

chicago manual for systematic theology citation

chicago manual for systematic theology citation serves as a foundational guide for scholars and students navigating the complex world of theological research and academic writing. Adhering to specific citation styles is paramount for academic integrity, ensuring proper attribution of sources and allowing readers to trace an argument back to its origins. This article provides a comprehensive overview of how to apply the Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS) to systematic theology, covering everything from basic principles to intricate details of citing various theological resources. We will delve into the nuances of footnotes, bibliographies, and the specific challenges presented by theological texts, such as ancient scriptures, commentaries, and dissertations.

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Understanding the Chicago Manual of Style for Theology

The Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS) is one of the most widely respected and utilized style guides in academic publishing, particularly in the humanities and social sciences. While it offers a general framework for citation and manuscript preparation, its application to specialized fields like systematic theology requires careful attention to specific conventions. Theological scholarship often involves engaging with a broad spectrum of source material, from ancient scriptures and patristic writings to contemporary theological journals and online databases. The CMOS provides a flexible yet rigorous system that, when applied correctly, enhances the clarity, credibility, and comprehensibility of theological arguments.

Systematic theology, by its nature, synthesizes doctrines and beliefs into a coherent doctrinal framework. This necessitates drawing upon a vast array of primary and secondary sources. The Chicago manual's emphasis on accurate and consistent attribution is crucial for demonstrating the scholarly foundation of these syntheses. By mastering the principles of CMOS for theological citation, writers can ensure their work meets the high standards expected in academic theological discourse, avoiding plagiarism and facilitating scholarly dialogue.

Core Principles of Chicago Style in Theological Citation

At the heart of the Chicago Manual of Style for systematic theology citation lie two fundamental principles: accuracy and consistency. Every citation, whether in a footnote or a bibliography, must precisely reflect the source being referenced. This includes author names, titles, publication details, and page numbers. Inconsistency in formatting, even for minor elements, can undermine the credibility of the author and distract the reader. The CMOS offers two primary citation systems: the Notes-Bibliography system and the Author-Date system. For theological scholarship, the Notes-Bibliography

system is overwhelmingly preferred due to its ability to accommodate extensive quotations, detailed source analysis, and the often-complex nature of theological source material.

The Notes-Bibliography system uses numbered footnotes or endnotes to cite sources within the text. Each note provides full bibliographical information for the first mention of a source and a shortened form for subsequent references. A comprehensive bibliography, listing all consulted sources, is then appended at the end of the work. This dual approach allows for detailed scholarly engagement within the notes while providing a convenient overview of the research for the reader. Adherence to the CMOS's meticulous formatting for these notes and bibliography entries is non-negotiable for scholarly work in systematic theology.

Footnotes vs. Endnotes in Systematic Theology

When employing the Chicago Manual of Style for systematic theology citation, writers must choose between footnotes and endnotes. Both serve the same purpose of referencing sources, but their placement differs. Footnotes appear at the bottom of the page where the reference is made, while endnotes are collected at the end of the chapter or the entire work. The choice often depends on publisher preference or the author's stylistic inclination. However, in theological scholarship, footnotes are often favored for their immediacy, allowing readers to quickly consult the source information without losing their place in the main text. This is particularly beneficial when engaging with lengthy quotations or making numerous cross-references common in theological exposition.

Regardless of the chosen method, the formatting within the notes must be precise according to the CMOS. The first citation of a source requires a full bibliographic entry, including author, title, publication details, and specific page number(s). Subsequent citations of the same source can be shortened, often using the author's last name, a shortened title, and the relevant page number. Some authors choose to employ the Latin abbreviation "ibid." (ibidem, meaning "in the same place") for consecutive references to the same source and page number, although the CMOS increasingly favors shortened citations for clarity and to avoid potential ambiguity. The crucial aspect for systematic theology is that the notes clearly and unambiguously direct the reader to the exact source material.

Citing Primary Theological Sources

Theological scholarship inherently engages with foundational texts that form the bedrock of religious thought. Accurately citing these primary sources is paramount in systematic theology. This category encompasses a wide range of

materials, each with its own specific citation requirements under the Chicago Manual of Style. Mastering these nuances ensures that the author demonstrates a deep understanding of the theological tradition and provides readers with reliable access to the original material.

Biblical Texts

Citing biblical texts is a cornerstone of theological writing. The Chicago Manual of Style generally recommends citing specific books, chapters, and verses directly within the text, usually in parentheses. For example: (Genesis 1:1). While full citation details for the Bible are not typically required in footnotes or the bibliography unless a specific translation or commentary is being analyzed in depth, consistency is key. When a particular translation is used throughout the work, it should be identified, often in a note or a preface. For instance, if using the New Revised Standard Version, it might be cited as NRSV. Scholarly editions or critical texts of the Bible may require more detailed citation, especially if textual variants are being discussed.

Patristic and Early Church Fathers

Works by Church Fathers like Augustine, Origen, and Irenaeus are essential primary sources in systematic theology. When citing these ancient texts, the Chicago Manual of Style emphasizes using standard scholarly editions and referencing the original language pagination where available, alongside translations. For instance, a citation might look like: Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. R.S. Pine-Coffin (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1961), 45. In footnotes, a typical entry would include the author, title of the work, translator (if applicable), place of publication, publisher, year of publication, and the specific page number(s). For classical Greek and Latin texts, referencing standard critical editions (e.g., *Patrologia Latina* or *Patrologia Graeca*) is often preferred, with references to the column or section numbers within those editions.

Medieval and Reformation Theologians

Citing theologians from the medieval period (e.g., Thomas Aquinas, Duns Scotus) and the Reformation era (e.g., Martin Luther, John Calvin, Huldrych Zwingli) follows similar principles to citing patristic works. The Chicago Manual of Style recommends using critical editions of their writings whenever possible. For instance, citing Thomas Aquinas's *Summa Theologiae* would typically involve referencing the question, article, and specific response, along with the edition and page number. A footnote might appear as: Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, vol. 1, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (Westminster: Christian Classics, 1981), I, q. 2, a. 3, resp. When dealing with collected works or specific treatises, accurate identification of the volume and pagination is crucial. Many modern critical editions now

provide both Latin/original language pagination and English translation pagination, which should be clearly distinguished in the citation.

Citing Secondary Theological Sources

Beyond primary texts, systematic theology relies heavily on the interpretations, analyses, and arguments presented in secondary scholarly works. The Chicago Manual of Style provides clear guidelines for citing these materials, ensuring that the author acknowledges the intellectual lineage and the scholarly conversations contributing to their own work.

Books and Monographs

Citing theological books and monographs follows the standard CMOS format for books. A full footnote citation typically includes the author's full name, the title of the book (*italicized*), publication information (place, publisher, year), and the specific page number(s) referenced. For example: Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction*, 6th ed. (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2017), 105. In the bibliography, the author's last name comes first, followed by the first name, and all other publication details are presented in a slightly different order, omitting the specific page numbers unless the reference is to a specific chapter or section within the bibliography entry itself.

Journal Articles

References to articles published in theological journals are crucial for engaging with current scholarship. The Chicago Manual of Style specifies that journal article citations include the author's full name, the title of the article (in quotation marks), the title of the journal (*italicized*), the volume and issue number, the year of publication, and the page numbers of the article, along with the specific page(s) cited. A footnote might look like this: Sarah Coakley, "The Body as Temple: Feminist Theological Reflections on the Hermeneutics of Embodiment," *Theology Today* 62, no. 3 (2005): 324. The bibliography entry will be similar but formatted with the author's last name first.

Dissertations and Theses

Academic dissertations and theses represent significant scholarly contributions, and their citation adheres to specific guidelines within CMOS. When citing a dissertation or thesis, include the author's name, the title of the work (in quotation marks), the degree sought, the university, and the year of completion. If the dissertation has been published, include the publication details as well. A footnote example: David R. Dunder, "The

Pneumatology of Gregory of Nyssa: A Study of the Holy Spirit in the Cappadocian Father," (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 2010), 78. If published, it would be cited as a book with additional information about its dissertation status.

Online Theological Resources

The rise of digital resources necessitates careful citation practices for online theological materials. The Chicago Manual of Style advises including as much information as possible to allow readers to locate the source, such as the author, title of the specific page or article, name of the website (*italicized*), date of publication or last update, and the URL. Crucially, it also recommends including a retrieval date, especially for content that might change over time. For instance: "The Doctrine of the Trinity," Christian Apologetics and Research Ministry, accessed December 15, 2023, <https://www.carm.org/doctrine-of-the-trinity/>. When citing online journals or books, follow the guidelines for those formats and include the URL and access date.

Special Considerations for Systematic Theology

Systematic theology presents unique challenges and opportunities for citation due to the complexity and historical depth of its subject matter. Applying the Chicago Manual of Style effectively requires attention to specific contexts and source types that are common in this discipline.

Referencing Scholarly Debates

A hallmark of systematic theology is its engagement with ongoing scholarly debates. When referencing these discussions, it is essential to cite not only the primary proponents of different viewpoints but also key secondary sources that analyze and critique these positions. The Chicago Manual of Style's emphasis on precise attribution ensures that the author accurately represents each scholar's contribution to the debate, maintaining intellectual honesty and providing readers with the means to explore these arguments further. This often involves citing multiple sources within a single note or paragraph to provide a comprehensive overview of the scholarly landscape.

Citing Controversial or Out-of-Print Works

In theological scholarship, authors may encounter controversial theological positions or works that are out of print and difficult to access. The Chicago Manual of Style encourages citing available editions, even if they are older or less critical, and providing as much bibliographical information as possible. If only a photocopy or unpublished manuscript is available, this

should be clearly stated in the citation, along with details about its provenance. The goal is to provide the most accurate and complete bibliographic record possible, enabling diligent researchers to track down the cited material.

Handling Translations

Many foundational theological texts are originally written in languages other than English. When citing these works, it is imperative to use a recognized and reputable translation and to cite that translation. The Chicago Manual of Style requires that the translator be credited and that the publication details of the translated edition be provided. If the author consulted both the original language and a translation, it is good practice to cite both, especially if there are significant differences in interpretation or wording. For example, a footnote might indicate: John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, vol. 1 (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), 3.3.1.

Crafting a Comprehensive Bibliography

The bibliography is an integral component of any work that adheres to the Chicago Manual of Style, serving as a complete alphabetical list of all sources cited. For systematic theology, this list will often be extensive, reflecting the broad range of materials consulted. The CMOS provides a standardized format for bibliography entries, which differs slightly from footnote entries, primarily in the order of names (last name first) and the omission of specific page numbers for the entire work, unless referring to a specific chapter or section within the bibliography itself.

A well-crafted bibliography in systematic theology not only fulfills citation requirements but also acts as a valuable resource for readers, showcasing the depth and breadth of the research undertaken. It allows for a quick overview of the scholarly conversation the author is participating in and provides a roadmap for further study. Maintaining consistency in formatting throughout the bibliography, according to CMOS guidelines, is essential for professionalism and clarity.

Common Pitfalls and Best Practices

Navigating the intricacies of the Chicago Manual of Style for systematic theology citation can lead to common pitfalls if not approached with diligence. One frequent error is inconsistency in formatting, such as varying the style of dates, abbreviations, or punctuation between notes and the bibliography. Another is failing to provide sufficient detail, leaving

readers unable to locate the source. In theological writing, it is also common to err by not properly identifying the edition of a particular text, especially with ancient or classical works where different critical editions can influence interpretation.

Best practices involve consulting the latest edition of the Chicago Manual of Style directly and using it as a reference throughout the writing process. Creating a style sheet for your own work can help maintain consistency. When in doubt, it is always better to provide more information rather than less. For theological sources, familiarizing oneself with standard scholarly abbreviations for classical texts and theological journals can also streamline the citation process and enhance clarity. Proofreading meticulously for citation errors before submission is a crucial final step.

Q: What is the primary difference between the Notes-Bibliography and Author-Date systems in the Chicago Manual of Style for theological works?

A: The primary difference lies in how sources are referenced. The Notes-Bibliography system uses numbered footnotes or endnotes for in-text citations and a separate bibliography at the end. This is generally preferred in theological scholarship for its ability to accommodate detailed commentary and lengthy quotations. The Author-Date system, on the other hand, uses parenthetical in-text citations (Author Year, Page) and a reference list at the end, which is more common in scientific and social science disciplines.

Q: How should I cite a specific passage from the Bible according to the Chicago Manual of Style in a systematic theology paper?

A: According to the Chicago Manual of Style, specific biblical passages are typically cited parenthetically within the text, using the book, chapter, and verse (e.g., John 3:16). If you are using a specific translation consistently, you should identify it, usually in a note or preface, such as NRSV for the New Revised Standard Version. Full citation details for the Bible itself are generally not required in footnotes or the bibliography unless you are analyzing a particular edition or commentary.

Q: What is the correct way to cite a work by a Church Father like Augustine in the Chicago Manual of Style?

A: When citing Church Fathers, the Chicago Manual of Style recommends using standard scholarly editions. A footnote citation should include the author, title of the work, translator (if applicable), place of publication,

publisher, year of publication, and the specific page number(s). For classical texts, referencing original language pagination or standard divisions (like book, chapter, or section) alongside translation details is also advisable.

Q: When citing a secondary source book in systematic theology using CMOS, what information is essential for a footnote?

A: For a footnote citing a secondary source book in systematic theology using CMOS, you must include the author's full name, the full title of the book (*italicized*), the place of publication, the publisher, the year of publication, and the specific page number(s) being referenced. For subsequent citations of the same source, a shortened version of the citation is typically used.

Q: How does the Chicago Manual of Style handle citing online theological articles or blog posts?

A: The Chicago Manual of Style requires that online sources be cited with as much information as possible to ensure verifiability. For online theological articles or blog posts, this includes the author's name, the title of the specific page or article (in quotation marks), the name of the website (*italicized*), the date of publication or last update, and the full URL. It is also highly recommended to include a retrieval date, especially for content that might be subject to change.

Q: Is it acceptable to use "ibid." in footnotes when citing theological sources according to the Chicago Manual of Style?

A: While the Chicago Manual of Style historically permitted the use of "ibid." (*ibidem*, meaning "in the same place") for consecutive citations of the same source and page, it increasingly favors using shortened citations for clarity and consistency. However, if used, "ibid." can be employed for consecutive references to the exact same source and page number. Subsequent references to the same source but a different page would use a shortened citation format.

Q: What is the primary purpose of a bibliography in a systematic theology work following the Chicago Manual of Style?

A: The primary purpose of a bibliography in a systematic theology work

following the Chicago Manual of Style is to provide a complete alphabetical list of all sources that were cited in the text. It serves to give credit to authors whose work has been consulted, allows readers to verify the sources, and provides a valuable resource for further research into the topics discussed. It also demonstrates the breadth and depth of the author's research.

Q: How should I handle citations of translations in systematic theology when using the Chicago Manual of Style?

A: When citing works that have been translated, the Chicago Manual of Style requires you to credit the translator and provide the publication details of the translated edition. If you consult both the original language and a translation, it is good practice to cite both, especially if significant interpretative differences arise. The citation should clearly indicate which version (original or translation) is being referenced.

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