Writing Academic Papers in English

The information in this manual has been adapted from the following sources. For more in-depth information on all issues discussed in this manual, please refer to these sources:

- Modern Language Association of America (2009). *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers.* New York: MLA.
  → This is *the* most important handbook for writers in modern languages.
  → If you purchase the latest (seventh) edition, you will receive a code and get access to the whole text in digital format and to very helpful additional resources.
- Purdue U Writing Lab (2009). *The Purdue OWL*. 8 Dec. 2009. <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>.
  → Online writing lab: great resources, exercises and examples geared towards students.
- Olson, Greta (2007). "Advice on Writing Essays in Academic English." *Greta Olson.* 1 Dec. 2010. <http://www.greta-olson.com/docs/Advice-on-Writing-Essays-in-Academic-English-2.pdf>.

Please note:

This manual intends to address common problems that students encounter in writing term papers. It is based on courses taught on academic writing and on questions that students have brought to those courses. It is also based on a native speaker's experience of correcting many papers written by advanced German speakers of English.

This manual is more than what is usually referred to as a "style sheet" which gives you information on the formal conventions to adhere to when writing an academic paper. However, a style sheet is included. Note that there are hundreds of different styles in which to document sources in a research paper. There are two central rules to adhere to when writing a research paper in English. First, be consistent. Second, use a system of documentation within the text, not in footnotes.

There may be styles which are better suited for the humanities than others but it does not really matter which style of documentation you use. No instructor will downgrade you for using a style different from the one she prefers, but you must use a system consistently. This manual introduces you to a style for referencing sources in the text and for preparing the list of Works Cited we recommend you use when writing a paper for any seminar at the Institut für Anglistik at JLU. The information on how to cite sources (PART II) is applicable to papers you will be asked to write in Literary and Cultural Studies, Linguistics, and Didactics. The information on how to argue a thesis or on how to arrive at an interesting research question, however, is more pertinent to Literary and Cultural Studies.

PART I

Primary Research: Working with Your Ideas

1. Why Write Research Papers? What Is a Research Paper?

Thinking of your research paper in the following three ways helps to explain functions and form, or conventions, of a research paper:

- As a form of **exploration**
- As an **argument**
- As a form of **communication**

The Research Paper as a Form of Exploration

While explorations of the mind are something for which there is no recipe, this is the most important and exciting part of writing a research paper. It is also the main reason why instructors ask you to write them. The research paper as a form of exploration

- invites you to **read, read, and read** – to "learn stuff" and widen your horizon.

- invites you to **think, think, think** – first in twists and turns and creatively, and eventually in a goal-oriented way.

- allows you to **work on a topic** that you do not know much about, that is new for you, but that fascinates you.

- invites you to become acquainted with **new sources of information.**

- invites you to read **what others have thought about the same topic**, and compare and enrich your very own insights with those of others.

When you have written the paper, **you will know and understand more than before.** A research paper is written for you and not for your instructor. In the middle of exams, deadlines, and the rest of life try not to forget this. Cherish the moments when things you have tossed and turned in your mind suddenly "click" and you begin to see an issue from a different angle, in a new light, or in more complexity.

The Research Paper as an Argument

The function of a research paper is to argue your view on a topic. The reader of the paper wants to know what *you* think about the topic. In literary and cultural studies this entails, more precisely, your own view on (an aspect of) the primary "text." "Text" refers here to any kind of representation: films, art objects, comics, radio plays, advertisements, and so on. In order to make your research paper a form of argument you will need to

- **develop your own view** of the primary text/s by "getting your nose dirty reading the text." Trust your own thoughts. Do not rely on secondary sources to form your view.

- **articulate your own view** of the primary text.

- **back it up with evidence** ("close readings") from the primary text.

- position it with regard to **secondary sources.**

- **defend it against other views** expressed in secondary sources.

Your main goal in writing a research paper is **to convince your reader of your view of the text.** This does not mean that you regard your interpretation as the only valid or all-encompassing one, but as one that is convincing, consistent, and relevant to an overall understanding of a text and the problems the text addresses.

The Research Paper as a Form of Communication

Think of your research paper as part of a dialogue with your reader. By thinking of it in this way and keeping your reader in mind, you will appreciate why you need to write in a very specific way and adhere to a number of conventions. Remember:

- You write a paper **for someone else to read.** (You want to convince someone of your point of view.)

- You need to **write in a way that is intelligible** to your reader.

- You need to **write in a form and structure that makes understanding your argument easy.**

- You need to write in a way that makes **transparent** how you arrived at a certain claim and that allows others to reconstruct and test your argument.

This is why you need **specific techniques for writing research papers**.

The "formalities" or **conventions are a code of communication** that you need to master. Do not view conventions as a pain in the butt, solely designed to torture you and provide an endless source of possible errors. View **conventions as part of an agreement between you and the reader** that helps the reader to understand exactly what you mean and to follow your train of thought and the sources you have used. Obviously, you cannot negotiate this deal with each reader individually. Thus the scholarly community has agreed upon what the deal is.

Thinking of the research paper as a form of communication highlights **three goals** you should try to fulfill:

Intelligibility: Clear structure, precise language

Readability: Adhere to the formalities/conventions agreed upon by the scholarly community and thus avoid errors that distract from the content/argument

Transparency: Document your sources

FAQ: <u>Who is my reader? Am I writing for my instructor? Or, should I be writing for everyone who might be interested in my topic?</u>

Your paper is part of a bigger conversation that the scholarly community is having about this topic. In other words: Yes, you are writing for "everyone" who might be interested. Most importantly, your scholarly community consists of your peers. When you write, imagine a student in your class as your reader. She will also have read the texts you have before you started on a more specific line of inquiry in your research paper topic. She will be familiar with the same concepts. She will be on a similar language level. This means you should not use language and terminology that you would not use regularly without explaining it. Do not explain every concept, because you are not writing for a general public who knows nothing about literature and culture, but for a "specialist." Rather, explain enough concepts (i.e. those your peer would like to have explained). Do not "write up" to your instructor to "impress" her. Trust me, it won't work.

2. Developing Your Argument

Preliminary Note I

All the examples in this section are taken from an imaginary term paper on Shakespeare's "Sonnet 130." The arguments made here are not necessarily valid; their sole function is to illustrate the construction of an argument. "Sonnet 130" was chosen because one can easily follow the simple argument that is used here to illustrate what you should do in a research paper. All examples are printed in Times New Roman:

Sonnet 130

My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun;
Coral is far more red than her lips' red;
If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun;
If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.
I have seen roses damask, red and white,
But no such roses see I in her cheeks
And in some perfumes is there more delight
Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks.
I love to hear her speak, yet well I know
That music hath a far more pleasing sound;
I grant I never saw a goddess go –
My mistress, when she walks, treads on the ground.
And yet, by heaven, I think my love as rare
As any she belied with false compare.

Shakespeare, William (1996). "Sonnet 130" [1609]. *The Sonnets*. Ed. G. Blakemore Evans.
        Cambridge: CUP. 97.

Preliminary Note II

For more advanced writers of research papers, the following prescriptions for how to structure your paper may seem overly restrictive. If you know exactly what you are expected to do when asked to write a research paper, you do not need this manual. It is designed for everyone who is slightly or very confused about what is expected. In this case, follow the rules laid out here closely; it is always easier to become more flexible and creative once you have internalized certain "musts" and "don'ts" than to move from creative chaos to intelligible form. For the more advanced, it never hurts to reflect on what you are doing when you compose a research paper.

How Do You Identify a Topic that Interests You?

Remember: The idea is that you should find out something that you did not know before. For this reason it is good to start by

- focusing on **issues** that were mentioned in passing but **not discussed in class.**

- looking at **questions that were discussed in class but were left open,** about which you want to develop an informed opinion.

- looking for **"points of irritation"** in the primary text or in class discussion, i.e. things you do not really understand, that are odd, that stick out, and that you may want to explain.

Sometimes – and this happens to everyone – all of the texts and topics may seem horribly boring or too difficult. Alternately, everything seems so exciting that you cannot decide on what to focus. Strategies that work and have the potential to develop into an interesting and relevant argument include:

- **Comparing** aspects of two or more texts and developing an interesting question on the basis of the comparison.

- Asking a question about the **development** of aspects of a text (characters, treatment of topics, etc.).

What Are the Parts of an Argument?

An **argument** always entails

- a **question**

- an **answer** to that question

- **evidence** for why your answer is good or plausible

FAQ: I was told that my paper needs, above all, a thesis. Is that wrong?

No. But I believe that most students have difficulties understanding what it means to "have a thesis." A thesis is, to put it simply, an initially hypothetical answer to a question. You will prove that thesis or answer that hypothetical question in the course of your paper. When stating the thesis you want to argue (e.g., I will show that Shakespeare's Sonnet 130 can be considered a love poem*), you are answering an implicit question. A thesis is only worth arguing if the question it answers is relevant. To decide on whether your thesis is relevant, turn it into a question. (The question would in this case be:*

Can Sonnet 130 be considered a love poem? Although, at first sight, the addressee, the loved one, is criticized rather than praised?) *It is also helpful to state the question and its answer explicitly. This helps to clarify what you are doing. A direct statement of what you are arguing for in your paper is preferable to stylistic elegance that loses sight of the question.*

3. Structuring Your Argument

The **three major sections** that structure your argument in a research paper are

- the **introduction**

- the **body of the paper**

- the **conclusion**

The Introduction

There are many ways to open your paper. However, in a paper of only 10 or 12 pages in total, you should state your argument quickly, preferably in the first paragraph. **The following things must be stated clearly in your introduction**:

- The central **question** you are tackling and perhaps answering in this essay:

    This paper questions whether Sonnet 130 can be considered a love poem.

- A hypothetical **answer** to that question, i.e. your thesis. This answer is what you need to prove in the pages that follow. Do yourself and your readers a favor with regard to clarity and transparency and frame your thesis in one of the following ways:

    In this paper I will argue that...
    In this paper I will demonstrate that...
    In this paper I will show that...

    In this paper I will argue that Sonnet 130 can indeed be considered a love poem.

- A statement of **how you are going to answer this question**:

    By examining the non-idealized imagery that the speaker uses to describe the woman he addresses, I will demonstrate that this sonnet offers a new definition of love and can therefore be considered a love poem.

- The steps you will be taking in the paper to reach an answer. I.e., you need to **describe the structure of your paper** and what you are going to do in each part:

> In the first part of this paper, I will contrast the traditional imagery of the beauty catalogue with Shakespeare's list of attributes. In the second part, I will then look at his use of language to show that the poem's reversal of the beauty catalogue is performed in an ironic way. In the last part of this paper, I will comment on the special function of the final couplet in Shakespeare's promotion of a new conception of love.

- **Your position with regard to other scholars** you agree and disagree with:

> My reading confirms G. Blakemore Evans's interpretation of "Sonnet 130."

While the above elements should be included in your introduction, **you may also but do not always have to**

- offer a **short general introduction** to the topic:

> When Shakespeare wrote Sonnet 130, he was looking back at a long
> history of love poetry and the use of the sonnet form for the
> expression of love. The form was first popularized by Petrarch…

- state in more detail **why the question/topic is relevant:**

> Many interpretations have assumed that this sonnet is meant to be a mockery of an ugly woman. They never considered the possibility that it might be a love poem.

- state why the **question/topic is important for larger discussion:**

> My argument also makes the case that conceptions of love in Elizabethan poetry
> were not static.

- state why the **question/topic is important** for the interpretation of the whole text. This applies primarily to longer texts.

Bearing in mind that you are writing for students who attended the same class and read the same texts, **one of the things you should not do in your introduction (or elsewhere in your paper) is to summarize the plot.** You will, in many cases, have to relate bits and pieces of the plot to argue your case. Yet never start your paper with or include a synopsis of the plot. Every potential reader is familiar with the primary text(s).

FAQ: Why would one state the answer in the Introduction? Doesn't the answer belong in the conclusion?

Sad as it may be, a research paper is not a thriller. Suspense is not your goal. The good news is that a lot of excitement can be found in a research paper. This does not reside in your answer but in the argumentative brilliance with which you reach it. Again, think of your paper as part of a dialogue with a colleague and as one part of an ongoing debate. If you were to discuss the question of student fees with a friend, you would not offer one argument after the other and, at the end of the discussion, finally reveal whether you are for or against them. Instead, you would state your opinion clearly from the start (e.g. "Even if most students are against it, I think we should have student fees in Germany."). The same is true for a research paper.

FAQ: Should I really say "I" in the introduction and in the paper overall?

In English and American literary and cultural studies, you can say "I." There are two reasons for this: First, the whole purpose of a research paper is to argue your point of view vis-à-vis a scholarly interlocutor, i.e. a peer student. It is your well-informed point of view and should clearly be marked as such. You can do this by using the first-person "I"-voice. Second, in the wake of poststructuralist theory, many question whether there can be a completely objective and comprehensive view of any topic. This is not a problem. On the contrary, it is the very basis of scholarly debate.

The Body of the Text

The two central elements that structure the body of the text are

- **sections**

- **paragraphs** (the introduction and conclusion are also structured in paragraphs; the same rules apply there as well.)

What Is in a Section?

- Sections **structure your argument into major points or the major pieces of evidence** you are citing. Each one should offer a slightly different perspective or an addition to your argument.

- Never just write in general about the text you are analyzing. The section structure helps you to focus on different aspects of the text: **Do one detailed close reading of a longer**

passage/scene/ aspect of the text in each section. Use these close readings to prove your point of view.

What Is in a Paragraph?

- **One paragraph = one idea**

- Do not simply string sentences together. Each paragraph is a small argument in itself and has a structure.

The Four Elements of a Good Paragraph (TTEB)

A good paragraph should contain the following four elements: a **T**ransition sentence, a **T**opic sentence, **E**vidence and analysis, and a **B**rief wrap-up sentence (also known as a warrant) – TTEB:

- A **transition sentence** leads from the previous paragraph into the new one and assures smooth reading. It acts as a hand-off from one idea to the next:

  END OF PARAGRAPH:

  …. Hence, the sonnet works mostly with color contrasts in the first quartet to highlight artificial and natural instances of female beauty.

  TRANSITION SENTENCE:

  In the second quartet, however, it combines sense impressions: color, smell, and sound.

- A **topic sentence** tells the reader what you will be discussing in the paragraph. With regard to the example below, you might wish to leave out "[I will show that]." Yet be clear about what the function of the sentence is. The sentence states the small argument you are making in this paragraph:

  [I will show that] In doing so, the sonnet also contrasts art and artificiality with nature and makes a case for the beauty of the latter.

- A specific piece of **evidence and its analysis** support one of your claims and provide a deeper level of detail than your topic sentence:

  When the poem states that "in some perfumes is there more delight/Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks" (l. 7-8), it comments on the contrast between an artificially made perfume and the bad body odor of the speaker's lover. While highly ironic, this can also be read as an indictment of the overly cultivated woman…

- A **brief wrap-up sentence** tells the reader how and why information in the paragraph supports the paper's thesis. The brief wrap-up is also known as **the warrant**. The warrant is important because it connects your arguments and evidence to your thesis:

> The fact that the text brings in the senses of smell and hearing and uses them to contrast false, i.e. "cultivated" and "artificial," beauty with a new beauty ideal, namely that of "naturalness" and "authenticity," supports my thesis that the sonnet is a love poem meant to redefine the nature of love.

FAQ: <u>Do I really need to state that the point I am making supports my main thesis at the end of each paragraph? Doesn't this get repetitive?</u>

You do not always need to link the paragraph in question to the main thesis as directly as above. However, you do always need to establish a relation between the evidence presented in the paragraph and what you have argued previously. For example, if you have begun the section you are working on by stating that you are going to show how the sonnet represents a natural form of beauty and that this contributes to the promotion of a new conception of love, you do not need to reiterate the larger argument. Rather, you need to link your evidence back to your specific task, to show that the poem praises naturalness. You can also link your paragraph to the previous paragraphs by saying, for example: "Thus, the second quartet evokes the same opposition between artificiality and naturalness which the first quartet does, but moves within a different metaphoric field." *Thereby, you create coherence. This is a "red thread" for the reader to follow. Never leave it up to the reader to guess why you have written what you have written.*

A Check-up for Paragraphs – A Rule of Thumb:

If you have structured your argument well, you should have written

- **two to three paragraphs per page** – not more, not less

- and **paragraphs that are about the same length**.

When you have finished writing your paper, systematically check whether this is the case and improve upon your structure. If you have fewer than two or three paragraphs per page, chances are that you have put more than one idea into each paragraph. You then need to disentangle these ideas and present them in several paragraphs. If you have more than two or three paragraphs on a page, chances are that you did not provide your reader with enough evidence for your argument; i.e. you did not provide enough detail to support your individual points. In this case, you need to flesh out your argumentative points: Possibly, you may need to go back to the primary text again and provide more specific examples.

The Conclusion

As with regard to the introduction, there are many ways to write a conclusion. Yet there are some **things you need to do in your conclusion**:

- **Summarize your argument**. This does not mean that you need to repeat everything that you have said. "To summarize" means "to abstract": You need to abstract from the actual evidence you have brought forward and restate what you have shown.

- Similarly, **do not repeat step by step "what you have done"** and in which part of the paper you have done it. Rather **state what you have shown** in your analysis:

  > By examining the imagery that the speaker uses to describe the woman he addresses, I have shown that this sonnet offers a new definition of love.

Note that, like an introduction, a conclusion contains your original question and its answer. However, both are now framed in a retrospective way.

Things you may also do in your conclusion include:

- **Pointing towards larger issues** that have been opened up with your analysis.

- **Stating how your analysis reflects upon the whole text** (when discussing longer texts).

- **Reflecting upon questions you could not solve** (without invalidating your argument).

Basic Structure of a Research Paper

If you wish to get the absolute basics right, remember this formula:

- Introduction: "In this paper I will show X. I will demonstrate X by looking at A, B, and C."

- Body of Paper: Sections A, B, and C

- Conclusion: "Now that I have looked at A, B, and C, I have shown X."

PART II

Secondary Research: Working with Sources

1. Finding Secondary Sources

Where Do You Begin Your Search?

Contrary to common opinion, you **do not begin your search by consulting the Giessen OPAC**. The Giessen OPAC contains only sources which the Giessen libraries own or make available online. The libraries hold only a tiny fraction of the texts which are published on each topic. No library, no matter how well equipped – with possible exceptions like the Library of Congress – can hold all of the relevant texts on a given topic.

In English and American literary and cultural studies, one searches for secondary sources and gets a comprehensive view of what has been published by **searching the MLA online bibliography**. The MLA (Modern Language Association) bibliography is the most comprehensive database for scholarly work published on modern languages and literatures. It lists books, journals, and individual articles. The MLA bibliography is linked to the OPAC Giessen: With a few clicks you can immediately check whether a publication is available in Giessen in print or online, or whether you need to get it via interlibrary loan.

A term paper is not a dissertation: It is not expected that you read and make reference to every source on the text. Yet your work should be based on a knowledge of how much has been published on your topic and on what specific aspects.

The MLA allows you to make an informed selection of sources and not to rely on the random selection that is created by the limitations of the Giessen library system. Searching the MLA and retrieving, for instance, a list of 40 relevant books and articles does not mean that you need to do an interlibrary loan of all of the titles. However, **it is expected that you read and refer to some recent sources** on your topic. You may have to do interlibrary loans to get these texts. If the MLA lists one monograph and three articles on your topic which were published in the 1990s, it does not suffice to work with one monograph and three articles that were published in the 1970s simply because Giessen owns them.

Searching the MLA Bibliography

This is how you find the MLA bibliography on the UB Giessen website:

Go to: **http://www.ub.uni-giessen.de/** → Digitale Bibliothek

→ Datenbanken der Uni Gießen (DBIS)   → Fachübersicht (DBIS)

→ Anglistik, Amerikanistik   → **MLA International Bibliography**

The search functions of the MLA bibliography are similar to the Giessen OPAC and virtually self-explanatory. The system allows you to save, email, and print the (selected) results of your searches in different citation formats. To be able to use the citations with only minor adjustments in your term paper, choose the format "Brief Citation" and "MLA Style."

How Do You Physically Get Hold of the Titles You Need?

In Giessen, a catalogue called "Hebis Portal" allows you to find out whether a title is available in Giessen and whether you can order it via interlibrary loan, if it is not available:

Go directly to **http://www.portal.hebis.de/servlet/Top**

or

Go to: http://www.ub.uni-giessen.de/   → Leihen und Bestellen

→ **Katalogportal**

On the top right you can select *"Voreinstellung wählen."* Select *"Suchregion Deutschland"* to search all of the German libraries that are members of the interlibrary loan system. Then enter the title you are searching for in the box on the left. If the title is available in Giessen, the system will give you the location and call number. If the title is not available in Giessen, a box opens which allows you to register for interlibrary loan or "Fernleihe."

   Note: Hebis Portal works in a different way than the MLA bibliography or OPAC. **If you are looking for an article in a book or journal, you need to search for that title of the book/journal in Hebis Portal and not for the title of the article.** When you have located the journal/book in Giessen, you will need to borrow the book from the library, read/photocopy the article by referring to the whole volume of the journal in the reading room, or download the article from an online journal which the UB has access to. If you need to do an interlibrary loan, the system will allow you to enter the author, title, and page numbers of the article you need.

   Note: All other paths which the library offers for getting hold of texts apart from "Hebis Portal" are ultimately detours. For example, under each citation in the MLA bibliography, you will also find a button that says "Hebis Volltextsuche." This alluringly looks like the shortest way to your book or article. But it isn't. If you click on it and then select "Suche im Hebis Verbundkatalog," you can search

for a title in all of the libraries in Hesse. However, if the book is not available for interlibrary loan in Hesse, you will have to switch to the "Hebis Portal". Hence, it is better to use "Hebis Portal" from the start. The system orders the book or article from the closest or most convenient library for the cost of €1,50 per title, regardless of whether they send it from Marburg or Kiel.

"Fernleihe" / Interlibrary Loans

Contrary to common practice, **you need to do interlibrary loans during your B.A. studies.** Many of the topics in English and American literary and cultural studies you will work on require you to do so. Get a password for registering for "Fernleihe" at the service desk in the UB. One article or book costs €1,50. You will be allowed to keep the book for a short amount of time in which you can work through it and/or photocopy parts of it. You can extend the deadline for returning the book twice online. If you order only an article or excerpt from a book, a photocopy, which you can keep, will be sent to you. Often, this will be cheaper than photocopying the article yourself.

Note that an interlibrary loan may take a couple of weeks. This means that you need to plan time to do research for your paper in advance.

FAQ: I have always gone to the university library in Frankfurt to get the books I need. Isn't that another good way to collect secondary sources on a topic?

No. Frankfurt is not the solution to collecting relevant sources for your research topic and neither is Marburg or Paderborn. You need to start your search in the MLA bibliography and continue in Hebis Portal to find out whether the title you need is in Giessen, or not. The interlibrary loan system is an incredible service that the German university system offers for a small fee. It saves you a lot of time, travel, nerves, and money for photocopies. Use it. Unless you live right across from the library in Frankfurt, it is a waste of time to go there. The MLA and interlibrary loan, not Frankfurt, will provide you with the books you need.

How to Endear Yourself to Your Instructors – A Note on Sources from the "Internet"

- **Do not use sources from the "internet."** Sources from the "internet" include reference pages like Wikipedia, papers published by dubious authors somewhere on a web site, or any information that is not issued by an academic or otherwise trustworthy institution.

- You should, however, **use articles in scholarly journals that are accessible online** or via online databases such as "Project MUSE."

The simple rule of thumb "do not use sources from the internet" applies in 95% of all cases. In the course of your studies, you will almost exclusively write papers on topics that have already received scholarly attention, even if you have never heard about the topic before. Scholarly publications are preferable over "just any" opinion on the topic because they are produced by experts, reviewed, and selected for publication, and share a common ethics of publication. Sources are credited; one can assume that the author has read all of the other texts that have been published on the topic. Such publications speak to you as a scholar and not as just another internet user.

If you cite a Wikipedia entry or similar website as a secondary source in your term paper on "Sonnet 130," your instructor will downgrade your paper. Your choice of a Wikipedia entry on sonnets shows that you are not aware of the enormous number of publications on the topic and that you have failed to select from the wide range of available sources. Moreover, in the prejudiced mind of your instructor, your choice of Wikipedia seems to betray the fact that you do not know how to use bibliographies or were too lazy to do research.

2. What Is the Use of Using Secondary Sources?

If you think about the research paper as a form of exploration, the need for secondary sources becomes clear: They will educate you by teaching you new ways to look at a text. Secondary sources can help you generate and structure your own ideas about a topic. The following section is concerned with the use of secondary sources, i.e. with the use of sources after the first phase of exploration.

Why Use and Cite Secondary Sources in Your Paper?

The use of secondary sources in your text serves many purposes. You might use them to

- **call attention to a position with which you agree or disagree**.

- **provide support** for claims and **add credibility** to your own argument.

- **refer to work** that supports up to the argument you are making.

- give **concrete examples of the various points of view** one can have on a subject.

- **use a particularly striking phrase, sentence, or passage because it expresses exactly what you want to say.** However, don't "overuse" the language of others. Trust your own voice and never use phrases that you do not understand.

3. How to Use and Cite Sources

Ways of Using a Source in Your Own Text

Secondary sources can appear in your own text in three distinct ways:

- **Quotations.** Quotations must be identical to the original. They must match the source document word for word:

    In his famous and influential work *On the Interpretation of Dreams*, Sigmund Freud argues that dreams are the "royal road to the unconscious" (1987 [1900]: 5).

- **Paraphrasing.** Paraphrasing involves putting a passage from the source material into your own words. Paraphrased material is usually shorter than the original passage. It takes a somewhat broader segment of the original source and condenses it slightly:

    Freud claims that dreams are a way for the dreamer to work through his or her unfulfilled wishes in coded imagery (1987 [1900]: 8).

- **Summarizing.** Summarizing involves putting the main idea(s) of a secondary source into your own words, including only the main point(s). Summaries are significantly shorter than the original and offer a broad overview of the source material:

    According to Freud, actual but unacceptable desires are censored internally and then subjected to coding before emerging in a kind of rebus puzzle in our dreams (1987 [1900]: 11-18).

YOU <u>ALWAYS</u> NEED TO DOCUMENT YOUR SOURCE

when you are quoting AND when you are paraphrasing or summarizing ideas and arguments.

OTHERWISE: YOU ARE COMMITTING PLAGIARISM.

What Is Plagiarism?

Plagiarism is not crediting another author for his/her words and ideas. It literally means "literary theft" and involves two kinds of "crimes":

- Using another person's ideas, information, or expressions without acknowledging that person's work constitutes **intellectual theft.**

- Passing off another person's ideas, information, or expressions as your own to get a better grade or gain some other advantage constitutes **fraud.**

You need to **take this seriously**. To not plagiarize is the central ethical code upon which all academic pursuits are founded. Universities would not work if scholars did not all agree upon this ethical code. You are part of this academic community. If you violate this code you can, at the worst, be expelled from the university.

When Do You Not Need to Document?

The basis on which you judge whether you need to document or not is the status of the information you are giving in relation to your audience and to the scholarly consensus on your topic:

- Information and ideas that are broadly known by your readers and widely accepted by scholars, such as the basic biography of an author or the dates of a historical event, can be used without documentation.

- Where your reader is likely to want to find out more information or when facts and theses are in significant dispute among scholars, you need to document.

Rule of thumb: **If in doubt, always cite the source.**

Documenting Sources in Your Paper

There are **two "places" in your paper in which you need to document your sources**, and therefore two sets of conventions you need to learn:

- **Citation in the text** (in-text-citation or **parenthetical citation**);

- **Citation in the list of Works Cited** at the end of the paper.

The system for documenting sources that we are using at the Institut für Anglistik, University of Giessen, is one version of the **"author-date-system"** and is a mixture of MLA style and APA style.

"MLA style" refers to the conventions agreed upon by the Modern Language Association and documented in the *MLA Handbook*; it is especially appropriate for studies in literature and the humanities. "APA style" refers to the conventions agreed upon by the American Psychological Association. The essence of both styles – in comparison to ways of citing sources more common in German academic contexts – is that **sources are documented in parentheses in the text**. This system is completed by a list of **Works Cited**.

FAQ: If Giessen does not use the MLA style, but a style adapted from it, does it make sense to use the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Paper* to get information about correct citation?

Yes. You should consult the MLA Handbook. *It is a great resource for every step involved in writing a research paper in the fields of language and literature. Moreover, the short Style Sheet for our seminar that follows here cannot cover all of the different cases and problems you may encounter when trying to cite sources correctly. Internet and visual sources can be particularly tricky. The* MLA Handbook *provides you with a lot of help in devising consistent ways to cite sources that are more complicated to document.*

Parenthetical Citation

Parenthetical citation means that you document your source directly after you have used it in the text by giving that **source in parentheses.** This also means that you **do not use footnotes**. I.e., you do not document your sources in footnotes. Only necessary explanatory remarks should be put in footnotes. An excellent research paper does not need to contain a single footnote as long as you use secondary sources and cite them correctly in the text.

The **system of parenthetical citation** works as follows:

"Quoted text" (author's last name (space) date of publication of text: page number) your text

> The view that "writing a research paper is a tough job" (Lyons 1998: 23) is supported by the majority of scholars in this field.

If your sentence ends with the quotation, the full stop goes behind the parenthesis:

> The majority of scholars agree that "writing a research paper is a tough job" (Lyons 1998: 23).

However, you do not need to use the full parenthetical citation after every single use of a source in your text. **Include as little information as possible, but enough for the reader to identify the source**

without any trouble. This allows the reader to follow your text easily and not to be distracted by too much information, including long and unnecessary information in the parentheses.

First, this means: If you use the author's name in the sentence preceding the citation you can leave it out of the parenthetical reference. In the following example, the author is "Defoe." Do, however, always cite the year of publication in parentheses.

Second, this means: If you quote from the same source and the same page in two or more consecutive sentences, you only need to cite the source after the last reference.

> In his preface, Defoe asserts that he is "far from thinking it is a satire upon the English nation." He insists on the fact that the English people "are derived from all nations under heaven" (1889: 177). However, the butt of his vitriolic pamphlet is "the vanity of those who talk of their antiquity and value themselves upon [...] being true-born" (1889: 178).

Note that if you leave out words or letters in the middle of a quotation, you need to indicate this by using square brackets with suspension points. Do not use "[…]" at the beginning or end of a quotation.

When quoting from **audiovisual media**, the system of parenthetical citation needs to be adapted since references are not to page numbers but to hours, minutes, and seconds of the broadcast, film, or TV show. Citation conventions for audiovisual media are still in flux as academic research into audiovisual forms is a field that is comparatively young. Do not be surprised to find citation conventions in secondary literature that differ markedly from the ones suggested here.

For quoting from **films**, use the following system of parenthetical citation:

"Quoted text" (title (space) year: hours: minutes: seconds) your text

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> Scarlett's exclamation that "after all, tomorrow is another day!" (*Gone with the Wind* 1939: 03:43:30) crystallizes her resolution and optimism.

Note that if you are referring to a complete scene or longer sequence from a film, you need indicate the duration of the scene or sequence in the parenthesis:

> The final scene between Scarlett and Rhett (*Gone with the Wind* 1939: 03:38:00-03:41:55) ends with Rhett leaving the despairing Scarlett on the steps of her Tara home.

For quoting from **TV series**, we suggest using the following system of parenthetical citation:

> **"Quoted text" (title (space) year-year: SnumberEnumber (space) minutes: seconds) your text**

> Patty's advice to Ellen to "trust no one" (*Damages* 2007-2010: S01E04 38:42) can also be read as an advice to the viewer and thus as a marker of the narrative's unreliability.

Note that "S" stands for "season" and "E" stands for "episode." Use a two-digit system for the season's and episode's numbers. Do not cite episode titles in the parenthesis. Indicate the duration of scenes in the parenthesis, if necessary.

A note on procedure: When composing your paper, it is advisable to **first use complete parenthetical citations after each quotation** to avoid mixing up your sources. Only **when you have completed the final version** of your paper and will not be making any more changes to the content of your paper should you **take out the information on sources that is not necessary.** The reason for this is that when you copy and paste pieces of text in your document you alter the order of quotations as well. If you do so while leaving out the full citation, you may easily confuse different sources.

Format of quotations

If a direct quotation is longer than 3 lines, you need to indent the whole quotation and reduce line space to 1.0:

> Defoe is aware that his text might not meet general approval and that it might even earn him the dubious reputation of being a foreigner, a spy. Far from aiming at merely denigrating his country, however, his intentions are entirely different. In his own words:

>> Possibly somebody may take me for a Dutchman, in which they are mistaken. But I am one that would be glad to see Englishmen behave themselves better to strangers and to governors also, that one might not be reproached in foreign countries for belonging to a nation that wants manners. I assure you, gentlemen, strangers use us better abroad; and we can give no reason but our ill-nature for the contrary here (1889: 182).

> His main care is the reputation of the English, whose good name seems to be endangered by their gross ingratitude towards the monarch who has liberated them from "King James and his Popish Powers" (1889: 183).

Note that the indented quotation is not opened and closed by quotation marks.

Note that the text following the citation above is not indented because it is still part of the same paragraph. When a new paragraph begins after a quotation, however, that paragraph has to be indented. **Note also** that in 95% of cases, it is a symptom of bad writing to end paragraphs with a quotation: A quotation should always be contextualized, and you need to comment on any longer quotation you are using. **The rule of thumb here is your analysis of the text should be at least as long as the quotation.**

FAQ: Why is it wrong to use quotation marks for longer and indented quotations? Isn't that just another stupid convention that does not make any sense at all?

Every single convention does make sense. The "sense" is always to make reading your paper easier. This entails using economical means to convey information, or, to use as little information as possible but as much as is necessary. Quotation marks and indentations signal to the reader that she is dealing with a quotation. Indented text passages allow the reader to quickly identify longer quotations, whereas quotation marks allow her to identify shorter quotations. Using both quotation marks and indentations is "too much" information. Either one of these visual means is enough to identify a piece of text as a quotation.

Works Cited

Your documentation of sources in parentheses in the text is incomplete without your list of Works Cited. When a reader sees the citation "(Chatman 1990: 67)," he or she needs to be able to identify the source and needs more information to do so, such as the title or the first name of the author. This is provided by the Works Cited. The **Works Cited** follows **after your conclusion.**

In the Works Cited you need to

- **list each and every source you cite in your text** and **only those that you cite**. Otherwise, sources cannot be identified and found in a library by your reader. Before handing in your paper, check that every source you have cited in a parenthesis appears in the works cited list.

- list the sources **alphabetically.**

- order **more than one source by the same author according to the year of publication** (in descending order). If one author has published more than one text in the same year, identify it (in parentheses) by adding lower case letters in alphabetical order, and list the texts accordingly – 1992a, 1992b, 1992c, etc. – in the Works Cited.

Please note:

- **Books, articles in books, articles in journals, films, websites etc. are cited in different ways**. The form of the citation contains crucial information for the reader about what kind of a source she or he is dealing with and hence, where to find it.

- **Do not separate primary and secondary sources** in your Works Cited.

- **Articles in reference books** should not be listed under the editor. In most cases, the authors of individual articles are indicated by initials at the end of the article; a list at the end of the book gives you the full name of the author.

Please note that the latest edition of the *MLA Handbook* asks writers of research papers to distinguish the medium of publication in the list of Works Cited, as various kinds of sources have multiplied with the rise of digital media. For the time being, the Institut für Anglistik will not ask you to add this information.

FAQ: We were told that we need to distinguish between primary and secondary sources. Why does this system not distinguish between them? What is the purpose of working this way?

There are two reasons for not listing primary and secondary sources separately. First, the reader does not have to figure out if something is a primary or secondary source to find it in the Works Cited. Second, the distinction between primary and secondary sources is based on the notion that one is the object of analysis and that the other analyzes that object. It assumes that some texts need to be interpreted ("literary texts") while others are completely objective ("scholarly texts"). However, recent scholarship suggests that no text can ever be completely transparent and objective; thus scholarly texts need to be interpreted as well. In your research paper you should discuss texts one might categorize as "secondary sources" as critically as you do primary ones. Thus the distinction between primary and secondary sources has become blurred and does not make sense in your Works Cited.

Monographs in the Works Cited

"Monograph" is the term for a book written by a single author or several authors in contrast to a book with contributions by many authors that is edited by one or more individuals (an edited book).

The system of **citing a monograph** works as follows:

Last name, First name (Year). *Title: Subtitle.* **Place: Publisher.**

Note that the year of publication in parentheses is followed by a period. The use of a short title and a longer subtitle is very common for scholarly monographs; title and subtitle are separated by a colon. The title of monographs (as well as of edited volumes and journals) is printed in italics.

Note that in German language publications, titles and subtitles are separated by a period rather than a colon. When you are citing German language publications, please adhere to this convention.

The date of the first edition should be cited as well if you use a later edition. The system works as follows:

Last name, First name (Year). *Title: Subtitle* **[Year of first edition]. Place: Publisher.**

If there are two authors to a book, the second author's name is cited in the following way:

Last name, First name and First name Last name (Year). *Title: Subtitle*. **Place: Publisher.**

Note that if the names are not listed alphabetically, this is not an error. Rather it signals that the author who appears first has (ideally) contributed more to the monograph. Less ideally, she or he has a higher academic position. Cite the names of authors (and editors) in the order in which they appear on the cover of the book.

One author:

> Chatman, Seymour (1990). *Coming to Terms: The Rhetoric of Narrative in Fiction and Film*. Ithaca: Cornell UP.

Two authors:

> Lakoff, George and Mark Johnson (1996). *Metaphors We Live By* [1980]. Chicago: U of Chicago P.

Note that when the citation is longer than one line, the second and following lines are indented.

Note that in MLA style, "University Press" is abbreviated by "UP." As in "U of Chicago P," this abbreviation can be spaced out. Note that Cambridge University Press and Oxford University Press are abbreviated by "CUP" and "OUP" respectively.

Edited Books/Anthologies in the Works Cited

The system works in a very similar way to that of monographs. Note that "ed." precedes the year in parentheses, if one person edited the volume, and "eds." precedes the parentheses if there was

more than one editor. Note also that volumes are often edited by more than two editors. In this case the names of all but the first editor are given as "First name Last name."

Last name, First name, ed. (Year). *Title: Subtitle*. **Place: Publisher.**

Last name, First name and First name Last name, eds. (Year). *Title: Subtitle*. **Place: Publisher.**

Last name, First name, First name Last name and First name Last name, eds. (Year). *Title: Subtitle.* **Place: Publisher.**

Note that monographs may also occasionally be published by more than two authors; you need to adjust the system modeled above accordingly.

Edited books and anthologies often appear as part of a series. You also need to cite the series title. **Note** that monographs may also be published in a series. Again, you need to adjust the system modeled above accordingly.

Last name, First name and First name Last name, eds. (Year). *Title: Subtitle*. **Series title, number. Place: Publisher.**

One editor:

> Fludernik, Monika, ed. (1998). *Hybridity and Postcolonialism: Twentieth-Century Indian Literature*. ZAA Studies, 1. Tübingen: Stauffenberg.

Two editors:

> Fludernik, Monika and Ariane Huml, eds. (2002). *Fin de Siècle. Literatur, Imagination, Realität*, 29. Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier.

Note that this example illustrates the difference in punctuation conventions between the title and the subtitle in German language publications. Here, a period separates the title and the subtitle.

Three editors:

> Nünning, Ansgar, Marion Gymnich and Roy Sommer, eds. (2006). *Literature and Memory: Theoretical Paradigms – Genres – Functions*. Stuttgart: Francke.

Book vs. Article in the Works Cited

The **central difference** between the citation of books and the citation of articles is the following: **Book titles are printed in italics, titles of articles appear in quotation marks.** To be more precise, the titles of all independent publications (i.e. also journal titles) are printed in italics. This system allows

readers to see what kind of sources the author of a research paper or an article used simply by scanning the page(s) of the Works Cited.

Always use **double quotation marks**. Single quotation marks are only used for quotations within a quotation. Double quotation marks may also be used for figurative expressions (*uneigentliches Sprechen*).

Article from an Edited Book/Anthology in the Works Cited

The system works as follows:

> **Last name, First name (Year). "Title of article."** *Title of book*. **Ed. First name Last name. Place: Publisher. Page numbers.**

If there is more than one author of an article or more than one editor of the book which the article is taken from, you need to adjust your citation accordingly.

Example:

> Chatman, Seymour (1989). "The 'Rhetoric' 'of' 'Fiction.'" *Reading Narrative: Form, Ethics, Ideology*. Ed. James Phelan. Columbus: Ohio State UP. 40-56.

Article from a Journal

The system works as follows: The volume or issue number of the journal is not followed by a full stop but rather a colon; then, the page numbers follow.

> **Last name, First name (Year). "Title."** *Journal* **Volume or Issue Number: Page numbers.**

Example:

> Stanzel, Franz Karl (1959). "Episches Praeteritum, erlebte Rede, historisches Praesens." *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte* 33: 1-12.

Films

Films are generally cited and ordered alphabetically by title and not by director. Whenever you list a source alphabetically by title, please disregard articles. I.e., do not list *The Green Mile* under "t," but under "g." *A Room with a View* should be listed under "r." The name of the director follows after a "Dir." after the parentheses. Films in your Works Cited should be listed like this:

> *Title* **(Year). Dir. First Name Last Name. Studio.**

Example:

>   *It's a Wonderful Life* (1946). Dir. Frank Capra. RKO.

Note that anonymous sources are also listed alphabetically by title.

TV Series

Like films, TV series are cited by title. Even if you are discussing only one episode, do not list it under its title in the Works Cited but rather the whole series. Otherwise, your reader cannot easily trace your source. TV series in your Works Cited should be listed like this:

Title (Year-Year). Creator First Name Last Name. Production company.

Example:

>   *The Sopranos* (1999-2007). Creator David Chase. HBO.

Note that due to the specificities of TV series' production, writers and directors of TV series may change over the course of the complete series. Therefore, list the creator of the series.

Citing Sources from the Internet

If you are writing a paper that belongs to the 5% in which the use of internet sources is justified, you should cite the source as follows. Try to find out the author of the text and list the source under the author's name. If you cannot find out the name, list the source under the page's title. You should also list the exact date when the article was posted (if available). You also need to list what is called the "Date of access," i.e. the exact date when you accessed this specific webpage. Note that you need to cite the URL in pointed brackets.

Last name, First name (Year). *Title.* Date of posting. Date of access. <URL>.

Example:

>   Eaves, Morris, ed. (2007). *The William Blake Archive.* 28 Sept. 2007. 23 October 2009.
>   <http://www.blakearchive.org/blake/>.

Note that sources on the internet, as in this example, can also have editors. Adjust your citation accordingly.

Other Sources

On the last three pages of this manual, citation conventions for the media you will be using most frequently are assembled. There are, however, a zillion other kinds of sources you may need to or want to cite in your research paper. The section on "Preparing the list of works cited" in the *MLA Handbook* is a stunning 90 pages long and includes sources ranging from unpublished dissertations to performances to radio plays and comics. If you need to cite a source other than the ones mentioned here, please refer to the *MLA Handbook* and adapt the conventions to the author-date system.

A Note on Citation Conventions

Much of what is presented here as the modified MLA style that the English Department uses may confuse you because you have come across other style sheets, e.g. in linguistics, which also use the "author-date system" but vary in terms of their preferred punctuation. Do not despair if you have always used a comma after the name of the publisher or the number of a journal and then listed the page numbers, or if you learned to use a colon after the year of publication in parentheses. At the end of the day, these punctuation details do not matter. However, **always be consistent** in your system of citing sources. Use the exact same system throughout your paper(s). The easiest way to be consistent is to closely follow one style sheet, for example, the one suggested in this manual. Instructors at the English Department do **request that you use parenthetical citation and the author-date system**.

PART III

Producing a Research Paper: The Process from A-Z

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1. Time Management

How long does it take to write a research paper of about 10 pages? A paper for a seminar is not something you can produce by working on it for eight hours a day for a certain amount of time. It entails a longer process that includes different stages of intensity. Ideally, you should allow yourself breaks to let your ideas and writing settle.

From the first idea for a paper till the day you actually hand it in, eight or ten or even twelve weeks may pass. However, **you should be able to write the actual text within a week when you work on it full time**. The experience of many students shows that on good days one can write up to three pages, and on bad days not a single sentence. On average, students write two pages per day.

The important thing about time management is to **start early enough with planning your time** and to know where you stand. At the beginning of each semester, set up a time plan for writing your term papers. Calculate the time you will need to write a paper by working "back" from the deadline when you need to hand it in.

Thirteen Steps to Handing in a Good Research Paper

1.   **Brainstorm for a topic**, develop a research question and thesis, choose a working title which contains your research question.

2.   **Research secondary sources**; borrow texts and order texts via interlibrary loan.

While you are waiting for the texts to arrive you can work on the following:

3.   **Read the primary text again**. Mark parts which are vital to your argument. A close reading of the primary texts will save you a great amount of time and hassle. If you do not read them carefully you may discover, during the writing process, that you need to change your argument (and need to start all over again). It is also extremely time-consuming to search for passages which you only dimly remember while you are trying to write. **Re-reading the primary text is a must.**

4.   **Read one or two of your secondary sources and take notes**. Do not read all of your secondary sources at one time. Reading "too much" at this stage may distract you from the argument you want to make.

5.   **Develop your argument**: Write a detailed outline of what you want to say when and where in the paper, i.e. **structure your argument.**

6.   **Read the rest of your secondary sources** and take notes on them.

7.   **Take a break**. Let everything rest for a week. (And work on another project.)

8.   **WRITE.**

9.   When you are finished writing the complete text, **rework your introduction and title.**

10.   **Make formal corrections**. Do yourself and your instructor a favor and discover the miracles of **automatic spell check** of your computer.

11.   **Take a break**. Let everything rest for another week. **Give your paper to a colleague/friend** who can give you feedback on your argument, language, intelligibility, and the formal aspects of your paper. Hopefully, he or she will also notice spelling and punctuation errors which you have overlooked. Ideally, this person has attended the same class and knows something about your subject.

12.   **Work suggestions into the text and correct errors.**

13.   **Reserve a whole day for printing out the paper.** If necessary, take your stick to the copy shop to print out the paper. As you may have already experienced, one's printer at home hardly ever works when one really needs it.

Hand in your term paper. Be proud of yourself. Be smarter than before.

Paper Proposals

Instructors may ask you to hand in **a paper proposal as a basis for discussing your ideas**. A paper proposal should usually be **one page** long and contain your working title, the texts you would like to work on, your research question and thesis, a preliminary structure, and a preliminary annotated list of works cited. Before you can write a proposal, you need to have completed step 2.

A Note About Deadlines

While the time constraints of your academic program may sometimes make this difficult, try to **regard deadlines as your friends**. For most people, the deadline is the only instrument that makes

them get things done. Although you should ideally put a great deal of energy, diligence, and intelligence into each term paper project, the deadline should help you to not let a paper become too large or time-consuming a project. It simply forces you to finish. Whatever else you may be feeling about your paper project, always remember, **the best paper is a completed paper.**

FAQ: Can I really give my paper to another student to correct? Isn't that cheating?

You should *give your paper to another student for feedback. Of course, it is best to give it to someone who attended the same class because she or he is the informed reader you are addressing with your paper. You need to share and discuss your work with another student because this is the best way to learn. This is particularly true in a system in which instructors do not have the capacity to spend hours discussing your ideas with you. Two people always see more and think more clearly through issues than one person alone.*

Giving each other feedback on writing is not cheating. Rather, it is and should be the essence of scholarly work. In an even more idealized world than the one sketched out in the thirteen steps above, you would share your work on the paper with the other student even earlier in the process. Preferably, you should also get feedback on steps 1 and 5 and possibly adjust your ideas and structure accordingly. However, if this is not possible, you definitely need to get feedback after completing step 10.

FAQ: How on earth are we supposed to do all this? I cannot spend 12 weeks on one term paper when I have to write five of them by the end of the term and take four exams.

First of all, you will not spend 12 full weeks writing your paper. Yet you may need to start thinking and taking steps towards writing your paper long before you hand it in. In other words, you may need to calculate five weeks of full writing time for finishing five papers. The other steps involved will not occupy all of your time. You need to organize your time carefully. Second, these thirteen steps are not steps for handing in something that might qualify as a paper, but steps for handing in a good *paper. Third, you are right to complain about a system that does not give you the time and freedom to become absorbed in research, to toss around ideas, and to carefully craft your argument and rework it, if necessary.*

The steps above and the time you need to take them indeed represent an ideal world. Unfortunately, this manual can only give you advice on how to write a paper, but not how to change a decade of education "reform." Do use its claims on the prerequisites for good academic work, however, to give substance to your protest and to argue for a real reform of the system.

2. Layout Conventions

A research paper, physically, contains the following parts: **a title page, a contents page, the text of the paper, the list of Works Cited.** This section explains the conventions to follow when creating the title page, the contents page, and the layout of your text.

The Title Page

On your title page, you need to give **two kinds of information**: You need to give "**context information**," i.e. information about the context in which you worked on this paper, and **information about yourself and your paper**. At the top of the page, aligned to the left, list the context information. This includes the **university, the title of the seminar, the name of the instructor, and the semester in which the seminar took place.** If you get everything else wrong, try at least to spell the name of your instructor correctly and mention her appropriate academic titles. This is the minimum courtesy, and failure to do so will not create an enthusiastic reaction in your instructor towards your paper as a whole.

In the middle of the page, centered, and in bold and large print, list the title of your paper. Do not use different font sizes for your title and subtitle. At the bottom of the page, aligned to the left again, you should list information about yourself and about the paper. This includes: **your name, address, email address, "Matrikelnummer," and date when you have handed in the paper** (not the deadline). For a sample cover page, please refer to the end of this document.

Title and Section Headings – Rules for Capitalization

In English, words in titles and in section headings need to be capitalized. In a title you need to **capitalize**

- the first and last words of the title

- nouns, pronouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs, and subordinating conjunctions (*if, because, that,* etc.)

You do not capitalize

- articles (*a, an, the*), coordinating conjunctions (*and, but, or, for, nor*), and prepositions (unless they are the first or last word of the title)

<u>Example:</u>

True Love by "Realist Compare"

Shakespeare's "Sonnet 130" as a Love Poem

Contents Page

On the contents page, you need to list the four parts of your paper: introduction, body of the text, conclusion, works cited. You need to number these parts consistently; the numbering reflects the structure of your paper. The introduction should be numbered "1." Then number the main body of your text by using "2." and the sections of your main body by using 2.1, 2.2, etc. Note that the actual text of the main body starts below "2.1", and not below the section heading "2." Number your conclusion "3." and number your Works Cited "4." Before handing in your paper, check that the headings and numbers are identical on the contents page and in the paper. For a complete sample content page, please refer to the end of this document.

<u>Example:</u>

1.	Introduction		1
2.	Imagery in Shakespeare's "Sonnet 130"		2
	2.1.	Color Imagery in the First Quartet	2
	2.2.	Olfactory Imagery in the Second Quartet	5
	2.3.	Auditory Imagery in the Third Quartet	7
3.	Conclusion		9
4.	Works Cited		11

Page Layout

The text on your pages should appear as follows:

- It should be printed in **size 12.**

- It should preferably be printed in a **font with serifs,** e.g. Times New Roman, Garamond, etc., for texts that will be read in print like research papers. Use fonts without serifs for texts that will be read on screen or on powerpoint presentations. These include Arial, Calibri, etc. (Note that this document uses Calibri. It would be more readable if it used a font with serifs throughout. A font without serifs was

chosen, however, to distinguish the main text from examples as they should appear in a term paper.)

- **The spacing should be 1.5 in the body of the text.**

- **The paper should have margins: 2.5 cm left, 4 cm right, 3 cm top, 3 cm bottom.**

- **The margins should be aligned** ("Blocksatz").

- **The first line of every paragraph should be indented**, except for the first paragraph of a new section. The section heading does the job of alerting the reader to the fact that a new paragraph has started. Thus indentation is not needed.

- **The body of the text, the conclusion, and the works cited should begin on a new page.** This does not mean that you can save yourself three pages of text by arranging your text in such a way that each section ends on a new page that is left almost entirely blank. If you are asked to write a ten-page paper, you should write ten pages, regardless of the number of pages they will eventually be printed on.

- **Page numbers should be inserted.** Begin with number 1 on the first page of your text, not on the title page or contents page. As in books this first page should be printed without a number. The second page is then numbered as 2.

3. Language and Punctuation

Do Not Mix Languages.

Even if you are using German-language sources, you should not use German in your paper. Quote from the text in an English translation, or, if you cannot find an English translation, translate it yourself. Indicate that the translation is yours in the parenthetical citation.

Example: (Böll 1979: 84; my translation)

Single foreign words are written in italics.

Example: The *sciences humaines* work on improving lives.

Do Not Use Sexist Language.

The "reader" is not a "he." Balance your use of feminine and masculine pronouns; use plural pronouns where appropriate.

A Note on British vs. American vs. German Punctuation

Note that British and American English and German differ in terms of punctuation. This manual follows American punctuation conventions.

British punctuation:

- Quotation marks are placed before commas, full stops, semi-colons, and colons:

  The text follows what might be referred to as the "Cinderella pattern".

  The text follows what might be referred to as the "Cinderella pattern", yet re-interprets that pattern by omitting the figure of the prince.

- If you insert a footnote with additional comments, the number of the footnote follows after the period:

  The text follows what might be referred to as the "Cinderella pattern".[1]

American punctuation:

- Quotation marks are placed behind commas and periods (but before colons and semi-colons):

  The text follows what might be referred to as the "Cinderella pattern."

  The text follows what might be referred to as the "Cinderella pattern," yet re-interprets that pattern by omitting the figure of the prince.

- If you insert a footnote with additional comments, the number of the footnote should follow after the period and the quotation marks:

  The text follows what might be referred to as the "Cinderella pattern."[2]

Note that in our system of citation, the co-occurrence of a quotation mark and a period is rare because quotations are followed by a parenthesis citing the source; the period then follows after the parenthesis. In the sentence above, quotation marks and periods occur together because the

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[1] Here a comment would be added.
[2] Here a comment would be added.

quotation marks are used to indicate that the term "Cinderella pattern" has not been taken from a specific secondary source but that the author is introducing the term herself.

One central difference between American and British as well as German punctuation involves the use of commas:

In American punctuation, a comma follows after the last but one item and before the "and" and the "or" in enumerations:

> He above all detests death, injustice, and dishonesty.
>
> He needed to buy strawberries, raspberries, or blackberries to bake the cake.

In British and German punctuation, no comma appears before the "und" and the "oder":

> He above all detests death, injustice and dishonesty.
>
> Vor allen anderen Dingen verabscheut er Tod, Ungerechtigkeit und Unehrlichkeit.
>
> Er brauchte Erdbeeren, Himbeeren oder Brombeeren für die Torte.
>
> He needed to buy strawberries, raspberries or blackberries to bake the cake.

English Usage: Some Hints for Native Speakers of German

The following examples are all taken from Olson (2007).

One of the central aims of your paper is intelligibility. You should aim to communicate with your reader in the clearest way possible. You need to write in the clearest English possible. Here are a few points that may help non-native speakers to write more fluently:

- **Protect the nucleus of your sentences** (independent clauses). Do not put anything in between the elements of the subject-predicate-object kernel. Compare the following:

  > The link between Chancery and the symbol of the fog, which could in this connection stand for the obscurity and blindness of the court, characterizes Chancery on the symbolic level.

  The sentence would be much more understandable if it was rephrased as follows:

  > The link between Chancery and the symbol of the fog is used to characterize the court symbolically. The fog represents the institution's obscurity and blindness to the suffering it causes.

- **Break up long sentences by using short independent clauses.**

- **Use inter-punctuation in long sentences.** Independent clauses must be separated by "," or ":" or ";". Avoid the overuse of dashes.

- **Avoid dangling modifiers** as in the following:

    Having thus far considered her to be an aristocratic lady, this scene shows…

    The participle construction "Having considered" requires that the subject of the main clause is the person or persons who did the considering. A possible revision might be the following:

    Having thus far considered her to be an aristocratic lady, the reader is surprised by how Lady Dedlock appears in this scene.

- Similarly, **avoid sentences in which the logical connection between clauses is not clear**, as in

    Although society considers her to be an aristocratic lady, this scene proves…

    This sentence could be revised as follows to make the connection between the clauses more transparent:

    Although society considers her to be an aristocratic lady, it becomes clear in this scene that such a judgment is questionable.

- **Use active verbs** to strengthen your writing and to make it more clear what you are referring to.

- **Use present tenses to describe fictional events**: e.g., "Marian feels that she is being hunted by Peter" and not "Marian felt that she was being hunted by Peter." Use the perfect tense to describe events that occurred at an earlier time in the narration. Only use the present progressive tense when you are describing an event that is occurring right at this moment.

- **Avoid the overuse of "the."** Compare "He dislikes Americans" and "He dislikes the Americans who continue to support Bush's foreign policy."

- **Do not use a comma before "that"** in English as in "Again she stresses <u>that</u> she is able to see everything very well, even though it is dark." English has no "…, *dass"*-construction.

- **Be careful to use the determiners "this" and "that" correctly.** When referring to a concept or event you have just mentioned, use "this."

- **Be careful about the use of "it" and other pronouns as the subject of new sentences.** Often it is better to reiterate what or whomever you are referring to. Pronouns in English refer to the last possible noun or proper noun: "Richard's first puppet is poor Clarence, his brother. As said above he initiates the plot that…." In the second sentence "he" would appear to refer to Clarence rather than Richard.

- **Using exclamation points in a formal essay in English is not appropriate**. It is the stylistic equivalent of screaming an obscenity.

- **"At the beginning of"** refers to something that happens at the very start of an event or period of time: "At the beginning of the novel Marian and Ainsley are in the kitchen of their apartment." By contrast, **"in the beginning"** refers to something that happens during a period of time near the start of an event or longer period of time: "In the beginning I was too shy to speak up in class." However, we do not say "in the end" in English but rather **"finally"** or **"in the last analysis."**

- **Use the pronouns "one," "we," or "I," or the expression "the reader" or "readers" when describing one's response to the text:** "One has the sense that Joan will never be able to bring her multiple identities together into one coherent whole."

- "Moll Flanders is no social outcast in the narrow sense" should read "Moll Flanders is not a social outcast in the narrow sense." **The construction "is not a" is unlike the German "ist kein."**

- **Capitalize names of religions and nationalities even when they are being used as adjectives:** "Antonio is cruel to Shylock just because he is Jewish."

Sample Cover Page

Justus-Liebig-Universität Gießen

Institut für Anglistik

PS: Introduction to Elizabethan Drama and Poetry

Prof. Dr. Anja Ausgedacht

WS 2010/11

True Love by "Realist Compare"

Shakespeare's "Sonnet 130" as a Love Poem

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Sample Contents Page

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[3] Note that the citation system has been adjusted to reflect the information that was available on this specific source.

[4] Note that you also need to list the translator(s) of a text.

[5] Note that, if you are quoting from a weekly journal or a newspaper, you also need to add the exact date of the publication and not just the year and number. Note that in more than one listing by the same author, the name of the author is not repeated but replaced by ---.

[6] If journals name their issues "spring," "summer," etc., you need to add this information as it helps your reader to track down the article more easily.