theology', 26.

Balla, Peter. 'Challenges to Biblical Theology'. Pages 20–27 in *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*. Edited by T. Desmond Alexander and Brian S. Rosner. Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 2000.

In the case of a lexicon where a word or family of words is discussed, the entire title and page range of the article should be given in the first occurrence. Thereafter, only the dictionary abbreviation, volume and page number need be given (e.g. Beyer, *TDNT* 2:83).

Journal articles

In addition to comments above regarding single quotation marks and the placing of punctuation in relation to quotation marks, it should be noted that if the title ends in a question mark, the comma or full stop is retained. In the bibliography, full stops follow the author and title and the journal title is fully written. In the first reference in the footnotes all pages in the article are given. In second and subsequent references, only the author, short title and the relevant page/s need be supplied.

14. John D. Currid, 'Recognition and Use of Typology in Preaching', *RTR* 53 (1994): 115–29.

21. Currid, 'Recognition and Use', 117.

Currid, John D. 'Recognition and Use of Typology in Preaching'. *Reformed Theological Review* 53 (1994): 115–29.

A CD-ROM reference (with a corresponding print edition)

67. Duane F. Watson, 'False Apostles', n.p., *ABD on CD-ROM*. Version 2.0c. 1995, 1996.

70. Watson, 'False Apostles', n.p.

Watson, Duane F. 'False Apostles'. *The Anchor Bible Dictionary on CD-ROM.* Logos Library System Version 2.0c. 1995, 1996. Print ed.: David Noel Freedman, ed. *Anchor Bible Dictionary*. 6 vols. New York: Doubleday, 1992.

Note that 'n.p.' can mean 'no place', 'no publisher' or, as here, 'no pages'. Also note that where CD-ROM resources give page numbers these should be referenced in the same manner as indicated above.

An internet publication

Note that despite the plethora of material available on the internet, this material is of variable quality and has rarely been submitted for peer review. You are therefore advised that such material should be used and cited with care.

8 Charles Truehard, 'Welcome to the Next Church', *Atlantic Monthly* 278 (August 1996): 37–58. Cited 5 May 1997. Online: http://www.theatlantic.com/atlantic /issues/96aug/nxtchrch/nxtchrch.htm.

9. Truehard, 'Next Church', 37.

Truehart, Charles. 'Welcome to the Next Church', Atlantic Monthly 278 (August 1996): 37–58. Cited 5 May 1997. Online: http://www.theatlantic.com/atlantic/issues/96aug/nxtchrch/nxtchrch.htm.

The URL is never hyphenated at the end of a line; you can divide a long web address before a 'dot' or after a 'slash'. If the publication has no print counterpart, then the printed publication details—such as '*Atlantic Monthly* 278 (August 1996): 37–58.' in the example above—should be replaced by 'n.p.' in the first reference and 'No pages' in the bibliography.

Resources

Further guidelines for the format of essays and assignments can be found in the following resources. Alexander, Patrick H., John F. Kutsko, James D. Earnest, Shirley A. Decker-Lucke and David L. Petersen, eds. The SBL Handbook of Style: For Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Early Christian Studies. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1999.

Writing a Book Review

Introduction

The purpose of a book review is to explain to someone who has **not read the book**, what the book is about and whether it is worth reading or not. So, a book review should have four sections:

1. Introduction.
2. Summary.
3. Evaluation.
4. Conclusion.

Let us look at each of these four sections.

The Sections of a Book Review

Introduction

The first thing to do is introduce your reader to the book. This would include the **title** and who the **author** is. Additionally, tell the reader who the book is **written for** (Christians, non-Christians, pastors etc.). You should also include the author's **purpose** in writing the book.

Summary

You then want to tell the reader what is in the book. This section unpacks the book's **contents**. How you do this will depend on its genre (biography, popular, technical, scholarly, dictionary, etc.). But generally, give an overview of the sections or chapters of the book. And then provide a brief summary of each section or chapter.

Things to watch in this section:

- Students sometimes attempt to cram so much information about the book in this section that their summary becomes unreadable. You cannot cover everything within the book. So, summarise what you think **are the most important** things said in the book.
- Make sure the reader knows whether it is **the author's views or your own views** that are being stated. If you are expounding what is in the book, then begin the sentence with who is making the point. For example: "Peter Jensen argues that …", or "In Allan Chapple's view …" etc.

Evaluation

The next section is an evaluation of what **you** think of the book. Explain what you believe are the book's strengths and weaknesses. But you must **give reasons** for the strengths and weaknesses.

The point of the evaluation section is to show your **analytical skills**. It tests your ability to analyse an argument.

Things to watch in this section:

- Some strengths or weaknesses may **not be important**. For example, Dietrich Bonhoeffer's *The Cost of Discipleship* is a book about the Christian life. I read a review of this book that went into great detail about why Bonhoeffer was wrong about infant baptism, all from a passing comment Bonhoeffer makes in the book. *The Cost of Discipleship* is not a book about baptism but the Christian life. So evaluate Bonhoeffer's vision of the Christian life rather than infant baptism.
- Be **gracious** in your language when you disagree with the author. Focus on the author's argument not the author themselves. And be careful not to impugn the author's motives.

Conclusion

In the conclusion tell the reader what you think of the book generally, i.e. provide an **overall conclusion**. Tell the reader whether you think the author **fulfils their purpose** in writing the book.

Secondly give a **recommendation**: would you encourage someone to read the book? If so who (new Christians, unbelievers, etc.) and why.

Final Comments

As a general rule of thumb the Summary and Evaluation sections should be roughly the **same length**.

Try to **write clearly**. This is an important skill to learn. To help do this, note the following:

1. Read and **reread** your book review so that its sentences and paragraphs naturally flow.
2. When writing, **ask yourself**, "Would the reader of this review, who knows nothing about the book, understand what I am saying?"
3. If you can use **fewer words** to make your point, do so. Wordy writing makes for difficult reading.

Writing a Theology Essay

How to Write a Theology Essay

The biggest mistake students make in a theology essay, is to write a biblical studies essay not a theology essay. Biblical studies **explores scriptural texts for ideas**, but theology **explores the *ideas* derived from scriptural texts**. So, a theology essay **does more** than exegesis and biblical theology, **though not less**.

> Remember, a biblical doctrine is what the **whole bible says about a topic**. A theology essay focuses on a biblical topic. And the most effective way to understand a biblical doctrine, **is to examine *various positions* on that doctrine** and argue which one is correct.
>
> For example, take the question "What is the church"? Answering this will involve comparing and contrasting two or more positions on the doctrine of the church. So, the essay may compare and contrast the classic Presbyterian and Congregationalist understandings of the church, and then argue which is correct, or perhaps show a third

position to be correct. The Presbyterian and Congregationalist understandings of the church are both attempts to discover what the whole Bible says about the church. When examining and comparing the two doctrines, hopefully the student will discover **where and why the two positions differ**. This will enable the student to effectively evaluate those differences, discover whether they are important, and why one is superior to the other.

Therefore, a good theology essay **presents a convincing argument**. The argument may take different forms, so there are many ways to answer the same question. But there will be some general criteria that must be fulfilled. Here are the criteria:

Expounding Various Positions

A theology essay must interact with a variety of positions on the topic because the same Bible texts are read differently often because of different underlying theologies. So, you will need to choose some different positions with which to interact. Choose the **classic positions on a doctrine** with which to interact. "Classic" means a position that is well-thought through and has garnered a strong following in the Christian tradition, because it is so convincing. You will often find these positions summarised in official creeds, councils, or confessions. Do not to select a view that is easy to refute (like Joyce Meyer or Benny Hinn). Rather, choose views that are particularly strong and have been defended by able theologians (usually not NT or OT scholars).[1]

When expounding a position do so:

1. **Faithfully**: do not create a straw man that is easy to demolish.
2. **Generously**: use generous language, even if you strongly disagree with them. This is an exercise in Christian grace; playing the ball, not the man.
3. **From the primary sources**: for example, expound Aquinas from his own works (primary sources), and not from the works of others (secondary sources). By all means use secondary sources to understand Aquinas. However, you will need to refer to Aquinas' primary texts at some point.

Warning: **Do not attempt a full history of a doctrine.** You do not have the word limit to do so. In lectures we cover the history of a doctrine because it's important to understand the key theologians in, and critical turning points of, a doctrine and why they occurred when they did. We have the time to do so. You do not have the space in an essay. So choose the most important positions concerning a doctrine.

Evaluating Various Positions

Ultimately, the purpose of the essay is to indicate what **you** believe. Expound different views, but **you** must evaluate them, and draw **your own** conclusions. **Don't just quote what other theologians think to prove a point**. For example, do not just quote what Calvin says as though it's correct. Let me know whether you agree or disagree with Calvin when you use him, and why you do.

In order to argue what **you** believe, three areas need to be covered. The subject you cover

[1] NT and OT scholars are not usually attempting to understand what the whole bible says on a topic. They may help in understanding key biblical texts along the way.

will determine how much emphasis you give to the following three areas:

Bible

Because theological ideas come from the biblical text, you must show that your conclusions come from Scripture. When evaluating a different position, you may need to critique their use of Scripture. Use of the Bible will particularly focus on **two** areas: **exegesis** and **biblical theology**.

For example the debate about the millennium hangs very much on how one reads Revelation 20:1–6. And therefore some analysis of this text must be done.

Logic / Reason

In evaluating arguments you will need to see if they are logical. Some positions will commit logical fallacies. For example, people have argued that if God is sovereign over all things then there is no use in praying because God has already chosen what will happen. This reasoning commits a logical fallacy. So be aware of the logical fallacies and explain which one may be committed. (See below for a list of classic logical fallacies).

Remember the place of presuppositions especially in the area of authority. For example, a Roman Catholic will argue for the truth of praying to saints because they have a different view of authority to Protestants. Do not only conclude the Catholic is wrong because they reject *sola scriptura*. Also enter the Roman Catholic worldview and critique their position from within it. For example, even within a Roman Catholic theology can we say that saints are able to hear the prayers of millions of humans all at once? Would that not question whether saints are truly human because humans do not have the ability to hear the requests of many people at once? By critiquing a theological position from within its own worldview it will show that you are attempting to *listen* carefully to your dialogue partner.

Systematic Theology

The work of systematics concerns how doctrines relate to each other. Therefore doing systematic theology will mean recognising which other doctrines are related to, and may influence, the particular doctrine you are examining.

- For example, many people reject the penal substitutionary view of the atonement because it is linked to a particular view of God's justice (retributive justice). Hence, there is a connection between the doctrine of God (and his justice) and the doctrine of the atonement.
- Another example is the debate between egalitarian and complementarian positions on women in ministry. The debate is related to the doctrine gender equality. Hence, the doctrine of humanity (and what gender equality is) is related to the doctrine of women's ministry in the church.

A theology essay needs to show, where necessary, how related doctrines may influence the doctrine you are examining.

Clarity

Strive to write clearly. This will help in bible teaching generally whether from lectern or lounge room. A key mistake people make is to use unnecessarily sophisticated words, often which they don't properly understand. Clarity comes with:

- Economic word use: **if you can say it in less words, do so**.
- **Avoid large sentences** with dangling sub-clauses. Short sentences communicate clearly.
- **Avoid passive verbs** where possible.

Remember to reread your essay several times before you hand it in, to see if the argue flows, and sentences make sense.

Logical Fallacies

Here are a list of common logical fallacies for which to watch out.

1. **Slippery Slope**: It claims that one event must lead to another. e.g. If we allow for drums in church it will lead to gay ordinations.

2. **Hasty Generalization**: A conclusion is drawn from insufficient evidence. e.g. "Every time I eat Thai the food I get sick, therefore all Thai food causes sickness".

3. **Non Sequitur**: "It does not follow", i.e. a conclusion does not follow from a preceding statement (or premises). e.g. "Mary makes the best chicken rice. Therefore she should run for parliament."

4. **Post hoc ergo propter hoc**: "After this, therefore because of this". When event two follows event one, event one must be the cause of event two. An example would be:

    i. Event one: The rooster crows.
    ii. Event two: The sun rises.
    iii. Fallacy: The sun rises because the rooster crows.

5. **Ad Hominem**: "To the person". Attacking the person's character not their position. e.g. "You're just saying that because you're jealous of me".

How To Research for a Theology Essay

One tool to learn at ETCAsia is an **ability to research yourself**. One key to research is finding good sources (articles, books) about your topic. If you rely on your lecturer to recommend sources, you will not learn how to find them yourself. The ability to research yourself means that after college you can keep educating yourself—a necessary skill for teaching God's word.

So, how does one begin researching a theology essay? How do we find sources?

Short / Dictionary Articles

Start with short simple articles and then progress to more in-depth sources. A short article will function like a map or bird's eye view of your topic.

The place to find simple articles is a **theological dictionary**. For example, if I'm doing an essay on penal substitution, I might begin by looking up dictionary articles on the "Atonement" or "Christ, Death of". Theological dictionary articles will give a simple overview of the various positions on the atonement. From there I can then start to research in a little more depth. For example, I might learn about some figures or positions that criticise penal substitution such as: Peter Abelard, the Socinian tradition, or Immanuel Kant. I now have some names and topics I can research in greater depth.

Journal Articles

A good place to research in greater depth is through **academic** journal articles, not simply popular articles (like The Gospel Coalition or the like). There are a variety of ways to access academic journals. Start with web searching. Furthermore, all Singaporean citizens can get access to academic journals through the national library. If you are unfamiliar with how to do this, please talk to another student who is, or to our registrar. If you struggle to get access to an important article talk to your lecturer who may be able to help.

Books

Obviously books on the topic you are researching may prove helpful. But you will not have the time to read entire books for your essay. Sections of particular books may likely have material useful for your essay.

> Do not underestimate the importance of Systematic Theology books (like Bavinck, Grudem, Erickson, Letham, etc.). They often have a good coverage of your topic.

Planning Your Essay

As you read sources it is advisable to take notes about what you read. Use whatever method you find useful for note-taking. But the key to a good theology essay is developing **an overall argument**.

Writing Your Essay

Starting to write your essay can be difficult. But, however you choose to picture your argument, it is important not to lose sight of it as you write. Students often get bogged down in details and forget they are arguing one particular thesis. You should be able to summarise your argument in a sentence. And then be able to unpack it, in a clear and understandable manner.

> The basic structure of your essay must have three essential elements:

1. Introduction

Your introduction should orient the reader to your question, and why it is important. And then it should explain what you hope to do (or how you will proceed) in the essay.

2. Body

The body will include at least two parts:

1. An **exposition** of positions on the topic.
2. An **evaluation** of the positions on the topic.

3. Conclusion

Your conclusion should summarise and state the thesis (or argument) of your essay.

Help in Writing Essays

The college can provide training in essay research and writing if students request it. Requests are to be made well in advance of assignment deadlines.

Use of AI

Appropriate Use

Students are allowed to use various AI tools for their assessments.[3] The purpose of using AI Tools is to help the student develop skills in critical thinking, analysis, and research. But the student is **fully responsible** to use AI tools appropriately and ethically recognising their limitations.

Ethical Use

The student is not allowed to use AI Tools to:

- Present AI generated work as their own. The student may **not use AI generated text** and present it **as their own written text**. That is, an AI tool will respond to your questions with its own generated text. You are not to use this generated text as your own work. Put another way: you are not to copy and paste AI generated text directly into your own work unless it is put it in inverted commas (or by use of a quotation block) with an appropriate footnote. **This applies to any and all AI generated text**.
- Learn about a topic but not acknowledge it. If you have used ideas from AI generated text in your assignment but have but have not quoted the AI generated text directly, you must still **give explicit acknowledgement** of this. For example, if you have used an AI tool to learn about say, redaction criticism, **you must explicitly acknowledge this** either via a footnote in the text (where you discuss redaction criticism) or in your bibliography.

When you sign your essay to confirm you have followed the ETCAsia assessment guidelines, these guidelines will now include ethical use of AI tools.

Limitations

AI tools come with limitations. They are only as good as the information they have been fed. Hence, if the AI tools have been fed:

- **Biased** data, they will produce biased output.
- **Wrong** data, their output will be wrong.

[3] These include applications such as: ChatGPT, Bard, Copilot, Apple Intelligence, Chatsonic, Dall-E, Midjourney and the like.

- **Limited** data (not up-to-date research), the output will be limited. For example, if the AI tools have only been fed research up to 2010, then the output will not give any research after 2010.
- Data that has **broken copyright laws**, they will give output that is **illegal**.

Therefore, it is **best to assume that AI output will be inaccurate until proven otherwise**. And it is the **students' responsibility to determine the accuracy or not of the AI tools output**. Hence, if you ask an AI tool to summarise a particular theological position on a topic, it may well be wrong and it is up to the student to evaluate this for themselves.

Recommendations

Recognising the limitations described above, we recommend using AI tools for the following kinds of work in research:

- To **gather information** about a topic as a starting point.
- To **summarise** content whether it be a book or a paper.
- To **clarify** content, particularly if it is a difficult concept.

Footnote Guidelines

There is currently no official SBL formatting guidelines for footnoting the use AI tools. Until one is decided upon we suggest you use the following format for a footnote:

> Text generated by ChatGPT to question "What is redaction criticism?", August 28, 2024, OpenAI, https://chat.openai.com/chat.

Bibliographic Guidelines

If you wish to acknowledge use of AI generated text in a bibliography use the usual SBL format for accessing any website. Instead of the webpage title put the question you entered into the AI tool. For example,

> "What is redaction criticism?". *OpenAI*. Last accessed August 28, 2024. https://chat.openai.com/chat.

Bibliographic Software

Using bibliography software will save you much time when writing essays. Bibliography software is a way of storing information about the articles and books you will refer to in your essays. It can then be used to automatically format the citations you put in your current essay. Furthermore, it will automatically produce a bibliography at the end of your essay from all your citations, to save you typing it in manually. And bibliography software can also store pdf articles you download and read, so you can easily find them again. Let us note some bibliography programs to use.

Zotero

Zotero is probably the **best choice** of bibliography software for your essays. Its benefits are:

- It is **cross-platform** (it works on Mac, Windows, and Linux).
- It syncs all your collected references to the **cloud** and so you can look at your references from a web browser.
- It has a **large user base** so that if you run into problems you can usually find a solution on the internet.
- It integrates well with the **major word processors**: Word, Libreoffice, and Zettlr.
- Most web browsers have Zotero **plugins**, so you can save bibliography references from websites like Amazon and EBSCO.

Mendeley

Mendeley is similar to Zotero, but not quite as popular and therefore does not have as many plugins and helps. The one benefit over Zotero is that you get 2GB of free cloud storage for your bibliography collection before you have to pay. Its positive features:

- It is cross-platform (it works on Mac, Windows, and Linux).
- It integrates with the major word processors: Word and Libreoffice.

Jabref

Jabref is a simple but useful bibliography program. Its benefits include:

- It is completely free.
- It is cross-platform (it works on a Mac, Windows, and Linux)
- It stores all your information in one file locally. If you put this file on OneDrive (or any other cloud storage platform) you can sync it to the cloud, and then you don't have to pay for more storage (as with Zotero and Mendeley).

The big negative is that it does **not** integrate with **Microsoft Word**. But it does integrate with Libreoffice and Zettlr.

Choosing a Word Processor and Bible Software

You will need to use a word processor to write your essays at ETCAsia. Here are some pointers about the various choices you have.

Microsoft Word

The industry standard word processor is Microsoft Word, which integrates well with bibliography software. Students at ETCAsia can purchase the full Microsoft Office suite at a discounted price.

Google Docs

Google Docs is free **but not really**. Google's business model is to offer their products free of charge so they can collect information about you as you use their products. For example, Google will scan all of your emails and files you store on Google Drive to build their profile about you. Google uses this information about you for advertising, to sell to other companies who will target you, and to entice you to keep using their products (the more you use them, the more they know about you). In other words, Google products are **not private**. For this reason it is probably a good idea to **stay away from Google generally** (i.e. refrain from using gmail, google docs, the google search engine, google maps etc.).

Free Word Processors

The best free word processor is **Libreoffice**. It does integrate with bibliography software well. Libreoffice also respects your privacy (it collects no data from you). The downsides are that it can be a little buggy, and is not completely compatible with Microsoft Office. But it would suffice for doing assessments whilst at ETCAsia.

Other good free options are **ONLYOFFICE** (which is a little more compatible with Microsoft Office). And for the more adventurous who like to use Markdown to write documents **Zettlr** (which links well with Zotero).

Bible Software

The bible software ETCAsia recommends is **Logos**: www.logos.com.

Mac Users

Apple provides its own word processor called Pages for free. This is a robust word processor, but it does not integrate easily with bibliography software (although you can use bibliography software manually). So it is a good solution.

If you are willing to pay, an excellent word processor is **Mellel**. It handles Hebrew particularly well (not least because it was created by Jews). Mellel is excellent for very big documents. It also connects well with a sophisticated bibliography program call **Bookends**. One caveat is that Mellel has a **steep learning curve**. But once you grasp its philosophy it is vastly superior to all other word processors.