

Modern East Asian Studies

Master of Arts

Guidelines for Writing Seminar Papers & MA Theses

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1. General Remarks

When writing a scientific paper, such as a term paper or a master's thesis, certain basic principles should be followed. These principles are outlined in the following guidelines. The guidelines do not claim to be complete, that is to say, you are given some freedom when designing/organising your paper. Moreover, the respective MEAS professors might state other academic specifications. In any case, your chosen approach should be **consistent** and **meet scientific standards**.

2. Formatting Guidelines

Number of Pages

Term papers: 15 pages (+/- 10%) (footnotes, bibliography, attachments not included)

MA Thesis: 60 pages (+/- 10%) (footnotes, bibliography, attachments not included)

Layout

Margin: 3 cm on the left, 4 cm on the right

Font: Times New Roman, 12 pt.

Grouped style, 1.5 spacing.

Pagination

Except for the cover sheet, every page must be numbered. Pages prior to the main text, *i.e.*, the Table of Contents, should be numbered with Roman numerals, whereas the remaining pages should be numbered with Arabic numerals.

3. Text Structure

Cover Sheet

The cover sheet should contain the following information:

- Term paper: study programme, topic, seminar title, seminar professor/lecturer, semester and date of submission;
- MA thesis: study programme, topic, supervisors, their respective faculties, semester and date of submission;
- Information on yourself as the author: name, matriculation number, address, email address and number of semesters studied (“Fachsemester”)

For a sample of the cover sheet of a MA thesis, please see the appendix.

Abstract (MA thesis only)

The abstract sketches the outline of the thesis (research question, research design, results) in 200 to 400 words.

Table of Content

The Table of Content precedes the text. It should reflect the structure of your paper's argument and be self-explanatory. Your headlines should be as informative as possible to let the reader understand what your paper is about. Consequently, please make sure that the Table of Content has a logical and consistent structure: for instance, if there is a sub-chapter 2.1, there also has to be a sub-chapter 2.2 and both need to be essential for your argument given in Chapter 2.

Table of Abbreviations (if abbreviations are used in the paper)

The Table of Abbreviations contains all abbreviations and variables used in the paper with their respective definitions.

Table of Figures (if figures are used in the paper)

The Table of Figures contains all figures with their respective numbers and headlines.

Main Text

Introduction: The introduction sketches the general outline of the paper. It explains the topic, its context, the research gap, the research question and why the answer is important. It briefly elucidates with which methods, sources, *etc.*, the research question is approached and summarises the main arguments made in the following chapters. An academic paper is not an exciting detective story where the puzzle is solved only at the end. The Introduction is more efficient and you tell the readers the results of your study at the beginning. It goes without saying that the Introduction should conform to the Table of Content.

Main chapters: The main body of your text should be organised in several sub-chapters. All sub-chapters should be dominated by the central theme or argument that mirrors the Table of Content and has already been outlined in the introduction. Every sub-chapter has to contribute to this argument, answering the research question. If it does not, please restructure, delete or integrate the parts of the text into another sub-chapter.

Conclusion: The Conclusion comes back to the research question as a starting-point and summarises the findings in a cogent way, making them intelligible independently from the preceding text. Therefore, when writing the Conclusion, you might want to read the Introduction again. Make sure that you really did what you intended to do and that the research question is the central theme of your paper. In the Conclusion, you normally do not add new information. However, you may give a further outlook on the open questions regarding the paper's topic and possible research directions.

Appendix

Information central for the understanding of your argument must appear in the text and not in the Appendix. The paper needs to be intelligible even without reading the Appendix. You can use an appendix to present additional material such as interview transcripts or passages from important legal documents. Do not forget to refer to the Appendix in the text.

Bibliography

The Bibliography lists all the publications referred to in the paper. There is no need to group the bibliographic references according to the type of publication. Internet sources are mentioned together with all other sources, such as journal articles, monographs, *etc.*, in alphabetical order.

For more information on the specific reference style, see below.

4. Writing Style and Process

Writing style

Use a clear and readable writing style. All papers have to be written in English. Please make sure there are no writing mistakes. Whether you are a native speaker or not, it is always advisable to let the paper be proofread – by yourself, a friend and/or an English grammar correction software.

Do not extensively use abbreviations and use only those which are common (such as: e.g., i.e., UN). If you insert tables and figures, each must include a title (normally shown above) and a source (normally shown below).

Essential terms used in your argument should be clearly defined. You should not discuss variants, but simply stick to a consistent definition throughout your text.

Writing a scientific paper is also about structuring your arguments in a meaningful way. The text leads the reader through the story, from argument A to B to C. Read your text again to make sure that every chapter and every paragraph is a package of coherent information explaining one specific aspect to the reader.

Writing process

Give yourself enough time to read, to develop your ideas, to write everything down and to proofread. For the MA thesis, you have 6 months; for a term paper, you should consider spending about 3 weeks of daily work. It is advisable to begin the first preparations during the semester.

More help

General counselling and workshops: The Goethe University's "Schreibzentrum" (Writing Centre) offers help to those struggling with the academic writing process. For more information, see <https://www.goethe-university-frankfurt.de/87509749/Studierende>; or write an email to: schreibzentrum@dlst.uni-frankfurt.de.

Reading suggestions: There are several books and guidelines in the university library on how to write a academic paper. Each of them has a specific focus and is embedded within the respective academic tradition. Depending on the course or the professor you are writing the paper for, you might want to have a look to see which one is helpful to you. The following suggestions give a general overview and are available online through the university library's webpage:

- Bailey, Stephen (2015): *Academic Writing: A Handbook for International Students*, 4th edition. London and New York: Routledge.
- Harris, Angelique, and Alia R. Tyner-Mullings (2013): *Writing for Emerging Sociologists*. Los Angeles, Calif.: SAGE.
- Lewin, Beverly A. (2010): *Writing Readable Research: A Guide for Students of Social Science*. London [et al.]: Equinox.
- Macgilchrist, Felicitas (2014): *Academic Writing*. Paderborn [et al.]: Schöningh.

5. Quotation, Citation and References

When you quote, paraphrase or refer to another author's ideas, theories or findings, you have to give a proper citation in order:

- to support your own argument;
- to show that you know the respective research;
- to allow the reader to follow your sources;

- to enable further research;
- not to be charged with plagiarism.

Scientific research has to be accurate, traceable and reproducible. Therefore, keep track of all sources during the writing process and state them properly in your paper.

Quotation

- A direct quotation consists of another author's exact words, within quotation marks, followed by the information where these words can be found.

For example:

"a revolution is not a dinner party" (Mao 1975: 28).

- All changes within the quotation (to adapt it to the position within your sentence, to add an explanation, or to leave out less important parts in between) have to be marked by square brackets. However, be careful not to change the meaning of the quotation.

For example:

"[A] revolution is not a dinner party, [...] it cannot be so refined, so leisurely and gentle [...]" (Mao 1975: 28).

- When you take the quotation from a secondary source, you have to be precise as well. In the bibliography, you then only mention the author you actually read (in this example: Perry 2008).

For example:

"A revolution is not a dinner party" (Mao Zedong, quoted in: Perry 2008: 40).

Paraphrase

- When you summarise another author's ideas and findings, you have to use your own words, followed by the specific reference. You have to rephrase the original text completely because a) it shows that you understand the content of these words; and b) it is plagiarism to display another author's ideas and words as your own.

For example:

Quotation: "[A] revolution is not a dinner party, [...] it cannot be so refined, so leisurely and gentle [...]" (Mao 1975: 28).

Citation: According to Mao Zedong, a revolution has to be considered a difficult and even violent endeavour (Mao 1975: 28).

References

- References can be placed either within the text or in a footnote. Whichever you choose, please be **consistent** throughout the paper. There are also different citation styles and preferences in every discipline. The minimum information to be given is: Name, year, page.

For example:

Perry 2008: 48.

- Every reference mentioned in the text must be verifiable with the bibliography.

Bibliography

Please cite laws in a way customary for the relevant jurisdiction and always in a format enabling the reader to verify the reference (particularly if you cite a version other than the most recent one). If in doubt, you may refer to citation styles used by prominent journals in the field, such as *Journal of Japanese Law*, *German Journal of Chinese Law*, etc. Similarly, there are different citation styles for monographs, journal articles, etc., as well. You do not have to adopt the following suggestions but please **choose a style of citation which is common in the respective field of study** (as used, for example, in: *American Economic Review*, *Annual Review of Political Science*, or consult style manuals such as *The Chicago Manual of Style*). Again, **consistency** is of the utmost importance.

For example:

Monograph:

Putnam, Robert D. (2000): *Bowling Alone*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Journal article:

Kreps, David M. (1990): "Corporate Culture and Economic Theory", in Alt, James E., and Kenneth A. Shepsle (eds.): *Perspectives on Positive Political Economy*, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 90-143.

Anthology article:

Card, David, and Alan B. Krueger (1994): "Minimum Wages and Employment: A Case Study of the Fast-Food Industry in New Jersey and Pennsylvania", *American Economic Review*, 84 (4), 772-793.

Article from a series of working papers:

Martins, Pedro S., and Ian Walker (2006): "Student Achievement and University Classes: Effects of Attendance, Size, Peers, and Teachers", IZA Discussion Paper 2490.

Unpublished manuscript:

Hakenes, Hendrik, and Isabel Schnabel (2007): "Bank Competition and Capital Regulation", unpublished manuscript, Max-Planck-Institut zur Erforschung von Gemeinschaftsgütern, Bonn.

Internet publication:

GEM, Global Entrepreneurship Monitor 2005, Executive Report 2006, available at: <http://www.gemconsortium.org/download.asp?fid=606>, accessed 10 June 2009.

Internet sources must always include the date on which you accessed the website.

Literature management software

There are several types of literature management software such as Citavi, Endnote or Zotero. They help you to keep track of your sources, to order them and establish your own academic catalogue as well as to insert standardised references. As a student of Goethe University, you get Citavi for free and Endnote at a discount from the university library. Zotero is available as open software on the Internet.

6. Chinese / Japanese / Korean Terms

How to use Chinese terms?

Referring to Chinese terms, please use the Hanyu Pinyin transcription system and provide the relevant characters. Please also use Pinyin versions (Jiang Jieshi, Mao Zedong, Beijing, Guangdong) for personal or place names instead of older versions of romanization (Chiang Kai-shek, Mao Tse-tung, Peking, Kanton). If common abbreviations exist, they can be used as long as their long form is included in brackets the first time that they are mentioned. Students with a Chinese studies background also have to insert the Chinese term (Chinese characters or pinyin). For example: SDRC (State Development and Reform Commission, Guojia Fazhan Gaige Weiyuanhui).

When using Pinyin, please pay attention to the following: first, only proper names are written with a capital first letter. Second, in case of ambiguities, please use an apostrophe; for instance, “Xi’an” instead of “Xian” (西安). Third, Pinyin transcriptions have to be in italics except for proper names.

There are basically two systems to integrate Chinese characters in your text. A) The Chinese version follows the translated English term in brackets. For example: “socialism with Chinese characteristics (*Zhongguo tese shehuizhuyi*, 中国特色社会主义)”. When using an untranslated term, please provide only the characters. For example, *guanxi* (关系). B) Only the relevant Pinyin is given the first time the term is mentioned. A glossary in the appendix attached to the paper then lists the Pinyin terms with the corresponding characters.

Please be consistent in either using the simplified or the complex forms of Chinese characters. There are certain exceptions to this rule: for instance, studies relating to Chinese philosophy should give the character for *qi* in its complex form 氣 and not 气 if *qi* is meant in a philosophical sense. Studies relating mainly to Taiwan, Hong Kong or the history of China before the reform of the characters should use the complex forms throughout the text.

How to use Japanese terms?

Please employ the Hepburn romanization system. If a vowel follows the syllable “n” within a word, insert an apostrophe before the vowel (e.g. *hon'ya*). Proper names of authors or other persons should be spelled in the most common style. Long vowels are indicated by a macron (e.g. “ō”) or by a circumflex accent (e.g. “ô”). Japanese terms and terms from foreign languages should generally be written in lower case and in italics. When using both, a Japanese term and its English translation, place the Japanese term in brackets behind the English translation (e.g. “...the family system (*ieseido*)...”).

However, there are some exceptions:

- Terms which have entered the English language according to a standard English dictionary (e.g. Oxford English Dictionary) should be written like a normal English word, *i.e.*, not in italics.
- Names of places and persons should be capitalised and written as non-italics. The spelling of names has to follow the Japanese norm: family name first and given name second.
- Firms and institutions, *i.e.*, “titles” in the broader sense, should be in non-italics, e.g., Sony, Japan Securities Research Institute, Nikkei 225 – Index and Keidanren.

- If a Japanese firm is also known by an English name, the English name should be used instead of the Japanese one. However, the Japanese name must be stated in brackets the first time that you mention the firm. For example, Matsushita Electric (Matsushita Denki Sangyō KK).
- If common abbreviations exist, they can be used as long as their long form is included in brackets the first time that they are mentioned. Students with a Japanese studies background also have to insert the Japanese translation. For example, METI (Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, Keizai sangyōshō)
- Laws should always be quoted in English. Students with a Japanese studies background should quote the Japanese title of the law in italics within brackets and add the number and year of the law. For example, Foreign Exchange and Foreign Trade Control Law (*Gaikoku kawase oyobi gaikoku bōeki-hō*), Law no.23/1998.

How to use Korean terms?

Please employ the McCune-Reischauer romanization system. When using an abbreviation, students with a Korean studies background also have to insert the Korean term.

7. Plagiarism

A seminar paper or a MA thesis is an academic test. Plagiarism means declaring the work of others as your own and therefore is seen as fraudulent behaviour and a breach of academic rules (MEAS Study & Examination Rules 2009, § 18; 2018, § 29; 2021, § 29). A student submitting a plagiarised paper fails the examination. In serious cases, the Examination Board is entitled to expel the student from the MEAS programme.

In general, plagiarism refers among others to:

- Copying another's complete work;
- Copying another's words without marking them as quotation;
- Copying another's ideas and results without referencing;
- Relying too closely to the original words and structure of another's work;
- Translating the wording of another's work and presenting them as one's own;
- Submitting a paper written by someone else (ghost-writer);
- Submitting the same paper in more than one course.

Lecturers can use the software Turnitin to test a paper for plagiarism.

8. Statutory Declaration

A statutory declaration is to be included at the end of every seminar paper and MA thesis. For legal reasons, you have to use (or to include) the German version below. The translation is as follows:

Statutory Declaration

“I herewith declare that I have composed the present thesis myself and without use of any other than the cited sources and aids. Sentences or parts of sentences quoted literally are marked as such. Other references are indicated in regard to statement and scope and are specified by full details of the publications concerned. The thesis in the same or similar form has not been submitted to any examination body and has not been published. This thesis was not yet, even in part, used in another examination or as a course performance. Moreover, I give my consent to have the present thesis checked by plagiarism detection software.”

Place, date:.....signature:.....

In the case of a MA thesis which is also to be submitted in a digital version, please use the following statutory declaration:

“I herewith declare that I have composed the present thesis myself and without use of any other than the cited sources and aids. Sentences or parts of sentences quoted literally are marked as such. Other references are indicated in regard to statement and scope and are specified by full details of the publications concerned. The thesis in the same or similar form has not been submitted to any examination body and has not been published. This thesis was not yet, even in part, used in another examination or as a course performance. I declare that the submitted written (bound) copies of the present thesis and the version submitted on a data carrier are consistent with each other in contents. Moreover, I give my consent to have the present thesis checked by plagiarism detection software.”

Place, date:.....signature:.....

Please use (or include) the following German version:

Ehrenwörtliche Erklärung

“Ich versichere hiermit, dass ich die vorliegende Arbeit selbständig und ohne Benutzung anderer als der angegebenen Quellen und Hilfsmittel verfasst habe. Wörtlich übernommene Sätze oder Satzteile sind als Zitat belegt, andere Anlehnungen, hinsichtlich Aussage und Umfang, unter Quellenangabe kenntlich gemacht. Die Arbeit hat in gleicher oder ähnlicher Form noch keiner Prüfungsbehörde vorgelegen und ist nicht veröffentlicht. Sie wurde nicht, auch nicht auszugsweise, für eine andere Prüfungs- oder Studienleistung verwendet. Darüber hinaus stimme ich der Überprüfung der vorliegenden Arbeit durch eine Plagiatssoftware zu.“

Ort, Datum:.....Unterschrift:.....

In the case of a MA thesis which is also to be submitted in a digital version, please use the following statutory declaration:

Ehrenwörtliche Erklärung

“Ich versichere hiermit, dass ich die vorliegende Arbeit selbständig und ohne Benutzung anderer als der angegebenen Quellen und Hilfsmittel verfasst habe. Wörtlich übernommene Sätze oder Satzteile sind als Zitat belegt, andere Anlehnungen, hinsichtlich Aussage und Umfang, unter Quellenangabe kenntlichgemacht. Die Arbeit hat in gleicher oder ähnlicher Form noch keiner Prüfungsbehörde vorgelegen und ist nicht veröffentlicht. Sie wurde nicht, auch nicht auszugsweise, für eine andere Prüfungs- oder Studienleistung verwendet. Zudem versichere ich, dass die von mir abgegebenen schriftlichen (gebundenen) Versionen der vorliegenden Arbeit mit der abgegebenen elektronischen Version auf einem Datenträger inhaltlich übereinstimmen. Darüber hinaus stimme ich der Überprüfung der vorliegenden Arbeit durch eine Plagiatssoftware zu.“

Ort, Datum:.....Unterschrift:.....

Appendix 1: Sample of the cover sheet of a master thesis:

GOETHE UNIVERSITY FRANKFURT AM MAIN
Interdisciplinary Centre for East Asian Studies (IZO)
Modern East Asian Studies (MEAS)

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Master's Thesis

1. Supervisor: Prof. XXXXXXXXXXXXX
Faculty of XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
Goethe University Frankfurt am Main

2. Supervisor: XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
Faculty of XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
Goethe University Frankfurt am Main

Submitted by

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Address XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Matriculation Number: XXXXXXXXXXXX

Email: XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Submission date: XXXXXXXXXXXX