Giving Credit to Authors and Acknowledging Sources

Every time you discuss an idea or information that is not your own or use a quote from one of your sources, you need to attribute that idea, information, or quote to the author or source. To do this properly, you need to do three things:

1. The author or source needs to appear in the text before the idea, information or quote.
2. Use quotation marks for any groups of words or sentences borrowed from a source.
3. Put a footnote at the end with proper citation style in the footnote, e.g. author, title, publication information, and page number(s).

Verbs to attribute information to a source:

accepts          denies          questions
acknowledges     derides         refutes
adds             describes       rejects
affirms          disagrees       relates
agrees           discusses       remarks
answers          disputes        reminds
argues           emphasizes      replies
asks             explains        reports
asserts          finds           responds
believes         focuses on      reveals
cautions          highlights      says
claims           holds           sees
comments         identifies      shows
comparcs         illustrates     speculates
concedes         implies         states
concludes         insists         stresses
condemns          interprets     suggests
considers          lists         supports
contends          maintains      summarizes
contradicts       notes          thinks
criticizes         observes     understands
declares            outlines     urges
defends          points out     verifies
demonstrates        posits         warns
                                        writes

Normally, when referring to sources’ ideas, use present tense. Use the past only when you want to stress that an idea has changed.
Examples:

Eric Law, in his book *The Wolf Shall Dwell with the Lamb*, asserts that the most important cultural differences are “internal, unconscious” differences in “perceptions and feelings.”

Reinhold Niebuhr maintains “The Christian Faith is the apprehension of the divine love and power which bears the whole human pilgrimage...”

According to Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, a feminist hermeneutics “must critically evaluate [the Bible and tradition] as partriarchal articulations.”

Usually the first time that a source is mentioned, the full name(s), i.e. first and last name(s), are included in the text. For subsequent mentions, only the last name(s) are used. The footnote for the first time a source is cited needs to be complete. Subsequent footnotes of the same source include only the author’s last name or authors’ last names and the page number, unless there is more than one source by the same author(s), in which case the title must also be included.

Examples:

1 Law, 8.

or


In a longer summary, you may want to remind readers that you are summarizing.

Niebuhr further states that …

Calvin goes on to say that…

---