

chicago style for canon law citation

The Importance of Chicago Style for Canon Law Citation

chicago style for canon law citation is a critical component for anyone engaging with the complex and historical body of law governing the Catholic Church. Mastering these citation practices ensures clarity, credibility, and adherence to academic and professional standards when referencing canonical texts, decrees, and scholarly interpretations. This article provides a comprehensive guide to understanding and applying Chicago style to canon law sources, covering everything from basic principles to specific examples for various types of documents. We will delve into the nuances of citing the *Codex Iuris Canonici*, papal pronouncements, conciliar documents, and secondary scholarly works, offering practical advice for researchers, theologians, and legal professionals. Understanding these guidelines is paramount for accurate scholarship and effective communication within the field of canon law.

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Understanding the Fundamentals of Chicago Style for Canon Law Citation

The Chicago Manual of Style, in its various editions, offers a robust framework for academic and legal writing. When applied to canon law, these principles aim to provide a standardized method for acknowledging and locating the precise sources used in research. This standardization is crucial because canon law is a codified system with a long history, and referencing its components accurately allows readers to verify information and delve deeper into the legal tradition. The core tenets of Chicago style, such as clarity, consistency, and completeness, are especially vital in this specialized field.

At its heart, Chicago style citation for canon law emphasizes the need to provide sufficient detail for immediate identification and retrieval of the cited material. This involves specifying the exact document, its promulgated date, and, where applicable, the specific article or section. Unlike some other citation styles that may focus heavily on author-date systems for contemporary legal texts, canon law citation often leans towards a more descriptive approach, detailing the nature and origin of the canonical source. This approach acknowledges the unique historical development and authoritative nature of Church law.

Key Elements of a Canon Law Citation

Regardless of the specific type of canon law document being cited, certain fundamental elements are typically required for a comprehensive Chicago-style citation. These elements ensure that the reader can pinpoint the exact source being referenced. Understanding these components is the first step toward accurate citation.

- The specific title of the canonical document or text.
- The date of promulgation or publication.
- The authoritative body or person responsible for its issuance.
- For codified laws, the specific book, title, chapter, article, and paragraph number.
- For other documents, relevant section or page numbers.
- For secondary sources, author, title, publisher, and publication year.

Footnotes vs. Bibliography in Canon Law Citation

Chicago style offers two primary citation methods: notes-bibliography and author-date. For canon law, the notes-bibliography system, utilizing footnotes or endnotes, is overwhelmingly preferred. This system allows for detailed, unobtrusive citation within the text and provides ample space for explanatory notes. The bibliography then provides a consolidated list of all sources consulted at the end of the work.

The use of footnotes is particularly advantageous in canon law because it allows for the inclusion of original Latin terms or parallel translations alongside the citation, which can be crucial for precision. The bibliography serves as a comprehensive reference, enabling readers to locate every source used by the author. This dual approach ensures both immediate verification and broader accessibility to the scholarly material.

Citing the Codex Iuris Canonici (CIC)

The Codex Iuris Canonici, or Code of Canon Law, is the primary legislative document of the Latin Church. Accurate citation of its provisions is fundamental for any discussion of Church governance and doctrine. Chicago style provides clear guidelines for referencing specific canons, ensuring precision and authority.

When citing a canon from the Code, the most critical information to include is the canon number itself, along with the year of promulgation of the Code being referenced. Since the

current Code was promulgated in 1983, this year is almost always implicitly or explicitly part of the citation. The structure of the Code—books, titles, chapters, and articles—is also essential for pinpointing the exact provision.

Standard Format for Citing the CIC

The standard Chicago-style citation for a canon from the 1983 Code of Canon Law typically includes the canon number and the year of promulgation. For instance, a reference to Canon 128 of the 1983 Code would be presented in a clear and unambiguous manner.

Example format in a footnote:

1. Codex Iuris Canonici [CIC], promulgated by John Paul II, 1983, can. 128.

In subsequent citations of the same canon within the same work, a shortened form is permissible and often preferred for conciseness. This shortened form usually includes just the canon number.

Example of a subsequent footnote:

2. CIC, can. 128.

Citing Specific Sections of the CIC

While citing a canon number is the most common method, sometimes it is necessary to refer to a specific part of a canon or a collection of canons within a particular section of the Code. In such cases, the citation should clearly indicate the relevant structure.

For example, if referencing the entirety of Title I of Book II, the citation would reflect this structure. The book and title numbers are key components here.

Example of citing a title:

3. CIC, Book II, Title I, canons 224-231.

It is important to always use the official Latin title or a widely recognized English translation, consistently throughout your work, and to ensure that the year of promulgation is clearly stated at least once in full for clarity, especially when discussing older versions of the Code.

Citing Papal Pronouncements and Apostolic

Letters

Papal pronouncements, including encyclicals, apostolic constitutions, apostolic letters, and *motu proprio*s, are significant sources of canon law and Church teaching. Chicago style provides specific guidance for citing these authoritative documents, ensuring their origin and content are clearly attributed.

The citation of papal documents requires careful attention to the title of the document, the name of the Pope who issued it, the date of promulgation, and the specific publication where the document can be found. This level of detail is crucial for scholarly rigor and allows readers to easily locate the original text.

Citing Papal Encyclicals and Apostolic Constitutions

Papal encyclicals and apostolic constitutions are formal documents that carry significant weight. Their citation should reflect their official nature and the authority from which they emanate.

When citing an encyclical, for example, the citation would typically include the title of the encyclical, the name of the Pope, and the date. If citing an apostolic constitution that has established or reformed aspects of canon law, it is essential to include its official title and date.

Example of an encyclical citation:

4. John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Fides et Ratio*, September 15, 1998, § 15.

Example of an apostolic constitution citation:

5. John Paul II, Apostolic Constitution *Sacrae Disciplinae Leges*, January 25, 1983, in *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* [AAS] 75 (1983): 1007-1008.

The abbreviation AAS is commonly used for the official commentary and promulgation organ of the Holy See, and its inclusion is standard practice for many papal documents.

Citing Apostolic Letters and Motu Proprios

Apostolic letters and *motu proprio*s, while sometimes less extensive than encyclicals or constitutions, also contain important legal and disciplinary norms. Their citation should follow a similar pattern of clarity and specificity.

The title of the document, the issuing Pope, and the date of promulgation are the core elements. If the document is published in the AAS, referencing this publication is standard.

Example of an apostolic letter citation:

6. Benedict XVI, Apostolic Letter *Porta Fidei*, October 11, 2011, § 3.

Example of a motu proprio citation:

7. Francis, *Motu Proprio Spiritus Domini*, February 11, 2021, in AAS 113 (2021): 220.

It is important to note that for some foundational documents, especially those predating the 1983 Code, the citation format might vary slightly based on historical conventions and specific scholarly editions. Always refer to a style guide or established practice in canon law scholarship when in doubt.

Citing Ecumenical Councils and Decrees

Ecumenical councils are authoritative gatherings of bishops that represent the universal Church. The canons, decrees, and teachings issued by these councils are foundational texts in canon law and Catholic theology. Chicago style requires careful and precise citation of these historical and significant documents.

When citing the decrees of an ecumenical council, it is essential to identify the council by name, the session during which the decree was issued, the decree number or title, and the date of promulgation or approval. This ensures that the reader can access the exact pronouncement being referenced.

Citing the Council of Trent

The Council of Trent (1545–1563) produced significant doctrinal and disciplinary canons that continue to influence Church law. Its decrees are typically cited by session, decree number, and the date.

Example of a decree from the Council of Trent:

8. Council of Trent, Session VI, Decree *De Iustificatione*, January 13, 1547, in *Concilium Tridentinum: Diaria, tractatus, leges, monumenta omnia* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1901–), vol. 6, 603–604.

The reference to *Concilium Tridentinum* is to a critical scholarly edition, which is standard for historical documents of this nature.

Citing Vatican II Documents

The Second Vatican Council (1962–1965) produced a series of influential documents, including constitutions, decrees, and declarations. These are usually cited by their

common English titles or their Latin titles, along with the specific document number or section.

Example of a Vatican II Constitution:

9. Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, November 21, 1964, § 22.

Example of a Vatican II Decree:

10. Second Vatican Council, Decree *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, December 7, 1965, § 6.

The practice is to cite the English title as it is widely understood and accepted, followed by the date and then the section number. If referencing the Latin text, the official Latin title should be used.

Citing Canon Law Scholarship (Secondary Sources)

Beyond the primary sources of canon law, scholarly works—books, articles, dissertations—interpret, analyze, and comment on canonical texts and jurisprudence. Chicago style dictates how these secondary sources should be cited to give proper credit and allow readers to find the referenced research.

Citing secondary sources in canon law follows the general Chicago Manual of Style guidelines for citing books and journal articles, but it's important to pay attention to the specific details of canon law scholarship, such as citing specific canons or sections of the Code within the scholarly work.

Citing Books on Canon Law

When citing a book on canon law, the standard Chicago format applies, which includes the author's full name, the title of the book (italicized), the place of publication, the publisher, the year of publication, and the specific page number(s) being referenced.

Example of a book citation:

11. Kenneth R. Himes and Francis R. Hill, *The Common Good and the Common Evil: Essays on the Social Teachings of the Catholic Church* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), 78.

For books that contain essays or contributions from multiple authors, it is important to cite the specific essay and its author, followed by the title of the book and its editors.

Citing Journal Articles on Canon Law

Journal articles are a vital part of canon law scholarship, providing in-depth analysis of specific legal issues. The citation format for journal articles in Chicago style includes the author's name, the article title (in quotation marks), the journal title (italicized), the volume number, the year of publication, and the page numbers.

Example of a journal article citation:

12. John J. Danisi, "The Role of the Diocesan Bishop in the Administration of Church Goods," *The Jurist* 65, no. 2 (2005): 215.

It is also common and often helpful to include the DOI (Digital Object Identifier) if available, especially for online access to the article.

Citing Online Canon Law Resources

With the increasing availability of online resources, citing them accurately is essential. This includes official Church websites, online databases of canon law, and scholarly articles published online. The format should include the author (if available), the title of the specific content, the name of the website, and the URL, along with the date of access.

Example of citing a web page:

13. "Canon Law Basics," Catholic Diocese of [City Name], accessed October 26, 2023, [URL].

For official documents published online, such as those on the Vatican website, it is best to cite the official publication if possible (e.g., in AAS) or follow the principles for citing official documents, including the specific web address.

Common Pitfalls and Best Practices

Navigating the complexities of Chicago style for canon law citation can present challenges. Awareness of common errors and the adoption of sound practices can significantly enhance the quality and credibility of scholarly work in this field.

One of the most frequent mistakes is inconsistency. Whether it's how abbreviations are used, how dates are formatted, or the level of detail provided for a particular source, inconsistency undermines the clarity that citation styles aim to achieve. Another pitfall is the incorrect or incomplete identification of canonical texts, especially when dealing with historical documents or different editions of the Code of Canon Law.

Maintaining Consistency in Abbreviations and Terminology

Consistency in using abbreviations is crucial. For instance, the abbreviation for the Code of Canon Law (CIC) should be defined upon its first use and then used consistently. Similarly, abbreviations for Latin terms or frequently cited Church documents should be standardized throughout the text.

The use of Latin terms versus their English translations should also be approached with a consistent strategy. If the original Latin term is important for precision, it should be provided, perhaps in a footnote, followed by its English translation. Subsequent references can then use the English term or the established abbreviation.

Ensuring Accuracy in Dates and Numbers

Accuracy in dates and numbers is paramount. A misstated date for a papal encyclical or an incorrect canon number can lead to significant misunderstandings. Always double-check dates of promulgation, publication, and effective dates. Similarly, ensure that canon numbers, article numbers, and page numbers are precisely transcribed.

When referencing older canonical texts, such as the 1917 Code of Canon Law or conciliar decrees from earlier centuries, it is vital to specify the edition or the historical context, as numbering systems and promulgation dates can differ from contemporary sources. This level of precision ensures that the reader is engaging with the correct legal or doctrinal source.

Utilizing Scholarly Editions and Primary Sources

For canon law, relying on authoritative and scholarly editions of primary texts is a best practice. This means using official promulgations or well-regarded critical editions for the Codex Iuris Canonici, papal documents, and conciliar acts. When citing secondary sources, prioritize peer-reviewed journals and scholarly monographs.

When in doubt about a specific citation format, consulting the latest edition of the Chicago Manual of Style, specialized guides on canon law citation, or seeking guidance from experienced scholars in the field is highly recommended. Adhering to these principles of citation not only upholds academic integrity but also contributes to the clarity and effectiveness of communication within the discipline of canon law.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is the primary difference between citing the 1917 and 1983 Code of Canon Law in Chicago style?

A: The primary difference lies in the explicit notation of the promulgation year. For the 1983 Code, it is common to cite "can. [number], 1983" or simply "CIC, can. [number]" with the year established contextually. For the 1917 Code, it is essential to explicitly state "1917 CIC, can. [number]" to distinguish it from the current code, ensuring clarity and avoiding confusion regarding which legislative corpus is being referenced.

Q: When citing a papal encyclical in Chicago style, is it necessary to include the Latin title?

A: It is not always strictly necessary to include the Latin title, especially if the English translation is widely recognized and used. However, for scholarly rigor, especially in academic papers focused on theological or historical aspects, including the Latin title in parentheses after the English title can be beneficial. The key is consistency; choose one approach and maintain it throughout your work.

Q: How should I cite a document that is available in both official print and online versions?

A: If an official print version (like the *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*) is available, it is generally preferred to cite that version, including volume and page numbers. If only an online version is accessible or if it is a document primarily published online, then cite the website name, URL, and the date of access. If both exist, citing the official print version is usually considered more authoritative, but mentioning the online source can be helpful for reader accessibility.

Q: Are there specific Chicago style rules for citing Canon Law commentary and legal opinions?

A: Yes, commentary and legal opinions fall under secondary sources. When citing commentaries on the Code of Canon Law, treat them as books, including author, title, publication details, and page numbers. For specific legal opinions from canonical tribunals or official bodies, cite them as you would a case in a legal brief, providing the tribunal, case number (if applicable), date, and the publication where the opinion can be found (e.g., a canonical law journal or an official collection).

Q: What is the best way to handle multiple citations of the same canon within a short span in Chicago style?

A: Chicago style allows for shortened citations in footnotes or endnotes after the first full citation. For subsequent citations of the same canon, you can use "Ibid." if it directly follows the previous citation, or a shortened form like "CIC, can. [number]." This practice

maintains conciseness while ensuring readers can easily track the source.

Q: How do I cite a canon that has been abrogated or modified by later legislation?

A: When citing an abrogated or modified canon, it is best practice to indicate its status. For example, you might cite "Can. 1055 § 1 (1983 CIC), prior to its amendment by..." or "Can. [number] (1917 CIC), abrogated by..." This provides crucial context and demonstrates a thorough understanding of the legal evolution.

Q: Should I use italics for the Latin titles of canon law documents in Chicago style?

A: Generally, yes, formal Latin titles of major works, such as the *Codex Iuris Canonici* itself, or specific apostolic constitutions and encyclicals, are often italicized in Chicago style when they are treated as standalone works or significant titles. However, for common Latin phrases or terms used within the text, italics are usually omitted unless they are being defined or highlighted for specific attention.

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