Guideline for Term Papers in

Literary & Cultural Studies

(please note: different guidelines apply for linguistics)

This is a guideline – no more, no less. The following instructions are there to help you to write a successful term paper. While some of the rules are really prerequisites for an academic text, there is necessarily so much more to really good writing. This is why we would like to recommend that you talk to your lecturer if problems surface during the writing process, and that you take a look at what the Schreibberatung of the Studierendenwerk has to offer and that you read up on academic writing yourself (please see Chapter 11, "Further Reading").

This edition of the Guidelines was updated in August 2024.

In regard to the (referencing) style, not the layout/format, the guideline is based on the MLA Purdue Owl Style Guide, 9th Edition.

If you have any suggestions/ideas on how to improve the guidelines, please let us know by sending an email to coordination-english@uni-bonn.de.

1. Title Page: Layout

<div align="center">

Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Bonn (14pt)

Institut für Anglistik, Amerikanistik und Keltologie (14pt)

Title (bold, 14pt)

Term Paper for/Hausarbeit für (12pt)
Course Title (12pt)
Summer Term/Winter Term//Sommer-/Wintersemester 20** (12pt)
Lecturer (full name with proper titles) (12pt)

</div>

Name Surname (12pt)
Student ID Number/Matrikelnummer (12pt)
Street (12pt)
Postal Code and City (12pt)
Uni Bonn email Address (e.g. s12….@uni-bonn.de) (12pt)
Place, Date of Submission (12pt)

2. Declaration of Authenticity[1]

Selbständigkeitserklärung

Ich versichere hiermit, dass die Prüfungsleistung[2] mit dem Thema

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von mir selbst und ohne jede unerlaubte Hilfe angefertigt wurde, dass sie weder an einer anderen Hochschule noch an dieser Universität als Prüfung vorgelegen hat und dass sie weder ganz noch in Auszügen veröffentlicht worden ist. Die Stellen der Prüfungsleistung – einschließlich Tabellen, Karten, Abbildungen usw. –, die anderen Werken dem Wortlaut oder dem Sinn nach entnommen sind, habe ich in jedem einzelnen Fall kenntlich gemacht.

Falls es sich bei der Prüfungsleistung um eine Bachelor- oder Masterarbeit handelt, bei der neben der dreifachen schriftlichen Ausfertigung die Einreichung einer digitalen Fassung zu erfolgen hat, versichere ich ferner, dass der Inhalt der Textdatei der digitalen Fassung identisch mit der eingereichten schriftlichen Ausfertigung ist.

Vor- und Nachname in Druckbuchstaben

Ort, Datum, Unterschrift

Translation[3]: Declaration of Academic Integrity

I hereby declare that my exam1 on the topic ___ was produced by myself without any unauthorized assistance, that it has not been submitted for examination here or at any other university and that it has not been published in whole or in part. I have marked the parts – including tables, maps, illustrations, etc. – that have been taken from other works, either verbatim or in meaning, in each individual case.

If this concerns a bachelor's or master's thesis in need of submission in both print and a digital format I further declare that the content of the text file of the digital format is identical with the submitted print versions.

First and Last Name in Block Letters

Place, Date, Signature

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[1] This declaration can be downloaded via our website.

[2] Bitte Nichtzutreffendes streichen. Diese Selbstständigkeitserklärung ist ein Muster sowohl für Bachelor- und Masterarbeiten als auch Hausarbeiten und sonstige schriftliche lehrveranstaltungsbegleitende Prüfungen (Projektarbeiten, Präsentationen, Protokolle, Praktikumsberichte, Portfolios). / Please delete as applicable. This Declaration of Academic Integrity is a model template both for bachelor's and master's theses as well as for term papers and other course examinations (project reports, presentations, reports, internship reports, portfolios).

[3] Please sign the German declaration above; the following translation is provided for information purposes only.

3. The Basics

First, you need to do the following:

1) Discuss your topic ideas with your lecturer – they will need to confirm the structure and the hypothesis before you start working; they can also tell you whether your topic is feasible and help you make adjustments!

2) Register on Basis for the respective "Modulabschlussprüfung"

3) Download the form "Prüfungsformular für Hausarbeiten" and follow the instructions given here.

3.1. Length

There is only one way to find out how long your term paper has to be and that is to ask your lecturer. This is due to the fact that the required length of the term papers correlates with the specific distribution of the workload in the course you attended. Accordingly, the 'Prüfungsordnungen'/examination regulations 2018/2023 (and accordingly, the Prüfungsordnung for education from 2022) state the following range:

Term paper Bachelor of Arts	10-20 pages (10-15 for "Issues" courses suffice)	20,000-40,000 characters, including spaces and annotations
Bachelor Thesis	35-60 pages	70,000-120,000 characters, including spaces and annotations
Term paper Master of Arts	15-25 pages	30,000-50,000 characters, including spaces and annotations
Master Thesis	60-120 pages	120,000-240,000 characters including spaces and annotations

Please note that the number of pages is meant as a general guideline; what ultimately counts is the number of characters. All ranges refer only to the body of the paper and exclude the title page, declaration of authenticity, bibliography, etc.

4. Format and Structure

4.1. Margins

Left: 4cm

Right, Top, Bottom: 2cm each

4.2. Font and spacing

Font: Times New Roman, 12pt

Spacing: 1.5 line spacing

General Format: full justification (Blocksatz)

4.3. Pagination

Page numbering starts with page number 1 on the first page of the introduction, leaving all the preambulatory pages unnumbered. This is done with section breaks.

Section breaks and pagination in *Microsoft Office Word:*

- ❖ The section break is inserted via **Layout → Breaks → Section Breaks; Next Page.**
- ❖ Double-click on the header to insert the page number. In the ribbon above, there should be an option **link to previous**; click to <u>uncheck</u> this.
- ❖ Add your page numbers in the second section.
- ❖ Highlight the page number and right click. Select **Format Page Numbers**.
- ❖ Make sure that the option **Continue from Previous Section** is <u>unchecked</u> and instead select **Start at…** and enter the number 1.

Section breaks and pagination in *Google Docs:*

- ❖ The section break is inserted via **Insert → Break → Section break (next page)**
- ❖ Insert the section break on the **last** page you wish to leave unnumbered.
- ❖ Double click on the header of your numbered section. Click on **Options → Page Numbers.**
- ❖ Make sure that the option **Continue from Previous section** is <u>unchecked</u> and instead select **Start at…** and enter the number 1.

4.4. Paragraphs

A complete paragraph follows one specific idea, which is discussed by following a line of argument. Thus, a paragraph consists of a topic sentence, an academic discussion (discuss and illustrate your idea and, if possible, use primary as well as secondary literature to verify your position), a conclusion and a linking sentence, which logically connects the paragraph to the following or previous one, respectively, and may begin for example with linking phrases such as "however," "nevertheless," "in contrast," etc. That means that the following is the typical structure of a paragraph:

Topic Sentence → Discussion → Conclusion → Linking Sentence

This also means that there are no paragraphs (or chapters) consisting of only one or two sentences. A paragraph should have at least three or more sentences. A chapter also needs to consist of at least one page.

Please check whether your paragraphs are relevant and necessary for the topic of your paper and whether they are logical and coherent.

Please indent the first lines of paragraphs (except the first lines of the first paragraphs at the beginning of a new chapter or after longer quotes).

If you have an argument that is too short for a paragraph/chapter, either include it in a previous or later paragraph/chapter or mention it in a footnote.

Please make sure that you do not include empty lines or additional spacing after paragraph markers, i.e. your page is supposed to look 'full'. To do so, please toggle off "Add Space before/after paragraph" in your word processing programme.

i.e. NOT like this:

"There was a ringing clash and a stab of white fire. The Balrog fell back, and its sword flew up in molten fragments. The wizard swayed on the bridge, stepped back a pace, and then again stood still.

'You cannot pass!' he said.

With a bound the Balrog leaped full upon the bridge. Its whip whirled and hissed."

But rather like this:

"There was a ringing clash and a stab of white fire. The Balrog fell back, and its sword flew up in molten fragments. The wizard swayed on the bridge, stepped back a pace, and then again stood still.
'You cannot pass!' he said.
With a bound the Balrog leaped full upon the bridge. Its whip whirled and hissed."

4.5. General Structure

This is how an ideal term paper should be structured:[4]

1. Title Page
2. Declaration of Authenticity
3. Table of Contents
4. Introduction
5. Theory/Method
   5.1., 5.2., 5.3., etc. Subchapters (if applicable)
6. Main Part/Analysis
   6.1., 6.2., 6.3., etc. Subchapters (if applicable)
7. Conclusion
8. Bibliography
9. Appendix (if applicable)

Your term paper should consist of an introduction (minimum one page), a theory section explaining the concepts applied to the primary literature, a main part with a logical structure, i.e. presenting a

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[4] This is a guideline for the structure. This is not a table of contents and should not be used as such. Deviations from the structure are possible, if the term paper demands it and if it is cleared with the lecturer.

clear line of argument, and a conclusion (minimum one page). Please try to find precise and meaningful chapter headings. Do not name the chapters 'Theory' or 'Main Part'.

For example: If your topic is the analysis of masculinity in Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*, then your theory chapter could be called "Exploration of masculinity" and in this chapter, you would then review secondary literature and other works on the theoretical basis you have chosen in order to present a definition based on theory and a concept of masculinity that can then be applied to *The Lord of the Rings*. The main part could then be titled "Masculinity in *The Lord of the Rings*." Please make sure that you tell your reader what you are doing in a chapter (at the beginning of each chapter), that you summarise at the end of each chapter, and that you link your chapters to each other.

The introduction first presents your main thesis, i.e. your research focus. So your thesis, which correlates with the title of your term paper, is not, for example, "Are the male characters in *The Lord of the Rings* masculine?" but "An Analysis of the Presentations and Performances of Masculinity in Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*." Please make sure that you and your lecturer agree on a research focus before you start writing. Secondly, the introduction addresses your approach and/or your method. Thirdly, the introduction describes and explains the structure of your text.

Your job in a term paper is to come up with a specific focus or take on your topic, which you then have to work on theoretically, before applying this to your primary source. Secondary sources are additionally used to bolster your argument. Your main work with the primary source should be a close reading of a text.

The main body of your text, following the introduction, should consist of a chapter with a focus on theory/method. It serves to define important terms and concepts. Then should follow a chapter on your analysis (based on close reading). This latter chapter focuses on your research question and presents a clear line of argument. In some cases, the theoretical aspects can be integrated into the analysis part, but that should be made clear.

The conclusion presents and sums up your findings and may include an outlook on what could be done to continue your research, in order to take it further. Furthermore, the conclusion gives room for further meta-reflection on the topic: is there another way to argue your thesis? Is there something else that should be reflected on?

5. Some general remarks on content and style

Please reflect on your role as a writer. We are neither literary critics nor professional ethnographers, i.e. our subjective opinions of a text are not part of an analysis and please avoid any general statements on cultures, social classes or groups of any kind. Always indicate your secondary literature. Whenever you formulate a hypothesis, you have to be able to support it or prove it (usually by referring to secondary literature).

Example:

> Do not write e.g.. "Frodo and Sam are gay." Instead, write "It has often been noted that the relationship between Frodo and Sam has homoerotic undertones…"

Please make sure that your term paper is up-to-date and based on current research. If there are older sources all the newer sources base their findings on, check out the older source first. If there is not any more recent research available than the one you found (which may date back to 1999 or 2002,

etc.), state this in a footnote to highlight that you did your research well. Have enough sources; for example, if your paper has 12 pages, you should have consulted at least 12 sources or more! It's better to have more sources than not having enough.

Be aware of colloquial use of language: for example, "get" is rather colloquial in use so find replacements: "get a job" = "find a job". Also avoid "way too" or strong adjectives like "super". Keep your writing nuanced and not too crass.

The terms 'primary literature' or 'primary sources' refer to the media you are analysing (e.g. *The Lord of the Rings*); the terms 'secondary literature' or 'secondary sources' refer to the media that help you achieve your goal (e.g. works on Tolkien and *The Hobbit*, *The Lord of the Rings*, etc.). The terms have nothing to do with 'quality' or with how often you consulted the sources.

Please make sure that you use enough reliable secondary literature (for definitions, for the theory/method chapters as well as for the interpretations). The literature should be on the theoretical aspects as well as on the primary literature. Definitions of key terms taken from dictionaries are not acceptable because usually there will be an academic handbook available, or definitions of concepts are given in other secondary literature. When referring to dictionaries, please make sure it is a trustworthy and known dictionary, e.g. the *Oxford English Dictionary*, *Merriam Webster*, *Cambridge*, etc. Use several dictionaries and contrast the definitions. An explanation of how to cite dictionary entries is given below.

Quotes from primary literature and secondary literature *have to be commented on*, i.e. they must be embedded in your text and used in your line of argument. It is not acceptable to simply quote something without elaborating on it: what this quotation means for your argument, what it highlights, how it contrasts to a different point, etc.

Usually, the biography of an author is not a viable part of your term paper (except when your research focus is a biographical study). Please do not include biographical data about the author (or authors of secondary literature) unless it is absolutely relevant for the argument you are making.

In general, plot summaries are not necessary (since your lecturer most often has already read the text you are working with). When in doubt, please ask your lecturer. You will naturally have to contextualise quotes you use in your argumentation, as it might make a difference whether it occurs at the beginning of the novel or the end. For example, it makes sense that you contextualise where in the novel you are if you try to sketch a development, e.g. in a *Bildungsroman*.

It is always a good idea to search for synonyms in order to avoid word repetition. You may want to consult a thesaurus. Additionally, you should never copy-paste ideas from your introduction into your main part or conclusion. Rephrase!

Please do not use contracted forms ("wasn't", "it's", "isn't", "wouldn't", etc.); instead please write the complete phrases ("was not", "it is", "is not", "would not", etc.).

Please be aware of the difference between „German" and "English" quotation marks! For your term papers, you need to use the English ones. Make sure to set the language of your word processor to English. Please also note the differences in using commas and quotation marks. In German, commas follow the quotation marks ("Ich komme mit dir", sagte Sam) while in English, commas (almost) always precede them ("I'm coming with you," said Sam).

Note the difference between 'dumb' and 'smart' quotation marks. 'Dumb' quotation marks are straight ("Like so") while smart ones are curly ("Like so"). This also applies to apostrophes. Use smart quotation marks throughout. Be aware that if you copy-paste e.g. a title of a work into your bibliography, the quotation marks may not automatically update to smart ones.

Please differentiate between a hyphen (-) to be used to combine two words (e.g. "Aragorn is a ranger-king"), an en-dash (–) or an em-dash (—), which are used to insert a thought into a sentence. Em dashes are used in American English, while en dashes are used in British English. Em-dashes do not commonly have spaces on either side—they are just inserted into the text—, while en-dashes – the shorter ones – do have spaces on either side. Please use the version that is appropriate to the variety of English you use in your paper.

On the use of personal pronouns: You will find that academic texts grow out of certain writing traditions; for example, it is much more likely to find an explicit "I" in a US context than in a text written by a scholar from Germany or the UK. Implicitly, it is obvious that the term paper is written by you, i.e. you need not highlight this fact by referring to yourself. Use personal pronouns with caution and be aware of international standards (sometimes you might prefer a passive construction or using just 'one' or 'readers' instead of 'I'). Please note that some lecturers do have preferences in this respect, so it is a good idea to ask them.

Please make sure that you list all the works you refer to in the 'Bibliography,' i.e. all the primary literature, films, other media, and secondary literature. This also means that nothing is listed that is not referenced. Bibliographies 'padded' with works you did not cite are to be strictly avoided. Some lecturers prefer a "Works consulted list." This is a list of works you have read in your research, but do not quote from, either directly or indirectly; your lecturer may want to know what other works may have influenced your own. Ask them!

Please note that handouts from lecturers are NOT a good source to use as these are based on original sources in most cases. If you do want to use parts of a handout, ask the lecturer to provide you with the sources, if they have not done so already.

6. Quotations/In-Text Citations

For quotations/referencing the MLA style is used. As the MLA can be rather intricate, you will notice that this guideline simplified matters a bit. In linguistics, the APA guidelines are used, and these two are different. Please keep that in mind.

For in-text citations and the works cited list please use the MLA style, but please adhere to the IAAK guideline for the general layout etc.

An excellent guideline for the use of the MLA style can be found here, especially when working with non-print sources from the internet.

When creating in-text citations for media that have a runtime, such as movies or podcasts, include the range of hours, minutes and seconds you plan to reference. For example: (00:02:15 – 00:02:35).

Examples:

- ❖ While Boromir is convinced that "[o]ne does not simply walk into Mordor" (*Fellowship* 01:30:00-01:30:03), that is exactly what Frodo and Sam do in *The Return of the King*.

- ❖ *The Fellowship of the Ring* ends with Frodo saying to Sam that he is glad to not be alone (cf. / see 02:50:05 – 02:50:12).

When citing a post on X (formerly twitter), use the user name, followed by the post in its entirety.

> *Example*:
>
> @LOTRFilm. "Corporate greed does not make good storytelling. 🙄 ."

→ Then, put this in context or comment on it: "Fans are dissatisfied with the increasing drive towards franchisation (see @LOTRFilm)."

When citing from a dictionary or encyclopaedia entry which has no author, the in-text citation should include the first word or words in the title of the entry. The title of the entry should be in quotation marks, with each word starting with a capital letter.

> *Example:*
>
> "The *OED* defines the word "hobbit" as…" ("Hobbit").

No matter whether you reference primary or secondary literature, the last name of the author is used; this is why this method is called 'author-page style'. Footnotes or endnotes are only used to provide further explanatory information, NOT the reference.

If two authors share the same last name OR you are using two works by the same author, give a shortened version of the title of their work when referencing, e.g. (Tolkien, *Hobbit* 37) and (Tolkien, *Lord of the Rings* 54).

If you want to cite from a website, try to find the author's name. In general, include in the text the first item that appears in the Bibliography that corresponds to the citation (e.g. author name, article name, website name, film name). This means that if you cannot find the author's name, you may use the article's name in an abbreviated form or the website's name as well.

If you cannot find a piece of work that is cited in other literature that you did read, but you would like to quote what they also quoted, you may do so in the following way:

> "Tolkien recalls, "On a blank leaf I scrawled, 'In a hole in the ground, there lived a hobbit.' I did not and do not recall why."" (*The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien*, qtd. from the Preface to *The Hobbit* v).

→ **Please note:** This technique should be used *sparingly* and you should try to find the original source, especially if you find yourself quoting extensively in second-hand, i.e. more than one or two times. In the above example, it would be prudent to seek out and quote directly from the *Letters*. Please also note how the above quotation has a quote within a quote (within a quote); this, too, is to be avoided and can be avoided by citing from the original source.

If the same reference, i.e. same author and same page, is used repeatedly, "ibid." (short for Latin *ibidem* = 'in the same place') replaces the reference. If the quote comes from the same source, but is quoted from a different page, the respective page number supplements the reference, e.g. "(ibid. 290)". Make sure it is absolutely clear what you are referencing!

There will always be special problems and no style guide can cover them all, but frequent 'problems' – such as how to cite indirect sources – can be solved by looking them up here.

Please make sure that you reference all quotes and indirect sources, paraphrases or adopted ideas in order to avoid plagiarism. Plagiarism is academic theft. On what is considered to be plagiarism (which means that your paper fails) please see here.

6.1. Direct quotations

Direct quotations are marked by inverted commas/quotation marks ("like this") and referenced by parenthetical citation, i.e. the necessary info is given in brackets after the quote.

Metalinguistic usage of a term, e.g. "the 'Fantasy' genre" is marked by single quotation marks.

Quotations need to be accurate. Any changes of the original text have to be indicated by square brackets within the quotation or commented on in parentheses after the quotation. Omissions within a sentence in a quotation are identified by three periods (often in square brackets). This should never change the original meaning of the text! You may also want to clarify quotations when, the context missing, it would be difficult for the reader to understand. Use your own judgement for when clarification is necessary.

Examples:

❖ "In a hole in the ground, there lived a hobbit. [...] It had a perfectly round door like a porthole." → *omission*

❖ Aragorn says that "hobbits are made of a stuff so tough that [he] never met the like of it." → *change* (in the original, Aragorn says "I")

❖ "There was no sign of road or track, but Shadowfax [Gandalf's horse] did not stray or falter." → *clarification*

Direct quotations have to remain in the original language. Please do not translate quotations. If you feel the need to clarify what was said, explain the quotation and its meaning. (Exception: Please ask your lecturer if you think providing an additional translation of a quotation would be wise, for example if you are quite sure that your lecturer is not fluent in e.g. Sindarin or Ancient Babylonian.) You may also put it in a footnote, or paraphrase it if the language is not well known and would disrupt the flow of the paper.

Examples:

❖ Frodo "felt a great reluctance to reveal the Ring, and a loathing of its touch" (Tolkien 247), which emphasises…

❖ When Pippin assumes the Entwives are dead, Treebeard corrects him, "'They did not *die!* [...] I never said *died*'" (Tolkien 47) [emphasis in original] → Please note that

single quotation marks are used to show that a character is speaking here. This also holds true for indented quotes, where the normal quotation marks are left out!

❖ Kristin Larsen explains that "the concept of *organicism* [in which] the natural world is viewed as alive and part of the gods' domain" (Larsen 95) [emphasis in original] substantially shaped Tolkien's concept of Middle-Earth, as is best illustrated by…

Quotations longer than three lines are not simply included in the text body but indented on the left side by 1.5 cm, written in 10pt and single line spacing; the quotation marks are omitted.

Example:

Gandalf manipulates the guard at the door to let him take his staff into Meduseld:

> The guard still hesitated. 'Your staff,' he said to Gandalf. 'Forgive me, but that too must be left at the doors.' 'Foolishness!' said Gandalf. 'Prudence is one thing, but discourtesy is another. I am old. If I may not lean on my stick as I go, then I will sit out here, until it pleases Théoden to hobble out himself to speak with me.' (Tolkien 511)

Gandalf thus uses his apparent age in order to achieve his ends, which is also seen…

(Please note that the first line of the following does not have a first-line indent.)

For emphasis, please use italics and state that it is your emphasis by adding 'my emphasis,' 'emphasis added,' 'my italics' or 'italics added' in the brackets. Which phrase you use is up to you; but do be consistent. Pick one and use only this throughout the entire paper.

Example:

Daniel Herbert explains how "New Line came into *The Lord of the Rings* as an outsider, as just *one of several* parties drawing from an existing intellectual property" (161, emphasis added).

If the emphasis is in the original, state so by adding 'original emphasis,' 'emphasis in original,' 'original italics,' or 'italics in original' in square brackets. Which phrase you use is up to you; but do be consistent. Pick one and use only this throughout the entire paper.

Example:

"'When Pippin assumes the Entwives are dead, Treebeard corrects him, "'They did not *die!* [...] I never said *died*'" (Tolkien 475) [original emphasis].

→Please note: only one period is needed, not two: "...I never said *died*'" (Tolkien 475) [original emphasis].

6.2. Indirect quotations/paraphrasing

Indirect quotations, or paraphrasing, means you are explaining the thoughts of another person in your own words. If you paraphrase, you are asked to add cf., which comes from the Latin word 'conferre' which means 'compare to' but may also mean 'contrast'; a more neutral option would be 'see'.

Examples:

❖ Frodo is starting to be suspicious of Boromir (cf. Tolkien 369).

❖ Shadowfax does not tolerate any saddle or harness due to his noble lineage and proud nature (cf. Tolkien 762).

Furthermore, paraphrasing should be done in a way that makes it clear another person's thoughts are explained.

Examples:

❖ Multiple parties were involved in creating the *Lord of the Rings* film trilogy (cf. Herbert 161).

❖ Tolkien's legendarium blends medieval with his own contemporary scientific thought (see Larsen 95).

6.3. Footnotes

Please use footnotes instead of endnotes. Footnotes may provide explanatory information or additional bibliographic information. More information on foot- and endnotes can be found here.

You can use footnotes to pursue points that might take your primary line argument too far, but are worthy to be investigated in future papers, for example. You can also offer additional secondary literature on the point which you have excluded from your main argumentation.

Please tend to regard footnotes as whole sentences which begin with a capital letter and end with a full stop. "Cf." and "ibid." begin with lower case letters within sentences and with a capital letter at the beginning of a sentence/footnote.

Examples:

[23] Elves, on the other hand, are strongly associated with nature: "These efforts of the Elves to celebrate the beauty of the natural world, especially within their own dwellings, reflect one of the fundamental defining characteristics of elven philosophy" (Larsen 100).

[22] Cf. Herbert 160-165.

7. Sources/Primary and Secondary Literature

Please do your research thoroughly and regard it as a vital part of writing a term paper.

Please do not use only the Bonner catalogues/'bonnus' or JSTOR, use also the MLA database (mainly for journal articles) as well as the KVK/Karlsruher Virtueller Katalog (mainly for books).

1) Bonnus

2) Karlsruher Virtueller Katalog

3) Bielefeld Academic Search Engine (BASE)

3) [JSTOR](#)[5]

4) [Project Muse](#)[5]

5) [The Wiley Online Library](#)[5]

It may very well be that the sources you need are not available in Bonn. Please do not hesitate to order a Fernleihe/interlibrary loan. It is easy and does not cost too much. It might take a week or two for the books to arrive, though, so that should be considered in your time management.

Most examples of the following subchapters are taken from the *Purdue Online Writing Lab* or the *MLA 9th edition*.

Please refer to at least 10 to 15 secondary literature texts (webpages may be used, but only reliable sources and not too many). But please ask your lecturer how many **works of secondary literature are required in the specific course you attend because numbers may vary.** This will also often depend on the availability of sources. Please note that for BA or MA theses, you need to work with a lot more secondary sources.

Please note: some lecturers prefer a division of your bibliography into the following categories:

1) Primary Literature (e.g. *The Lord of the Rings*)

2) Secondary Literature (e.g. works on/articles about *The Lord of the Rings*)

3) Online Sources (reliable, academic websites, official websites)

Additionally, in American Studies, primary and secondary literature are not differentiated in the bibliography. Always ask your lecturer for their preferences.

8. Bibliography

Anything you reference has to be included in the works cited section/bibliography (in alphabetical order of the surnames of the authors). Please make sure that you include all the relevant information so that another researcher could find your text for their own work (this is the reason why bibliographies have to be accurate).

The bibliography is formatted with a hanging indent. This means that the first line is further to the left margin of the page than all the following lines. 0.5 to 1 cm is sufficient.

Examples:

Amendt-Raduege, Amy. *The Sweet and the Bitter: Death and Dying in J. R. R. Tolkien's The Lord of the Rings*. The Kent State University Press, 2017.

Porter, Lynnette. *Unsung Heroes of the Lord of the Rings: From the Page to the Screen*. Bloomsbury, 2005.

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[5] You must be logged in via the eduroam WiFi or the Uni BonnVPN, or login via Shibboleth to access these resources in full.

Please use italics for book titles or journal titles, i.e. for anything that was published as a single entity, but please use double quotation marks for anything that was only published as a part of something bigger, i.e. articles or poems in books or journals, and even episodes in television shows or songs in albums.

The first step is always that you figure out what it is you are including in your list. Is it a book, an anthology or a collection of essays, a single essay in a collection…? Once this is established, you can find out how to cite it here.

The university also offers a Citavi license and workshops specifically for that purpose. It might be worth checking them out to learn how to use Citavi for easy handling of sources.

Every entry must end with a full stop.

8.1. Books and Collections in their entirety

When a source has one author: Surname, Name. *Title*. Publisher, Year of publication.

> *Examples:*

> Amendt-Raduege, Amy. *The Sweet and the Bitter: Death and Dying in J. R. R. Tolkien's The Lord of the Rings*. The Kent State University Press, 2017.

> Porter, Lynnette. *Unsung Heroes of the Lord of the Rings: From the Page to the Screen*. Bloomsbury, 2005.

When a source has two authors: Surname, Name of First Author, and Name and Surname of Second Author (e.g. Smith, Mary, and John Doe…).

When a source has three or more authors: Surname, Name of First Author, et al. (e.g. Smith, Mary et al.). The phrase *et al.* is Latin for 'and others'; there is no period after et because it simply means 'and' – it is not an abbreviation.

> *Examples:*

> Vacarro, Christopher, and Yvette Kisor, editors. *Tolkien and Alterity*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2017.

> Kerry, Paul E., et al. *The Ring and the Cross: Christianity and the Lord of the Rings*. Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2010.

Two or more works by the same author: The name is not repeated but substituted by three hyphens.

> *Example:*

> Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Hobbit*. 1937. HarperCollins, 2007.

> ---. *The Lord of the Rings*. 1954-1955. HarperCollins, 2013.

If you want to cite an entire anthology or collection, list by editor(s) followed by a comma and "editor" or "editors."

> *Example:*

Vacarro, Christopher, and Yvette Kisor, editors. *Tolkien and Alterity*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2017.

8.2. A Text in an Anthology or Collection; a single chapter in a book.

Surname, Name. "Title of Essay." *Title of Collection*, edited by Editor's/Editors' Name(s). Publisher, Year of Publication, pp. [Page range of entry].

Examples:

Larsen, Kristine. "Medieval Organicism or Modern Feminist Science? Bombadil, Elves, and Mother Nature." *Tolkien and Alterity*, edited by Christopher Vacarro and Yvette Kisor, Palgrave Macmillan, 2017, pp. 95–108.

Herbert, Daniel. "One Franchise to Rule Them All: New Line and The Lord of the Rings." *Maverick Movies: New Line Cinema and the Transformation of American Film*, University of California Press, 2024, pp. 145–85.

8.3. A Text in a Scholarly Journal

Surname, Name of the Author. "Title of Article." *Title of Journal*, Volume, Issue, Year, page range of entry.

Examples:

Krikorian, Lawrence Vaughan. "Realism in Fantasy: *The Lord of the Rings*." *Mallorn: The Journal of the Tolkien Society*, no. 54, 2013, pp. 31–33.

Hatcher, Melissa McCrory. "Finding Woman's Role in 'The Lord of the Rings.'" *Mythlore*, vol. 25, no. 3/4 (97/98), 2007, pp. 43–54.

8.4.. Electronic Sources (Web Publications, e.g. Blogs, Online Journals)

Surname, Name of the Author. "Title of Article." *Title of Website*, Date, URL. date of access

Examples:

Winter, Stephen C. "'Speak Friend and Enter'. Gandalf Tries to Enter Moria by the Western Gate but is Thwarted By His Own Cleverness." *Wisdom from The Lord of the Rings*, 23 October 2021, stephencwinter.com/2021/10/23/speak-friend-and-enter-gandalf-tries-to-enter-moria-by-the-western-gate-but-is-thwarted-by-his-own-cleverness/?wref=tp. Accessed 29 July 2024.

Larsen, Kristine. "A Medievalist Myth-making Crisis: Tolkien's Tychonic Cosmology." *Journal of Tolkien Research*, Vol. 19, Iss. 1, scholar.valpo.edu/journaloftolkienresearch/vol19/iss1/7. Accessed 29 July 2024.

The date of access must be added because, unlike print media, web resources may be updated, changed, or even deleted after the fact. By adding the date of access, you confirm that the information was true at the time of accessing the page, and any researcher consulting your paper after some time has passed will understand that the information may have changed.

If you want to make absolutely sure that your lecturer and future readers of your paper have the exact same version of the website as you do, consider saving the page via the Internet Archive.

8.5. Films, Movies, TV, and other 'new media'

Films/Movies

List films by their title. Include the name of the director, the film studio or distributor, and the release year. *If relevant*, list performer names after the director's name.

Title. Directed by name, performances by name and name, studio, year.

> *Example*:
>
> > *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring.* Directed by Peter Jackson, New Line Cinema and Wingnut Productions, 2001.

If you wish to highlight a specific performer or contributor (for example, if you wish to discuss a film's cinematography, editing, or a certain performance), begin the citation with the name of the desired performer or director, followed by the appropriate title for that person.

> *Example:*
>
> > Gilbert, John, editor. *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring.* Directed by Peter Jackson, New Line Cinema and Wingnut Productions, 2001.

Television show

Television shows are cited in a similar way to movies. Begin with the episode name in quotation marks. Follow with the series name in italics. Give the distributor name followed by the date of distribution.

"Episode Title." *Series title*, created by Name, [performance by name], series/season X, episode Y, Distributor, Year.

> *Example:*
>
> > "Adar." *The Lord of the Rings: The Rings of Power*, created by JD Payne and Patrick McKay, season 1, episode 3, Amazon Studios, 2022.

8.6. Alternative electronic sources (YouTube, Twitter, Dictionaries, etc.)

Twitter (X)

Begin with the user's Twitter handle in place of the author's name. Next, place the tweet in its entirety in quotations, inserting a period after the tweet within the quotations. Include the date and time of posting, using the reader's time zone; separate the date and time with a comma and end with a period. Include the date accessed if you deem it necessary.

> *Example:*

@LOTRFilm. "Corporate greed does not make good storytelling. 🙄." X, 01 Mar. 2023, 10:54 p.m., https://x.com/LOTRFilm/status/1631050415989981186. Accessed 29 July 2024.

YouTube

Video and audio sources need to be documented using the same basic guidelines for citing print sources in MLA style. Include as much descriptive information as necessary to help readers understand the type and nature of the source you are citing. If the author's name is the same as the uploader, only cite the author once. If the author is different from the uploader, cite the author's name before the title.

Name, Last Name. "Title." *YouTube*, uploaded by Channel Name, Date, URL.

Examples:

"The Hobbit: A Long Expected Autopsy." *YouTube*, uploaded by Lindsay Ellis, 28 March 2018, youtube.com/watch?v=uTRUQ-RKfUs. Accessed 29 July 2024.

Olson, Dan. "An Exhaustive History of Ralph Bakshi's Lord of the Rings." *YouTube*, uploaded by Folding Ideas, 20 August 2021, youtube.com/watch?v=Cr_rb_pitHk&t. Accessed 29 July 2024.

A Dictionary or Encyclopaedia

For entries in encyclopaedias, dictionaries, and other reference works, cite the entry name as you would any other work in a collection but do not include the publisher information. Also, if the reference book is organised alphabetically, as most are, do not list the volume or the page number of the article or item.

"Entry." *Title of Dictionary*. Xth Ed. Year. URL.

Example:

"Hobbit." *Oxford English Dictionary Online*. 2023. doi.org/10.1093/OED/1011964085. Accessed 29 July 2024.

9. Common mistakes and reasons why papers have failed

Here you can find a list of the most common mistakes made in term papers. You can also download this chapter separately via our website.

9.1. Formatting and Layout

The formatting as explained in the term paper guidelines has not been used (font size, full justification, line spacing, margins, etc.).

One-sentence paragraphs.

Chapters that have a single subchapter (unnecessary).

Wrong indication of work titles, such as quotation marks instead of italics or vice versa.

- ❖ For example: "The Hobbit" [incorrect] instead of *The Hobbit* [correct]
- ❖ Or: *Song of the Lonely Mountain* [incorrect] instead of "Song of the Lonely Mountain" [correct]

Wrong characters, such as these quotation marks " instead of these "" or a minus - instead of a dash –. This may be more obvious in certain fonts than in others.

Double quotation marks instead of single quotation marks to indicate the metalinguistic use of a term:

- ❖ "The term "Fantasy" describes..." [incorrect] instead of "The term 'Fantasy' describes..." [correct]

9.2. Grammar and Style

Colloquial register or inappropriate register (this includes contractions).

- ❖ For example: "Bilbo gets knocked unconscious"
- ❖ "This is a really cool ring."

Tense mistakes, e.g. using past tense in summaries, inconsistent tense.

- ❖ For example: "In *The Hobbit*, Bilbo went on an adventure"
- ❖ When Tolkien first wrote *The Hobbit*, he does so for his son.

Punctuation mistakes.

- ❖ For example: "It is striking, that Bilbo goes on this adventure." [There does not need to be a comma in this sentence.]
- ❖ "However, "I wrote it for my son", says Tolkien." [In English, the punctuation (in this case, a comma) comes before the punctuation mark]

9.3. Content

Line of argument or thought is illogical.

No coherence or cohesiveness.

- ❖ For example: "Because Bilbo goes on an adventure, the dragon hoards treasure."
- ❖ "Tolkien wrote *The Hobbit*, but his son preferred to eat pie."

Tangents and digressions, i.e. sequences that have little to nothing to do with the overall argument.

- ❖ For example: "Tolkien wrote *The Hobbit* for his son. By the way, his son was very good at spotting inconsistencies and mistakes. Because Tolkien's son was ill and could not leave the house, Tolkien wrote him an adventure story."

Conclusions are missing or underexplained.

- ❖ For example: "*The Hobbit* is a great example of a children's adventure story" without any further discussion of what an adventure story is or why *The Hobbit* is a particularly good example of one.

9.4. References and Quotations

References are missing or there are not enough references. For example, stating that Tolkien wrote *The Hobbit* for his son without indicating where you found this information.

Terms remain undefined. For example, stating that *The Hobbit* is an adventure story without defining the term 'adventure story': or, that *The Hobbit* codified many aspects of fantasy literature without going into detail as to what these aspects are.

Poorly formatted or unformatted bibliography.

- ❖ Tolkien, J.R.R.. "The Hobbit, or There and Back Again." 2007, HarperCollins, [incorrect]
- ❖ Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Hobbit, or There and Back again*. 1937. HarperCollins, 2007. [correct]

Quotations are not explained or interpreted.

There are only direct or only indirect quotes. A good paper has a mixture of both kinds.

There are an excessive amount of secondary quotations, i.e. quotations that themselves were quoted in a work you are consulting. This technique should only be employed when you absolutely cannot track down the original source.

- ❖ "Tolkien recalls, "On a blank leaf I scrawled, 'In a hole in the ground, there lived a hobbit.' I did not and do not recall why."" (*The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien*, qtd. from the Preface to *The Hobbit*). [Please seek out and quote directly from the *Letters*].

References that are out of date. Unacademic references. Your study notes are not proper references.

9.5. Other Mistakes

German-influence grammar, punctuation, and syntax; False Friends.

Your word processing programme might be set to German. This can lead to unintended autocorrects, such as moving the quotation marks to the bottom „"

Mixing British and American English. Choose one variety and stick to it.

Misspelling of the lecturer's name or omitting their titles on the title page.

9.6. Tips and Recommendations

Strong ideas and arguments can be completely undermined by bad writing and structure.

Consider if several one-sentence paragraphs could be combined into one longer paragraph.

It is better to look up the meaning of a word which you are not completely sure of and to find you were right after all than to use a word incorrectly.

If you copy and paste e.g. the titles of work, make sure to update the quotation marks and add italics when necessary

To quote from a text that is not in English (or German), quote the original and only provide your translation if your lecturer does not speak the language. Ask them!

Always consult your lecturer if anything is unclear.

10. General Advice[6]

10.1. Research Topic and Research Question

Your research topic is the broader area you wish to analyse. Your research *question*, however, is defined by the more specific aspects of the topic you want to find an answer for. It is an explicit, concrete question which can be answered through research and analysis. Neither the topic nor the question should be so broad that it is not manageable, nor too specific so that you will not find enough to write about.

One of the most important steps when choosing a topic for your term paper is thinking of what aspects particularly interest *you*. Writing any scholarly text is a long process, and choosing a topic you find fun or interesting can make it much less stressful.

Your research question should be connected to the topic you chose and should reflect that in some way. If your topic is e.g. Gender in *The Lord of the Rings* (Gender Theory/Gender Studies), then your question(s) should present aspects connected to it in a concrete way.

> *Examples:*
>
> ❖ How do the characters Aragron, Boromir, and Faramir perform their masculinity?
> ❖ How does Éowyn claim agency for herself as a woman in Middle-Earth?
> ❖ How is the estrangement between the Ent-Wives and the Ents related to gender?

10.2. Academic Reading

Academic reading aims to extract information from a particular text (active reading). Whether it is a primary (close reading), or a secondary source, the aim is to understand a text in detail.

Close reading describes a method of analysis of primary sources within literary criticism which allows you to gain a deeper understanding of any particular text. Close reading means looking for and analysing more nuanced aspects of a text, such as

❖ Form and style
❖ Narratological structure/choices
❖ Symbols (colours, shapes, sounds, objects etc. can often be used to represent something else)
❖ Literary devices
❖ Language

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[6] With thanks to Ana-Zeit-Altpeter

Reading a primary source with these aspects in mind can help the reader find connections and patterns in meaning which are not immediately obvious upon a first leisure reading.

Reading with a purpose means that, in both cases (primary and secondary sources), you must read with a specific goal in mind. Knowing exactly what information you are looking for before committing to a text, especially a long one, is essential to saving time and reading efficiently. Despite close reading not applying to secondary sources, knowing what you need from them is still important.

10.3. Arguments and Counterarguments

A good argument is transparent, coherent, and complete. It is *transparent* because every part is easy is to follow; *coherent* because all parts support and build upon each other; and *complete* because every necessary part is there and no information that is not immediately relevant is included.

Counterarguments: While researching we will not always find sources we entirely agree with, but engaging with these disagreements is an equally important part of academia and shows your ability to think critically. While disagreeing with any piece of secondary literature is perfectly fine, presenting your counterargument in a respectful and fair way is paramount to building a strong line of argumentation. Avoid strong emotional and/or disrespectful language. However, if you disagree with a source entirely, it is best to leave it out. In a term paper such as this, you only have limited space and it should be used with information that is actually relevant to your analysis.

11. Further Reading

The MLA Style is continually updated. If you find that the IAAK guideline contradicts current standards, please let us know.

Our guideline is based on the MLA Handbook 9th Edition and the MLA Style Guide on the [Purdue Online Writing Lab website.](#)

The following bibliography provides you with titles you can find in Bonn, it is of course not comprehensive.

Aczel, Richard. *How to Write an Essay: Optimize your Exam Preparation*. Klett Lerntraining, 2014.

Bailey, Stephen. *Academic Writing: A Handbook for International Students*. Routledge, 2011.

Björk, Lennart, and Christine Räisänen. *Academic Writing: A University Writing Course*. Studentlitteratur, 1999.

Broders, Simone. *Wissenschaftliches Arbeiten in Anglistik und Amerikanistik*. utb, 2015.

Macgilchrist, Felicitas. *Academic Writing*. Schöningh, 2014.

Prexl, Lydia. *Mit digitalen Quellen arbeiten*. utb, 2015.

Rumisek, Lisa A., and Dorothy E. Zemach. *Academic Writing from Paragraph to Essay*. Macmillan, 2005.

Swales, John, and Christine B. Feak. *Academic Writing for Graduate Students: Essential Tasks and Skills*. University of Michigan Press, 2012.

Tang, Ramona, ed. *Academic Writing in a Second or Foreign Language: Issues and Challenges Facing ESL/EFL Academic Writers in Higher Education Contexts*. Continuum, 2012.

12. Registering and Handing in Your Term Paper

The Prüfungsamt of the Faculty of Arts has an online guide regarding formal requirements etc. of term papers. You can find it here.

Please note that in order to attend a class for which you have to write a term paper, you will have to first pass the *Issues in Literary and Cultural Studies* module. If you attempt to write a term paper without having passed the *Issues* module, you will not be able to sign up for the paper on Basis. Make sure that you have passed the *Issues* module before signing up for a class for which you have to write a term paper.

If you do not see you lecturer in any way to hand in your term paper, please give it to

Anastasia Ljangosov
Department Office (Geschäftszimmer),
Room 2.020 (Rabinstrasse 8)
Opening hours are listed on the website.