Instructions: How to Write Term Papers

Choosing a Topic and Formulating a Research Question

I would recommend you to choose a topic that broadly deals with the issues we touched upon during the seminar, that you are interested in and that motivates you to work on the paper. The research question you decide for has to be sufficiently narrow and focused in order to avoid a too general and descriptive treatment. It should allow for both a theoretical and an empirical perspective on the topic. At the same time, it has to be manageable given the limited resources you are faced with. For this reason, you should also limit yourself to dealing with only one to two cases and selecting them carefully.

Structure

A term paper is comprised of three main parts:
1. An introduction (~10% of the word count); therein, you should:
   a. Delineate the topic and arouse interest for it
   b. State your research question and explain why it is relevant
   c. Mention the theories and methods you will use
   d. Hint at the results of your paper without giving away the main arguments
   e. Outline the structure of the paper
2. A main part in which you develop the argument of your paper, based on empirical evidence. The main part consists of several chapters and subsections which have to be well-structured. Make use of paragraphs in order to organize your thoughts wisely - please avoid paragraphs comprising only one or two sentences or more than half a page.
3. A conclusion (~10% of the word count); it summarizes your main arguments and thereby responds to the research question stated in the introduction. It is unlikely that you will be able to answer your question with full certainty, since ‘the real world’ can usually be interpreted in different ways. For this reason, it is important to be modest about one’s results and to be explicit about possible limitations of the paper and alternative explanations. You can also include the implications of your case study for the wider field of research or international politics in your
A good conclusion can have a disciplining effect, since it forces you to limit yourself to your research question and to omit sections that might be interesting but actually irrelevant for your paper.

**Form**

Please pay attention to the following formal guidelines:

- In addition to the text body, your paper has to contain a cover page, a table of contents and a list of references
  - On the cover page, please state the topic of your paper, your name, student ID number, E-mail address, course of studies, the submission date and the word count
- Include page numbers, except on the cover page
- Use Arial or Times New Roman, font size 12, 1.5 line spacing (except in footnotes), full justification (not left-aligned)
- Leave a margin for corrections on the right side of each page
- Write only in full sentences

**Documentation**

Most important rule: Do not plagiarize! Every single time you use someone else’s ideas or wording, making a reference is obligatory. Both the purposeful omitting of references and ‘unintended’ plagiarism are a grave breach with the principles of academic work and will not be tolerated. Papers in which plagiarism is detected are, without exception, graded with a 5.0. However, please do not infer that using another author’s work is inadvisable and dangerous. On the contrary, you need to reference others in order to develop and prove your own arguments. Please stick to the guidelines below to make sure that your documentation is accurate.

**In-Text References**

**Different Ways to Reproduce Another Author’s Arguments**

1. **Analogous rendering of a passage**
   When longer passages of a text are rendered or summarized it suffices to refer to the author, the year of publication and the page number in brackets (e.g. “(Manteltasche, 2001, p.12)” or (Manteltasche, 2001, pp.13-14) or in a footnote at the end of the paragraph.

2. **Indirect quotations/paraphrasing**
   Indirect quotations remain close to the wording of the author and are usually delivered in indirect speech. The author, year of publication and the page number have to be referred to in a footnote/in brackets at the end of the quotation.
3. Direct quotations
Direct quotations are literally copied and indicated through quotation marks. Passages that are unimportant for the context can be omitted but have to be indicated through ellipsis (“…”). Only definitions, special terms or original, disputable arguments should be quoted directly. Again, at the end of the quote the author, the year of publication and the page number have to be stated in brackets or in a footnote.

Classical Citation Method - Footnotes
For your in-text references you may decide between the ‘classical’ and the American citation method. It is very important that you stick to one method throughout your whole paper. In the classical method the reference is placed in a footnote that is indicated by an elevated number at the end of the quote. When a book is mentioned for the first time, the footnote has to include the name of the author, the full title of the book, and other bibliographical details like the date and place of publication, publisher, journal and so forth. In further mention, it suffices to state only the last name of the author and refer to the footnote that includes the full reference. If you refer to the same source several times in a row, you can use “(ibid.)” instead of repeating the author’s name.

Examples for monographs:
- Ann Miller, Murphy’s Law. Life’s little Annoyances are not as Random as they Seem., Boulder (CO) 1991, p.83
- Manteltasche (footnote 1), p.49

Examples for journal articles or contributions to edited volumes:
- Wuffle (footnote 1), p.6
- Ibid.

Please refer to internet sources by stating the name of the publisher, the publication date, the title, the access date and the link. Example:
  www.uni-tuebingen.de/xyz
‘American’ Citation Method - Harvard Style

The Harvard Style is an alternative to the use of footnotes and a space-saving method, since sources are only mentioned briefly within the main text. A reference consists of the last name of the author, the publication year, and the page number – all in round brackets at the end of the sentence. If your bibliography contains several works by the same author, please label them with a, b, c… and denote the respective letter in your in-text references. Examples:

- (Manteltasche 1999: 48)
- (Miller 1991: 83)
- (Manteltasche 1997a: 45; 1997b: 89)

Additional aspects

- Although it is preferable to quote only from work ‘at hand’, quoting someone from another one’s work is possible by way of exception. Quotes within quotes should be indicated with single quotation marks (‘…’). Example in-text reference: (Spargel 1984: 68 quoted in Manteltasche 2002:102); example list of references: Spargel, Helmut 1984: Phantasmological Approaches to the Analysis of Neglected Trivia, in: Eskimo Nell Annual Review 21:8, 689-742. Quoted in: Dagobert Manteltasche 2002: Owls and Larks, Knotters and Simplifiers. The Origins of Modern Political Science, 2:1, 36-42.
  The list of references has to include both the original work and the quoted work.
- If you want to highlight a certain aspect in a quote, it can be set in bold or italics; however, please be consistent throughout your paper
- If a book or an article was published by more than three authors it suffices to state the name of the first one and “et al.”
- If no publication date or place can be determined please address this by stating “(n.d.)” or “(n.p.)”
- If the work is unpublished, please add “unpublished work” to the reference. If it will be published soon, please add “forthcoming” and information about the date and place of publication.

List of References

All the literature referred to in your paper needs to be listed in one single list of references. A list of references is not the same as a bibliography; hence, please only include work that is referenced in your paper. The list of references needs to be sorted alphabetically by family name. It is important that you attach a list of references even if you use the footnote style. In the following, the bibliographical information that has to be included in your references is listed for the most common types of academic work.

Books: Name of the author, year of publication, the full title of the book, place of publication, publisher
Chapter of an edited book: Author of the chapter, year of publication, title of the chapter, editor, title of the edited book, place of publication and publisher, page numbers of the chapter

Journal article: Author, year of publication, article title, journal title, volume, issue, page numbers of the article

Internet sources: Name of the author, year of publication, title, “retrieved from [link]”, “last accessed [date]”. It is very important that you do not only copy and paste the link.