



Institut für Englische Sprache und Literatur: Literary and Cultural Studies

Guidelines for academic papers in Literary or Cultural Studies (VT1 paper – B.A. thesis – M.Ed. thesis)

1 Topic

Your topic has to be of literary or cultural relevance and is to be discussed with your first supervisor before you begin your research. Remember that you are writing a research paper and not an essay! You have to argue a thesis, not merely express your opinion. In order to do this, your research needs to be based on theoretical texts as well as on primary material and secondary literature.

2 Length

The required length is 4,000 words for a regular term paper, 8,000 words for a bachelor thesis, and 16,000 words for a master thesis (10% tolerance). These word counts exclude your title page, table of contents, list of works cited, appendices, and declaration of authorship. Please indicate your final word count on the title page of your thesis.

3 Format

The student's last name and the page number should appear in the upper right hand corner of every text page (minus the title page and the table of contents). Each page should have a margin for corrections and comments (2.5 cm on top and bottom, 3 cm on the sides). Except for the first paragraphs of each chapter, each following paragraph should be indented 1.25 cm from the left margin.

The text – including quotations, notes, and the list of works cited – should be in a regular 12-point font (Arial or Times New Roman) and 1.5-line spaced.



Institut für Englische Sprache und Literatur: Literary and Cultural Studies

The title page should include the following items of information:

- name of university and chair, title of the seminar, name of lecturer, name of module (for seminar papers), names of both supervisors (for bachelor and master theses)
- title of term paper/thesis
- student's name, address (incl. telephone and matriculation numbers), e-mail address, Studiengang, semester, final word count of the paper

4 Structure

Each term paper or thesis has to include a title page, table of contents, main text, a list of sources, and a declaration of authorship.

4.1 Table of contents

Your table of contents should show the structure of your paper, the individual chapters and subchapters, each with the respective page number. Think of informative and concise headings for your chapters and make sure that the exact wording in your table of contents is repeated in the text.

A clear structure for a B.A. thesis could look similar to this:

1	Introduction	1
2	Theoretical part	
2.1	Definition of concept I	2
2.2	Definition of concept II	4
3	Analytical part	
3.1	Analysis of aspect I	6
3.2	Analysis of aspect II	10
3.3	Analysis of aspect III	13
4	Conclusion	16
5	Bibliography	17
6	Declaration of authorship	18



Institut für Englische Sprache und Literatur: Literary and Cultural Studies

The number of subchapters obviously depends on the length of your paper (very few chapters for term papers, more or longer chapters for master theses).

4.2 Introduction

In your introduction you introduce the topic you have chosen for your term paper/thesis, the relevance of your topic and material, your thesis statement, the structure of your paper, and your theoretical approach to your topic. Remember that your thesis statement is the most important aspect of your introduction, as it guides your argumentation and analysis and determines the choice of theoretical tools.

4.3 Theoretical part

In your theoretical part, you outline your basic theoretical approach and appropriate methods for your analysis and define the main theoretical terms and relevant concepts (example: for the topic “Modernist Femininity in Virginia Woolf’s *Mrs Dalloway*” define “modernism” and “femininity”). For this, you need to use secondary sources from Literary and Cultural Studies. Remember: the theory is there to support your analysis, not the other way round. Only include theoretical points that you need in your analysis (example: do not discuss the difference between “modernism” and “postmodernism” if you are only analysing a modernist novel).

4.4 Analytical part

The main part of your paper is the analysis and interpretation of the literary text(s), film(s), graphic novel, cultural phenomenon or artistic product that you have chosen for your paper. The analytical part should be subdivided in accordance with the thematic aspects and theoretical concepts you select (example: if your topic was “Monstrous Femininity in Jeanette Winterson’s *Sexing the Cherry*”, your analysis could consist of the chapters: “Monstrous Physicality”, “Sexuality and Maternity” and “Cruelty and Violence”).



Institut für Englische Sprache und Literatur: Literary and Cultural Studies

While your introduction and theoretical part will already have generally stated what you intend to analyse and introduced the theoretical definitions and methods you need, your argumentation is conducted in the analytical chapter(s). Make sure you pay attention to detail: rather focus on a thorough analysis of key moments than discuss too many scenes in a superficial way. Include not merely *what* is told (e.g. narrative, characters, plot), but also consider *how* it is told (e.g. narrator or speaker, stylistic devices, point of view, asides, voice over, mis-en-scène). Remember that each genre and medium comes with its own terminology: for the analysis of a novel you need a special terminology which is different from the terms used for the analysis of a poem, a film or a drama.

Do not include any summaries of your primary text or elaborate character descriptions as they are not necessary. However, you are allowed to refer to the fictitious world of your primary source(s) in order to contextualize your argument. Short biographies of authors are also superfluous unless they are directly relevant to your inquiry. If in doubt, ask your lecturer, because you definitely cannot use everything you read for your own background information in your paper.

4.5 Conclusion

The conclusion should summarise your most important findings and refer back to your thesis statement. Be careful not to repeat elaborate points or arguments you explained before – be brief and to the point. Indicate possible aspects of your topic that could provide for further study as an outlook.

4.6 Declaration of authorship

The declaration concludes your thesis. By signing it, you confirm to have written the term paper independently and to have acknowledged all primary and secondary sources cited directly or indirectly in the paper. Please include and sign the following paragraph at the end of your thesis:



Institut für Englische Sprache und Literatur: Literary and Cultural Studies

I hereby declare that this term paper/bachelor thesis/master thesis (chosen accordingly) is the result of my own independent scholarly work and that in all cases the use of material from the work of others is acknowledged. Quotations and paraphrases are clearly indicated and no material other than listed has been used. This written work has not been submitted at any university or department before.

Ort, Datum (place, date) Unterschrift (signature)

5 Style and language

Great clarity of language is the prerequisite for the precise expression of your thoughts. Therefore, you cannot divide your language skills from the content level of your paper. Do not use any typographical effects. If you wish to emphasize a point or express a contrast of opinions, please do so with the help of linguistic means only (e.g. “In this context, it is important to point out that ...” or “In contrast to Miller’s reading of this passage, I would argue ...”). Please also take on board all the helpful pieces of advice you were given in your courses on academic writing or textual composition, for instance on paragraphing.

Moreover, remember that you have to use the simple past tense for historical facts (e.g., “*The Moonstone* was published in 1868.”) and the simple present tense for fiction (e.g. “*The Moonstone* is partly set in London.”). Should you decide on using capitals, remember to capitalise everything except for articles and prepositions. Do not use unusual abbreviations (such as “incog.” for “incognito”) or short forms (such as “hasn’t” or “won’t”).

Make sure all your sentences contain a complete main clause [SP – and also an object (SPO), especially if the verb is transitive (vt)]. Better repeat nouns or names to clarify subjects or objects of sentences (he, she, they). Avoid the use of “it” or “this” when you are not positive what “it” or “this” refers to.



Institut für Englische Sprache und Literatur: Literary and Cultural Studies

Remember that commas can easily change the meaning of a sentence (cf. Lynne Truss's bestseller *Eats, Shoots & Leaves*, 2003), since they cut off the main clause from the relative clause (in the sentence "He did not kill his wife, because he loved her." the comma saved the wife's life!).

Avoid the use of the -ing-form unless you feel completely confident you use it correctly. Examples for incorrect usage are, e.g., "Walking down the street, the house was on fire." or "Reading his play, Shakespeare constructs Juliet as a young innocent woman."

The use of the "I" (e.g. in "I would argue", "I will illustrate", "I aim to show", "in my view") will help you to avoid ungainly and imprecise passive constructions (such as "It will be argued" or "It was mentioned").

Use a variety of verbs, adjectives, connectors and conjunctions (not only "but") to achieve precision and a pleasant style. Avoid colloquial, simplistic or naïve expressions (like, kind of, big, nice, just, naturally, of course) or verbs (to do, to get, to put, to want), and also avoid "to seem" or "to try" when they will weaken the impact of your argument. Use your dictionary to check whether you have used the correct preposition with a noun or a verb. Usually, the meaning of a verb relies strongly on the preposition that follows it (cf. for instance "to come by", "to come down", "to come from", "to come to", "to come up", "to come with", etc.).

6 Citation and bibliography

The information in these guidelines is taken from the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, which lists the formal conventions for writing research papers and gives examples for quotations and source documentation. Please follow the MLA instructions for citing sources (both in-text and concerning your list of works cited). For more information, please consult your additional handout or the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* (available at the library or the Media Centre of the Institut für Englische Sprache und Literatur).



Institut für Englische Sprache und Literatur: Literary and Cultural Studies

6.1 Why document sources?

Academic writing is a conversation among scholars. It is a way of communicating your research results to other scholars, which is a process that needs comprehensible and verifiably means of referring to other authors' works. Documenting sources properly is necessary to avoid charges of plagiarism and also shows competence in your field.

6.2 Plagiarism and academic dishonesty

Plagiarism is presenting another person's thoughts, ideas, information, expressions or entire work as your own. Plagiarists are not only seen as dishonest, their capability of doing their own research and expressing their own thoughts and analysis are questioned as well. In professional writing, schools and universities, plagiarism is considered a serious offence. If one piece of work contains plagiarism, how can the reader trust any other work by the writer? There are various forms of plagiarism, including copying text from a published source, using another student's work and presenting it as your own or buying papers online. All of these forms present another writer's work as your own and must be avoided.

6.3 How to avoid plagiarism

The most important part of avoiding plagiarism is to be scrupulous with your own research. Always include the sources in your notes, distinguish between your own thoughts and phrases that you have copied or summarized from another source. In the process of writing, be careful to identify all phrases, ideas and thoughts you have taken on board, even if it is merely a short sentence or a paraphrased idea. When in doubt consult your supervisor.

6.4 Citation

The Modern Language Association (MLA) provides the method of source documentation you should use for a paper in Literary or Cultural Studies. The most



Institut für Englische Sprache und Literatur: Literary and Cultural Studies

recent MLA guidelines can be found in the eighth edition of the *MLA Handbook* or at the Online Writing Lab of Purdue University:

https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_formatting_and_style_guide/mla_formatting_and_style_guide.html

6.5 Formatting quotations

Shorter quotations (four typed lines or fewer of prose or three lines of verse) need to be integrated into the running text and indicated by double quotation marks. Make sure you use the English (“...”) and not the German („...“) way of writing them. Name the author and the specific page in the text and include the complete reference in your bibliography. Direct speech within the quotation is to be distinguished by single quotation marks.

Oscar Wilde claims that “the morality of art consist in the perfect use of an imperfect medium” (3).

The morality of art is a relevant question in *fin-de-siècle* literature and one argument is that “the morality of art consists in the perfect use of an imperfect medium” (Oscar Wilde 3).

Mark breaks in short quotations of verse with a slash (/) at the end of each verse. Use a double slash (//), if a stanza break occurs during your quotation.

Thinking about his possible future as king, Macbeth states “Come what may, / Time and the hour runs through the roughest day” (Shakespeare 1.3.147-148).

Longer quotations should be placed in a free-standing block of text. Start the quotation on a new line and inset it 1 cm from the left margin. Since this already signals



Institut für Englische Sprache und Literatur: Literary and Cultural Studies

quotation, double quotation marks are not necessary. In this case your parenthetical citation should come after the closing punctuation mark.

When Dorian Gray first thinks of the prospect of growing old, he is struck by fear:

The scarlet would pass away from his lips, and the gold steal from his hair. The life that was to make his soul would mar his body. He would become dreadful, hideous and uncouth. As he thought of it, a sharp pang of pain struck through him like a knife and made each delicate fibre of his nature quiver. His eyes deepened into amethyst, and across them came a mist of tears. He felt as if a hand of ice had been laid upon his heart. (Wilde 26)

Quotations of long sections of poetry should be formatted as closely to the original as possible.

Macbeth desires to learn more of his future and begs the Weird Sisters to stay:

Stay, you imperfect speakers, tell me more.
By Sinel's death I know I am Thane of Glamis;
But how of Cawdor? The Thane of Cawdor lives,
A prosperous gentleman; and to be King
Stands not within the prospect of belief,
No more than to be Cawdor. (Shakespeare 1.3.70-75)

If you want to quote a passage of a text that contains a quote, differentiate the quote within the quote with single quotation marks ('...'). Write "cited in" in your parenthetical citation, if you only quote the already cited part.

To add or omit words in quotations put brackets around the words to indicate that they are not part of the original text:

"Archer reddened, and his heart gave a leap of surprise [when Madame Olenska asked him about the roses]. He had called only twice on Madame Olenska, and each time he had sent her a box of yellow roses, and each time without a card" (Wharton 116).

"Now her sudden recognition of the gift [...] filled him with an agitated pleasure" (Wharton 116).



Institut für Englische Sprache und Literatur: Literary and Cultural Studies

6.6 Bibliography

The bibliography has to provide full bibliographical details of all works that have been cited or consulted in writing the paper. Start your bibliography on a separate page at the end of your paper and label the page Bibliography or Works Cited. Make sure that the bibliographical details are equally thorough for all forms of sources, including articles, dictionaries, reviews, videos, etc. Entries must be listed alphabetically by the authors' surnames, do not list academic or other titles or degrees (PhD, MA, etc.). Capitalize each word in the title of books, articles, etc., but do not capitalize articles (a, the), prepositions or conjunctions unless one is the first word of the title. Use italics for titles of all works published on their own (books, journals, magazines, films) and quotation marks for titles of shorter works that appear in collections (poems, articles, essays). If you want to include several works by the same author, order the entries alphabetically and use three hyphens instead of the author's name for every entry after the first one.

- The basic format for book citations:

Last Name, First Name. *Title of Book*. City of Publication, Publisher, Publication Date.

Note: the City of Publication should only be included if the book was published before 1900 or if the publisher has offices in more than one country.

- A book with one author:

Schäbler, Daniel. *Framing Strategies in English Fiction from Romanticism to the Present*. Winter, 2014.

- A book with more than one author:

Order the authors in the same way they are presented in the book. The first given name appears in last name, first name format. If there are three or more authors, list only the first author's name and give the phrase et al. (Latin for "and others") in place of the other authors' names.

Gillespie, Paula, and Neal Lerner. *The Allyn and Bacon Guide to Peer Tutoring*. Allyn and Bacon, 2000.



Institut für Englische Sprache und Literatur: Literary and Cultural Studies

- Two or more books by the same author:

Palmer, William J. *Dickens and New Historicism*. St. Martin's, 1997.

---. *The Films of the Eighties: A Social History*. Southern Illinois UP, 1993.

- A book by a corporate author or organization:

American Allergy Association. *Allergies in Children*. Random House, 1998.

- A book with no author:

Encyclopedia of Indiana. Somerset, 1993.

- A translated book:

Foucault, Michel. *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*.

Translated by Richard Howard, Vintage-Random House, 1988.

- A republished book:

Republished due to popularity, without becoming a new edition:

Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble*. 1990. Routledge, 1999.

- A collection of articles or essays:

Böhnke, Dietmar, Stefani Brusberg-Kiermeier and Peter Drexler, eds. *Victorian Highways, Victorian Byways: New Approaches to Nineteenth-Century British Literature and Culture*. Trafo, 2010.

- An edition of a book:

There are two types of editions: a book that simply has been published in more than one edition and a book that is prepared by someone other than the author (an editor).

- A subsequent edition:

Crowley, Sharon, and Debra Hawhee. *Ancient Rhetorics for Contemporary Students*. 3rd ed., Pearson, 2004.

- A work prepared by an editor:

Bronte, Charlotte. *Jane Eyre*. Edited by Margaret Smith, Oxford UP, 1998.

- A work in an anthology, reference or collection:

This may include an essay in an edited collection or anthology, or a chapter of a book.

The basic form is:



Institut für Englische Sprache und Literatur: Literary and Cultural Studies

Last Name, First Name. "Title Essay." *Title of Collection*, edited by Editor's Name(s), Publisher, Year, Page range of entry.

Brusberg-Kiermeier, Stefani. "Cruelty, Violence and Rituals in Sarah Kane's Plays." *Sarah Kane in Context*, edited by Laurens De Vos and Graham Saunders, Manchester University Press, 2010, pp. 80-87.

- An article in a reference book (e.g. Encyclopedias, Dictionaries):

Brusberg-Kiermeier, Stefani. "Sarah Kane." *Kindlers Literatur-Lexikon*, 3rd ed., 2010.

- An introduction, preface, foreword, or afterword:

Brusberg-Kiermeier, Stefani and Jörg Helbig. Introduction. *Shakespeare in the Media: From the Globe Theatre to the World Wide Web*, ed. by Stefani Brusberg-Kiermeier and Jörg Helbig, 2nd ed., Frankfurt/M.; Berlin; Bern; Bruxelles; New York; Oxford; Wien: Peter Lang, 2010, pp. 7-10.

- A book published before 1900:

Books published before 1900 are usually defined by their place of publication rather than the publisher.

Thoreau, Henry David. *Excursion*. Boston, 1863.

- An Article in a scholarly journal:

Last Name, First Name. "Title of Article." *Title of Journal*, Volume, Issue, Year, pages.

Brusberg-Kiermeier, Stefani and James McKenzie. "Desire and Anxiety: Cold War Voyeurism in Contemporary TV Spy Series." *Journal for the Study of British Cultures*, vol. 24, no. 1, 2017, pp. 73-88.

- An article in a magazine:

Last Name, First Name. "Title of Article." *Title of Periodical*, Day Month Year, pages.

Poniewozik, James. "TV Makes a Too-Close Call." *Time*, 20 Nov. 2000, pp. 70-71.

- A review:

Brusberg-Kiermeier, Stefani. "Love's Labours Lost 'So won, so lost'." Review of *Love's Labours Lost*, directed by Kenneth Branagh. *Hard Times 70*, no. 1, 2000, pp. 57-59.



Institut für Englische Sprache und Literatur: Literary and Cultural Studies

- Citing an entire website

Editor, author, or compiler name (if available). *Name of Site*. Version number, name of institution/organisation affiliated with the site (sponsor or publisher), date of resource creation (if available), URL, DOI or permalink. Date of access.

The Purdue OWL Family of Sites. The Writing Lab and OWL at Purdue and Purdue U, 2008, owl.english.purdue.edu/owl. Accessed 23 Apr. 2008.

- A page on a website

Lundman, Susan. "How to Make Vegetarian Chili." *eHow*, www.ehow.com/how_10727_make-vegetarian-chili.html. Accessed 6 June 2015.

- An article in a scholarly online journal

If the journal also appears in print, cite the article as you would a scholarly journal in print and include the URL and date of access. If the journal only appears exclusively in an online format and does not indicate a page range, indicate the URL or other location information.

Dolby, Nadine. "Research in Youth Culture and Policy: Current Conditions and Future Directions." *Social Work and Society: The International Online-Only Journal*, vol. 6, no. 2, 2008, www.socwork.net/sws/article/view/60/362. Accessed 20 May 2009.

- Films

List films by their title and include the director's name, the film studio or distributor, and the release year. You may also include performers' names after the director's name, if necessary.

Speed Racer. Directed by Lana Wachowski and Lilly Wachowski, performances by Emile Hirsch, Nicholas Elia, Susan Sarandon, Ariel Winter, and John Goodman, Warner Brothers, 2008.

For further examples and more specific formats, please visit https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue_owl.html or consult the eighth edition of the *MLA Handbook*.