

# Do's and don'ts for writing your term papers

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# Term paper

- Aim
- Structure
- Content
- Citation
- Evaluation

## Aim

- Develop interesting, clear, precise question
- Answer it in critical, neutral and reflective way
  - no political pamphlet!
  - „it depends“ answers ok
- Both empirical and theoretical answers possible
- Orient yourself on articles in peer-reviewed journals
- Based on „state of the art“

# Structure

## Introduction

- puzzle
- formulation of question: precise and „small“
- overview of paper

## Main part

- „state of the art“: theoretical and empirical
- evaluation of literature and own position

## Conclusion

- Summary of main points
- Limitations: what could you not do
- Outlook: what are other interesting questions?

## Other crucial components

- Title page
  - all relevant class information
  - all relevant student information
  - title of paper
  - submission date
- Table of contents:
  - corresponding to (sub-)titles in text
  - clear structure: each section to be clearly differentiated from the other, everything in that section logically belongs to it
- List of tables, list of figures, (list of abbreviations)
- In-text citations
- List of references

## Citation: In-text references

- See  
[http://www.polsoz.fu-berlin.de/soziologie/studium/master/download\\_files/Plagiarism.pdf](http://www.polsoz.fu-berlin.de/soziologie/studium/master/download_files/Plagiarism.pdf)
- Harvard: „Jung (2008: 596) argues that...“  
[http://www.oxfordjournals.org/our\\_journals/eursoj/for\\_authors/index.html](http://www.oxfordjournals.org/our_journals/eursoj/for_authors/index.html)
- Oxford: with footnoes „Jung<sup>1</sup> argues that“  
[http://journals.cambridge.org/images/fileUpload/documents/BJPOLS\\_style\\_sheet.pdf](http://journals.cambridge.org/images/fileUpload/documents/BJPOLS_style_sheet.pdf)
- Both ok, but use only one style consistently
- When direct quote, indicate page, use quotation marks
- When crucial idea, also indicate page
- When citing somebody else’s citation, cite both authors

## Citation: List of references

- All in-text citations also in references
- All references should be found in text
- Many styles, choose one and use consistently
- Monographs (edited volume): author (editor „ed.“), title, subtitle, year, publishing site and company
- Book chapter: add editor, book title and subtitle, page nrs
- Journal article: add journal name, year, issue, page nrs

## Evaluation is based on

- Formulation of precise, concise and sensible puzzle and question
- Consideration of existing literature; critical assessment of its main points
  - amount and
  - quality of literature (no textbooks)
- Logical connection between different parts
- Stringent and logical argumentation
- Formal aspects: spelling, structure, etc.



## Useful literature

Booth et al. (2008) *The Craft of Research*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press (mainly about writing, structure and style)

O'Leary, Z. (2005) *The Essential Guide to Doing Research*. London: Sage (more general)

## Assignment for next week

- Think of puzzle and research question
- Main existing literature
- How you want to go about
- Prepare a slide for each question
- Send it to me by Monday night