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Russian Church History – 325

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## **Methodology for Writing Term Papers**

### General Guidelines

The subject of a student's term paper may be an **examination of a historical theme** within our studied period or a **review of a book or article** in a periodic journal.

The student must submit his chosen topic to the instructor. It must be approved by November 15<sup>th</sup> (March 15<sup>th</sup> for the second semester). The papers themselves are to be submitted before Examinations, so that they may be returned for revision. While completing the assignment, the student must keep the instructor informed of the paper's progress.

Submitting a paper for which the student has received a grade in another course and/or using parts of another's work in a paper without citing the source is **UNACCEPTABLE**.

### Reviewing the Literature

While reading, one must take notes on those sections which correspond with the student's topic. If the student, does not own the book, notes should be taken on a piece of paper. It is preferable to work with copies, so that notes can be made directly on the text. While reading, one must keep in mind the goal of his own research and ignore that which does not directly correspond to it.

### Paper Format

**Text.** Must be typed on a computer according to MLA guidelines. (see example). The paper should be a minimum of six typewritten, single-spaced pages using 12-point font.

Required sections for any paper: 1) Introduction (state main questions), 2) Main body (develop questions), 3) Conclusion (answers to questions). All three parts must be tied together.

When writing, one must avoid unnecessary verbosity. Everything written should serve to develop the topic set forth in the title. One should not spend much time on events and facts which do not deal directly with the topic at hand. It is necessary that the main sections of the paper consist of concusions drawn from an "analysis and discernment of the texts taking place in the given section of the paper (Archpriest. G. Orekhanov 18)

The student must avoid a one-sided or polemic writing style. Rather, the paper should be written dispassionately, and even-handedly.

A term paper is an elementary skill for a scientific examination: "...any independent written work of a student, geared towards the study of sources, is in the first place a creative work" (11). As such, "a mechanical compilation of others' ideas cannot be allowed, since even a basic scientific work must show not only a mastery of the materials, but also the student's independent thought and analysis. (19)

### Citations

No more than 15% of the paper should consist of citations. In addition, all citations must be based as an illustration of a certain point.

As a rule, the main method of citing will be paraphrase.

All ideas and facts belonging to other authors must be joined by an indication of the source.

### Examples

1. Fr. Vladislav Tsy-pin writes that "Since its birth, the Church has revealed its Divine and human nature."
2. One cannot disagree that the Church by its nature is both Divine and human (Archp. V. Tsy-pin 6).

A citation consisting of four or more lines must be indented from the left side by ten spaces.

### Foot Notes & Bibliography

Pay attention to the citations of articles in the example below.

italicize book titles instead of underlining them. (Underlining nowadays is only used for titles in handwritten or typed papers, where italics are not available.)

Use reverse order for authors' names only in the bibliography. (E.g., footnote no. 1 should read "Mark Raef, " not "Raef Mark." )

Write "8.2" -- not "Vol. 8 No.2."

Don't repeat the full reference the second time around. For instance all you need for f.n. no 5 is Raeff, "An Early Theorist..." 77-89 Don't write "p." -- just give the page number.

Every foot note has to be closed with the full stop.

*Ibid* --> *Ibid.* stands for *ibidem* (Latin for [in the] "same" [place]). As an abbreviation it requires a period; as the short form of an introductory adverbial phrase, it needs a comma.

Periods and commas normally go inside quotation marks, even if they do not properly belong to the quoted phrase. E.g., The sign said "STOP," but I just kept going.

Do not use TWO punctuation marks at the end of the sentence . It should be ended with a question mark only (E.g., " or of filling other high Church offices?").

### Examples

- a. Article: Ferris, Lucy. " 'Never Truly Members': Andre Dubus's Patriarchal Catholicism." *South Atlantic Review* 66.2 (1997): 39-55.
- b. Book: Meyendorff, John. *The Byzantine Legacy in the Orthodox Church*. Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2001.
- c. *Byzantine Theology: Historical Trends and Doctrinal Themes*. New York: Fordham University Press, 1983.
- d. Internet: Sociology. Dept. home page. U of California Los Angeles. 8 Oct. 2003  
<http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/soc/>

### Editing Check List

1. Does everything written apply to the topic?
2. No more than 15% citations.
3. Citations must be used only as illustrations of important points. In all other cases, it is necessary to use paraphrase.
4. Could the paper have been written more concisely?
5. Assumptions and facts should be checked.
6. Check that the topic was proportionally narrow for the assigned length. For example, there is no room in an eight-page paper to dedicate a whole page to an author's biography. A short paraphrase will suffice.
7. The format and grammar of the paper will be checked. As opposed to editing for meaning, editing for grammar should be done by reading the paper to the end, sentence by sentence. The paper should be edited both on the computer and on paper. Read it aloud.
8. Give the paper to a friend to read.
9. Hand the rough draft to instructor.

## Research

**Subject:** The student must choose a topic of interest to him in order to find an answer to that, which has been intriguing by for a long time. For example, the subject “The Mission of Sts. Cyril and Methodius to the Slavonic people” is too broad, while “The Possibility for Cyrill and Methodius’ Mission to the Slavs” is more fitting.

What does it mean to ‘think through a subject’? In the topic itself, there is a clearly laid out or implied problem. If, in the first case, you should already understand the presented problem, then in the second case, you should, interpreting the given topic, discover its “pressure points” and their hierarchy, and determine the main root problem.

**Sources:** After the subject is chosen, it is necessary to collect a number of independent sources – first, in the Seminary Library (books and periodic journals), second from internet sites, and also in other libraries (search system First Search). One should also submit his topic to the instructor.

**Work Plan:** After the topic is approved by the instructor, it is necessary to form a plan. Desirably, the plan will look something like the one below.

1. Reading of sources.
2. Analysis of sources.

One must ask himself the following questions.

- a. Some authors of methodological papers recommend writing down on a piece of paper any thoughts that come to your head regarding the given paper, before beginning your research. Only later will you organize these into your plan.
  - b. What picture comes together from the studied sources?
  - c. Does this picture correspond with the the research topic?
  - d. What is the most important I have discovered from the studied materials?
  - e. What do I want to tell the reader (This important answer should be formulated as a single sentence)
3. Plan for the paper itself
    - a. The paper must contain an introduction, in which the researcher explains his task (for example, to compare two monastic *typicoi*) and how he will complete this task over the course of his paper (Eg: Typicon A will be marked with roman numerals, Typicon B with Arabic)

- b. Draw for the reader the picture you formed from the studied sources. All of your conclusions should be substantiated here.
- c. The conclusions, in which the author should explain how he decided the question formulated in the introduction.

ALTERNATIVE VERSION: At the beginning of the paper, summarize the results of previous research on the topic, and substantially describe their weaknesses.

#### 4. Writing the Paper

In the main body, one must tie together and concisely synthesize the sum of the differing sources, to weave (so to speak) a historic canvas. In order to achieve this, the author must not simply be a presenter of citations, but rather he must control them, tying them with his analytical commentary. The depth of the research must be proportionally relate to the length of the paper. For example, if the paper is assigned as six pages, one cannot expect from it the same level of description of facts as one of twenty pages.

#### Book Review

1. Everything said in point 3 of the “Research paper” section applies also to the review.
2. In the beginning, one should give a short description, no more than 2-3 sentences, of the reviewed book’s author.
3. The student must point out what goal the author puts before himself.
4. How he completes this goal. Give a concise description of the book’s main arguments. What sources does the author use to support his own argument. Does he enter into a debate with other historians?
5. In conclusion, one should point out whether the author successfully navigated his task. If possible, compare the book to other works on the topic.
6. It should be clear from the review whether or not the reviewer agrees with the author’s method and conclusions.
7. Title Format: **V.A. Tsy-pin. Church Law. Moscow 1994**

This aide is based on the following sources:

Kennedy, X.J; Kennedy, Dorothy M.; Muth, Marcia F.; Holladay, Sylvia A. *The Bedford Guide for College Writers with Reader, Research Manual, and Handbook*. 7<sup>th</sup> ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2005.

Silverman, Jay; Hughes, Elaine; Wienbroer, Diana R. *Rules of Thumb for Research*. Boston; McGraw-Hill College, 1999.

Allen, Eliot D.; Colbrun, Ethel B. *The Student Writer's Guide*. Deland, FL: Everett/Edwards, Inc.

"Writing Book Reviews." Writing Tutorial Service. Indiana University. 25 Sep. 2005

[http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/book\\_reviews.html](http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/book_reviews.html)

Ореханов, Г., свящ.; Сухова Н.Ю. *Методические указания по подготовке письменных студенческих работ разного уровня сложности: Письменные работы 3-4 курса (курсовые работы)* 1. Москва: Православный Свято-Тихоновский Гуманитарный Университет, 2005.

Rodriguez, Dawn; Tuman, Myron G. *Writing Essentials with Quick-Reference Coverage of Writing Online*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1999.