

Institute of Political Science

STUDY GUIDE

Introduction and Guidelines to Academic Research and Writing

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I. Organisational issues

1. *Your email account xxx@uni-bremen.de*

It is important that your lecturers can communicate with you via email. That is why you should check your email account at the University of Bremen regularly. You already received your account details with your enrollment documents. A good idea is to have your University of Bremen email address redirected to your personal email account you are already using. This way you will be sure not to miss an important message. Instructions on how to redirect your university email account can be found at www.zfn.uni-bremen.de/zfn.

2. *StudIP*

StudIP is the online course management system at the University of Bremen, which each student can log on to with his university email account free of charge. Via StudIP you 'subscribe'¹ to your classes/courses. Once the lecturer accepts you for the class, which is just a formality, you can access an online forum for this specific class/course. Most likely, your lecturer will announce during the first lecture, if and how she will use StudIP. It is advisable to subscribe to all classes at the beginning of the semester. If your subscription to a class is not accepted within a week or so, it is quite likely that your lecturer chose not to use StudIP for her class.

Using StudIP is quite easy; should you encounter a problem or question, however, there are online help resources, albeit at the time of writing (December 2008) only in German. At the beginning of each semester there is also a helpdesk in the main library. Ask the library staff for the helpdesk's office hour.

You can log onto StudIP at <https://elearning.uni-bremen.de>.

3. *Using the computer rooms*

There are several computer rooms, also called 'CIP rooms' (German: CIP-Räume), where you have access to desktop PCs and the Internet. Throughout the opening hours of the rooms you can access the PCs whenever you like, provided no reservations have been made for a class. There is a display next to each computer room, which indicates its opening hours and the times in which it is occupied.

The computer rooms are located in the MZH (=multi purpose building) rooms 4230, 4210, 4200 and 4190; opening hours are Monday to Sunday 8 am to 12 pm. For further information on using the computers visit ww.zfn.uni-bremen.de/zfn. The social sciences faculty, also called 'FB8' (=faculty number 8), provides further computer pools, the so-called CIP-pools, where you can access the Internet, print documents etc. To use these computers, you have to apply for a user account. For further information, visit www.fb8.uni-bremen.de/service/de/cip_raum.de.htm.

¹ The word 'subscribe' is used on purpose, as you don't use StudIP to **enroll** in your courses. By the time you arrive in Bremen, you will already have dealt with most of the administrative details, including enrollment. StudIP is only used to distribute learning resources such as tutorial questions, Power Point presentations, reading material etc., and to facilitate communication between the lecturer and the students and among the students, respectively. Also note that depending on your course of study not all lecturers use StudIP; it is certainly used very frequently in business studies and the social sciences, but only rarely in subjects such as e.g. law or English.

4. Course Credit / “Scheine”

Types of classes/courses:

- Lectures: In a lecture (labelled with „V“ for „Vorlesung“ in the university calendar) the professor usually holds a presentation and answers questions, which are rather infrequent. Depending on the subject, the audience can range between a few dozen and several hundred students.
- Seminars: Seminars (labelled with „S“ for „Seminar“ in the university calendar) are usually attended by 20 to 30 participants. Active participation is expected, e.g. verbal contributions, presentations and reading texts for preparation.
- Exercises: Exercises (labelled with „Ü“ for „Übung“ in the university calendar) usually take place after seminars and often focus on applying the theoretical subject matter of the lectures to exam-type questions. The lecturers are often advanced or postgraduate students.

Types of examination:

- Papers: Papers are dossiers or essays addressing and investigating a particular topic, which mostly has already been talked about in class. Most of the time you are free to choose any topic you want, which of course has to be related to your class. However, you have to consult the professor/lecturer first. Usually those papers are written during the semester breaks.
- Exams: Exams are written during the last weeks of classes or early during the semester break. The length of an exam depends on the kind of examination you have to obtain for that particular class. The lecturer will announce the definite date and place of the exam late in the term.
- Presentations: We will outline in some detail how to give presentations (cf. Section IV, pages 21 to 24 in this guide).

A written exam is the most frequent type of examination in big lectures attended by several hundred students. An alternative, which is most often used in smaller seminars attended by only a few dozen or so students, is to write a term paper or an exposition of your oral presentation. This means that you will have to perform some kind of academic achievement in order to receive a so-called „Evidence of academic achievement“.

Certificates of academic achievement for your classes/courses:

At the start of the term, the professor/lecturer will talk about which kind of examination or participation requirements to expect. Make sure to find out early in the term which kind of examination or participation is expected as you will not obtain any ECTS credit points or a grade if you do not perform any kind of examination. Depending on the kind of examination and differing between departments, you usually require between 3 and 6 credit points.

For exchange students there are ECTS-Certificate forms (with information in English and German, ECTS-points are reported as well). Please note: You will have to fill in those forms yourself at the end of the term. The professor/lecturer will then fill in your grade and sign the

form. Furthermore, those forms have to be sealed by your department's secretariat. Without signature and seal the ECTS-Certificate is invalid! Finally, make sure to hand over the forms to the Erasmus-coordinator of your department before you return home.

You can download the ECTS-Certificate forms at:

<http://www.io.uni-bremen.de/euprogramme/formulare/ectsleistung.pdf>.

Transcript of Records:

If your home university needs more evidence of your achievements beyond the ECTS-Certificate form, you can also ask your Erasmus agent to provide you with a transcript of records, i.e. a compilation of all your academic achievements at the University of Bremen, at the end of your stay. For this you will need to show him your „Scheine“, i.e. your certificates of (successful) participation, signed by your professor/ lecturer. This document too needs to be sealed and signed by either your Erasmus agent or the administration of your department. You can download the form „Transcript of Records“ at: <http://www.io.uni-bremen.de/euprogramme/formulare/ECTS-Transcript.pdf>.

Material for your classes/courses:

Some lecturers provide additional or required reading for their class in a folder. These folders can either be found in the University library on the course reserve shelf (German: „Semesterapparat“) or in one of two copy shops: One is on the campus boulevard, the other close to the campus (a 5 minute walk or so) at Universitätsallee 3. The texts in those folders serve as master copies, i.e. the texts may not be taken out of the shop. The lecturer will tell you in the beginning of classes whether there is a folder and where you can find it.

Professional Advice (regarding your choice of classes/courses):

Always consult your faculty's Erasmus coordinator if you need information about your timetable, course credits, etc. Your Erasmus coordinator can advise you on the classes/courses to take and he will help you with any problems or questions concerning your studies.

Course credit transfer:

Please clarify beforehand – using your Erasmus learning agreement – if the classes/courses you take in Bremen meet the degree requirements of your home university and what these requirements are (e.g. type of examination, number of hours, amount of work, ECTS-points). Your home university will decide about transferring credits from classes you took in Bremen, not the University of Bremen!

University calendar (German: „Vorlesungsverzeichnis“):

All classes/courses, seminars, lectures and the corresponding ECTS points are listed in the university calendar. Furthermore, in this calendar you find the addresses, phone numbers and office hours of your lecturers. The calendar can be purchased in the University bookstore or in other bookstores in Bremen. Especially at the beginning of the semester the printed version quickly goes out of date, so it's best to consult the frequently updated online version, which you can access from the university homepage at www.uni-bremen.de.

Commented university calendar (German: „Kommentiertes Vorlesungsverzeichnis“):

For many subjects there are commented versions of the school program, which provide course descriptions for the classes in that particular subject. The commented university calendars can be obtained from the respective institute's secretariats for a small fee, usually 1,- Euro. These brochures give information about the contents of the diverse classes/courses and often point out relevant or necessary literature. It is a good idea to purchase one in the first week or so of the semester; some faculties do not print these brochures, but only provide an electronic version.

Starting times:

Classes usually don't start at the top of the hour, but 15 minutes later. If a class is scheduled to take place between 1 pm and 3 pm, this is understood to mean that it will start at 1:15 pm sharp and end at 2:45 pm. Please note that there may be some faculties that don't apply this convention and schedule the actual times. Infrequently, an "s.t." (Latin: "without time") behind the scheduled time indicates that the class starts exactly as stated.

Dining hall card (German: "Mensakarte"):

The dining hall card allows you to make noncash payments in the dining hall and some cafés on campus. Also, you need to have a dining hall card to use the laundromats in the dormitories. The card is available at the information, the so called "Info Point", in the dining hall. You need to show some official ID, (e.g. a passport, driver's licence or national ID) your student ID and pay a 5 € deposit. The dining hall card also allows you to use the photocopiers and printers at the university library.

Library card:

The library card is issued at the library information desk. Again, you need official ID, your student ID and a copy of your registration of residence issued by the local residents' registration office (German: "Einwohnermeldeamt"). The closest branch office is the BSU ("bremen_service universität"), which is located on campus. For further information on the BSU, visit: <http://www.bsu.uni-bremen.de>.

Photocopy cards/ laser-print cards:

If you don't have a dining hall card you need a copy card in order to use the photocopiers and printers at the university library. You can purchase copy cards from vending machines in the main library. There is also a copy shop on the campus boulevard where you can make photocopies, print documents or transparencies or have your documents bound.

Summer term 2009:

If you wish to re-enroll for summer semester 2009, you must fill in the change of address form ("Anschriftenänderung") available in the administration building and return it to the international students' office ("Sekretariat für Studierende International"). If you have any questions, please contact your tutor!

II. Some general advice on reading academic texts

Reading and writing academic texts are among the most important qualifications of an academic. It is with the written word and spoken language that we communicate with the public, present our knowledge and the results of our research. In the social sciences as well as many other subjects, these skills are fundamental. If you don't learn these 'tools of the trade', you somewhat defeat the purpose of pursuing an academic degree in the first place. In other scientific disciplines, such as medicine or engineering, the emphasis on producing written work is less pronounced. This study guide, although intended for students of all disciplines, was originally written by faculty members and staff of the political science department. Therefore, you will find that many examples in this guide are from the domain of political science.

Before you can write your own academic papers, you have to start by reading up on facts and theories. Especially in the social sciences excellent reading skills are elementary; if you are not a habitual reader, you will quickly encounter grave problems at a later point in time during your studies. By reading the works of others, you learn about existing theories and methods, both in your scientific field and neighbouring disciplines. Reading is thus the stepping stone to your own scientific work.

1. Guidelines for reading scientific texts

There is a marked difference between reading fiction or academic literature. To gainfully read a scientific text, the reader has to actively follow the author's train of thought to work out an understanding of the text's structure and content. Different reading strategies and techniques can be helpful in achieving this; some important ones are introduced here:

First step:

Cursory reading or 'skimming':

You use skimming to identify those books that are most helpful for your research on a given topic.

- Books:

You skim through the book, starting from the title page and the table of contents, both of which you should read carefully, as they will give you a good idea on the book's content. Next you read the introduction and the conclusion. Generally speaking, the first one or two sentences or so of each paragraph or section are usually the most informative ones. Then, you check the index (if there is one) for important keywords or names and the bibliography. If this cursory investigation doesn't show your book to be relevant, you can put it back on the shelf.

- Journal articles:

Read the paper's abstract, i.e. a summary of the paper's question, the method or theories employed and its most important finding(s). This is usually at the very beginning of the article or at the end of the publication's issue. Next, skim the article's outline, its introduction and conclusion. Here, the same principles apply as above: If the article is not sufficiently relevant for your research interest, don't bother reading it entirely, but move on to more promising material.

Second step:

If you find a book or article you skimmed promising for your research, you can start **reading** selected texts **intensively**. Here are some guidelines:

Answer to yourself these questions:

- What is the author trying to communicate? Which problems/issues does he address? How does he phrase his research question?
- What is the relation between the author's research question and your own research interest?
- Then, gather more information about the methods used by the author, about the terms and theories he employs, about how he frames his argument, about his school of thought, about his most important empirical or normative statements and his conclusion.

The following guidelines can be helpful for **reading** a text **intensively**:

- What is the context of the text? Is it a contribution to an ongoing scientific debate? Is it an excerpt from a textbook? Does the text try to summarize the state of research on a given topic?
- What is the central thesis of the text? Try to put it in a nutshell, i.e. one sentence!
- Which are the central arguments the author employs to support his statements/theses?
- Which assumptions and theories does he rely on?
- Does the author argue against the rival hypothesis/theory of a colleague? If yes, which ones?
- What would be the antithesis to the author's central thesis?
- How does the author proceed to support his argument/thesis? What is his modus operandi; what are his methods, e.g. comparison, statistical/empirical methods, interviews, document analysis? Are the results important? Do they provide insights into related, more general questions? If yes, what can you learn from the author's results for which issues?
- What are the author's conclusions/results?
- Evaluation: Is the author's approach, i.e. his methods, definitions/operationalization of concepts and terms, analysis, choice of sources and data, convincing?
- What were your expectations towards the text? To what extent did the author meet your expectations?

Keep in mind that your goal is to analyze the text with regard to your own research question. That's why you approach the text with your own research questions and interests in mind.

2. “Reading with your pen in hand” / Writing an excerpt

Reading texts with a pen and highlighter readily at hand is well worth the effort. This way you can make notes easily and highlight central elements of the text. These notes and important quotes you can then copy on index cards or into a text file (this is called: writing an excerpt) and thereby lay the foundation to your literature database you can use whenever you need information on that topic.

Remember to always note down the page number while excerpting; this is also true for writing summaries. This will help you to use these texts during your exam preparation.

Writing summaries of texts and taking notes in the margins is especially useful if you prepare for an oral examination, because it helps to compare and contrast the opinions of one author to that of another. To write your excerpts you should use office software² and put the full bibliographic details (i.e. author, title, year and place of publication, publisher etc.) of each book you excerpted into a document. This list can later be used to e.g. compile the bibliography for a term paper or bachelor thesis. For this purpose you can also use software such as Endnote or Reference Manager.

You can also use RefWorks, which is provided for you free of charge on the homepage of the university library:

www.suub.uni-bremen.de/refworks.html

We highly recommend that you familiarize yourself with this software; it will save you a lot of unnecessary work and mistakes throughout your studies.

² A free office suite is 'Open Office', which you can download from www.openoffice.org.

III. General guidelines for writing academic texts

Writing an academic text is a task quite unlike an oral presentation or discussion of academic problems. Academic texts have to conform to more demanding standards, both in terms of formal and content related aspects. This is true not only for the text's structure, its wording and style, and the citation of sources and opinions of other authors, but also for the correctness of your written work: Your work must be orthographically and grammatically correct, your citations have to conform to their respective citation style and your work must be properly formatted. This chapter of your study guide is supposed to provide some general guidelines and helpful advice.

1. Literature research basics

1.1 Why literature in the first place?

Especially in the social sciences it almost a truism that almost all topics have been addressed before in some way or other. That's why you have to inform yourself on the 'state of the art' in order not to try and reinvent the wheel. Your readers want to know which previous work of others you build on, where you borrow ideas and concepts and in how far you contribute to the scientific discourse. At least as an undergraduate you are not expected to collect your own data 'in the field', but rather build on the primary research of others. Consequently, you have to cite your data sources to allow your readers to follow and evaluate your arguments.

1.2 Which kind of literature do I need to address my research question or write an essay on a given topic, respectively?

Depending on your research question, you have to make use of primary and secondary literature to get an idea about the current state of the scientific debate on the topic at hand. As a general rule, primary literature is an autonomous scientific contribution, while secondary literature analyzes and discusses the primary literature. Furthermore, official sources such as official government statistics, historical documents, election manifestos, are also categorized as primary literature. In a scientific essay you have to show that you know the latest literature that is relevant to your topic. Also, you are usually asked to support your argument, which may have been derived from secondary literature, with primary sources. Popular academic or non-academic sources should not normally be used, although exceptions may be permissible depending on your topic. Internet resources such as blogs or Wikipedia are considered 'untrustworthy'. While they can be helpful places to begin your research, your paper cannot rely on them as sources. A term paper that predominantly cites Internet sources falls short of academic standards. This caveat is, however, not intended to mean that all Internet sources are inappropriate. If, for example, an acknowledged research institution has published a report and names its author(s), you can use it as a source without reservations to supplement your 'offline' sources. The same is true for sources such as the wording of a law or party manifestos. As a general rule it is, however, a good idea to rely on Internet sources only sparingly.

Your goal for your literature research is to separate the wheat from the chaff – nobody can (or needs to) compile a comprehensive list of the complete literature on his topic, much less read all these sources.

1.3 How do I find appropriate literature for my topic or research question?

A good place to start looking for appropriate literature for your task are the recommended reading lists you received from the lecturer. The sources listed there are usually a good starting point, but in and of themselves too general for your task. To find the literature that is most relevant to your research question use these resources and strategies:

- **Library catalogs:** The homepage of the university library gives you access to numerous catalogs, e.g. the catalog of all libraries in Bremen and those of all universities participating in interlibrary lending. Also, you can access a number of databases referencing journals as well as newspaper and magazine articles, among other sources. Note that library catalogs normally don't reference individual book chapters; that's what you need bibliographies and databases for. Also, at the very beginning of your studies you don't know the names of the important authors on your topic, so you normally start with keyword and item searches, with which you should familiarize yourself as soon as possible.
- **Academic Journals:** Search in current issues of relevant academic journals. Many of these journals publish not only articles, but also literature reviews and recensions, maybe even some that are relevant to your topic. Some journal articles are also available online in full text; for others there may only be an abstract. Other journals publish only the tables of contents of each issue online.
- **'Snowball searching':** A 'snowball search' is a way to find literature relevant to your research interest. You start with the bibliographies of relevant books or journal articles you have already found. Take note if an author or certain books or articles are quoted frequently; this is usually a good indicator that these sources are classic or otherwise important. Then check if the authors of these sources published further relevant and current material on your topic. You then evaluate the bibliographies of these works and repeat the process. Stop 'rolling the snowball' if you only find literature that is old or of little relevance otherwise. A word of caution: This method can result in you only covering a certain subset or particular school of thought relevant to your topic; also, your bibliography could simply be out of date. For these reasons, don't exclusively rely on this technique and also use more systematic literature research strategies.
- **Research institutes:** Look for relevant literature, e.g. project reports, statistics/data or book reports, on your topic on the websites of research institutes that are relevant to your subject matter. Of course, these differ according to your course of studies and your research question.
- **Databases/ the Internet:** Look for data and sources in databases, the Internet or CDs/DVDs where many magazines and newspapers publish their yearly archives. The Internet can be a very rich source for material; especially search engines such as Google or Google scholar. Increasingly, official data (e.g. statistics and studies/reports conducted by government agencies) is published online. If these sources are trustworthy, by all means use them. The caveat about which online sources to use and which ones to avoid (cf. p. 18) still applies!

It is advisable to start early looking for literature that is relevant to your topic. The waiting times for books that are in high demand can be up to several weeks; if a book is unavailable in local libraries, interlending can take several weeks before you have the volume you need in

hand! Also get into the habit of noting down the complete bibliographic data of every book you find helpful and decide to use.

Please note: Don't start your research with an unspecific search on the Internet. Rather start by accessing the (online) catalogs of the University library and the library of your department.

2. Referencing your sources

2.1 References

A basic principle of all scientific work is the *intersubjective traceability* of all statements made in scientific work. Each use of 'borrowed knowledge', i.e. information that is not your own contribution, e.g. data, conclusions or arguments, has to be unequivocally pointed out to your readers by referencing your source. A proper reference allows your readers to identify the original source and check the accuracy of the cited information.

The author's obligation to name his sources serves two purposes: not only does it prevent the theft of intellectual property, i.e. plagiarism (cf. chapter III, section 3), but it also makes scientific progress possible in the first place, as it frees the author from elaborating on already existing knowledge which he uses for his argument or theory. By referencing the original source unequivocally, the author can use existing data or conclusions without replicating the methods that produced that information. That is why a definitive and systematic referencing style is foundational for scientific work, not only for ethical, but also epistemological reasons. Missing references and the intellectual fraud that often follows can lead to both sanctions from your lecturers and even legal sanctions.

Depending on your course of study and department, you may be asked to hand in a declaration on the proper usage and full disclosure of all your sources with your written work. Additionally, you may have to hand in your work both as an electronic document and hard copy. The former is then processed with anti-plagiarism software, which checks your work for plagiarism against online and offline sources.

2.1.1 Unambiguousness of your references

To allow your readers to distinguish between your own work and that of others, your references have to be unambiguous in numerous respects:

- **The contributions of other authors have to be clearly distinguishable from your own work.** A direct or verbatim quote needs to immediately be followed by the reference. If you rephrase other authors' contributions using your own words, the reference should be placed immediately thereafter as well.
- **The reference must refer to a unique entry in the bibliography.** This also means that each source used throughout your paper has to be listed in the bibliography. For instructions on how to do this, refer to chapter III, section 4 "Bibliography" (p. 18).
- **The reference has to point out the exact location and scope of the authors' contributions.** That's why a proper reference points out the exact page(s) in the book on which the referenced material was originally found. If the cited knowledge is the central result of an entire study, you should reference the entire book as your source. If you reference content originally contained in a footnote, you also name the number of the

footnote.

2.1.2 Admissible Sources

Secondary literature, monographs, compilations, reports or unpublished papers, so-called 'gray literature' are acceptable sources to cite in your own papers. Make sure to use the latest editions, if possible. Daily or weekly newspapers and magazines, however, cannot be used as secondary sources as they fall short of scientific standards. They can be used as primary sources, i.e. in your paper you can critically analyze information, e.g. from newspapers, in a systematic way in order to learn about a change in public opinion. Sometimes a quality magazine or newspaper³ publishes important documentaries or articles written by scientists or researchers that are permissible to reference.

Diagrams, charts, legal texts and court documents published by renowned institutions (e.g. government agencies/departments, the *Bundestag*⁴ or the European Court of Justice), both online and offline versions, are primary sources which can be readily cited. In other cases you have to check Internet sources for their academic merit and decide if they qualify as scientific. In contrast to scientific lexicons and encyclopedias, popular scientific sources of the same genre are not citable; the same is true for other popular nonfiction literature. Generally speaking, Internet sources including online encyclopedias (most prominently Wikipedia) are not considered scientific and are subordinate to scientific sources proper, as outlined above.

2.2 Citation style and how to cite properly

2.2.1 Citation style

There are numerous citation styles⁵ used in different academic fields. They can be broadly divided into those that use footnotes or end notes to reference sources, and those which use in-text citation put in parentheses. Some widely used styles include the APA (=American Psychological Association) style, MLA (=Modern Language Association), and Harvard style. The prevalent citation style in the social sciences is Harvard style, also sometimes called author-date system.

In this guide we will only outline the **Harvard system**; it is your task to find out which citation style to use in your written work, which may differ from subject to subject and even from lecturer to lecturer. Under the Harvard style, the in-text citation is placed in parentheses after the sentence or phrase that the citation supports. The citation includes the author's name, year of publication and page number, **if not** the whole source or publication is referenced but only a short excerpt or quote.

An in-text citation looks like this:

“The unemployment rate in Germany peaked at 11.2 per cent” (Smith 2005: 44).

If in the previous example Ms Smith published more than one publication in 2005, small letters are appended in alphabetical order to the publication date uniquely identify the publication that you quote:

³ In Germany some important ones are: Der Spiegel, Die Zeit, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, taz, Süddeutsche Zeitung, Neue Züricher Zeitung.

⁴ The Bundestag is the German federal parliament.

⁵ In this guide we use the terms 'citation' and 'reference' interchangeably.

Example:

... (Smith 2005a: 44).
... (Smith 2005b: 69).

If you cite two or more sources in one set of parentheses, divide them with a semicolon:

... (Smith 2005b: 69; Jones 2006: 19; Brown 2007: 45).

If an identical source is cited again at a later time, you have to reference your source in parentheses and cannot abbreviate the citation to “ibid” or (German) “ebenda.”, “ebda.” (= “at the same place”).

If a certain publication has already been properly referenced, a subsequent citation can be shortened to the publication year and page number (where appropriate) directly after the author's name in the text:

Examples:

.... While Brown (2005: 45) argues that ...
..... Smith (2006a) proposes that ...

If you quote from a newspaper, the citation includes the name of the newspaper, the year of publication and the page number in parentheses directly after the quote:

... (New York Times 2007: 34).

If you quote an online source the citation includes the author's name and the year of publication, in parentheses directly after the quote.

Example:

... (Smith 2007).

If the same publication is also available in an offline version, e.g. as a journal article or book, always quote the printed version rather than the Internet source.

Please note: You have to list all sources cited in your written work in a proper bibliography (cf. page 18 in this chapter). The bibliography (also called 'references') lists in alphabetical order each source with all mandatory bibliographic data and unambiguously matches each in-text citation with one specific source.

2.2.2 General citation guidelines

Generally speaking, you should use direct or verbatim quotes only sparingly. They should only be used if an author presents a fact or phrases an argument in an especially succinct or singular way, or he/she defines or coins a new term. If the original author only gives a factual account, you should try to report these facts using your own words. This way you can avoid assuming the original author's perspective uncritically by constantly quoting his/her words, which may compromise your own approach of the subject matter. However, when analyzing some genres, e.g. theoretical accounts, referring to or quoting the original text frequently may

be unavoidable. If your quotes are too long or your paper basically consists of one quote after another, you run the risk of appearing to have only a poor understanding of the subject matter as you haven't shown that you can present your sources in your own words.

2.2.3 Citation basics

Rule 1: *Always identify any quote to your readers!*

This rule applies to direct (i.e. verbatim) quotes as well as to paraphrases of other author's thoughts and arguments.

Rule 2: *Verbatim quotes have to be reproduced true to the original.*

This rule applies to both the quote's content and its form. This means that you have to reproduce the quote exactly as it appears in the original text, including incorrect or outdated spelling or punctuation. Consequently, it's advisable to disable the automatic correction functionality of your office software. Spelling or grammar mistakes in the original text are indicated by the Latin “[sic!]” (=that way!) directly after the incorrect word or punctuation mark.

Rule 3: *Quotes in a foreign language have to be translated.*

You usually write your term paper in either German or English⁶; frequently, the choice is up to you. Whichever 'working language' you choose, you have to use it throughout the text. This entails that if you quote sources in a language other than German or English, you have to translate these quotes into your 'working language'. If you translate a source, your citation must include the note “translation by the author” (German: “Übersetzung des Verfassers”). It is also permissible to copy the untranslated original quote and provide a translation in a footnote.

Rule 4: *Only quote original sources.*

Whenever possible you should only quote original sources. If the original source is unavailable and you have to quote from a secondary source, you have to indicate that fact by adding “cited according to” (German: “zitiert nach”) followed by the secondary source. Generally speaking, you should try to avoid quoting secondary sources and only do so when there is no other choice, e.g. if the primary source is unavailable.

Example: “(text of the original quote)” (Bloch: *Metamorphoses*, zitiert nach: Habermas 1974, S.222).

Rule 5: *Quotes have to be functional.*

A quote should only contain those aspects that you specifically wish to express. If the quote mentions other aspects unrelated to your research question, the quote should be omitted (as explained in the next section) or abbreviated.

⁶ Of course, there are exceptions to this rule. An obvious one are – to name only one example – students of French literature, who are usually required to write their term paper in French, rather than English or German.

2.2.4 How to quote

a) Verbatim quotes

A verbatim quote is if you copy another author's language directly, word by word, in your paper. Verbatim quotes are useful if the original author phrased a thought or argument very succinctly or precisely. However, you shouldn't use too many verbatim quotes. A verbatim quote is indicated by putting the original author's language into inverted commas/quotation marks (“ ... ”). A full stop/period concluding the quote is put **after** the closing parentheses of the reference.

Example:

“The member states of the EU are penetrated political systems” (Black 1999: 72).

b) Paraphrasing

The most appropriate and frequent use of quotes is to paraphrase an author's thoughts in your own words. As these quotes are paraphrases and not verbatim they are not indicated by quotation marks.

Example:

Original source: “There are several alternatives to increasing price, including shrinking the amount of product instead of raising the price and substituting less expensive materials or ingredients” (Kotler 2000: 483).

Paraphrase: Reducing package sizes and using cheaper ingredients are two indirect ways of raising revenue without increasing the nominal price of a product (Kotler 2000: 483).

c) Omissions

It is often useful to abbreviate long quotes by omitting parts of it which are irrelevant to the research question. Omissions are only permissible if the abbreviated quote remains true to its original intent.

Rule 1: *Omissions are indicated by three dots in square brackets: '[...]'*.

Example:

Original text: “Price decision: Prices are a key positioning factor and must be decided in relation to the target market, the product-and-service assortment mix, and competition” (Kotler 2000: 528).

Quote with two omissions: “Price decision: Prices [...] must be decided in relation to the target market [...] and competition” (Kotler 2000: 528).

Rule 2: *If the last words of a sentence are omitted, the omission sign is placed directly in front of the full stop.*

Example:

Original text: “Wholesalers can discourage less profitable customers by requiring larger orders or adding surcharges to smaller ones” (Kotler 2000: 534).

Quote with omission: “Wholesalers can discourage less profitable customers by requiring larger orders [...]” (Kotler 2000: 534).

d) Modifications and additions

It is permissible to modify or amend a quote if this aids the readers' understanding of the quote or if the modification is necessary to fit the quote into one's own text in a grammatically correct way.

Rule 1: *Comments or additions are inserted into a text in squared brackets and amended with the notice “d.Verf.” (=German: “der Verfasser”, English: “author's note”).*

Example:

Original text: “In this year he concluded his work” (Bloggs 2000: 134).

Modified quote: “In this year [1914, d.Verf.] he concluded his work” (Bloggs 2000: 134).

Rule 2: *Modifications are inserted in squared brackets without adding “d.Verf.”.*

Example:

Original text: “Target Inc., a leading wholesaler, puts it succinctly: 'The key is to find a distinct mix of services valued by our customers', which is an important point” (Kotler 2000: 534).

Modified quote: Kotler agrees that it is important for wholesalers “to find a distinct mix of services valued by [their] customers” (Kotler 2000: 534).

e) Emphases

An emphasis in the original text has to be reflected in a quote. You can also add your own emphases to an original quote, if you indicate them properly. Occasionally, you may wish to put emphasis on a succinct or crucial term or phrase contained in the original text to focus your readers' attention on that particular word or phrase.

Rule: *Any emphasis in the original text as well as in a quote has to be indicated by amending the phrases “emphasis added”⁷ or “emphasis in the original”⁸, respectively.*

⁷ (German: “im Original” or “durch den Verfasser”)

⁸ (German: “Hervorhebung im Original”)

f) Long quotes

Quotes exceeding three lines in your text should not be quoted as outlined above, but rather inserted into your text as a proper paragraph, naming the original author, but without using quotation marks.

Example:

Kotler (2000: 544) remarks on market logistics as follows:

Major gains in logistical efficiency have come from advances in information technology. Though the cost of market logistics can be high, a well-planned market-logistics program can be a potent tool in competitive marketing. The ultimate goal of market logistics is to meet customers' requirements in an efficient and profitable way.

There should be one blank line between your text and the inserted quote.

3. Plagiarism

In all of your written academic work, e.g. essays, papers or theses, you have to document your sources by including a citation within the text – (Smith 2007: 33) – and appending a list of works used at the end of the text. Particularly, you need to make sure that you reference your sources properly by indicating any ideas, quotes or other information that you copied or paraphrased from other texts and that is therefore not your own original work. If you fail to do this, you have committed plagiarism, and thus academic fraud. Not only is this unethical, but can lead to sanctions ranging from failing the course to legal sanctions due to copyright infringement.

The most unambiguous form of plagiarism is passing another individual's work off as your own, e.g. by handing in work that has been copied from the Internet. The same is also true for copying and pasting bits and pieces of plagiarized text to form a new text, which is then misrepresented as your own work. Moreover, even 'borrowing' an idea, which has clearly been affiliated with its author, and misrepresenting it as your own contribution by omitting a reference to its author, already constitutes plagiarism. It doesn't matter if you use the original author's verbatim quotes or paraphrase his idea in your own words.

Here are some guidelines that you should consider when trying to identify plagiarism:

You have committed plagiarism, if

- you take notes from a book or paper and do not distinguish between (verbatim) quotes and your own words, and thereby end up passing off quotes as your own intellectual work.
- you copy and paste text from the Internet without putting the cited text in quotation marks and referencing it properly.
- you present data and/or facts that have originally been observed and obtained by others as your own, i.e. without referencing your source.
- you hand in written work not authored by yourself as your own paper.

You can avoid committing plagiarism by following these guidelines:

- Make a list of all authors and their concepts, ideas or arguments that you used in your work. This list will be helpful to avoid conflating your own work with that of others, as well as reference your sources correctly.
- Be sure to distinguish clearly between 1. your own ideas, 2. your summaries or paraphrases of other authors' ideas or arguments, 3. verbatim quotations from any sources you used.
- Check your finished work for any omitted references. Make sure that all ideas, concepts, theories and quotes that are not your own original work are properly referenced as such.
- **Never** splice together a paper by copying and pasting text from various (online or offline) sources.

Recommended reading (in English): Gibaldi, Joseph (2003): *MLA Handbook for Writers of Researcher Papers*, 6. Aufl. New York: Modern Language Association of America, 66-75.

4. Bibliography

A bibliography's main purpose is to allow the readers of a paper to check the author's sources. To facilitate that task, a bibliography has to contain all necessary information and adheres to a specific, standardized form.

While a bibliography contains the complete bibliographic data for every source referenced in the paper and its appendix (if there is one), no other sources than these should be listed. The bibliography's proper place is after the body of the paper and before the appendix.

4.1 Sequence

The bibliographical references are ordered alphabetically according to the surnames of the authors. In case there are two or more authors with an identical surname, the sequence of the entries follows alphabetically from their first name(s). If the bibliography lists two or more publications of the same author, the sequence of the entries is determined by the year of publication (earlier works are listed before later ones).

Should there be two or more publications of the *same author* in the *same year*, the sequence of entries follows alphabetically from the first word (excluding definite articles⁹) of the publication title, and a lower case letter is added to the publication dates:

Example: 1.) Nullmeier, Frank (2004a): Der Diskurs der Generationengerechtigkeit ...
 2.) Nullmeier, Frank (2004b): Die politische Karriere des Begriffs ...

If an author has published alone as well as in collaboration with one or more other author(s), you first list all works the author published alone. Next, the works he published in collaboration with others are listed; the sequence of the entries follows alphabetically from the name(s) of the co-author(s).

⁹ German: *der, die* or *das* etc.

4.2 Standard reference

A standard reference is as follows: author(s) surname(s), author(s) first name(s) (year of publication): Title. Subtitle. Place: Publisher.

Example: Mayer, Peter (2006): Macht, Gerechtigkeit und internationale Kooperation. Eine regimeanalytische Studie zur internationalen Rohstoffpolitik. Baden-Baden: Nomos.

4.3 Reference for two or more authors

If a text has been published by two or more authors, the names of the collaborating authors are separated by a slash (/):

Example: Obinger, Herbert/Leibfried, Stephan/Castles, Francis G. (Hrsg.) (2005): Federalism and the Welfare State. New York and European Experiences. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

As a general rule, always list all authors of a given source in the bibliography – in the order in which they appear in the original text. If a title has been authored by three or more individuals, an in-text reference can be abbreviated to name only the first author, followed by the Latin “et al.” (English: “and others”).

Example: (Obinger et al.: 2005).

Please note that you can only abbreviate references in this manner if they can still be unequivocally correlated with one entry in the bibliography, i.e. – in this case – there is no other work of Herbert Obinger in the bibliography that was published in 2005 in collaboration with two or more co-authors.

4.4 Compilations

If the publication is a compilation, the names of the editors have to be amended by “(ed.)” for editor or “(eds.)” for editors.¹⁰

Example: Kodre, Petra/Roggenkamp, Martin/Roth, Christian/Scheffelt, Elke (Hrsg.) (2005): Lokale Beschäftigungsbündnisse. Europäische Perspektiven in Forschung und Praxis. Berlin: edition sigma.

4.5 Editions/multi volume works

If you are referencing anything other than the first edition of a publication, you have to amend the number of the edition and include attributes such as 'revised' (German: “überarbeitet”) or 'extended' (German: “erweitert”) after the title.

Example: Schmidt, Manfred G. (2004): Wörterbuch zur Politik, 2. vollständige überarbeitete und erweiterte Aufl. Stuttgart: Alfred Kröner Verlag.

¹⁰ (German: “(Hrsg.)” for both the singular and the plural)

If the referenced title is a multi-volume work, you have to include the following:

- a) number of volumes, if you reference the whole multi-volume work, and
- b) number of the specific volume, if you reference one specific source.

Examples: a) Hesse, Joachim Jens/Ellwein, Thomas (2004): Das Regierungssystem der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, 2 Bde., 9. Aufl. Berlin: De Gruyter.

b) Hesse, Joachim Jens/Ellwein, Thomas (2004): Das Regierungssystem der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, Bd. 2., 9. Aufl. Berlin: De Gruyter.

As a rule, always use the latest, most recent edition!

4.6 Articles in compilations

If you reference an article from a compilation, you first list its author(s)'s name(s), its title and date of publication; you continue with publisher, title, place and publishing house of the compilation (without publication date); last, you list the page numbers of the article.

Example: Zürn, Michael (2002): Zu den Merkmalen postnationaler Politik. In: Jachtenfuchs, Markus/Michele Knodt (Hrsg.), *Regieren in internationalen Organisationen*. Opladen: Leske + Budrich, 215-234.

4.7 Journal Articles

If you reference an article from a journal, you list the title of the journal, year of publication, issue number and the page numbers of the respective articles in the following format:

In: title of the journal, year of publication (issue number), page numbers. The title of the journal is in *Italics*.

Example: Schmidt, Susanne K. (2006): Probleme der Osterweiterung. Kleine Länder in der europäischen Union. In: *Zeitschrift für Politikwissenschaft*, 16 (1), 81-101.

4.8 Downloads

Articles and materials downloaded from the Internet are treated exactly like other sources, however you add the URL and the date you downloaded the data:

Example 1: Seeleib-Kaiser, Martin/ Dyk, Silke van/ Roggenkamp, Martin (2005): What Do Parties Want? An Analysis of Programmatic Social Policy Aims in Austria, Germany, and the Netherlands. ZeS-Arbeitspapier 1/2005. Text abrufbar unter <http://www.zes.uni-bremen.de/pages/download.php?ID=225&SPRACHE=de&TABLE=AP&TYPE=PDF> (Zugriff am 9.8.2007).

Example 2: Schäuble, Wolfgang (2005): Interview im Tagesspiegel am 28.5.2005. Text abrufbar unter <http://archiv.tagesspiegel.de/archiv/texte/280805tsp.pdf> (Zugriff am 30.9.2006).

IV. Academic genres

1. Minutes

The purpose of minutes is to document and sum up the main points and central results of a lecture, seminar or tutorial. There are several kinds of minutes, e.g. resolution or decision minutes, discussion minutes, memory minutes or narrative minutes. At university level you are usually expected to write **discussion minutes**: these are minutes that reflect the topics under discussion as well as the main arguments, important points of contention, open questions and a consensus or result that may have been achieved. Importantly, in the end the reader should be able to review the topics discussed, arguments employed and structure of the classroom discussion; it is **not** the goal of discussion minutes to document the proceedings in the classroom on a minute by minute basis (these would be narrative minutes).

Therefore your task is to appropriately sum up and document topics, the positions taken and arguments used throughout the discussion. (... The topic of the seminar was X ... For position y on that topic, the following reasons were given: ... On the other hand, position Z employed the following arguments.....)

Your minute's header should contain the following information:

- title of the seminar/lecture, seminar number, name of lecturer
- date and time of the class
- topic of the class
- if a presentation was given in class: the topic(s) of the presentation(s) and name(s) of the presenter(s)
- name of the minute taker

If you write discussion minutes, the following structure should be helpful:

- main topic of the class
- central issues discussed (which problems/topics were explained and discussed)
- (if applicable) different positions taken in the discussion and arguments used. Please **do not** attribute arguments to their proponents, i.e. **do not** write things like: "Mr. X argued that Ms Y disagreed and explained ...", but rather: "Two arguments were made: At first / On the one hand, There was no consensus; the counterargument explained that ...".
- questions and issues that came up during discussion but couldn't be answered satisfactorily. If they are to be addressed in a later class, this should be indicated as well.
- an account of the degree of consensus or disagreement
- important literature mentioned in class (if any)

Always write complete sentences, rather than using bullet points! Minutes of a seminar should be about two to three pages long.

2. Presentations

Not only are talks and presentations an important part of your degree requirements; moreover, the ability to give a well-structured presentation is an essential skill and necessary qualification for professionals in many fields, academic or otherwise. At the core of this skill

lies the ability to tackle a complex subject matter and present it competently in oral or written form. Therefore, students of all subjects are strongly advised to develop and practice presentation skills and make use of all opportunities to do so.

2.1 Content and form

A presentation's purpose is **not** to cover a topic in depth! Rather the presentation addresses a certain topic with regard to a specific question in a systematic and scientific way, and thus provides a basis for discussion in the seminar.

In your presentation, do not provide a detailed account of facts and events, such as an extensive chronological account. An oral presentation is generally unsuitable for the presentation of detailed information, because the audience usually cannot process the information in a systematic way and is easily bored by a purely factual account. The presentation should rather focus on the exposition of basic arguments and limit the factual data to the amount necessary to explain the context and to bolster the arguments.

A presentation is typically made up of an introduction, several body paragraphs and a conclusion.

A The introduction should briefly address the following issues:

- *Explanation of the problem*

A good start is to briefly introduce the topic and scope of the presentation and to place it into its proper context. It is important to explicitly name the research questions and topics of interest and to delimit the presentation's thematic scope. To address the questions raised by the presenter, a hypothesis should be formulated. Throughout the presentation, this hypothesis is then the subject of rigorous argument; in the end, the hypothesis is either confirmed or rejected.

- *Illustration of the *modus operandi**

The presenter should explain how she plans to address the question, i.e. she introduces both her methods of inquiry and the sources she relies on. She may also give reasons why she chose these specific methods and what other approach might have been chosen.

- *Explanation of the presentation's structure*

The structure of the discussion, i.e. theses, arguments, counterarguments and explanations should be introduced in the order in which they appear.

The bullet points above should give you an idea what a good introduction might look like; however, not all of them have to be addressed already in the introduction. In any case, make sure that your introduction is sufficiently brief and does not take longer than a few minutes; surely, it shouldn't occupy a third of your presentation's length. More often than not, the quality of your presentation and your audience's attention depend on the soundness of your introduction. Among other things, one important function of the introduction is to captivate your audience's interest and secure their attention. Additionally, the introduction provides a structure for the audience and serves as an orientation throughout the talk.

B In the body of the presentation, you discuss and explain the questions raised in your paper aided by and based on your sources. Make sure to address interim results throughout your discussion.

C The conclusion sums up the interim results in the context of the presentation's topic, i.e. the question the presentation tries to answer. Here is also a good place to critically differentiate your own conclusions from those of other studies and to point out issues that need further research. Furthermore, you should propose provocative hypotheses, which are based on your presentation's conclusions and provide a basis for subsequent classroom discussion.

2.2 Handout

You should provide a handout along with your presentation to all in attendance. You can either distribute your handout as hard copy or present it via an overhead projector or as a Power Point presentation. As the aim of your handout is to structure your presentation, you should provide an outline of your talk and an overview of your argument. On your handout, **do not** enumerate facts or provide detailed information!

A handout shouldn't be longer than two pages and should provide the following information:

- In the head of your handout, provide some basic information about the class: name of the university and department, name of the class and semester, name of the lecturer, topic and/or title of the presentation, name of the presenter, date.
- State your topic and the research questions your talk is addressing.
- Give an outline or structure of your talk, i.e. provide chapter and section titles.
- You should propose hypotheses to structure your argument. Generally speaking, a hypothesis is a suggested explanation that predicts a causal relationship between observable phenomena. Your hypotheses try to give answers to the question you deal with in your talk by providing a logical structure to the given facts and data. In your oral presentation you give reasons for your hypotheses, sum up your argument pointedly and provide a basis for subsequent classroom discussion. You may present your hypotheses along with your outline by listing each thesis under the appropriate section headline of your outline.
- Your list of works cited shouldn't be a comprehensive bibliography of your topic. Rather, only list the sources you actually used for your presentation.
- Additional information, e.g. tables, charts, graphs, statistics or documents, can be provided as an appendix to your handout, which shouldn't be too extensive.

2.3 How to give a presentation

Your task is to present a complex subject matter in a concise manner while engaging your audience. Consequently, it is important that your listeners can easily follow the thread of your argument; also your language should not be too dense or technical. Keep in mind that written language (especially German!) is not ideal for oral presentation. Long-winded and complicated sentences can easily end up confusing not only your listeners, but even yourself while you are giving the talk! Especially, an enumeration of facts is rather tedious and may bore and exhaust your audience. That's why you should use easy and short sentences – like this one ! – and avoid convoluted language. Additionally, be careful to speak slowly and face your audience throughout the presentation to keep their attention.

Reading from a manuscript vs speaking freely

If your talk consists of simply reading out aloud your pre-written manuscript you will bore your listeners to tears as well as look unprofessional and insecure. That's why you should speak as freely as possible, with the aid of bullet points on your cue cards. Of course, it can be

useful to prepare a manuscript that contains your presentation in full text. In case you don't know what to say next or how to phrase an idea during the talk, you can then always consult your manuscript. However, remember that you cannot read from your manuscript all the time and should practice giving talks freely.

Standing vs sitting

Some people don't like to be in full view of their audience and prefer being located securely in one spot. Consequently, they choose being seated during their presentation over moving about. Sometimes, however, this can lead to nervous movements, e.g. kneading of your hands. Thus, while being seated, pay attention to your hands especially as well as other nervous tics. Giving your talk standing up, on the other hand, allows you to move about freely. This can be more stimulating to your audience and lightens up the atmosphere.

Duration

A presentation usually runs between 15 and 20 minutes, unless, of course, your lecturer tells you otherwise. This time target is shorter than you might think, so be sure to make a timed practice run of your presentation! Also, keep in mind that you will usually speak slower in front of a live audience than during your practice run and you may have to edit your manuscript accordingly. Another reason for one or two practice runs is that these give you an opportunity to check if your written language translates well into an oral presentation.

Using media

It is often useful to complement your oral presentation with visual media, such as Power Point presentations, overhead transparencies or diagrams. Using media also makes your presentations more interesting and fun because it provides some visual stimulus for the audience and allow them to focus on something else besides the presenter. Moreover, media can be quite helpful as they provide structure to the presentation and thus aid the audience in following the argument. This can be achieved, e.g. by providing your hypotheses in concise form or informative paragraph headings on a transparency or Power Point presentation. Also, you provide additional information by showing tables, graphs or illustrations (where appropriate) without using up valuable time. Be careful, however, not to exchange your structured presentation for a mere slideshow, in which you simply read out aloud a Power Point presentation to your audience.

Conclusion

An important question to keep in mind is what to do at the end of the presentation. At the very end of your talk you should briefly recap your results, point out contentious issues for discussion or propose a provocative or challenging hypothesis.

3. Essay

3.1 What is an essay?

According to a dictionary definition, an essay is an account that deals with a literary or academic issue in a concise and analytical manner. You usually begin a critical essay by pointing out the question, the contentious issue or hypothesis under consideration, which is then to be discussed in a **subjective** way. You can and should add relevance to your topic or

question by explaining to your audience what peaked your interest in the subject matter. Your interest might be motivated by personal experience or maybe your topic pertains to a current event.

3.2 Criteria for a proper essay

Writing essays develops your critical reasoning skills as well as your ability to reach well considered scientific conclusions. The aim of an essay is not to deal with a topic in full detail, but rather to analyze the subject matter within its broader context. Even more so than in a term paper, it is important to distinguish between essential content and unnecessary detail that can safely be omitted. Consequently, the author of an essay is supposed to not only present a scientific argument, but rather point out her own conclusions and opinions. The scientific argument, however, is still the main part and core of your essay; it serves as the starting point for your own thoughts and ideas. Your position or hypothesis thereby reached should be plausible and (at least in principle, if not in practice) testable. You are not asked to engage in highly abstract and unprovable musings about the world in general.

3.3 Structure of an essay

Your essay should have an introduction, a body (i.e. a main part) and a conclusion. Structuring your essay thematically into paragraphs is a good idea, as it aids both your, the author's, and your readers' understanding. You start your essay by stating your topic, the subject or question you will deal with in the main part of the essay, and briefly explaining its relevance. Next, you submit your own hypothesis on the subject matter, which you argue in the main part. There, you argue the pros and cons for your hypotheses. Your goal here is to provide both theoretical arguments (your own or those of others) and empirical evidence (if possible) for your position. Your final part should then sum up the central arguments briefly and arrive at a conclusion. Do not simply repeat your arguments from the main part; rather relate the gist of your argument in a nutshell. Your conclusion can express personal judgments, as well as point out new and interesting questions arising from the discussion.

3.4 How to write an essay

It is best to organize your essay around the central arguments for or against your hypothesis. To bolster your argument make use of a range of material from scientific as well as non-scientific sources.

- statistics, data, facts
- scientific hypotheses (theories, opinions)
- influential thinkers in the field
- your own thoughts and opinions on the topic
- social, ethical, moral or other normative positions or values (where appropriate)
- positions taken or arguments made in the public sphere (where appropriate)

Your material in turn can come from diverse sources and media: scientific texts, newspaper articles, films, literature, television programmes etc. Whenever you voice your *own* opinion on a subject, make sure to let your readers know that. To do this, you can use phrases such as: “In my view/opinion ...; I come to the conclusion that ...” . Never lose sight of your essay's main purpose, which is to prompt your readers to make up their own minds and maybe gain a new perspective on the topic.

3.5 Second draft

Once you finished your first draft it is a good idea not to look at your work for a few days. Sometimes this is necessary to achieve a fresh perspective on your writing. After a few days, pick up your essay again and check if you can still follow your own argument as written down. Remember: Your goal is to make yourself understood; so if you cannot follow your argument with ease, you know that there is a problem!

3.6 Formal requirements

Referencing your sources throughout your essay is not mandatory and no footnotes should be used. However, when you quote an author or employ his opinions and theories, it should still be clear whose thoughts and ideas you are using. You do this by simply naming the author in your text (e.g. According to Vernon Smith, as we learn from Smith). However, it is recommended that you use your own words when paraphrasing another author. A good rule of thumb is: Your own thoughts and words always have to be easily distinguishable from those of other authors! Statements, explanations or details that cannot easily be integrated into the essay, are often unnecessary for your argument and can be omitted. At the end of your essay, you list all the sources you used or cited. As a rule of thumb, a short essay should be between three and four pages long; a regular essay between eight and ten pages.

This part of the study guide draws on: Otto Kruse (1995): *Keine Angst vor dem leeren Blatt. Ohne Schreibblockaden durchs Studium.* Frankfurt a.M./New York: Campus.

Fahrenheit, Anja (2003): *wissenschaftliches Arbeiten – der Essay.* Text abrufbar unter <https://zope.sowi.hu-berlin.de/lehrebereiche/stadtsoz/lehre/wa/essays> (Zugriff am 10.9.2007).

4. Term papers / seminar papers

Term papers - also sometimes called seminar papers (German: "Hausarbeit") - are academic papers, which are usually not published, but conform to the same formal and material criteria as articles published in scientific journals. For this reason, regarding citation, language and style, term papers have to conform to the same criteria as journal articles. Your term paper either deals with a question or problem of your own choice or an assignment given by your lecturer. In both cases, you make use of academic sources that help you address your research question. The topic of the paper, i.e. the question or issue you address, is the golden thread of your writing; you address your research question already in your essay's introduction. You do this to tell your readers up front what you will discuss throughout the paper.

In a term paper, only clearly delimited problems or questions can be addressed. A topic such as "The role of the EU in today's world politics" is too broad to be sensibly discussed in a term paper. Rather, your task is to find a manageable question that you can properly discuss and try to answer in a paper. Consequently, it makes little sense to try and find out, e.g. "The role of the upper house in German politics"; this topic is too broad and unspecific. A more manageable task could be to analyze in your term paper if party politics have become more influential in the German upper house since 1990.

A term paper is typically rather short, depending on the subject and your lecturer between 10 and 25 pages. Not only do your discussion, the facts and your argument have to be sound and valid, but there are also formal criteria to meet for a high mark. A work schedule is advisable as your paper typically progresses as you write several drafts that increasingly reflect your

deepening understanding of the issue, new questions and solutions that arise, as well as the sources you consulted.

4.1 Layout and formal criteria

- cover sheet (name of the university, institute and seminar; name of the lecturer; semester; the exact topic of the term paper; name, email and mail address of the paper's author ; matriculation number; your course of studies; number of semesters at university)
- outline
- list of works used, bibliography at the end of the text body
- format options: font: Times New Roman, font size: 12 pts, 1.5 line spacing; footnote font size: 10 pts (or equivalent), footnote line spacing: 6 pts
- left/right margins: 3 cm; top/bottom margins: 2.5 cm
- page numbers: starting with “1” on the first page of the actual text, the cover sheet and table of content are not numbered
- full justification; automatic hyphenation
- tables and charts in the text are consecutively numbered

Make sure that you:

- write correct German (or English), i.e. check your spelling, grammar, sentence structure and punctuation,
- cite your sources properly (cf. Chapter III Section 2, p. 11),
- attach a properly formatted and complete bibliography (cf. Chapter III Section 4, p. 18).

Please note: As a rule, sections and paragraphs are to structure a text into coherent units of meaning. **Therefore, avoid paragraphs consisting of only one or two sentences as well as those running for several pages.**

4.2 Structure of a term paper

A term paper is structured as follows:

Introduction

In a nutshell, an introduction is supposed to answer the following questions: **What** am I to write, **how** and **why**? In a 15 to 20 pages paper your introduction should be about 1 to 2 pages long.

Your introduction should contain:

- An explanation of the topic or scope of your term paper – why did you chose it and why is it relevant?
- Your research question - why did you choose this exact question? Why is it relevant?
- What hypotheses do you propose?
- A short introduction of the theories and concepts you take into account and use as a starting point.
- A pointer to your method(s) of inquiry, e.g. a comparison between two countries, policy

areas or points in time; statistical data analysis, discursive analysis etc.¹¹

Body of the text/main part

The main part is the core of your term paper. It is here that you discuss theories and facts to answer your research question. The main part normally comprises:

- definitions and explanations of terms, as far as necessary,
- an account of a theory underlying your argument (if applicable),
- an account of other authors' contributions to your topic (the current state of research),
- your own hypotheses; how you developed them and a discussion of their merits,
- a short account of the methods you use to check your hypotheses and make them plausible,
- an evaluation of your material and/or (empirical) data; presentation of your findings: how does the data relate to your hypotheses?
- An extensive discussion of your inquiry's results, e.g.:
 - How significant are your results? Can they be applied to other cases? If yes, which ones? How can your results be transferred to different, more general contexts?
 - What problems arose during your research? For example, important data may have been unavailable or some data sources may contradict others.
 - What do your results imply for the theory you used, if you used a theory? Do your results confirm or infirm, i.e. contradict, the theory?

Conclusion/final part

Your final part should include:

- a summary of your central results and the steps you took and methods you used to achieve them,
- an answer to your research question, which you initially asked,
- a critical reflection of your results: What conclusions can be drawn from them? What questions remain unanswered? What problems need further research?

Please note: The final part of a term paper is not the place for personal opinions. Your task is to reach a reasoned conclusion from your earlier analysis based on empirical or normative theory.

Bibliography

Your bibliography lists all scientific sources (books, journal articles etc.) you cited, as well as all primary sources (e.g. statistics, documents such as newspaper articles, press releases, party manifestos, legal texts or verdicts. For further information, cf. chapter III, section 4, p.18).

4.3 Outline and table of content of a term paper

A term paper's structure is reflected in its outline, right after the cover sheet. The headings in the outline are identical to those in your text. The outline has to conform to certain formal criteria as well:

¹¹ Many examples in this study guide are from the field of political science or the the social sciences, as this document was first written for students of political science at the University of Bremen. Methods and concepts in other fields may be different.

Rule 1:

A section is divided into subsections only if there are two or more subsections in that section.

Example:

Incorrect:

2. Germany's Grand Coalition from 1966-1969
 - 2.1 The Grand Coalition's foreign policies 1966-1969
3. Germany's Grand Coalition since 2005
- ...

Correct:

2. Germany's Grand Coalition from 1966-1969
 - 2.1 The Grand Coalition's domestic policies 1966-1969
 - 2.2 The Grand Coalition's foreign policies 1966-1969
3. Germany's Grand Coalition since 2005

Rule 2:

Divide each section into subsections only according to the same criterion:

Example:

Incorrect:

2. The policies of the German federal government 1998 - 2005
 - 2.1 The foreign policies of the federal government 1998 - 2002
 - 2.2 The period 2002 - 2005
- ...

Correct:

2. The policies of the German federal government 1998 - 2005
 - 2.1 The foreign policies of the federal government 1998 - 2002
 - 2.2 The foreign policies of the federal government 2003 - 2005
- ...

Rule 3:

Headings have to make sense in and of themselves.

Example:

Incorrect:

3. The foreign policies of the SPD during the Grand Coalition 1966-1969 and 2005-2009
 - 3.1 The role of the SPD
 - 3.2 The foreign ministers of the SPD
 - ...

Correct:

3. The foreign policies of the SPD during the Grand Coalition 1966-1969 and 2005- 2009
 - 3.1 The role of the SPD during the Grand Coalition 1966-1969
 - 3.2 The role of the SPD during the Grand Coalition 2005-2009
 - 3.3 Willi Brandt as foreign minister of the Grand Coalition 1966-1969
 - 3.4 Frank Walter Steinmeier as foreign minister of the Grand Coalition 2005-2009
 - ...

Please note: Your term paper is generally structured into an introduction, a body (or 'main part') and a conclusion (or 'final part'). This structure, however, is not entirely reflected in the outline. While the first section is labelled 'introduction' and the last one 'conclusion', there is no headline 'main part' (or 'body'). The body of the paper is usually subdivided into several autonomous sections.

Example:

Topic of the term paper: Is a first-past-the-post electoral system more conducive to government change than proportional representation? A comparison between Germany and Great Britain.

1. Introduction
2. Voting systems
 - 2.1. The Westminster system (plurality voting system)
 - 2.2. Proportional representation
 - 2.3. Comparison: advantages and disadvantages of each system
3. Government change in Germany
 - 3.1. Election of a new chancellor
 - 3.2. Change of government coalition
 - 3.3. Change within the ruling government coalition
4. Government change in Great Britain
 - 4.1. Election of a new prime minister
 - 4.2. Change of the governing party
5. Comparison between government change in Germany and Great Britain
6. Conclusion

4.4 How to write a term paper: More helpful tips

- **Time management:** Draft a generous time and work schedule for writing your term paper. You should plan 4 to 6 weeks for your paper, which factors in plenty of time for all kinds of diversions. Make sure to allow ample time to do research on literature and to analyze primary sources or data. These tasks can be quite time consuming!
- **Don't lose sight of your research question:** Limit the scope of your research and the treatment of your data to those sources and information necessary to answer your research question, which needs to be specific rather than all-encompassing. Avoid going off on a tangent; i.e. don't try to treat issues that are interesting but unrelated to your research question. It is helpful to note down your research question and keep that note in sight while you work on your paper. Then, you can check frequently if the chapter or section you are working on contributes to answering your question.
- **Empirical vs. normative questions:** In your term paper, you can address an empirical question (i.e. description and exploration of a subject matter) or a normative question (i.e. evaluation of an issue, theory-guided exploration of a problem). Don't confuse these two basic types; especially let your language clearly reflect the distinction between normative judgments or comments and empirical statements. Additionally, make sure to differentiate between a presentation of reliable data and factual statements, on the one hand, and your own hypotheses and arguments, on the other hand.
- **Quotes:** Only use relevant literature or data and other primary sources (where appropriate), respectively. However, your work must not be a mere succession of quote after quote! Express in your own words as much as possible without loss of information; it's preferable to quoting.
- **Footnotes:** The standard citation style in the social sciences is the so-called 'Harvard style', which is also the recommended style.¹² When using Harvard style you reference your sources in the text directly and use footnotes only to provide additional information or an excursion that is not vital to your discussion and too long or cumbersome to include into your text. Make sure to banish these tangential issues that bog down your readers to a footnote if you don't want to omit them entirely. If you can omit a sentence/paragraph or relegate it to a footnote with your argument remaining intact and intelligible to your readers, it is usually a good idea to do so. If you have more footnotes in your paper than there are pages of text, or if your footnotes contain more text than your proper text, that's a sure sign that you have too many footnotes.
- **Language:** Correct register is important! This means you should only use proper German (or English) and avoid informal, everyday or colloquial language. Your tone should be appropriate and matter-of-fact and your language conform to academic standards, both when you describe and explain and when you voice your own opinions or conclusions. A paper is not a propaganda piece; confrontational and/or inflammatory language is inappropriate.
- **Style:** Although you are supposed to write in a formal rather than casual style, don't try to sound overly sophisticated or stilted. Rather, express yourself clearly, precisely and in a

¹² Depending on your course of study or even your lecturer, you may have to use a different citation style. Make sure to find out which style to use before you start your paper. In this guide, it is assumed that you reference using Harvard style.

varied manner. Some pointers worth considering and some pitfalls to avoid: Use the active voice whenever possible, rather than the passive voice. Don't use too many genitives in a row; this is more of a problem if you write in German. Leave out unnecessary filler words and redundant or meaningless phrases. Don't use pleonasms. Keep your sentences short and to the point, rather than convoluted and long winded. The same is true for enumerations: Keep them short! It is a common misunderstanding that scientific texts have to be written in a dense and inaccessible style!

- **Structure and paragraphs:** Your term paper taken as a whole should be well structured; the same is true for each individual section and paragraph. Each section and paragraph begins with an introductory sentence, then unfolds some argument or description and finally leads to a conclusion, which in turn leads over to the next section or paragraph. Structure your paper into sections and paragraphs to make it more accessible to your readers, but mind the pitfall of disrupting the text flow by starting a new paragraph every other sentence or so. **A term paper that is chopped into a new paragraph after every two or three sentences and has only one sentence or paragraph to each section is not properly structured. Moreover, it does not meet the requirements of an academic paper.** On the other hand, don't have your paragraphs run too long; if a paragraph exceeds one page, it is best to split it up.
- **Proof reading:** Proofreading your paper before handing it in is essential. Handing in a poorly proofread paper that is full of errors and has been finished at the last minute is a surefire way to get a poor mark. Once you have finished a first draft, put it aside and wait for a few days before proof reading it several times. The lapse in time will allow you a new perspective on your own writing. Modern office software comes with built-in spell checkers; also, there is commercial spell-checking software available that offers extended dictionaries, grammar and punctuation checking and other extra features.¹³ Do not, however, rely on the software blindly, but always check if the alternative spelling or punctuation proposed by the software makes sense in the given context. You may find it helpful to have someone else proofread your paper, which is a good way to identify sections whose meaning seems obvious only to you, but no-one else. A common problem is that writers are not sufficiently self-critical and tend to become 'blind' to their most common or obvious mistakes.

Recommended reading on how to write a term paper (in German):

Simonis, Georg/Elbers, Helmut (2003): *Studium und Arbeitstechniken der Politikwissenschaft*. Opladen: Leske + Budrich.

This title is specific to students of political science.

Narr, Wolf-Dieter/Stary, Joachim (editors) (2000): *Lust und Last des wissenschaftlichen Schreibens. Hochschullehrerinnen und Hochschullehrer geben Studierenden Tipps*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.

¹³ One **German** spelling and grammar checking software your authors are familiar with is the 'Duden Korrektor' (at www.duden.de). Another software that checks texts written in German, English, Spanish and French for spelling and grammar mistakes is 'Ultralingua' (at www.ultralingua.com). These programs work with many office suites and you can try them for free for a limited time period.