

University of North Texas
GEOG 4210/5210: Urban Geography

Some Referencing Guidelines

Complete referencing of your sources is an indispensable element of academic writing. Good writing requires good referencing habits. Here are a few guidelines to help you do this well.

1. **Any time you use facts or ideas someone else came up with, you need to cite your source.** If you don't cite a source, you are implicitly saying that the facts or ideas you mention are ones you created. This means that, for example, if you mention that the United States has a population of 312 million people, either:
 - a. You cite the source of your information because you found that number somewhere else, or
 - b. You don't cite the source because you personally counted everyone in the country and can verify that the number you cite is correct (this really what you're saying when you don't cite a source)

2. **Source citation involves two steps: flagging statements in your report that have outside sources, and providing the complete details for each source you use.** Typically, writing in geography uses an "Author, date" system for in-text citations, and an alphabetical list of sources provided at the very end of the paper for the complete details of each source.

Here's a short example of in-text source citations:

Pratt and Pratt (1960) studied the impact of regional shopping centers on existing communities. They concluded that regional shopping centers do have an impact on surrounding areas up to a ten minute driving distance. Their study, however, was focused on two shopping centers and their influence on suburban patronage in the New York metropolitan area. A wide variety of work done since the 1960s has addressed retail location and shopping behavior as well as the changing location and development strategies of malls and retail chains (Ghosh and McLafferty 1987; Guy 1994; Graff 2006; Lorch and Hernandez 2008; Hernandez *et al.* 2008), but none of the research published in recent years has come back to the theme of retail development impacts in a regional setting.

Here's a short example of an alphabetical reference list (found at the end of the paper). This example includes citations to both books and articles published in journals or magazines:

References

- Ghosh, A. and S. McLafferty. (1987). *Location Strategies for Retail and Service Firms*. Lexington Books. Lexington, MA.
- Graff, T. (2006). "Unequal Competition Among Chains of Supercenters: Kmart, Target, and Wal-Mart." *The Professional Geographer* 58(1), pp. 54-64.

Guy, C. (1994). *The Retail Development Process*. Routledge. London.

Hernandez T., T. Erguden, and M. Svindal. (2008). *Power Retail Growth in Canada and the GTA: 2007*. CSCA Research Letter 2008-01. Ryerson University. Toronto.

Lorch, B.J., and T. Hernandez. (2008). "The Transformation of Shopping Mall Space in Canada: An Analysis of Selected Leasing Site Plans Between 1996 and 2006." *Geography Research Forum* 28, pp. 21-41.

Pratt, S., and L. Pratt (1960). "The Impact of Some Regional Shopping Centers." *Journal of Marketing* 25(2), pp. 44-50.

3. **You need to find a balance in how you do your source citations.** It is easy to go to extremes as you cite your sources.

a. Sometimes people go too far one way, and don't cite sources when they really need to. When this happens and a paper includes very few source references, the reader is left without a basic understanding of where the paper's facts and ideas come from.

b. Sometimes people go too far the other way, and cite a source with every sentence (or sometimes multiple sources within sentences). When a paper (McGregor 2008) has too many (Tierney 2010) references (Rice 2004), it becomes very (Hudak 2001) hard (Lyons 1996) to read (Oppong 2011). Try reading a few pages like that (Dong 2007) and you will probably agree (Williams 1992) that it is possible to have too much of a good thing (Ferring 2009).

You need to find a good balance. Make sure you cite major references that provide important information for your paper, but avoid inserting so many reference citations that your paper becomes unreadable.

If you're still wondering what you should be doing with your referencing, perhaps you would benefit from seeing some more examples. Here is a link to one of my publications that demonstrates what I'm talking about above:

http://www.geog.uvic.ca/dept/wcag/kalafsky_rice.pdf

Please feel free to talk with me if you have any questions about proper referencing.