



A Four-Step Guide to Academic Success at CTS



IMPORTANT DISCLAIMER

Do not use this handout as a replacement for your assignment description. Use it as a supplement to help understand the basic expectations of your assigned genre, but *always* defer to the specific assignment description given to you by your instructor.

What are the “four steps” to academic success?

DEFINITION: The “Four-Step Guide to Academic Success” is a method that one should follow to conduct clear and high-level research at Columbia Theological Seminary. This guide outlines where and how to start research that will result in strong academic and theological writing.

PURPOSE: During your time at Columbia Theological Seminary, there will be many skills (beyond the skills immediately required for coursework) that you will need to develop in order to be successful. This guide will help you hone your research method skills.

What are the steps of the “Four-Step Guide to Academic Success at CTS”?

Step 1:

- **Research:** Search specific topics and resources on [Emory University’s Pitts Theology Library](#) research catalog.
- If or when you find a book, article, or text of interest, **copy the title into the [John Bulow Campbell Library](#).**

Step 2:

- **Seek research guidance** from Emily Peterson, Director of Public Services at the John Bulow Campbell Library: Peterson@CTSnet.edu.

Step 3:

- **Begin the writing process** by looking at the Center for Academic Literacy (CAL) [resource page](#).

Step 4:

- **[Make an appointment with CAL](#)** for guidance. CAL can help you with brainstorming, outlining, writing mechanics, and more. You can make an appointment on our website.

What are some practical tips for following the “Four-Step Guide”?

- **TIP 1: Start the “steps” early.** By giving yourself as much time as possible to complete and conduct research, you are providing yourself with a maximal amount of potential to do *your* best on any given assignment or speaking engagement.
- **TIP 2:** Don’t be afraid to **ask for help** if you get stuck on one of the steps. Each of the academic coaches at CAL would love to help you wherever you are in the research process. Just make an appointment on our website.
- **TIP 3: Retrace your “steps.”** Remember, writing is a *recursive* process. Don’t be afraid to do more research or to return to CAL for a follow-up appointment. One may need to follow this guide more than once to reach the highest outcomes.

Important Links for the “Four Step Guide”

- **Emory University Pitts’ Theology Library:** <https://guides.theology.library.emory.edu/>
- **John Bulow Campbell Library:** <https://library.ctsnet.edu/>
- **CAL Resource Page:** <https://www.ctsnet.edu/academics/cal/cal-resources-2/>
- **CAL Appointment Page:** <https://ctsnet.mywconline.com/>

Compiled by **Courtney Bowden, Academic Coach** and
Robert Griffin, Director of the Center of Academic Literacy

In collaboration with **Erica Hughes, Academic Coach**

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