

# Guidelines for Term Papers and B.A. / M.A. Theses

Whether you are writing a term paper (Hausarbeit), B.A. thesis (Bachelorarbeit) or M.A. thesis (Masterarbeit), you have to adhere to the same basic principles of academic writing, scholarly research and citation. While there may be different expectations regarding theoretical foundation or analytical depth between a term paper, B.A. thesis and M.A. thesis, the basics are always the same in terms of research, formalities, structure, and thesis development. These guidelines are designed to help you familiarize yourself with these basic principles, make you aware of pitfalls and problems, give you valuable advice on how to approach, structure and write your work, and, finally, how to properly do your citations when writing with me as your supervisor.

Before we move into all of the above, you should be aware of the competencies and criteria you are expected to show and fulfil in your work. The following **six criteria** are **essential** for **a good term paper / thesis**. Be aware of them and aim to fulfil these criteria in your written work as best as possible.

The better you fulfil the following criteria, the better your grade will be!

# The Seven Essential Elements of a Term Paper / Thesis

## 1) Thesis Statement

- Formulate a precise and thematically specific thesis statement;
- The thesis statement shows a clear focus on selected/central elements of the chosen topic;
- The thesis statement details your methodological approach that will structure your research towards fulfilling your central research aim(s).

## 2) Structure

- The structure of your work shows a clear fusion of thesis and method.
- The structure of your work shows a logical progression (“roter Faden”, and sequence of chapters)
- Paragraphs are the central structural and structuring elements within chapters. Your work shows / reflects this (paragraphs are a unit of sense; not too short or too long.)

## 3) Analysis

- Your arguments must be logical, cohesive and thesis-specific. No logical breaks in your argument!
- Don't summarize content or plot! Always suppose the reader knows the primary text(s) you are talking about!
- Your arguments should include and utilize your theoretical, contextual and/or conceptual (secondary) sources in the analysis chapter(s).
- Theory and context need to be *functionalized* in the analysis. This means that you have to *do something* with the concepts you introduced to show how your object of analysis (literary or media text or cultural practice) functions within the context of your thesis statement. Apply concepts to show different or new perspectives.
- Don't just paraphrase your secondary sources. Include your own perspective on things based on your knowledge (and citation!) of secondary sources. Agree or disagree with previous thinkers on your topic. Combine theories to create a critical lens that fits your object and elaborate on the new insights this gives!

## 4) Quotations

- Obviously, quotation should be correctly referenced in the Bibliography.
- Include direct quotations in your paper, both in the theoretical as well as in

the analysis part. This is ESSENTIAL. You need to engage with the arguments of the sources directly and show how you apply them to your method or how you interpret them for your thesis!

→ Works without direct quotations will not succeed in academic analysis!

### 5) Formal Features

- Have a formally correct cover page and table of contents.
- Include page numbers.
- Show the correct use of an academically accepted citation style throughout your work.
- A complete bibliography that contains *ALL* works cited.
- Length according to the requirements of the examination or module regulations.
- Use indentation with paragraphs.

### 6) Language

- Use of academic English, i.e. formal language, academic words and concepts (no slang, or everyday registers).
- Readability and coherence! Your argument has to follow logically from one aspect to the next and your language has to reflect that. Use appropriate sentence connections, like for example: Therefore, Consequently, Similarly, etc.
- Your language has to be grammatically correct.
- **PLEASE NOTE: theses that fail the criterion of language are always automatically a complete fail!**

### 7) Sources and Secondary Literature

- Show that you have read the standard works for your topic.
- Use current scholarship and not sources from 50 years ago.
- Utilize a variety of types of sources: monographs, journal articles, edited collections, interviews, etc.
- Make sure you use *scholarly* sources. Wikipedia, Spark Notes etc. are NOT scholarly sources.

**Having outlined the criteria and competencies that go into the writing of a good term paper/thesis and that consequently form the basis for the evaluation and**

**grading of the work, we shall continue with the information that will help you fulfil the above requirements.**

# How to write an academic Term Paper or B.A. / M.A. Thesis – Preparation, Structure and Research

## 1) General Purpose and fundamental *Do's* and *Don't's*

- A term paper (or B.A. thesis/M.A. thesis) in literary or cultural studies is the product of thorough academic research.
  - This means that you have to have an expert knowledge of your primary text(s) *in their entirety* before even starting to think further!
  - This also means that you need to read existing secondary sources about your topic in order to become knowledgeable about your topic's contexts and reception in the academic discourse. This happens before you start writing and even before you have a definitive chapter structure.
- The purpose of your term paper or written thesis is to present *your own argument* based on a well-focussed critical perspective.
  - Simply gathering information about the topic and patchworking information from secondary sources together will not do! You have to present a persuasive argument which takes in secondary sources by critically evaluating them and appropriating them to your argument.
- Your argument should be designed to show new aspects of your chosen topic by uncovering new connections or reevaluating established ideas from a new angle!
- Biographical information on the author is almost always irrelevant and should not be included.
- Plot summaries are unnecessary as you should always assume that the reader knows the primary texts you are talking about.
- Every time you use information from another source, this must be referenced.
  - This means: reference information not only when information is quoted, but also when you have summarized someone else's argument or when you cite data that is not common knowledge. If in doubt regarding what is common knowledge, better give a citation or come and talk to me.
- Always distinguish between information you take over indirectly and reformulate entirely in your own words (in this case, refer to it with "cf." [see below for more]). Do the same, of course, for passages in which you quote verbatim or from which you use formulations, even if it is only a few words (here, everything you directly quote from a source must be cited in quotation marks).
- Footnotes and/or Endnotes: You can either use footnotes or endnotes.
  - If you use endnotes, start a "Notes" section on a new page after the conclusion of your paper.
  - Endnotes and footnotes are *NOT* used for citing references. The main purpose of notes is to give related information that would be distracting in the main text. Notes are also often used to evaluate secondary sources critically, to point out further sources or to refer to debates in scholarship.
- Always add the "Selbstständigkeitserklärung" at the very end of the paper/thesis.

## 2) Formal Requirements and Structural Outline

- In writing your thesis or term paper, you should heed the following formalities:

### a) General Formatting

- ⇒ **Paper Size:** DIN A4, one-sided.
- ⇒ **Page Margins:**
  - **Term Paper:** 2,5 cm left, right and top. 2,0 cm bottom.
  - **BA / MA Thesis:** 3 cm on the left side; 2,5 cm right and top, 2,0 cm bottom.
- ⇒ **Font:** 12pt Times New Roman (or 11 Calibri / Aptos) for the text, 10pt for footnotes.
- ⇒ **Line Spacing:** 1.5 in running text, 1.0 in footnotes and indented quotations.
- ⇒ **Spacing Before and After Headings:** 6pt.
- ⇒ Your paper must be written in **justified print** ('Blocksatz').
- ⇒ **Indentation:** the first paragraph after a heading is usually not indented; all other paragraphs begin with a 1.5 cm indent which sets them apart from the previous paragraph (use 'tab stops').
- ⇒ **Page Numbers:** The page count should start with the introduction. Pagination should be on the bottom right of the page. There are no page numbers on the cover page, the table of contents, or the declaration of originality ('Versicherung an Eides Statt und Selbstständigkeitserklärung').
- ⇒ **Paper Length:** **Double check your respective "Prüfungsordnung", please.** However, usually texts should have the following length:
  - **Term Paper:** 10-12 pages for a term paper in semesters 1-4. 12-15 pages for a term paper in semesters 5 and 6.
  - **BA Thesis:** A B.A. thesis should be about 30 pages long. Everything between 27 and 33 pages is fine. Don't write less than 25 or more than 35 pages.
  - **MA Thesis:** A M.A. thesis should be about 60 pages long. Everything between 55 and 65 pages is fine. Don't write less than 50 or more than 70 pages.
  - **NOTE:** Don't waste space. If, for example, a chapter ends three lines into a page, don't leave the rest blank and start a new page! ALWAYS continue with the next chapter in the same page where the last chapter ends!
  - **NOTE:** If you have a hefty number of images or graphs in your paper, the overall size of the paper will increase as the above numbers are text-only. We will discuss this in more detail during our discussions about your paper/thesis.

## b) General Structure

### I. **Title Page (cf. Appendix I for an example)**

The title page of a term paper is a single page at the front of the work and includes the following information:

#### TOP LEFT:

- Name of the university and department.
- Term when the seminar took place.
- The module for which the paper is the module exam.
- Title of the seminar.
- Name of the lecturer (check website for correct spelling and academic titles!)

#### CENTER:

- Title (and subtitle) of the paper / thesis.

#### BOTTOM RIGHT:

- Your name and matriculation number.
- Course of studies.
- University E-Mail address.
- Official date of submission.

The title page for B.A./M.A. thesis contains basically same information, but in a slightly different format. Be sure to add both 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> supervisors! You will find a reference title page in *Appendix I* and also on the internet. I will provide examples and guidance when needed!

### II. **Table of Contents**

The table of contents is printed on a separate page and follows immediately after the title page. It lists all chapter headings with their corresponding page numbers, beginning with the Introduction. Capitalize all principal words in each chapter heading. Use Arabic numerals. Avoid more than two structural levels (e.g., 3.2 is still ok, 3.2.2 is not).

### III. **Main Text**

The Main Text is divided into three parts:

#### *Introduction*

- This part leads into your topic and explains your approach. The Thesis Statement is to be found at the end of the introduction (more on this, see below). The Introduction should be no more than 1 page (term paper) / 2 pages (BA and MA thesis) long.

#### *Main Body*

- This is the central part of your paper/thesis. It is subdivided into chapters and subchapters. It contains your comprehensive treatment of your topic in the form of a clearly structured line of argumentation where each (sub)chapter builds upon the previous and prepares the next.

#### *Conclusion*

- This part sums up your argument and your results briefly (1 page (term paper) / 2 pages (BA and MA thesis)) and may point towards ways or areas of further research.

#### IV. **Appendix**

If you have an Appendix or even Appendices, these are placed on a new page following the Conclusion.

#### V. **Works Cited**

- Start on a new page for the works cited.
- List any books, articles and sources you have used. This means both other sources from which you quoted *and* sources you have summarized information from. See below for further information on citations style.
- Put the citations into alphabetical order (by last name of the author); indent the second line of a citation and (if needed) all additional lines of the citation (Sondereinzug: hängend).
- You do not have to divide your bibliography between “primary” or “secondary” sources. You can do so if you feel it helps the reader find sources more quickly. It is customary to capitalize nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs in titles of books, poems, articles, etc.

#### VI. **Selbstständigkeitserklärung.**

This part is always the final part of the paper/thesis. It is on its own page and must be signed.

### **3) Preparing you Research**

- Since you will be spending quite some time working on your term paper or thesis, I suggest picking a topic that you have a decent interest in. Curiosity about a topic and motivation to delve deeper into something you like or find interesting goes a long way to assuring you enter your research with verve!
- Whether you are working with a canonical literary work, a film or a computer game, the first step is always to get to know your primary text!
  - This means reading, watching, playing that text a number of times until you have a very good grasp of the material.
  - Underline passages and make notes in the text or, in case of media texts, use a notebook to write down observations and references.
  - If you are dealing with literature in the narrow sense, be sure to work from a critical edition of your text. Critical editions have notes on the main text that help you understand the text itself and its contexts. Critical editions also usually provide a list of standard secondary sources that you should use to further your own research (see below).
- Use the library and its database resources to gain access to secondary sources about your topic. Be aware that there are sources you can (and should) get hold off beyond those directly accessible through Primo.
- If you are using internet sources or external databases, make sure these are scholarly sources. Wikipedia is NOT a scholarly source, nor should you use Cliff Notes, Spark Notes or any other type of notes.

#### 4) Preparing your Thesis Statement

- When you have settled on a topic and done (preliminary) research on it, it is time to formulate a thesis statement.
- The thesis statement is the most important part of your work. A term paper – and even more so a B.A. or M.A. thesis – is only as good as its thesis statement. When you have a concise, focussed, and clear thesis statement, chances are very high that your paper will be successful.
- Your thesis should narrow down your topic.
- You need to narrow down which aspects of your primary text you intend to focus on.
- For your thesis statement, you need to define the perspective / critical approach through which you approach your topic.
- Furthermore, you should specify the aim of your paper, your method, and the way you intend to reach that goal (structure).
- The thesis statement guides you as the author of the text. Every paragraph of your text should be connected to the thesis statement and argue some point of it. This helps you not get side-tracked while writing.
- A thesis statement is a **statement**. Do **NOT** formulate it as a research question!

- “Are the Harry Potter novels a coming-of-age story?” is NOT a thesis. It is a question and a rather superfluous one. Yes, they are.
- “Anglo-Saxon Elements in The Lord of the Rings” is a proper title, but also not a thesis. This title narrows down the topic a bit (to Anglo-Saxon elements) but does not say anything about the how and why. Since *Lord of the Rings* is a pretty long and complex work of literature, one needs to be rather specific about how to approach even the topic of Anglo-Saxon elements in the space of 15 pages, or even 30 or 60 pages. Here’s an example for a **proper thesis statement**:

*“In my paper / thesis, I will discuss Tolkien’s fantasy epic The Lord of the Rings with respect to Anglo-Saxon elements that can be found throughout the novel. I will concentrate on two aspects, namely the appropriation of Anglo-Saxon literary commonplaces and, secondly, on the Riders of Rohan as the most obvious representation of Anglo-Saxon culture. My investigation will show how key commonplaces are appropriated to create an elegiac atmosphere of the novel by means of the functionalization of narrative elements from the Old English epic poem Beowulf. I will read the plot of the Riders of Rohan through the story of Beowulf to show how Aragorn is initially cast as a Beowulf figure who frees Rohan, though not through his mere, brutal strength but by returning agency to the Rohan characters. In this way, Anglo-Saxon doom on the symbolic plane (commonplaces) is countered by a modern message of self-sufficient agency on the plot level. I will begin by exemplifying the elegiac nature of Anglo-Saxon literature and its presence in the novel. Next, I will show the central importance of wyrd (Fate) in Beowulf before reading the Rohan storyline as a renunciation of wyrd through human agency.”*

Another example for a thesis statement might be:

*“In my paper/thesis I will analyse the representation of toxic masculinity in James Bond. I will concentrate on the Bond film Spectre as it entails a number of representations of toxic masculinity. I will show how both Bond and Oberhauser enact toxic masculinity and analyse how the film manages to encode Bond’s*

*masculinity as heroic and Oberhauser's as villainous. I will begin by defining masculinity and delineating the concepts of hegemonic masculinity and toxic masculinity. As a next step, I will analyse selected scenes from the film to show how toxic masculinity is represented and encoded both heroically and villainously."*

⇒ As these examples show, thesis statements should be 5-8 sentences long, narrow down the topic, and specify the aspects of analysis as well as the structure.

- The thesis statement usually is found at the end of the introduction.

## 5) Writing your Paper / Thesis

- When you write your text, be sure to keep your thesis statement in mind. Everything you argue should be relevant to what you have specified in your thesis statement.
- The main structural element of longer texts is the paragraph. One paragraph should deal with one aspect (or sub-aspect) of your wider argument/analysis. This means that paragraphs should have a certain length to allow for an argument to be developed. 600 words is a good size for a paragraph, but, of course, shorter and longer ones are always possible depending on the context and argument. What you should avoid are very short, two or three sentence paragraphs.
- Do not chop up your paper into short sections. A section, chapter or subchapter should usually be several pages long. If it isn't, combine it with other sections into a larger unit of sense.
- Make clear distinctions between different levels of subheadings in terms of font size. Again, don't have too many sub-chapters.
- Do not use abbreviated forms of words and phrases like "don't", "shouldn't" and so forth. Always use the full forms "There is", "She states..."

## Citing Sources and Preparing the Works-Cited List

### Citing Sources – General Outline

- Citing sources is important to make your work academic. Without citing sources from scientific and academic texts and researchers, your paper will not fulfil the requirement of a *research* paper ("Wissenschaftlichkeit") and you will automatically fail.
- Please DO USE DIRECT QUOTATIONS to support and develop your arguments. Don't rely solely on paraphrasing (and referring to) the arguments of other scholars.
  - Arguments that don't work with direct quotations feel ungrounded. The reader does not get a feeling for the argument you are using and cannot fully understand your own take on the matter. Rule of thumb would be to have a quotation every other page when you are making an argument. Especially for elements or concepts you will use centrally, you should use direct quotes.

- If you have a direct quote, you should follow that up by giving its core argument in your own words and then applying it to your own argument, i.e. appropriating it for your thesis.
  - I prefer the MLA Citation Style (with some adjustments; see below). I suggest you work with the MLA style and familiarize yourself with it.
 

(If you are already proficient / familiar with another style of citation (Chicago, for instance), please talk to me about it. If it makes your life easier, I might be persuaded to let you use the other style 😊.)
  - The main reference is the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, at the time of writing in its 9<sup>th</sup> edition. You should always use the newest edition available (cf. <https://www.mla.org/MLA-Style>).
  - In addition to the MLA homepage, a more user-friendly page that explains current usage of MLA is here:
 

[https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research\\_and\\_citation/mla\\_style/mla\\_style\\_introduction.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_style_introduction.html)
- In the following, I will list, explain and exemplify the most common rules and formalities of MLA-style citation. If you are uncertain about any aspect of citing and referencing sources or you need to reference a source / form of text not covered here, look it up on the websites mentioned above. If that does not help (although it should!), come speak to me.

### **General Rules of Citation (MLA Style) [Examples given in blue]**

- **Quotation marks**

When citing sources in your text, use double quotation marks to indicate a direct quotation. Do this for all quotations of less than four lines of regular prose. Be sure to integrate the quotation into your prose and argument.

Seamus Heaney does not see poetry as quasi-religious, but as a form of self-help, namely “as divination, poetry as revelation of the self to the self” (Heaney, “Feeling into Words” 18).

For longer quotations, see below.

- **Paraphrase**

Sometimes rather than quoting a source directly, it makes more sense to paraphrase the ideas and arguments. Paraphrasing allows you to maintain your own style and tone of writing. Paraphrasing is used to summarize and condense longer arguments or processes. When you paraphrase ideas, you nevertheless need to tell the reader that you are doing so by citing your source(s). I suggest – in contrast to what the MLA says – that you put a footnote in your text explaining your paraphrase to the effect of, for instance, “The following summary of the various definitions of popular culture has been lifted from my reading of the following texts: Storey 2006, Fiske 1988, Hall 2005”. Remember that a paraphrase needs to be IN YOUR OWN WORDS. If you follow the sentences of the original too closely without using quotation marks, it will be plagiarism. Even within a longer paraphrase, it is not forbidden to quote directly from the sources you paraphrase if a sentence is particularly important or pertinent.

### ○ Longer Quotations

Avoid really long quotes of more than 1/3 of a page. In cases that you feel you need all this information, paraphrase (see above).

If a quotation is up to four lines long, embed it into the normal flow of your prose. If a quotation is longer than four lines (in your text!) it is to be set apart from the main text. In this case, the line spacing becomes 1,0 and the whole quotation is indented from the left margin by 1,5 cm. Font size is reduced by one; for example, from Times New Roman 12 to 11, or Arial / Calibri / Aptos 11 to 10.

... Heaney further elaborates on the connection between digging and writing poetry.

He understands

poetry as divination, poetry as revelation of the self to the self, as restoration of the culture to itself; poems are elements of continuity, with the aura and authenticity of archaeological finds, where the buried shard has an importance that is not diminished by the importance of the buried city; poetry as a dig, a dig for finds that end up being plants. ("Felling into Words" 18)

For Heaney, the aim of poetry is to uncover images of the past and through them to bring about a restoration of Irish culture. ...

### ○ Omissions and Changes in Quotations

If you change a quotation, this has to be indicated.

- a. **Omissions** are indicated by three dots with a space before each. When the omission coincides with the end of your sentence, place a period after the last word of the quotation and then add three periods with a space before each.

"The continual reference . . . to a distinction between structuralism and post-structuralism has several unfortunate effects."

"For the young Seamus Heaney, growing up in and around the small rural town of Mossbawn in County Derry, Northern Ireland, the land was a place of wonder . . . ."

- b. **Emphasis**. You may italicize words in a quotation for emphasis. You have to specify your alteration in parentheses by stating "emphasis added" or "my emphasis". It is separated by a semi-colon from the citation information.

"The continual reference in critical debate to a distinction between structuralism and post-structuralism has *several* unfortunate effects" (Culler 28; emphasis added).

- c. **Errors**. If your quotation contains an error, place "sic" in square brackets after the error to indicate that it is an original error and not your own.

"The continual reference in critical debate to a distinction between structuralism and post-structuralism have [sic] *several* unfortunate effects" (Culler 28).

- d. **Syntax and Grammar**. You can use square brackets to change the tense of a verb to fit you own sentence or even to make a pronoun change. Use these changes sparingly.

- **Quoting Poetry.**

When quoting poetry, lines are separated by a solidus (“/”):

Shakespeare’s *Sonnet 18* begins with a Natureingang. The speaker ruminates: “Shall I compare thee to a summer’s day/Thou art more lovely and more temperate” (1-2).

If you are quoting more than three lines of poetry, you should reproduce the verses as they appear in the page of your source:

Shakespeare’s *Sonnet 18* begins with a Natureingang. The speaker ruminates:

Shall I compare thee to a summer’s day  
Thou art more lovely and more temperate  
Rough Winds do shake the darling buds of May  
And Summer’s lease has all too short a date (1-4).

- **Footnotes**

Do NOT use footnotes for citing your sources!

Footnotes are in smaller print than the regular text. Your word processor usually automatically formats footnotes in such a font size.

Use footnotes to give information to the reader, which is not central to the argument at hand, but which, you feel, is good to know. This is called a *textual footnote*. Here is an example:

This is an excerpt from the paper’s regular text:

In his new book *District and Circle*, Seamus Heaney returns after more than thirty years to one of his most celebrated and most controversial subjects – The Tollund Man.<sup>1</sup> The sequence “The Tollund Man in Springtime” brings back the Iron Age body in a new and unexpected manner.

The textual footnote number 1 would be as follows:

<sup>1</sup> ‘Tollund Man’ is the name given to a mummified body from Iron Age times found in the bogs of Jutland. The Tollund Man appears for the first time in the poem of the same name in Seamus Heaney’s 1972 volume *Wintering Out*, which, together with the subsequent volume *North*, contains a number of poems dealing with bog mummies.

### **The Formal Structures of the MLA Citation Style [Examples given in blue]**

Cite your source in brackets directly following the quotation. In the brackets, include the author’s last name and the page number.

"The continual reference in critical debate to a distinction between structuralism and post-structuralism has several unfortunate effects" (Culler 28).

- If any source that doesn’t use page numbers, write: “n.p.”
- In using this type of citation, the reader can identify every quotation by cross-checking the name with the works-cited list/the bibliography.

- If the bibliography contains more than one work by an author, add the short title of the work you are citing from. The title should be shortened so that it can be unequivocally identified in the bibliography. This title is separated from the author's name by a comma. If the title appears in italics in the bibliography, the short title for the in-text citation should also be in italics. If the title in the bibliography appears in quotation marks, the short title should be in quotation marks as well.

"The continual reference in critical debate to a distinction between structuralism and post-structuralism has several unfortunate effects" (Culler, *On Deconstruction* 28).

- If you mention the name of the author in your own prose leading to the quotation, the name is omitted from the parenthesis:

Culler notes that "a distinction between structuralism and post-structuralism has several unfortunate effects" (28).

If the bibliography contains more than one work by the author, the parenthesis will contain only the short title and the page number.

Culler notes that "a distinction between structuralism and post-structuralism has several unfortunate effects" (*Deconstruction* 28).

- If you are working with a media text you need to cite **time stamps**. In time-based texts (video, music, etc.) cite the relevant time span of your quotation.

Toby Stark comes full circle in *Avengers: Endgame* when he says: "I am Iron Man" (*Endgame* 02:30:20-31).

- **Quotation within a Quotation.**

If you cite a source that itself contains a quotation, use single quotation marks within.

He "comes full circle in *Avengers: Endgame* when he says: 'I am Iron Man'" (Caeners 25).

- **Punctuation.**

If you conclude your sentence with a quotation and the parenthetical citation, omit the period at the end of your quotation and place it behind the parenthesis.

Original:

Crucial to this complex process is the unstoppable production of representations.

Citation:

"Crucial to this complex process is the unstoppable production of representations" (Mansfield 48).

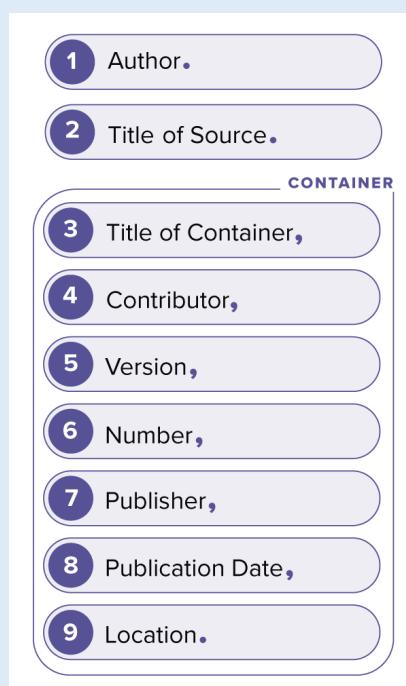
If the quotation ends in the middle of your sentence, replace the punctuation mark with one that fits your sentence.

“Crucial to this complex process is the unstoppable production of representations,” writes Mansfield (48).

- Any other punctuation mark (question mark etc.) is placed outside the quotation marks.

### **Works-Cited List – The Idea of the Container in the MLA Style**

- The Works-Cited List contains all sources you have cited (both by quotation and by merely mentioning!)
- The list is organized alphabetically by the author’s last name.
- MLA style has introduced the concept of the ‘container’ as the element in which the source has been used. A container can be a book, a journal, a DVD, a YouTube video, a streaming service, a social media platform and so forth.
- The citation format follows the MLA sequence as can be seen in the following visual representation:



- You fill out the numbers of the format with the information you have. Not all numbers are always filled. In case of a monograph, the title of the source is usually identical to the title of the container. The MLA calls this self-contained. A typical entry for the works-cited list of a monograph would be:

Caeners, Torsten. *Poetry as Therapy. Contemporary Literary Theory as a Foundation for Poetry Therapy*. Trier: WVT, 2010.

- If you are dealing with an essay in a journal or a chapter in an edited collection, the journal or collection is the container. In both cases, you include the pages your source covers within the container. The MLA does not require you to name the place of publication (1<sup>st</sup> example below), but it is optional to do so (example 2 below).

*Edited Collection:*

Caeners, Torsten. "Negotiating the Human in Ridley Scott's *Prometheus*." *Young Adult Fiction: Finding Humanity in a Posthuman World*, edited by Anita Tarr and Donna R. White, University Press of Mississippi, 2018, 199-226.

Caeners, Torsten. "Imagination Reloaded: Transfiguring Urban Space into Virtual Space in the TV series *Caprica*." *Cityscapes of the Future: Urban Spaces in Science Fiction*, edited by Yael Maurer and Meyrav Koren-Kuik, Leiden: Brill Rodopi, 2018. 186-205.

*Essay in a Journal:*

Caeners, Torsten. "Humanity's scarred Children: The Cylons' oedipal Dilemma in *Battlestar Galactica*." *Extrapolation* 49:3 (2008). 368-384.

- You will not always work with the original paper version of a text. You may also find a book on google-books, for instance, and an essay in a database. In this case, the way you acquired the text is a second container. This is also relevant for media text, hence an example below:

"Encounter at Farpoint." S01E01 Directed by Corey Allen. *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. Created by Gene Roddenberry, Paramount, 28 Sep 1987. *Netflix*, [www.netflix.com](http://www.netflix.com).

The first container of the episode is the series – *Star Trek: The Next Generation* – the second container is the streaming service where it was accessed: *Netflix*.

## **How to cite different sources in the works-cited list**

### **BOOKS**

- **Basic Book Format – single author**

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

Caeners, Torsten. *Poetry as Therapy. Contemporary Literary Theory as a Foundation for Poetry Therapy*. Trier: WVT, 2010.

- Books that have no author are listed alphabetically by title.

- **Basic Book Format – two authors**

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

Brownie, Barbara, and Danny Graydon. *The Superhero Costume. Identity and Disguise in Fact and Fiction*, London [et al.]: Bloomsbury, 2015.

- **Basic Book Format – more than two authors**

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

Julia Hoydis, et al. *Climate Change Literacy*. Cambridge University Press, 2023.

- **Basic Book Format – Corporate Author or Organization**

List the names of corporate authors in the place where an author's name typically appears at the beginning of the entry. Leave out any A, An, or The.

Modern Language Association of America. *MLA Handbook*, 9<sup>th</sup> Edition. Modern Language Association of America, 2021.

In cases where the corporation is the same as the publisher, as in the case above, you can also list the work by its title only.

*MLA Handbook*, 9<sup>th</sup> Edition. Modern Language Association of America, 2021.

- **Basic Book Format – translated book**  
Use the basic format and add “Translated by First Name Last Name,” after the title.  
Derrida, Jacques. *The Gift of Death*. Translated by David Willis, University of Chicago Press, 1995.
- **Basic Book Format – book editions**  
Use the basic format and add the edition after the title.  
Crothers, Lane. *Globalization and American Popular Culture*. 4<sup>th</sup> Edition, Lanham et. al.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2018.
- **Basic Book Format – edited books**  
Some books are not prepared by the author, but editors. In this case, use the basic format and add “,edited by First Name Last Name (of the editor)”  
Hall, Stuart, *Essential Essay, Vol. 1*, edited by David Morley, Durham, London: Duke University Press, 2019.
- **Basic Book Format – edited collections**  
Some books contain essays or chapters by a variety of authors (anthologies, reference books, collections). List the names of the editors according to how you would do with authors (see above) and add “, editor(s). Alternatively, you can use “(eds.)” instead of “editor(s)”.  
del Pilar Blanco and Esther Preen, editors. *The Spectralities Reader: Ghosts and Haunting in Contemporary Cultural Theory*, London [et al.]: Bloomsbury, 2013.

If you list a chapter from an edited collection, use this format:

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

Hall, Stuart. “Encoding, Decoding.” *The Cultural Studies Reader*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, edited by Simon During, Routledge, 1999. 507-517.

- **Basic Book Format – Poetry / Poem**  
Citing an individual poem follows the citation of an edited collection.  
Last name, First name. “Title of Poem.” *Title of Collection*, [add “edited by Editor’s Name(s)” if the poem is taken from an anthology or edited collection], Publisher, Year, Page range of entry. You may add the name of the poet again before the title of the collection, but it is superfluous as it is named in front of the entry]  
Heaney, Seamus. “Mid-Term Break.” *Death of a Naturalist*, Faber, 1966, 15.
- **Basic Book Format – Multivolume work**  
When citing only one volume of a multivolume work, include the volume number after the work’s title, or after the work’s editor or translator.  
Freud, Sigmund. *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works*. Translated and edited by James Strachey [et. al.], vol. XIV, Hogarth, 1962.

If you are citing the entire work, specify the number of volumes at the end:

Freud, Sigmund. *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works*. Translated and edited by James Strachey [et. al.], Hogarth, 1962. 23 vols.

- **Basic Book Format – Introduction, Preface, Foreword, Afterword etc.**  
When citing an Introduction, Preface and similar part of a work, name the author of piece of the work followed by the title (no italics or quotation marks), then the name of the work in italics follows by “by First Name Last Name” of the author / “edited by First Name Last Name” and the publication details.

Browne, Ray B. and Ben Urish. Introduction. *The Dynamics and Interconnections of Popular Culture(s)*, edited by Ray B. Browne and Ben Urish, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014, 1-15.

## JOURNALS AND PERIODICALS

### **Scholarly Journal:**

Use this basic format:

Author(s). "Title of Article." *Title of Journal*, Volume, Issue, Year, pages.

Caeners, Torsten and Stefanie Albers. "The Poetics and Aesthetics of Ian McEwan's *Atonement*." *English Studies - A Journal of English Language and Literature*, 90:6, 2009, 707-720.

### **Newspaper**

Author(s). "Title of Article." *Title of Newspaper*, date, pages.

Brubaker, Bill. "New Health Center Targets County's Uninsured Patients." *Washington Post*, 24 May 2007, p. 1.

## Film And TV

### **Films**

List films by the title in italics followed by the director and the production studio and or the distributor. End with the year of release and the container you accessed the film through. Add performers, producers, etc. after the director when necessary.

*Indiana Jones and the Dial of Destiny*. Directed by James Mangold, performances by Harrison Ford, Phoebe Waller-Bridge, Walt Disney Pictures, Lucasfilm, 2023. Disney+.

### **TV**

#### **Episodes**

List TV episodes by their title in quotation marks. Give the season number and the episode's number following the episode title in the format of SxyExy. Give the name of the series in italics. Always include the name of the director, then the studio or distributor, and the release year. End with the container. If relevant, list the creator (s) or producers of the series after the name in italics. If relevant, add performer names after the director's name. In case it is important when exactly an episode was first broadcast, add the exact date and the network it was first broadcast on.

"Captain's Holiday." S03E19. *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, directed by Chip Chalmers, Paramount, 1990. DVD.

"Qpid." S04E20. *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, created by Gene Roddenberry, written by Gene Roddenberry, Ira Steven Behr, Randee Russel, directed by Chip Chalmers, performers Parrick Stewart, Jennifer Hetrick, Paramount, 1991. Paramount+.

### **Entire TV Series**

List the series name in italics, followed by the creator(s), then the production studio or distributor, and the year it originally ran. You can also add the number of seasons following the runtime. Add main performers, if necessary, following the creator(s).

*Star Trek: The Next Generation*, created by Gene Roddenberry, performances by Patrick Stewart, Jonathan Frakes, Brent Spiner, Paramount Studios, Syndication, 1987-1994.

## **ONLINE or WEB SOURCES**

Collect as much of the following information about the web source as you can!

- Author and/or editor names (if available); last names first.
- "Article name in quotation marks."
- *Title of the website, project, or book in italics.*
- Any version numbers available, including editions (ed.), revisions, posting dates, volumes (vol.), or issue numbers (no.).
- Publisher information, including the publisher's name and publishing date.
- Take note of any page numbers (p. or pp.) or paragraph numbers (par. or pars.).
- DOI (if available, precede it with "https://doi.org/"), otherwise a URL (without the https://) or permalink.
- Date you accessed the material (Date Accessed). While not required, saving this information it is highly recommended, especially when dealing with pages that change frequently or do not have a visible copyright date.

- ***Citing entire websites***

Use the following format:

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

Caeners, Torsten. *Dr Torsten Caeners* (Department Homepage). Department of Anglophone Studies at University of Duisburg-Essen, [https://www.uni-due.de/balc/caeners\\_torsten.php](https://www.uni-due.de/balc/caeners_torsten.php). Accessed 7 December 2023.

*The Superhero Project*. Homepage of the Superhero Project Research Network. <https://www.superheroproject.net/>. Accessed 7 December 2023.

- **Page at a website**

Use the following format:

Author, editor or compiler name (if available). "Name of page." *Name of Site*. Version number (if available), Name of institution/organization affiliated with the site (sponsor or publisher), date of resource creation (if available), URL, DOI or permalink. Date of access (if applicable).

"The Steering Committee." *The Superhero Project*. Homepage of the Superhero Project Research Network. <https://www.superheroproject.net/the-steering-committee>. Accessed 7 December 2023.

- **E-Books**

If an E-Book resembles the physical book (i.e., it has the same page numbers and page setup), treat it like a normal book and add the digital nature of it as the container.

Shaw, Katy. *Hauntology. The Presence of the Past in Twenty-First Century English Literature*, Cham: Palgrave, 2018. E-book [PDF].

With E-books that are specifically designed for a device or app (Kindle etc.), name the device/app as the final entry. These books usually don't have page numbers, so don't forget to put "n.p." to any in-text citations you use from these sources.

- **Discussion groups, blogs etc.**

Cite web postings as you would a standard web entry.

Author or compiler name (if available). "Posting Title." *Name of Site*, Version number (if available), Name of institution/organization affiliated with the site (sponsor or publisher), URL. Date of access.

TortelloniTortelloni. "Ein Paar Fragen zum Wechsel von Mark auf Euro." *Reddit*. 6 Dec 2023. [www.reddit.com/r/de/comments/18ccxlp/ein\\_paar\\_fragen\\_zum\\_wechsel\\_von\\_mark\\_auf\\_euro/](http://www.reddit.com/r/de/comments/18ccxlp/ein_paar_fragen_zum_wechsel_von_mark_auf_euro/). Accessed 7 December 2023.

- **Instagram / Twitter (X)**

List the user's handle. Cite the tweet in its entirety in 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.

@PurdueWLab. "Spring break is around the corner, and all our locations will be open next week." *Twitter*, 5 Mar. 2012, 12:58 p.m., [Twitter.com/PurdueWLab/status/176728308736737282](https://twitter.com/PurdueWLab/status/176728308736737282).

- **YouTube or internet videos on other platforms**

Cite the author and the title in quotation marks. The platform functions as the container. If it is an episode from a channel, the channel is the first and the platform the second container. If the author of the video is different from the uploader, cite the uploader following the first container.

Ferrick, Sean. "Ups & Downs From Star Trek: Lower Decks 4.10 - Old Friends, New Planets". *Trek Culture. YouTube*. 03 Nov 2023. Accessed 7 December 2023.

## Appendix I: Title Page Term Paper

University of Duisburg-Essen  
Department of Anglophone Studies  
Summer Term 2023  
Seminar: Cinematic Marvels – 21 Century Superheroes in Film and TV  
Lecturer: Dr Torsten Caeners

# Title of Paper

Subtitle of Paper

Name of the Module

Max Mustermann  
Matr. No.: 123456  
2-Fach Master  
max.mustermann@stud.uni-due.de

## Appendix I\_ Title Page B.A. / M.A. Thesis

University of Duisburg-Essen  
Department of Anglophone Studies  
Summer Term 2023  
1<sup>st</sup> Supervisor:  
2<sup>nd</sup> Supervisor:

# Bachelor Thesis

For the attainment of the academic degree of Bachelor of Arts

# Title of Thesis

## Subtitle of Thesis

(cf. the internet or [here](#) for further examples)

Maria Musterfrau  
Matr. No.: 123456  
2-Fach Bachelor  
maria.musterfrau@stud.uni-due.de

## Begutachungskriterien für Hausarbeiten / Abschlussarbeiten in der Literaturwissenschaft (Caeners)

Kriterien
<p>These</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– präzise Formulierung der These</li> <li>– klare Fokussierung der These auf ausgewählte / zentrale Punkte des Themas</li> <li>– Darlegung der theoretischen Grundlagen der Arbeit</li> <li>– Darlegung der Methodik zur sinnvollen Bearbeitung der zentralen Forschungsfrage</li> </ul>
<p>Struktur</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– erkennbare Verbindung zur These und Methodik</li> <li>– logischer Aufbau („roter Faden“ in der Abfolge der Kapitel)</li> <li>– Gebrauch von Paragraphen als Strukturelement innerhalb von Kapiteln</li> <li>– keine kurzen Paragraphen (ein oder zwei Sätze)</li> <li>– keine übermäßigen Unterkapitel</li> </ul>
<p>Analyse (40)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Funktionalisierung der Theorie / Kontext / Konzepte im Hinblick auf die These</li> <li>– schlüssige, kohärente und konzise Argumentation</li> <li>– Integration von Theorie und Kontext bzw. relevanten Konzepten</li> <li>– Weiterführende Integration und Anwendung von Sekundärliteratur im Analyseteil</li> <li>– Direkte Zitate aus der Sekundärliteratur werden in die eigene Argumentation einbinden.</li> <li>– eigene gedankliche Positionierung bzw. Weiterentwicklung von Ideen</li> </ul>
<p>Form</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– korrektes Inhaltsverzeichnis sowie Angabe von Seitenzahl</li> <li>– korrekte und einheitliche Zitation</li> <li>– vollständiges Literaturverzeichnis</li> <li>– Umfang entsprechend der Vorgaben</li> </ul>
<p>Sprache*</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Wissenschaftlichkeit der Sprache (Fachbegriffe, keine Alltagssprache)</li> <li>– Lesbarkeit (sprachliche Übergänge, flüssig, logische Anbindungen)</li> <li>– korrekte Rechtschreibung, Grammatik &amp; Interpunktion</li> <li>– <b>Eine sprachlich mit 5,0 bewertete Arbeit gilt als insgesamt nicht bestanden.</b></li> </ul>
<p>Quellen und Literatúrauswahl (20)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Berücksichtigung von Standardliteratur</li> <li>– Aktualität der Literatúrauswahl</li> <li>– Variation von Quellen (Monographien, Aufsätze, Datenbanken, etc.)</li> <li>– Wissenschaftlichkeit der Quellen (keine Wikipedia, Spark Notes etc.)</li> </ul>