



Institute of Lutheran Theology

ILT Library Research Guide

This guide is designed to help new theology students begin their studies. Topics include:

- How to find books in the library.
- How to find articles on theological topics.
- How to make the best use of the Internet in studying theology.
- How to conduct a successful research project.
- How to cite sources.

How to find books in the library.

Three primary systems are available to help ILT students find books: KOHA, the ATLA Group Catalog, and the ILT Online Full-Text search engine.

KOHA

- the catalog search interface
- allows users to search, compile lists, request materials, and manage check-outs
- allows a virtual "Shelf Browsing"

ATLA Group Catalog

- The ATLA group catalog makes it possible for students to search the collections of American Theological Library Association member libraries at one time, through a single interface—the FirstSearch interface. Users of the ATLA catalog also will be able to search a regional group of ATLA libraries, expand their search to the participating ATLA libraries, or seamlessly expand their search to all of WorldCat.

ILT Online Full-Text

- Tens of Thousands of full-text books, articles, essays, and multimedia resources are accessible through ILT custom search engines. To search for full-text books online, just enter your query in the search field under the heading “Search for Online, Full-text Books Here.”

How to find articles on theological topics.

Index Theologicus

- The theological database "Index Theologicus" contains document descriptions of articles from more than 600 periodicals in theology and religious studies. Many of the titles included in Index Theologicus are available in the [ILT journal collection](#). The journal collection's holdings are cataloged in the library's [KOHA](#) catalog.

ILT Online Full-Text

- Tens of Thousands of full-text books, articles, essays, and multimedia resources are accessible through ILT custom search engines. The Journal search engine includes over [350 journal titles](#). To search for full-text journal articles online, just enter your query in the search field under the heading "Search for Online, Full-text Articles Here."

How to make the best use of the Internet in studying theology.

There is useful (accurate) information to be found on the Internet, if you know where and how to look. Google and Wikipedia aren't always helpful or accurate.

This section will help you:

- Evaluate such sources for yourself
- Find Internet sources that have been screened by scholars in religious studies

Don't forget to ask the librarian if you need help!

Librarians use the Web for research all the time!

The Internet is loaded with helpful resources, but remember to evaluate all information with these standards in mind:

1. Purpose: Does the level of discourse and presentation indicate that this is a scholarly site?
2. Authority: Is the author/creator a recognized expert in the field? What is the author's academic credentials?
3. Accuracy: Are there obvious errors in content, grammar, spelling?
4. Bias: Is the presentation balanced with differing points of view and respectful tone?
5. Timeliness: When was the site last updated?

LibX Toolbar

LibX Institute of Lutheran Theology Edition is a Firefox and Internet Explorer extension that provides direct access to your Library's resources. It features toolbar and right-click context menu access to:

- ILT Library Catalog
- ILT Library Journal Search
- ILT Library Reference & Monograph Search

In addition to all of the library's resources listed above, there are a variety of resources online to

support student research. The sites below have been screened by scholars and librarians, and these will generally provide accurate information (but evaluate linked pages carefully!).

- [Wabash Center Guide](#): Selective, annotated guide to a wide variety of electronic resources of interest to those who are involved in the study and practice of religion.
- [Intute – Best of the Web](#): Free online service for best web research and study resources. Sites chosen by lecturers and librarians from universities across the UK.
- [Religion Online](#): Full texts by recognized religious scholars free online. Limited selection but there's some good stuff here. Edited by Prof. William F. Fore and a team of volunteers.
- [Directory of Open Access Journals](#): Free, full text, quality controlled scientific and scholarly journals in all subjects and languages.
- [Open Directory of Internet Sources](#): A directory of human indexed sites with significant content in religion.
- [Oister Digital Repository](#): Millions of documents from digital archives not always searchable in Google.
- [Internet Archive](#): A repository for thousands of digitized books and saved web pages.
- [OpenDOAR](#): Directory of Open Access Repositories offers full-text searching of many academic repositories, where you can often find pre-prints or copies of published articles, unpublished papers, and yet-to-be-published materials.
- [Research in Ministry](#) – An Index to DMin and DMiss Project Reports and Theses (RIM®) Online: Research in Ministry (RIM) online indexes and abstracts project reports and theses from more than 50 Doctor of Ministry and Doctor of Missiology programs accredited by the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada.
- [CDRI – Digital Resources for the Study of Religion](#): The CDRI database provides access to digital images of woodcuts, photographs, slides, papyri, coins, maps, postcards, manuscripts, lithographs, sermons, shape-note tune books, and various forms of Christian art, architecture, and iconography.

How to conduct a successful research project.

An easy 6-step approach based on “The Big 6 Skills Approach to Information Problem-Solving” devised by Michael B. Eisenberg and Robert E. Berkowitz.

- Step 1: Task Definition
- Step 2: Information Seeking Strategies
- Step 3: Location and Access
- Step 4: Use of Information
- Step 5: Synthesis
- Step 6: Evaluation

Step 1: Task Definition: Define the assignment and determine needed information for completion.

- Look at the information your professor gave you concerning the assignment and decide what

you are expected to do and what is required as an end result (paper, speech, presentation, etc.).

- Pay attention to key words like "assess" or "compare" or "explain," and make sure you complete your task based on these words. If the assignment requires you to answer a question, look to see if there is more than one part to the question.
- Based on the assignment, determine what information you need or what you will need to do in order to complete it.
- Consider the due date and create a time-line for completing the assignment.

Step 2: Information Seeking Strategies: Brainstorm possible sources appropriate for your assignment, evaluate, and choose the best ones.

- Determine where you can find the information to complete your assignment. What sources (books, periodicals, web sites, indexes, etc.) will have information you need?
- Decide which resources would be the best ones to use, and what kind of information each one might provide.

Step 3: Location and Access: Locate your sources and find the needed information within them.

- Look up resource locations using the library's catalog and search tools.
- Search through the item to find the information you need within it.

Step 4: Use of Information: Examine all the information within a source and extract what you need.

- Read, view, examine, or digest the information from each source and write down what pieces of knowledge you need to complete the assignment or solve your problem.
- Write down the citation information you will need for each source while you are extracting information from it. Keep the source data and the extracted information together for when you compose your bibliography or works cited page.

Step 5: Synthesis: Organize the information you gained from all the sources and present it according to the assignment.

- Use all the pieces of information along with your own ideas to create your paper, video, speech, presentation, or whatever the assignment calls for you to create. Using transitional words and phrases will create a smooth flow to your writing or to other presentation formats.
- Don't forget to create a bibliography/works cited page and give credit to your sources within the text.

Step 6: Evaluation: Judge your final product for effectiveness, and determine the efficiency of your problem solving skills.

- After you are all done and your assignment has been turned in or presented, determine how you did.
 - Did you complete all the requirements?
 - Did your research methods work?
 - What was the quality of your final product?

How to cite sources.

Tools to help you cite sources in your assignments include:

- [Chicago-Style Citation Quick Guide](#)
- [KnightCite Citation Service](#): an online citation generator service provided by the Hekman Library of Calvin College. This service simplifies the often tedious task of compiling an accurate bibliography in the appropriate style by formatting the given data on a source into a reliable citation, eliminating the need to memorize minute details of style for multiple kinds of sources.
- [Zotero](#): a free, easy-to-use Firefox extension to help you collect, manage, cite, and share your research sources. It lives right where you do your work—in the web browser itself. Zotero has a plug-in for both Microsoft Word and Open Office, and allows you to drag and drop citations into a document.
- [Mendeley](#): another free product on the web. Like Zotero, it allows you to drag and drop citations into a document.
- **FirstSearch Citations**: WorldCat records the OCLC FirstSearch service include a "Cite this Item" link. When users select "Cite this item" in the External Resources links within records from these databases, they will see the citation for a selected record in the reference standard for five common styles: APA, Chicago, Harvard, MLA and Turabian. Users may copy and paste the needed format into a bibliography.