Faculty of Social Science
Chair of Sociology/ Social Inequality and Gender
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RUHR
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BOCHUM

RUB

# General Guidelines for Writing Seminar Papers at the BA and MA Level

## 1 Aim

The goal of a seminar paper is the compact and structured analysis and discussion of knowledge concerning a specific research question as well as one's own evaluation (comment, critique, questions).

## 2 Title Page

The title page gives an overview of the context, topic and author(s) of the seminar paper. It contains the following information:

### 2.1 Header

| | |
|---|---|
| Name of the institution | Ruhr University Bochum |
| Name of the faculty | Faculty of Social Science |
| Department | Sociology |
| Name of the chair | Chair of Sociology/Social Inequality and Gender |
| Course instructor (title, name) | Prof Dr Heike Kahlert |
| Semester | WiTe 2017/18 or SoTe 2018 etc. |
| Title of the course | e.g. Gendered Excellence |
| Course number | e.g. 080 200 |

### 2.2 Title of the Seminar Paper

### 2.3 Author(s)

Full name of the author of the seminar paper
Full postal address (street, house number, postal code, town/city)
Telephone number (to contact the author in case of questions)
E-mail address
Student ID number
Semester
Type of course (seminar, exercise course, lecture, advanced seminar)
Course of study
Information about the course of study (basic/main course of study)

If several authors are involved, they should be arranged in alphabetical order to indicate their equal participation in the writing of the paper. An analphabetic arrangement of authors, in contrast, implies a difference in the degree of participation.

## 2.4  Date of Submission

## 3 Formal Structure

A seminar paper generally consists of the following parts:

- Table of contents, including numbered chapters and page numbers
- Introduction (reference to the seminar/current example as an introduction to the topic, research question(s), aim(s), possibly hypothesis/es, methodological approach, description of the structure)
- Chapters (and subchapters) which deal with the research question systematically
- Conclusion and outlook (summary of the most important results concerning the question, discussion of results and individual evaluation, and possibly further research questions)
- Bibliography
- If necessary, an index of used internet sources
- If necessary, an index of used graphs and tables

The title page does not contain a page number, even though it is included in the page count. The contents page displays the number '2' and the pagination continues until the last page.

Please make sure that chapter titles and numbers as well as the page numbers on the contents page match those in the rest of the paper.

## 4 Bibliography

The bibliography lists all sources mentioned and used in the text. Please check if the bibliography and the text are consistent (even after several revisions of the paper).

The names should be in an alphabetical order. If several works by the same author are cited, they are listed chronologically, e.g.:
Harding, Sandra (1986)
Harding, Sandra (1987)

If several works of the same year by the same author are cited, they must be distinguished by letters (a, b, c) after the year of publication and listed alphabetically, e.g.:

Jenkins, Fiona. 2014a. Epistemic Credibility and Women in Philosophy. *Australian Feminist Studies* 29 (80): 161-170.

Jenkins, Fiona. 2014b. Gendered Hierarchies of Knowledge and the Prestige Factor: How Philosophy Survives Market Rationality. In *Through a Glass Darkly: The Social Sciences Look at the Neoliberal University*, ed. by Margaret Thornton, 49-62. Canberra: ANU Press.

Examples of bibliographical references:

⇨ Book: Lamont, Michelle. 2009. *How Professors Think. Inside the Curious World of Academic Judgement.* Cambridge, London: Harvard University Press.

⇨ Article in an anthology: Jenkins, Fiona. 2014b. Gendered Hierarchies of Knowledge and the Prestige Factor: How Philosophy Survives Market Rationality. In *Through a Glass Darkly: The Social Sciences Look at the Neoliberal University*, ed. by Margaret Thornton, 49-62. Canberra: ANU Press.

⇨ Journal article: Code, Lorraine. 2014. Ignorance, Injustice and the Politics of Knowledge. *Australian Feminist Studies* 29 (80): 148-160.

⇨ Article from the internet: Walby, Sylvia. 2011. The Impact of Feminism on Sociology. *Sociological Research Online* 16 (3) 21. http://www.socresonline.org.uk/16/3/21.html (accessed: 05/12/2017).

## 5 Citations and Use of Sources in the Text

Seminar papers may and should – in moderation! – include direct citations of the literature worked with. These citations must be marked (in quotation marks) and followed by the name of the author, the year, and the page number in parentheses (e.g. Barker 2005, p. 2190 or Jenkins 2014a, p. 163f). This also applies to internet sources!

When statements are paraphrased, but not quoted directly, the source must still be indicated in the text (e.g. Barker 2005, p. 2190; Jenkins 2014a, p. 163f; or cf. Lamont 2009, chapt. 3).

If citations or indirect quotes are not labelled as such, this is considered as an attempt to deceive (plagiarism). The seminar paper will accordingly be marked 'insufficient' and regarded as failed.

## 6 Language, Style and Critical Distance to Applied Literature

Develop an inner distance to the literature used and express this by your choice of words. Even sociological texts do not proclaim the – one and only – truth but a possible perspective on a certain issue. Other theoretical and political premises and/or methodical approaches might lead to a different account of the assumed objective circumstances!

Detach yourself from the idea that 'everything' you read can and needs to be mentioned and neutrally described! Texts necessitate subjectiveness and selectiveness.

Make use of active forms of sentences! You may use the pronoun 'I' even in academic texts when it is appropriate and done in moderation.

Formulate short and precise sentences! Excessively long sentences with complicated clauses are highly impressive; however, they do not necessarily contribute to an understanding of the issue described and the messages of the text.

## 7 Layout and Extent of the Seminar Paper

Pay attention to the manuscript's legibility (spacing, title layout...).

Font size: at least 12 pt.

Line spacing: 1.5

Margins: at least 3 cm (left) and 4 cm (right)

Number of characters or pages (including spaces)
*   BA level:
    25,000 – 35,000 characters resp. 10 – 15 pages (individual work)
    40,000 – 55,000 characters resp. 20 – 25 pages (group work by 2-3 people, for larger groups depending on prior agreement)
*   MA level:
    50,000 – 70,000 characters resp. 20 – 25 pages (individual work)
    70,000 – 90,000 characters resp. 25 – 35 pages (group work by 2-3 people, for larger groups depending on prior agreement)

Please refrain from handing in your paper in folders or the like; a sheet protector suffices!

## 8 Dates and Credit Points

### 8.1 Submission Date

In general, deadlines set by the instructor are binding. Changes require a prior agreement with the instructor and are only possible in exceptional and justified cases.

If not indicated otherwise in the study programme regulations, the latest submission date for papers written in the winter term is March 15 of that same year, and September 15 of that same year for papers written in the summer term.

Seminar papers, along with a signed declaration of authenticity, must be handed in to the secretary's office (Universitätsstraße 134, Raum 3/3.02) or sent to Prof Dr Heike Kahlert,

Ruhr University Bochum, Faculty of Social Science, Chair of Sociology/Social Inequality and Gender, Room 3/3.14, Universitätsstraße 134, 44801 Bochum. Additionally, they have to be sent to the instructor as a PDF (one document) via e-mail.

## 8.2 Correction of the Seminar Paper

If the paper is submitted during the lecture period, it is generally reviewed within four weeks; if submitted during the semester break, within six weeks. However, it must be corrected at the latest four weeks after the start of the new semester, meaning April 30 or October 31 of that same year.

If you wish for a quicker correction, this has to be arranged with the instructor in time. In time means at least two weeks in advance during the lecture period, or at least six weeks in advance during the semester break.

## 8.3 Grade and Credit Points

The grade and credit points will be certified electronically (currently via VSPL/CampusOffice).

## 9 Evaluation Criteria

The seminar paper will be evaluated with regards to the following criteria:

- **Structure of the Paper**
  Are the research question/s and the aim/s of the paper stated clearly?
  How is the research question worded (concisely, diffuse, unrecognisable...)?
  Does the structure correspond to the paper's research question and objective?
  Is the structure consistent/stringent, non-systemic...?

- **Thematic Implementation**
  What is the implementation of the problem like (precise, theroretically consistent, contradictory, inexpedient...)?
  Is the implementation comprehensible (clarification of key terms...)?
  Is the implementation informative and does it give an overview?

- **Independent Analysis and Critique**
  Does the paper contain individual analyses and critique (comprehensive, partial, unrecognisable...)?

- **Commitment**
  How high is the level of personal input and commitment (high, good, satisfying, disinterested...)?

- **Originality**
  Is the work rich in individual ideas? Are they used? Or does the work lack ideas?

What is the level of difficulty of the research question and literature?

- **Language, Style, Mode of Expression, Orthography, Punctuation**
  Is the writing style accurate and precise, improvable, negligent...?
  Are the orthography, spelling and punctuation correct and consistent?
  Does the text clearly mark ideas or quotes taken from the literature and distinguish them from one's own statements?

- **References and Bibliography**
  Are the theses backed up correctly by the reference to sources?
  Are the references arranged clearly and correctly, are they incomplete or not at all comprehensible?
  Do the references in the text match the literature in the bibliography?
  Is the bibliography complete, correct or fragmentary?

## 10 Feedback and Grading

The entire available range of grades will be utilised.

The grading will be made transparent and justified for record.

Group papers will be graded uniformly. If you would like a separate grading for each author, indicate this in the paper by labelling each part (in the table of contents as well as the corresponding chapter) by name.

Date of last update: 01/2018