

Guidelines for writing seminar papers and theses

These guidelines are for your orientation, but certain academic principles should always be followed. If you are used to a different academic standard for formatting, citation and bibliography, please apply it. Just please make sure to employ it correctly and consistently throughout the paper.

Every seminar paper or thesis must conform to academic standards. The length of the written work is defined in the examination regulations and module descriptions. The essential characteristics of academic writing include the following:

Substantiation: Assertions and borrowings or references (indirect and direct) must be substantiated in academic writing. Exceptions are statements that can be assumed as common knowledge, explanations and own considerations.

Paraphrasing: Ideas and opinions from other academic texts must be paraphrased, i.e., reproduced and substantiated in the student's own words.

Citation: Verbatim text passages must be quoted, i.e., placed in quotation marks. The origin of the quotation must be clearly recognizable.

Justifying: Assertions, conclusions, methods used, extent of literature and sources consulted, and research question must be justified and clearly detailed.

Defining terms: Scholarly texts require a definition of key terms. To define is to explain how and in what context one intends to use words.

Specifying: Care should be taken to be extremely precise in the consistent use of terms.

Differentiating: Academic texts are expected to be differentiated, i.e., not only one opinion is presented, but also other points of view (a balanced representation).

Plagiarism is deceit and will be graded as 'failed' (5,0). Students' written work will be tested for plagiarism.

1. Text formatting

Page margins	Top, bottom, right and left 2.54 cm each
Page number	Top right
	Cover page does not receive a page number
	Table of contents is counted, but is not provided with a page number
Font	Choose a font that is easy to read (e.g. Arial, Times New Roman)
	Font size 12 pt
Spacing	1.5-line spacing
	6 pt spacing after each paragraph and after headings
	Use graphic design elements (bold, italics, underlining) moderately

2. Structure

- Title page
- Table of Contents
- Declaration of compliance with good academic practice (see 2.3)
- If applicable, list of abbreviations and figures (directly after the table of contents)
- Introduction
- Main part
- Conclusion
- Bibliography
- If applicable, appendix

2.1 Title page

- Name of the university and the institute
- Title and number of the module and course, semester, name of the lecturer
- Title of the term paper
- Name of author, matriculation number, e-mail, degree program, semester
- Date of submission

2.2 Table of contents

- List of chapter headings with corresponding page numbers (on which the chapters begin)
- Formal and substantive division into main sections and subsections
- Three levels of outline should not be exceeded (with Arabic numbering), example:
 - 1. Chapter
 - 1.1 Subchapter
 - 1.1.1 Section

2.3 Declaration of compliance with good academic practice

- Wording: “I hereby testify that I have written the whole of this paper myself and used no sources or aids (including electronic media and online sources) other than those named. All passages taken from a source, whether verbatim or in substance, have been indicated as such”.
- Place, date, matriculation number, signature

2.4 Introduction

- Brief description of the topic and question of the paper
- Classification of the specific topic in the broader context, explanation of the significance of the question for the scientific discourse, as well as possibly also on the personal interest in knowledge
- Concise presentation of the literature and sources related to the topic
- Outline of the structure, content and method of the work
- If necessary, comments on the problematic nature of certain terms that are being used

2.5 Main part

- Varies depending on content and problem
- Therefore, there are hardly any generally binding rules regarding the number of chapters or the selection of aspects in the main part

However, the following applies in principle:

- Clearly comprehensible, logical structure of the presentation as well as the argumentation
- Content and formal structuring of each chapter
- Depending on the question, the aspects of interpretation of the primary literature/sources, methodological and factual problems, current state of research, as well as the own point of view are to be presented
- Your own considerations, ideas and criticism are to be carefully justified and weighed against other points of view
- Only include all the information that is necessary for the understanding of a subject, secondary matters do not belong in a paper - not even in notes!

2.6 Conclusion

- Summary of the most important points
- Comment on the productivity of the research question, on still open questions, on the appropriateness of the applied method, and on possible perspectives for further research

2.7 Appendix

- Maps, illustrations, statistics or source extracts referred to in the main text
- For each map, graph and table give a source

2.8 Bibliography

- The list of sources and bibliography contains all sources/primary literature and specialized literature consulted for the work: All written texts, visual and film material, and oral sources from which the author has taken quotations, material, individual thoughts, suggestions, and general information
- It does not include “further reading” which one has not mentioned in the text, or reference works, provided that their content is considered general knowledge

Bibliographical information

- In alphabetical order, author’s last name first
- For English titles: capitalization must be consistent: either all “nouns” (nouns, verbs, adverbs, adjectives...) capitalized or as in normal text
- For journals, no place / publisher / editor is indicated

3. Citations

- All citations must be referenced! (This includes: Literal quotations, quotations according to the sense, quotations from the sources/primary literature and secondary literature, mere reference)
- Quotations must be embedded in an argumentation context, explained and interpreted
- Literal quotations must be word-for-word and reproduced in the original language (translation in footnote, if necessary)
- Omissions are marked by [...] - but only within the quoted text passage, not at its beginning or end
- Quotations of up to three lines long are placed within the text in double quotation marks (“quote”)
- Longer quotations are separated from the frame text by a blank line or larger line spacing and by indentation of 1 cm on both sides and written in single lines
- A quotation within a quotation is indicated by single quotation marks (‘quote’)
- For complete sentences, the quotation marks are placed after the punctuation mark; for individual words and word groups, they are placed before any punctuation that may follow
- Language errors in the quoted text are also quoted and marked by [sic!] (lat. = “so it is”) as belonging to the original

3.1 Secondary citations

- Indicated by “cited in”. Example: “It is not enough to have no thoughts, one must also be incapable of expressing them” (Karl Kraus, cited in: Franck, 2002: 55).

3.2 Notes, literature references and source references in footnotes

- Include: Author, year of publication, and page number
- Layout: justified, single-spaced, and in size 10 font
- Notes are sentences: Consequently, they begin with a capital letter and end with a period
- The paper must be comprehensible even without reading the corresponding footnotes, therefore theses important for the main argument do not belong in a note
- The text in the notes should be short and precise

3.3 Literature references and source references in the text (Harvard system)

- Short references directly after a quotation contain author, year of publication and page number; e.g. (Franck, 2002: 55)

3.4 Examples

Books/monographs

Ansprenger, Franz. 1999. Politische Geschichte Afrikas im 20. Jahrhundert. 3. überarb. und erw. Aufl., München: C.H. Beck.

Omission of first names only if the authors themselves do not give them, e.g. P. E. H. Hair.

More than one editor

Heine, Bernd and Derek Nurse (eds.). 2000. *African Languages. An Introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Unpublished theses

Pesek, Michael. 2003. „Vom Forschungsreisenden zum Kolonisierenden. Die lokalen Wurzeln deutscher Kolonialherrschaft in Ostafrika, 1884-1903“. Dissertation, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Berlin.

Chapters in edited volumes

Ranger, Terence. 1992 (1983). „The Invention of Tradition in Colonial Africa“, in: Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge: University Press, 211-262.

Martin, Phyllis. 1997. „Sports“, in: John Middleton (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Africa South of the Sahara*, Bd. IV. New York: Scribner, 160-163.

Journal articles

Kom, Ambroise. 2003. „Mongo Beti and the Responsibility of the African Intellectual“, *Research in African Literatures*, 34/4, 42-56.

Nicole, Jacques. 1980. „Downstepped Low Tone in Nawdm“, *Journal of African Languages and Linguistics*, 2, 133-139.

Articles in newspapers

Dotzauer, Gregor. 2003. „Zauber des Zweifels. Der Literaturnobelpreisträger J. M. Coetzee macht Südafrika zum Spiegel der Welt – und der Weltliteratur“. *Der Tagesspiegel*, 4. Okt., S. 25.

Internet sources

Grill, Bartholomäus. 1999. „Johannesburg. Afrika fragt sich: Schwarzes Leid, halbes Leid?“. *Die Zeit*, Archiv 23/1999. Online:
http://www.zeit.de/archiv/1999/23/199923.afrika.kurz_.xml

CIA-The World Factbook. 2003. „Senegal“. Online:
<http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/sg.html>

Films

Curtiz, Michael (1942): *Casablanca*. USA: Warner Bros First National Pictures.

4. Further literature on the writing of academic papers

Bailey, Stephen. 2015. *Academic Writing. A Handbook for International Students*. 4th Edition. Abingdon: Routledge.

Budrich, Barbara. 2019. *Erfolgreich Publizieren. Grundlagen und Tipps für Autorinnen und Autoren aus den Sozial-, Erziehungs- und Geisteswissenschaften*. 3. überarb. u. erw. Auflage. Opladen & Toronto: Verlag Barbara Budrich.

Eco, Umberto. 2015. *How to Write a Thesis*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

(German Version: Eco, Umberto. 2020. *Wie man eine wissenschaftliche Abschlussarbeit schreibt*. 14. Auflage. Stuttgart: utb.)

Kruse, Otto. 2007. *Keine Angst vor dem leeren Blatt. Ohne Schreibblockaden durchs Studium*. 12., völlig neu bearbeitete Auflage. Frankfurt/Main, New York: Campus.

Niederhauser, Jürg. 2019. *Die schriftliche Arbeit: Für Schule, Hochschule und Universität*. Duden-Ratgeber. Berlin: Bibliographisches Institut.

Scheuermann, Ulrike. 2017. *Die Schreibfitness-Mappe: 60 Checklisten, Beispiele und Übungen für alle, die beruflich schreiben*. 2. Auflage. Wien: Linde Verlag.

Stock, Steffen, Patricia Schneider, Elisabeth Peper und Eva Molitor. 2018. *Erfolgreich wissenschaftlich arbeiten: Alles, was Studierende wissen sollten*. Berlin, Heidelberg: Springer.

2010. *The Chicago Manual of Style*. 16th Edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.