

# How to write and evaluate term papers



## Formal criteria

- Does your paper have a title page (incl. author, title, submission date)?
- Does it have a table of contents?
- Does it have a list of references? Is it complete, i.e. does it include references to all in-text citations (and only to these)?
- Does the layout comply with institute standards (1.5 lines, times new roman)?
- Is it roughly 3.000 words long?
  
- Are citations formally correct and complete?
  - coherent and according to **Harvard-style**: <http://libweb.anglia.ac.uk/referencing/harvard.htm>
  - Examples:
    - Paraphrasing: Author (Year, page number(s)) argues that...
    - Literal citation: This view is shared by other authors as well: „exact citation“ (Author, year, page number(s))
  - **Plagiarism is sanctioned with 5,0 (=fail)**. Please also refer to further information on plagiarism on the institute website.

# Topic and research question

- Does the paper refer to the topic of the seminar?
- Is there a clear research question
  - Is it made explicit?
  - Does it correspond to the topic of the term paper?
  - Is it a sensible question, i.e. precise, focussed, scholarly relevant, and is it possible to answer it in the framework of a term paper?
- Does it include the definitions of the main concepts?
- Is your own contribution clearly recognizable (i.e. are you not only reproducing existing texts)?
  - Does the question go beyond the topics that have been dealt with in the seminar?
  - Is the paper purely descriptive or also analytical?
  - Is there an original/innovative idea with respect to theory or methods?

# Outline of the argument

- Do you explain and justify how you go about to answer the research question?
- Does the structure of the paper make sense in view of the research question, or would there be better ways to deal with it?
  - Is the aim of each chapter clearly defined, and does it contribute to answering the research question?
  - Is the chapter structure coherent, i.e. are the chapters logically connected and is there a clear and explicit theme running through the paper?

## Paper structure:

Introduction:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Introduction to the topic</li> <li>- Development of a relevant and clear research question</li> <li>- Definition of main concepts</li> <li>- Discussion of the paper structure</li> </ul>
Main part:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Presentation of the argument in subsections</li> </ul>
Conclusion:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Summary of findings</li> <li>- Limitations of this research</li> <li>- Outlook</li> </ul>

# Answering your research question I

- Do you present clear reasoning underpinning your arguments?
  - Do your arguments link to the research question?
  - Are they deductive (i.e. following from what was previously said), concise (i.e. no unnecessary digressions) and logically consistent (without contradictions)?
- Is your argument based on the state of the art in scholarly literature?
  - Have you conducted a systematic literature review?
  - Do you refer to relevant scholarly literature that refers to the topic?
  - Do you use a sufficient amount of contributions (about 10 sources)?
  - Do you report and interpret the references correctly?

## Answering your research question II

- Do you critically reflect on your arguments? Do you mention potential criticism regarding weaknesses of your own argument?
- Does the style comply with standards of academic research, i.e.
  - Is your argumentation grammatically and linguistically correct?
  - Is the spelling correct?
  - Is your writing style simple, clear and precise?
  - Is the writing style adequate, i.e. neutral, free of polemics and normative judgment?
- Do you answer the research question in the final chapter?