Guidelines from the Institute for Social and Cultural Anthropology FU Berlin

Writing Academic Papers

Dear students and lecturers!

The academic term paper is one of the most common forms of examination in courses. It serves as an in-depth written examination of a specific topic within the framework of the degree program. At the same time, it prepares students for writing an academic thesis in our subject area.

In addition to content and language quality criteria, a number of academic formalities must be observed when writing a term paper. The guidelines at hand summarize the most important formal criteria as agreed upon at this institute. Please adhere to these guidelines when writing, or correcting, a term paper.

1   Extent and layout

1.1   Lenth of the term paper
• BA program: approx. 3000 words (excluding bibliography)
• MA program: approx. 4500 words (excluding bibliography)

1.2   Page layout
• Left and right margins 2.5-3.0 cm
• Top and bottom margins 2.0-2.5 cm
• Page numbers in the footer, starting with the introduction

1.3   Font, font size, and line spacing
• One of the following fonts: Times New Roman, Arial, Calibri
• Font sizes; line spacing, alignment:
   o Body text: 12 pt. with 1.5 line spacing; justified
   o Longer quotations (3 lines or more): indented with 10 pt. with single line spacing; justified
   o Footnotes: font size 10 pt. with single line spacing; left-aligned
   o Bibliography: font size 12 pt. for single-line typesetting; left-aligned; hanging indent recommended
   o Headings: 14 pt. for chapters, 12 pt. for subchapter headings; bold (no CAPITAL LETTERS or other highlighting)

> ! Headings end without periods or colons. However, colons or dashes are permitted within headings.

1.4 Linguistic conventions

• Emic terms are usually italicized and used without quotation marks.

• Care should be taken to use gender-neutral language; there are various ways of doing this. A brief overview can be found in this guide from Alice Salomon University.

2   Cover page

The cover page should include the following basic information:

<div style="border:1px solid black; text-align:center;">

Freie Universität of Berlin
Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology

Seminar paper:
<Title of the course>
<Name of the course instructor>
<Semester and year>

<Title of paper>

<Author>
Student ID number:*****

Contact details (email/address)
Subjects studied
Number of semesters
Submission date: <Date>

</div>

The title of the thesis can be written in a larger font and in bold; for all other information, please use the standard font size of 12 pt.

If you are writing in English, the institute can be referred to as the "Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology." Your university remains the "Freie Universität Berlin" even in English and is not translated.

3   Outline or table of contents

3.1   Outline

The outline shows the structure of the text's content. The individual outline levels are logically related to each other: this applies to both the order and the hierarchy of the individual outline points.

In order to reflect the sequence and hierarchy, the levels of the outline must be clearly indicated in terms of their importance. This is done by numbering sections and subsections.

Arabic numerals are used in the decimal classification system (see also detailed example in 3.3).

- Each subsection consists of at least two elements, i.e., a section 1.1 is always followed by a 1.2!
- Each section heading is followed by text before the next heading is inserted. For example, sections 1.1 and 1.2. under 1. are first introduced (briefly).

Example
1 / 1.1 / 1.2 / 2 / 2.1 / 2.2

3.2 Table of contents

- In the term paper, the structure is presented in the form of a table of contents, i.e., the structure is supplemented with the page numbers of the individual sections.
- Only the page number on which the text section begins is shown (no page ranges).
- The (sub)headings in the table of contents correspond to those in the text.
- Practical tip: In word processing programs, headings can be assigned and an automatic table of contents can be generated.
- No page number is assigned to the table of contents itself; the numbering of the page numbers therefore begins with the introduction.

3.3 Example of a table of contents

The following example is from a BA thesis on the topic of "The concept of work in Atánya, Hungary":
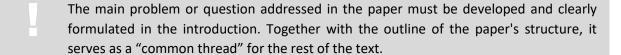
> **!** The structure of a term paper should not exceed three levels of outline. An overly detailed subdivision can make the paper confusing.

4 Introduction

The introduction leads readers to the topic and gives them a first orientation. Together with the conclusion, it frames the whole paper, so both parts should be closely matched.
The introduction includes:

- Context and relevance of the topic/problem
- Topic: What do you want to write about? How exactly do you narrow down the topic so it fits the scope of a term paper?
- Research question: What exactly do you want to find out with your paper?
- Aim of the paper: What contribution should the paper make? What overarching context do you want to better understand?
- Prerequisites for addressing the topic: methodological approach, literature references, data, assessment of sources
- Structure of the paper, explanation of the approach

> **!** The main problem or question addressed in the paper must be developed and clearly formulated in the introduction. Together with the outline of the paper's structure, it serves as a "common thread" for the rest of the text.
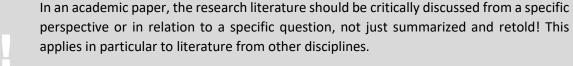
5   Main section

All chapters between the introduction and conclusion constitute the main section. For this reason, the "main body" is not listed as a separate section, but is represented directly by the chapters and their subchapters.
The main body contains:

- Presentation of literature and data
- Here, it is important to independently analyze and organize relevant source statements in line with the question formulated at the beginning.
- The (sub)chapters have their own, meaningful headings.
- The order and weighting of the individual (sub)chapters are tailored to the objective of the paper.

> **!** In an academic paper, the research literature should be critically discussed from a specific perspective or in relation to a specific question, not just summarized and retold! This applies in particular to literature from other disciplines.
>
> Key terms must be defined and, where appropriate, critically reflected upon. Care should be taken to use consistent terminology throughout the text.

6 Conclusion

The conclusion can have one of the following headings: Summary, Conclusion, Final Thoughts, or Wrap-up.
The conclusion contains:

- a summary of the main section focused on answering the question
- a final assessment of the problem or question presented
- if applicable, outlook on further research opportunities/problems and questions arising from the study

> **!** As a general rule, write in your 'own technical language.' Avoid overly colloquial expressions, but at the same time, be careful not to write in an overly 'cryptic' language. What is needed is a clear and distinct style of expression that reflects your own scientific voice.

7 Citing and referencing in the text

Any content (theses, arguments, trains of thought, examples, etc.) borrowed from other sources must be identified as 'external,' i.e., not your own thoughts, with reference to its origin. Otherwise, there is a risk of plagiarism.

A distinction is made between direct or literal reproduction and indirect or paraphrased reproduction. The basic mode of academic citation is indirect quotation, i.e., the reproduction of what has been read in one's own words. Original quotations are only appropriate if they are central statements, theses, or definitions of terms by the respective authors, whose wording is particularly concise or relevant to one's own analysis.

7.1 General information on American citation style

The source must be indicated in the form of a reference for each citation. Please be as precise as possible. Use the American citation style, i.e., the source references are incorporated directly into the body text of the paper in abbreviated form after the citation.

...Text... (Author's last name, year of publication: page number(s)).
e.g.: ... (Geertz 1983: 51).

If you are referring to an idea that spans several pages:
e.g.: ... (Geertz 1983: 51-53).

The same applies when citing film sequences:
...Text ... (Director Year: Minutes:Seconds-Minutes:Seconds)...
 (Walter/ de la Crúz 2008: 19:36-20:56)

The complete reference for the work can then be found in the list of sources or bibliography.

> Quote/mention ⟹ Reference in the text ⟹ Bibliography
> (Author/s Year:Page(s))

- If there are two authors, both are named, e.g. (Gupta/ Ferguson 1992).

- If there are three or more authors, only the first surname is given and the others are referred to with the Latin abbreviation "et al.", e.g. (Keohane et al. 1982).
- A quotation must always be clearly attributable. As a rule, the source reference is placed directly after the quoted statement.
- However, as a special rule of American citation style, it should be noted that the source reference is placed before the quotation if the author is named in the sentence. The principle of economy applies here.

Example

Lila Abu-Lughod (1991: 137) problematizes 'culture' as an "essential tool for making other."

- For identical sources on the same page, the abbreviation "ibid." for 'ibidem' is used. "Ibid." can refer either to the complete bibliographic reference or only to the work. However, this only applies to sources that are repeated immediately. For example:

  ... (Geertz 1983: 48). ... (ibid.).
  ... (Hannerz 1980: 26). ... (ibid.: 21).

- If the same source is referred to repeatedly throughout the work, it can be pointed out at the beginning of the text that, unless otherwise stated, it is this source that is being referred to. This is particularly useful when the work discusses a specific text. In this case, however, the specific page numbers must still be indicated.

7.2 Indirect or paraphrased quotations

- Indirect or paraphrased quotations are not enclosed in quotation marks.
- The source is reproduced in your own words, i.e., the original wording is summarized or paraphrased.
- Translating a direct quotation from English into German does not constitute a paraphrase. Here, too, you must use your own words!

Example

According to Geertz, the sacred symbols used in each religion form both models of, and models for reality: they are both representations of reality and patterns for certain behaviors (Geertz 1983: 51-53).

- Indirect quotations do not usually use the subjunctive, i.e., they are not usually rendered as indirect speech. Rather, the subjunctive (I and especially II) is usually used to distance oneself from the statement being quoted.
- If you are not referring to a specific passage in the text, but to a work in general, a reference without page numbers is sufficient. For example:

  ... (Kleine 2001).

- To avoid repeatedly citing references, you can introduce such longer indirect quotations with phrases such as:

  In the following, I paraphrase Sandmann's (1957: 45-49) thesis, ...
  In the following, I summarize Müller's (1998: 67-75) argument, ...

7.3 Direct or verbatim quotations

In justified cases, it is worthwhile to reproduce a term, sentence, or train of thought verbatim from another text. The wording must be important for your own analysis or argumentation. The following applies here:

- Direct quotations are indicated with quotation marks.

Example

> Geertz understands religion as "a symbolic system that aims to create strong, comprehensive, and lasting moods and motivations in people" (Geertz 1983: 48).

A sentence can only end with a punctuation mark. Therefore, the (final) punctuation mark is moved after the reference bracket if the quoted clause is at the end of the sentence or if a complete sentence is quoted.

Example

> ... provocative thesis: "Culture is the essential tool for making other" (Abu-Lughod 1991: 137). The role of anthropology...

If the quotation is longer than three lines, the paragraph is indented and distinguished from the rest of the text by different formatting (font size 10 pt; single line spacing). However, when indented, the quotation no longer has quotation marks, as the indentation already clearly identifies the text section as a direct quotation.
The punctuation mark is placed directly at the end of the quotation and before the reference bracket.

Example

> Geertz understands religion as ...
>
> > a symbolic system that aims to create strong, comprehensive, and lasting moods and motivations in people by formulating ideas about a general order of being and surrounding these ideas with such an aura of factuality that the moods and motivations seem to correspond completely to reality. (Geertz 1983: 48)
>
> According to Geertz, the sacred symbols used in each religion form both models of and models for reality...

- The literal quotation should only include the passage of text that is subsequently analyzed and interpreted.
- Literal quotations do not speak for themselves, but should always be explained and meaningfully integrated into the text.
- Care should also be taken to ensure that they fit grammatically into the running text; if necessary, omissions and additions can be marked in square brackets.
- Direct quotations must be reproduced word for word and letter for letter. Any omissions must be marked with [...] or ... . If an insertion is necessary for the understanding of the content or for grammatical adaptation, this should be done in [square brackets].
- Nothing may be highlighted without indicating this by adding a reference with your initials after the source, for example: (Hannerz 1980: 26, emphasis added by K.B.).

- Errors in quotations should be marked with [sic] after the relevant incorrect passage. This does not apply to old spelling conventions.

> **!** Sometimes, only a specific term is taken verbatim from another author, e.g., if it is a neologism or a conceptually central term. In this case, too, the source must be cited.

Example

The representatives of the *Chicago School* therefore saw it as their main task to describe the various "moral regions" and "social worlds" (Hannerz 1980: 26) that coexist in a city.

7.4 Further citation formats

- **Reference:** This is simply a rough reference to a source that makes a similar statement or serves as further reading. A reference is indicated by the prefix "cf." for "compare." E.g.: ... (cf. Rubin 1975).
- **Quotation within a quotation:** Extreme caution is required when using direct or indirect quotations from third parties. As a rule, this form should be avoided and the original source should be checked again. Only if the effort involved is disproportionate to the task at hand because the original source is difficult to access can one of the following citation methods be chosen:

  ... (Boas 1910: 35, quoted from Lewis 1978: 12) / ... (Boas 1910: 35, cited in Lewis 1978: 12)

  Only sources that you have read yourself are listed in the bibliography, i.e., Lewis in the example.

7.5 Citing your own data

The following special rules apply when dealing with your own data material:

- The framework data of the research (location(s), time period, etc.) must be discussed in the introduction, a methods chapter, or at least in a footnote.
- In addition, individual field notes and interviews are only specifically identified if they are quoted verbatim.
- References should only be made in the body text. This means that the field notes or interviews quoted should not be listed again in the bibliography or list of sources.
- The information in the body text should be as complete as necessary and as concise as possible. If the research was conducted in only one location, the location can be omitted, for example. If it is a collaborative research project, the corresponding initials must be indicated in the field notes.
- The names of research participants or locations may need to be anonymized. Pseudonyms are generally used for this purpose. This practice must be indicated either in the running text or in a footnote.
- Depending on whether the quotation is from a field note, a conversation note, or an interview, one of the following formats should be used:...

  (field note, location, date)

e.g.: ... (field note, Jakarta, November 23, 2014)
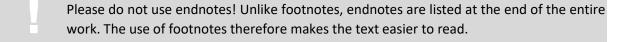
... (interview with name/pseudonym, place, date)
e.g.: (interview with Brahim Mahamat Ali, Abéché, Chad, February 27, 2010) ...

(reconstructed conversation with name/pseudonym, place, date)
e.g.: (reconstructed conversation with Brahim Mahamat Ali, Abéché, Chad, February 27, 2010)

8 Footnotes

- Footnotes can be used for comments outside the body text. They are indicated by small superscript numbers at the end of the sentence and appear at the bottom of the page.
- Footnotes always end with a punctuation mark, usually a period.
- Footnotes provide space for relevant details, corrections, objections, and further thoughts that would otherwise interrupt the main argument within the text. However, footnotes should still be used sparingly in this function.
- Footnotes can also refer to further bibliographic information that supports the views (or explanations) discussed in the text.

> **!** Please do not use endnotes! Unlike footnotes, endnotes are listed at the end of the entire work. The use of footnotes therefore makes the text easier to read.

9 List of sources

The list of sources or bibliography is located at the end of the paper. If the list contains films or other media products in addition to literature, the heading "List of Sources" should be used. Otherwise, the term "Bibliography" is more precise. The information in the list of sources or bibliography must enable the reader to obtain the exact publication (book, journal volume, etc.) from which the quotation was taken. Only sources that are cited in the text should be included in the list of sources or bibliography. Conversely, all sources cited in the text must appear there.

The way in which bibliographic references are formatted often varies, so the following important rule applies:

> **!** The bibliography must be consistent and uniform in design.

- It should also be noted that authors or editors, year of publication, and title always belong at the beginning of an entry.
- Additions such as "and," "translated," or "editor," or information about the edition are given in the language of the main text. In a term paper written in German, for example, the editors are designated with (Hg.), while in an English text they are designated with (ed.) or (eds.) if there are multiple editors.
- The list is arranged alphabetically by the authors' last names.
- Each entry ends with a period.

> ! It is recommended that the main source be italicized within the bibliography, as this makes it clear at a glance which source is the main source and makes it easier for others to search the literature.

> ! The use of a reference management program is highly recommended.
> The Citavi program is free of charge for students at the FU Berlin. The university library regularly offers introductory courses on how to use the program.
>
> The citation style can be set for specific journals in Citavi; in our field, you should set it to *Current Anthropology* or *Harvard (GBFE)*, for example, as these styles are sufficiently similar to the one used in this guide.
>
> Endnote is a suitable program for Mac and is also available free of charge to FU students:
>
> https://www.fu-berlin.de/en/sites/ub/literatursuche/literaturverwaltung/index.html

9.1 Examples of bibliographic references

BOOK / MONOGRAPHY

Last name, first name Author Year of publication: Full title. Subtitle. [If applicable, title of the series and volume number.] Place of publication: Publisher.

Example

Röttger-Rössler, Birgitt 2004: *Die kulturelle Modellierung des Gefühls. Ein Beitrag zur Theorie und Methodik ethnologischer Emotionsforschung anhand indonesischer Fallstudien.* Göttinger Studien zur Ethnologie Vol. 12. Münster: LiT.

COLLECTED WORKS

Last name, first name Editor (ed.) Year of publication: Title. Subtitle. [If applicable, title of the series and volume number.] Place of publication: Publisher.

Example

Dilger, Hansjörg und Bernhard Hadolt (ed.) 2010: *Medizin im Kontext. Krankheit und Gesundheit in einer vernetzten Welt.* Frankfurt a.M.: Peter Lang Verlag.

CONTRIBUTION TO ANTHOLOGY

Last name, first name Author Year: Title. Subtitle. In: First name Last name Editor (ed.), Title. Subtitle. Place of publication: Publisher, page numbers of the article.

Example

Heuser, Eric Anton und Agnes Brandt 2011: Beyond European Discourses: Friendship conceptions and practices in Aotearoa New Zealand and Java. In: Bernadette Descharmes, Eric

Anton Heuser, Caroline Krüger und Thomas Loy (ed.), *Varieties of Friendship: Interdisciplinary perspectives on social relationships*. Göttingen: V&R Unipress, 145-174.

ARTICLE IN SCIENTIFIC JOURNAL

Last name, first name Author Year: Title of the essay. Name of the journal Volume (issue number): Page numbers of the article in the issue.

Example

Mattes, Dominik 2012: "I Am Also a Human Being!": Antiretroviral Treatment in Local Moral Worlds. *Anthropology and Medicine* 19 (1): 75-84.

FILM

Last name, first name Director (Dir.) Year: Title of the film. Film genre, duration in minutes, further details on technical format and language. Location: Production company.

Example:

Walter, Florian (Dir.) 2008: *On the Road with Maruch.* Anthropological documentary film, 45 Min. 16mm film, Super8, 24pA, Spanish and Tsotsil with english subitles. Göttingen: Institut für visuelle Ethnografie (IVE).

SOURCES from the INTERNET

Basically, the same requirements apply as for all preceding materials. Missing information on authorship, title, or year of publication can be replaced by placeholders (e.g., if the year is missing: "n.d.").

Last name, first name Author Year: Title. [If applicable: In: Title of series/journal Volume (issue number)] Name of institution/main page/list. Internet address (date of access).

Example

Jouili, Jeanette S. 2005: Muslimische Frauen in Europa und das Gebet: Von „moralischen" Selbsttechnologien zu performativen Anerkennungspraktiken. In: *Ethnoscripts* 7 (2). http://www.ethnologie.uni-hamburg.de/de/pdfs/Ethnoscripts_pdf/es_7_2_artikel1.pdf (May 9th, 2012).

König, Anika: Embryos on the Move: Transnational Networks of Surrogacy. Blog post on „Medizinethnologie. Körper, Gesundheit und Heilung in einer globalisierten Welt". https://www.medizinethnologie.net/embryos-on-the-move/ (July 9, 2018).

If the source is an institution's website or online publication, the institution is listed as the author:

Institution Year: Title or heading of the page. Internet address (date of access).

Example

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Sozial- und Kulturanthropologie (DGSKA) (n.d.): Geschichte der DGSKA. https://www.dgska.de/dgska/geschichte/ (July 9, 2018).

> **!** Sources from the Internet must be examined for their scientific value. It is not possible to use Wikipedia and similar sources in a scientific paper (unless you are explicitly writing a paper about Wikipedia).

DOCTORAL THESES

Last name, first name Author Year. Title. Dissertation, University.

Example

> von Poser, Anita 2009: *Bosmun Empathy. Person, Food, and Place in Papua New Guinea*. Dissertation, Universität Heidelberg, Microfiche.

UNPUBLISHED WRITINGS

Last name, first name Author Year: Title. [Type of thesis, if applicable] Location: Unpublished.

Example

> Kasmani, Omar 2016: *Of_f the Lines: Fakir Orientations of Gender, Body and Space in Sehwan Sharif, Pakistan.* Dissertation, FU Berlin: Unpublished.

9.2 Additional rules and more difficult cases

One text and multiple authors or editors

- List all authors or editors in the bibliography.
- Authors or editors are separated by commas, with the last person preceded by "and."
- For the first person: Last name before first name and separated by a comma; from the second person onwards, the first name comes before the last name.

Example

> Dilger, Hansjörg, Angelika Wolf, Undine Frömming, and Kerstin Volker-Saad (eds.) 2004: Moderne und postkoloniale Transformation. Ethnologische Schrift zum 60. Geburtstag von Ute Luig. Berlin: Weißensee Verlag.

One author, one year, multiple publications

- Works are distinguished from one another by letters, which are then also used in the short citations in the text.

Example

> Röttger-Rössler, Birgitt 2010a: Das Schweigen der Ethnologen. Zur Unterrepräsentanz des Faches in neurobiologisch-kulturwissenschaftlichen Forschungskooperationen. *Sociologus* 60 (1): 99-121.

> Röttger-Rössler, Birgitt 2010b: Zur Kulturalität von Emotionen. *Existenzanalyse* 2: 20-29.

The work has had several editions.

- In the bibliography, the edition is identified and the year of publication of the first edition in the past is indicated in square brackets after the year of publication.
- In the short citation style in the text, only the year of the cited edition is usually given, e.g. (Dilger/Luig 2013).
- Only if it is important for historical contextualization can a square bracket with the year of first publication be added here as well, e.g., (Lévi-Strauss 1991 [1962]).

Example

> Dilger, Hansjörg and Ute Luig (Hg.) 2013 [2010]: *Morality, Hope and Grief: Anthropologies of Aids in Africa*. New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books.

The work cited is not the original edition

- In the case of translations and reprints, or in the case of much later editions of older books, the original publication should be indicated in parentheses.

Example

Lévi-Strauss, Claude 1991: *Das Wilde Denken*. Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp. (Original 1962: *La pensée sauvage*. Paris: Plon).

Year or place of publication not specified

Example

Pflaume, Niels (o.J.): *Literarische Betrachtungen.* (o.O.): Zyklin.

> **!** You will notice that references may deviate from the recommended procedure above and may differ in details. As mentioned earlier, consistency within a text is the most important rule of all.

10 Appendix

The appendix contains supplementary material that is too large for the text and must be attached to the work at the end. This may include tables, illustrations, maps, or interview guides, for example.

> **!** It is not customary to include field notes or interview transcripts in the appendix. Refrain from including such additional material in empirical work unless expressly requested by the instructor.

11 Affidavit (plagiarism declaration)

To ensure that all statements in your text that do not originate from others and are therefore not cited are your own thoughts, the following affidavit must be included with your work:

Affidavit

I hereby declare that I have written this paper independently, without outside help and using only the sources listed.

_____   _____
Place, date   Signature

! The **Chicago Manual of Style** provides detailed information on the formal layout of academic texts. Although it specifies a citation style that differs from this guide, it can be helpful for clarifying further details.

http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org

...and by the way:

- The paper should be proofread by friends, etc. before submission.

- The paper may also be written in English.

- For M.A. papers, an abstract of max. 100 words and keywords may be included.

- "The publication of exam-relevant term papers or presentations in printed form or on internet platforms, whether for commercial or non-commercial purposes, is only possible with the permission of the respective course instructors" (information from the FU's legal department regarding GRIN, Hausarbeiten.de, etc.).

The following guidelines were consulted in the preparation of this guide:

Reinhardt, Thomas 2015: *Kleiner Leitfaden zum Abfassen wissenschaftlicher Arbeiten*. Institut für Ethnologie, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München. https://www.ethnologie.uni-muenchen.de/studium/lehre/leitfaden/leitfaden_hausarbeiten.pdf (June 25th, 2018; September 8, 2025).

Reithofer, Hans 2014: *Wissenschaftliche Hausarbeiten. Ein Leitfaden mit Richtlinien und Empfehlungen.* Institut für Ethnologie; Georg-August-Universität Göttingen. https://www.uni-goettingen.de/de/86102.html (June 25th, 2018; September 8, 2025).

Translation with DeepL

Editorial Revision: Dr. Katharina Kirchhoff