

# Training Programme for Documentary Collections in Theology and Religious Science

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## Collection Development in Religion and Theology

The objectives of collection development are shown in the following schematic listing:

- No acquisition
- 1 Gifts exchanges, minimal collection
- 2 Basic collection (essential selection)
- 3a 1st cycle (undergraduate level)
- 3b 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle (master's level)
- 4 Research collection (the serious centre)
- 5 Exhaustive collection (excellence)

F: French E: English D: German I: Italian A: Ancient Languages

## Christian Theology

### Biblical Sciences

- Canonical sources
- Scientific commentaries
- Thematic studies
- Life situations (Near-Eastern languages)
- Rabbinical sources

## Science of Religion

- Methodological studies
- Historical-comparative studies
- Sociological studies
- Psychological studies
- Judaism (sources, encyclopaedias)
- Judaic studies
- Islam (sources, encyclopaedias)
- Islamic studies
- Oriental religions
- Emergent religions
- Phenomenological studies (magic, demonology)

### Introduction

In Lausanne, in theology and the science of religion, documentary training is done in the framework of a course in methodology that is aimed at the new students. Putting this course in place has benefited with favourable circumstances. Some are found in the staffing order (a professor called to administrative tasks, from whence we have delegation; a librarian engaged in research, from whence we produce a climate of confidence), the others that naturally follow (good relations between the Faculty and the Library; the development of NTI; limiting the number of students).

The methodology course is given in seven sessions of 90 minutes each, followed by practical work where the students must prepare a bibliography on the history of Christianity. The assistant takes charge of correcting the work and of leading discussion with them; the librarian assumes training in the following areas:

- Presentation of the religion/theology section and that of the CDU
- Presentation of the library catalogue
- Introduction to the information resources of the BCU
- General research techniques (Boolean users, index, thesaurus)
- The use of the databases, *Francis*, *ATLA*, *BibleWorks*, *Online Periodical Abstracts*, *BIBIL*, *International Medieval Bibliography*
- Presentation of the BCU website
- Use of internet search engines, with critical evaluation of the results

This morning I am proposing to present to you the research that has been carried out in three databases: *Francis*, which is the principle French database in the humanities; *ATLA*, which I am sure you know and which represents the principle database for theology and religious studies; *BIBIL*, the Computerized Biblical Bibliography of Lausanne, developed by the Romand Institute of Biblical Sciences. Following that, we shall pass on to the use of internet search engines, with an evaluation of the results.

### FRANCIS and ATLA

Here are some examples of subject searches:

- Laity in Switzerland
- Procession and Iconography + mosaics
- Judaism-Islam interreligious dialogue (except Christianity)
- Ethics and animal rights
- Violence and war + religion + Sri Lanka
- Articles appearing between 2002 and 2005 on the Iliad
- Reviews about Jacques Waardenburg
- The theme of health in the interreligious dialogue between Christians, Hindus and Buddhists
- Social change, religious change (the lay war)

The following subjects can serve as a demonstration (on-line or on ppt)

#### On Francis:

- Islamic morale, in particular on the subject of ecology
- Funeral ceremonies and the women of the Far East

#### On ATLA

- Documents on Mohammad
- Women in Hinduism and in Judaism
- Pauline ethics

#### Comparative searches ATLA/FRANCIS:

- Violence and Islam
- Interreligious dialogue
- The holy shroud (The Shroud of Turin)

- Ethics according to Jean-Paul II

## BIBIL

BIBIL is a bibliographic research tool for Biblical sciences.

[http://www3.unil.ch/bibil/public/default.action?request\\_locale=fr](http://www3.unil.ch/bibil/public/default.action?request_locale=fr)

<http://www.bibil.net>

A demonstration on some specific points:

- By periscope; example: Mark 16:8
- In the original languages: soteria, nephesh (is available in September)
- Cross-reference: monotheism + the goddess Ashera
- Via the thesaurus: the study of the Bible as a whole >...> pragmatic

## INTERNET

At the level of computerized research, we insist more on the critical evaluation of the results, above all when this comes from a search engine on the internet. I shall give a concrete example here, developed since the year 2007, that some sessions have been added for the benefit of the students in humanities who had chosen “science of religion” among their principle disciplines. The necessity of insisting on critical evaluation of the results testifies to an alarming fact: The frequent tendency to be content with some documents that have been rapidly found via *Google*, or at least, come from a bibliographic database, selected based on inappropriate criteria such as being immediately available.

Namely a search carried out on the *Falun Gong*, a contemporary religious movement which has encountered huge problems with the Chinese authorities.

<i>Google.com</i>	<i>Google.fr</i>	<i>Google Scholar</i>
<b>allintitle: falun gong china / filetype: pdf</b>	<b>allintitle: falun gong chine</b>	<b>allintitle: falun gong china</b>
<p><i>Among the first results:</i></p> <p><a href="http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/67820.pdf">fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/67820.pdf</a> (Congressional Research Service - Library of Congress)</p> <p><a href="http://www.foreignaffairs.house.gov/archives/109/22579.pdf">www.foreignaffairs.house.gov/archives/109/22579.pdf</a></p>	<p><i>Among the first results:</i></p> <p><a href="http://www.chine-informations.com">www.chine-informations.com</a> (Chine-information)</p> <p><a href="http://www.infofalungong.net">www.infofalungong.net</a></p>	<p><i>Among the first results:</i></p> <p>B Edelman, JT Richardson - <i>Nova Religio</i>, 2003</p> <p>B Leung - <i>Journal of Contemporary China</i>, 2002</p>

<p>(U . S . Government Printing Office. Washington)</p> <p><a href="http://organharvestinvestigation.net/events/us-hearing-transcript-20060929.pdf">organharvestinvestigation.net/events/us-hearing-transcript-20060929.pdf</a></p> <p>(House of Representatives, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations)</p> <p><a href="http://www.jaapl.org/cgi/reprint/30/2/266.pdf">www.jaapl.org/cgi/reprint/30/2/266.pdf</a></p> <p>(The Journal of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law)</p> <p><a href="http://www.sfu.ca/cmns/faculty/zhao_y/assets/documents/14_03-168_Ch13.pdf">www.sfu.ca/cmns/faculty/zhao_y/assets/documents/14_03-168_Ch13.pdf</a></p> <p>(School of Communication at Simon Fraser University, Canada)</p> <p><a href="http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cat/docs/ngos/II_China_41.pdf">www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cat/docs/ngos/II_China_41.pdf</a></p> <p>(Interfaith International – Special consultative status with United Nations ECOSOC)</p>	<p>(site officiel du Falun Gong)</p> <p><a href="http://fr.clearharmony.net">fr.clearharmony.net</a></p> <p>(Falun Dafa en Europe - revue du mouvement)</p> <p><a href="http://www.religioscope.com/notes">www.religioscope.com/notes</a></p> <p>(Religoscope)</p> <p><a href="http://www.info-sectes.org">www.info-sectes.org</a></p> <p>(Site d'information sur les sectes et les mouvements de pensée)</p> <p><a href="http://www.amnestyinternational.be">www.amnestyinternational.be</a></p> <p>(Amnesty International)</p>	<p>RC Keith, Z Lin - <i>The China Quarterly</i>, 2003</p> <p>R Munro - <i>Journal of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law</i>, 2002</p> <p>P Mandaville - <i>Global Society</i>, 2003</p> <p>CH Chen - <i>Asian Journal of Communication</i>, 2005</p>
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First track: as a last resort to [www.google.com](http://www.google.com) . When research without any precautions yields more than 900,000 results, it is important to limit the search drastically. First of all, in advanced research, it requires that the words *Falun Gong* and *China* appear in the title of the document (*allintitle*). As there are still more than 24,000 results, point to documents that are in *pdf* format only – the authors of these texts have taken care to protect their texts. The total then slightly exceeds 150, which seems manageable.

Second track: the same search on the French web ([www.google.fr](http://www.google.fr)), but this time without requiring *pdf* documents. One gets more than 650 articles with the words *Falun Gong* and *China* in the title.

Third track: use *Goggle Scholar* (<http://scholar.google.com>), and require that the words *Falun Gong* and *China* appear in the title of the document (*allintitle*). One gets close to 80 results.

#### Critical Evaluation:

In the first column 3 *official* sites appear, signalled by *.gov* in the two first entries, and by mention of the House of Representatives in the third. Following comes an article from a noted international review, a study done within the context of a Canadian university, then a document *harvested* by an organization that works in conjunction with the UN.

In the second column, in addition to an article in the broad spectrum journal *Chine Informations*, one finds essentially the “involved” sites, either in favour of Falun Gong (an official site +journal of the movement) or some persecuted minorities (amnesty International), or a site against new religious movements (an information site on sects and thought movements). As for the site “Religoscope”, developed by the historian Jean-François Mayer, a specialist in emergent religions, it furnishes excellent documentation on current religious news.

In the third column, this time it’s a matter of some articles published by some researchers in the academic journals and known on the international scene (labelled *peer review*, that is to say that these articles have been read by a reading committee of peers). This ‘judging’ by one’s colleagues, experts on the subject matter, give to these journals a guarantee of seriousness.

To recap, requiring a *pdf* format gives direction to the search, either towards the official sites (like those of the American government), or towards the specialized works (chapters from a thesis or from a dissertation). The French web, for its part, gives access to positions in a broad discussion of ideas on the social questions. Finally, *Google Scholar* points to the documents that emanate from specialists and that appear in the academic reviews. As for research on the internet without precautions, without limitations, it often proves to be disastrous, unless it is sufficiently precise in its formulation.

## CONCLUSION

The collection of the documentation, in theology as well as in the science of religion, is characterized by a movement of opening and integrating into the human sciences. I wish that this anchoring in the humanities were complete. In other words, that this concern about recognition of the seriousness of the research still leaves room for the specifically human dimension that must lead it. For can we claim to be working in the humanities if the word “science” overshadows the word “human”? That would ignore the link that should be emphasized strongly between knowledge and the skills that need to be acquired between the intellectual and personal enrichment of culture and depth.

Translated by P.R. Hall