

## Purpose

This paper is designed to introduce you to the Society of Biblical Literature (SBL) citation format.<sup>1</sup> The works you cite in seminary may include multiple authors, editors, or translators. You may cite different editions or reprints. You may need to cite an entire series or chapter in an edited volume. While the bibliographical information may seem complex, all SBL citations are based on two basic formats: a book by a single author and an article by a single author.

## Book Format

First, let us review a book format.

**First Citation.** The first time you cite a book, the citation would be as follows: Charles H. Talbert, *Reading John: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Fourth Gospel and the Johannine Epistles* (New York: Crossroad, 1992), 127.

You will write the author's name followed by the book title in italics. Then, you will include the publishing company's name, the publishing company's city, and the year of publication. Then, you will cite the page number.

**Subsequent Citations.** The next time you cite this specific book, the citation would be as follows: Talbert, *Reading John*, 128.

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<sup>1</sup> Gonzalo Rubio et al., eds., *The SBL Handbook of Style: For Biblical Studies and Related Disciplines*, 2nd ed. (Atlanta: Georgia, 2014). This book will be either on reserve in the library or on the shelf under the call number "808.027 SBL 2nd ed. / 2014."

You should include only the author's last name, the title of the book in italics (with the subtitle removed), and the page number.

### **Article Format**

Second, let us review an article format.

**First Citation.** The citation would be as follows: Blake Leyerle, "John Chrysostom on the Gaze," *J ECS* 1 (1993): 159-74.

You will begin by writing the author's name. Then, you will write the title of the article in quotation marks. Next, you will include the journal abbreviation in italics. For example, this particular article is from the *Journal of Early Christian Studies* and appears as *J ECS* in the citation above. Then, you will write the journal volume followed by the year. You can find this information on the article's cover page. If you are citing the entire article, write a colon and the entire article's page numbers. If you are not citing the entire article, use a comma and write the page number.

**Subsequent Citations.** The next time you cite this specific work, you should include only the author's last name, the title of the article in quotation marks, and the page number. The citation look like this: Leyerle, "John Chrysostom," 161.

### **Bibliography**

You will need to format the information differently in the bibliography. Begin by listing your sources alphabetically according to author's last names. Each bibliographical entry needs to be single spaced. The first line should be flush with the left margin and the following lines should be indented to the normal space for a new paragraph (0.35 inch). You will list the author's last name, a comma,

then the author's first name. You will use a period instead of a comma for each part of the citation. For example, a bibliography for our book and article examples would look like this:

Leyerle, Blake. "John Chrysostom on the Gaze." *J ECS* 1 (1993): 159-74.

Talbert, Charles H. *Reading John: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Fourth Gospel and the Johannine Epistles*. New York: Crossroad, 1992.

### **A Few Things to Keep in Mind**

For information on books or articles including multiple authors, editors, translators, series, reprints, and much more, see the *SBL Handbook of Style*, section 6.3.

You should remove additional details from a publisher's name. For example, do not write "InterVarsity Press" or "IVP Press" in your citation. Write only "IVP."

When listing the location of a publishing company, you should include only the city if the location is well known. If the city is not well known, you must also include the state. For example, students are likely to cite a book published by Eisenbrauns at some point in seminary. The company was located at Winona Lake, Indiana until 2017. In citing one of their books, you would not write only "Winona Lake" because the city is not well known. Instead, you must write "Winona Lake, IN."

**\*This review only covers the most basic formats of SBL. *When in doubt, always check the handbook.***