



Guide to Academic Writing

ENGLISH AND AMERICAN STUDIES

Last Updated: December, 2014

Academic writing is one of the most important means through which you acquire and present the skills and knowledge that are at the core of our studies here at the university. Writing essays, seminar papers, and a final thesis will give you the opportunity not only to apply the theories and methods of literary and cultural studies, but to develop central skills in analyzing texts, processing information and reporting your research. Such skills will be useful in all areas of “knowledge work.” Asking the right questions, finding valid answers and presenting them in a way adapted to a specific audience requires not only careful research, but also effective communication of non-trivial ideas that are meant to change the way your readers think about the subject, albeit usually to a very small degree.

Academic writing is writing for a specific audience. Like all types of writing, writing to present research follows a set of rules and conventions defined by that audience. Though there are different conventions in different disciplines, the basic principles are the same across all fields of research: The writing needs to be clear and accessible, i.e. structured in a way that your readers expect, and the sources of all information need to be identified precisely and unambiguously.

The guidelines below introduce some of the major conventions in English and American Studies, adapted for use in courses taught at Universität Bayreuth. They apply to BA, MA and state exam theses, seminar papers, essays, reading reports, and response papers.

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1. Forms of writing: essay and seminar paper

The module handbooks of our BA, MA and teacher training programs distinguish two types of presenting your research and thinking in writing: **essays and seminar papers**. Both are forms of academic writing and therefore follow the same basic rules. An academic essay or seminar paper collects, organizes and presents **your analytical ideas about an aspect of a primary text** (see “Types of sources” below), or sometimes of more than one text. The aspect you choose should be carefully limited. You need to argue for your analytical ideas on the basis of evidence from the primary text, and to set forth your ideas in a clearly reasoned and coherent order.

However, since they have a slightly different function in your studies, essay and seminar paper also differ in some respects:

- (1) The **essay** highlights **practicing your analytical and argumentative skills** based on a focused research question. The essay is usually shorter than the seminar paper (1000-4000 words depending on the course and the number of other assignments) and does not require you to consult secondary sources. In the essay, you are asked to develop your own analytical argument based on the theories and methods of literary and cultural studies. Though secondary sources (i.e. scholarship on your topic, see below) are not a requirement, you may need to include tertiary and secondary research to help you define your methods and concepts, strengthen your argument and to serve as models for understanding the writing conventions in the discipline.
- (2) The **seminar paper** takes you a step further by asking you to develop your own analytical argument **in the context of existing scholarship on your topic**. The research question is usually somewhat broader than in an essay, requiring a longer paper to lay out your argument (usually 3500-9000 words). In the seminar paper, you will enter the scholarly conversation on your topic through secondary research: **finding and assessing sources, and placing their claims in relation to your own argument**. Secondary sources may also help you to find primary texts you had not been aware of or to understand new aspects of the texts you are analyzing. **Unlike the essay, a seminar paper should be organized in subsections and contain a table of contents.**

Both forms require you to organize your ideas in a way suitable to your audience and to meticulously document your sources.

2. Doing research

Before you start drafting your paper, you need to gather information and ideas that your paper will ultimately organize and present. Though there are distinct steps you will need to take in doing your research, the process is usually not perfectly linear: for example, you may need to return to searching for more sources or to redefining your research question as your essay or paper develops.

Defining a topic and a research question

To make your research more efficient, your first step should be **to narrow** the aspect you choose to focus on and also formulate an explicit question that your research and analysis

will address. The scope of your research question should correspond with the length of your essay or seminar paper.

The following types of topics may serve as a starting point for defining the focus of your projects:

Textually intrinsic topics: themes, structure of a work, character constellations, fictional devices;

Relation of a work to other works: sources and influences, historical analysis of themes and motifs, genre relations, intertextuality;

Relation of a work to sociohistorical contexts: sociocultural context, functions of a work at the time of its production, conditions governing its production, history of collective mentalities;

Relation of a work to its reception: adaptation, reproduction or re-creation in other media, history of a work's reception or influence.

Working with sources

Your research and writing depend on a careful selection and use of sources. Be discerning with all your sources, print or online; avoid sources that do not follow the same standards of scholarship for research and documenting sources that you should use. The internet can be an excellent resource for academic research, but most websites do not follow these standards. An important part of learning to do research well is to be able to distinguish different types of sources and the role they play in your work.

TYPES OF SOURCES: PRIMARY, SECONDARY, TERTIARY

It is useful to distinguish three types of sources in literary and cultural studies:

- (1) **Primary sources** are the texts you will analyze, such as novels, short stories, poems, or films. The main claims of your essay should make interesting and contestable statements about primary texts that can be supported through textual analysis.
- (2) Furthermore, you are likely to refer to **secondary sources**. These are works of published research such as monographs or articles in scholarly journals that deal with primary sources and the theories and methods of analyzing them. The library website provides a number of excellent resources for finding and acquiring secondary sources (most importantly the [MLA international bibliography](#)).
- (3) In the beginning stages of your research, you may also want to refer to **tertiary sources**, such as specialized encyclopedias, dictionaries of literary terms or introductions to the field you are studying. Tertiary texts summarize existing research and help you to contextualize your work in the larger research framework.

SELECTING RELIABLE SOURCES

Your research is only as good as your use of sources. Avoid general encyclopedias and non-scholarly web sites. Although there is a growing number of excellent academic sources available online, most online sources are not based on the kind of scholarship and careful

Use the resources of the library rather than relying on a simple google search.

research you require and thus not suitable as a basis for your own work. Use the resources of the library rather than relying on a simple google search. This will make your search for sources much more efficient and will help you avoid shady sources such as answers.com, enotes.com, or Hausarbeiten.de in your term papers. Wikipedia is a general encyclopedia which many also consider unreliable because anyone can add and remove information. Though it is advisable to begin your research with tertiary sources, you find the best and most suitable information in reference works based on the theories and methods of literary and cultural studies which address a specialized audience of students and scholars in the field. Carefully choose your sources and spend your time reading effectively rather than wading through endless websites of random information.

ACTIVE READING

Reading for an essay or seminar paper should be **active reading**. For your primary and your secondary sources, prepare your reading by defining your expectations and identifying the structure and main points of the text and then take careful notes while reading. **Note-taking** is a selective process, and the easiest way to do this is to note the text that gave you an idea and then add your own comment. Do not forget to write down the source and the page number where your quote comes from. That way you will be able to quote the source in your essay (and thus avoid unintentional plagiarism).

During your studies, you will use many sources, so try to start a **bibliography** as soon as possible. This is a booklist, either computer-based, or in the form of a card index. Every book you read should have its details listed in your master book-list, your card index, or computer file. It should contain: **Author/s, title, place of publication, publisher, date, page number**. (See “Documenting your sources: Style Sheet” below)

For your own use, it is advisable to add the **call number** (German: *Signatur*) of books you get from the library, because that is the easiest way to find a single item again.

QUOTING FROM SOURCES

Once you have selected and read your sources, you should give them an appropriate place in your argument. Avoid using sources just for the sake of quoting, or to replace your own analysis. Use quotations sparingly and by no means as a substitute for your own argumentation. Excessive use of direct quotation from primary and/or secondary sources (“patchworking”) turns what should be your own writing into being merely a collage of quotations. Only use direct quotations when you need to comment on the way in which a particular idea was phrased or to support your analysis of a primary text. In all other cases, paraphrase and thus establish a relationship between your ideas and the cited source.

Avoid using sources just for the sake of quoting, or to replace your own analysis.

Establishing such a relationship requires a discussion of the content of the quoted material: does that material do justice to the primary source? Why do you think it does so? What method does that material use? Is there something the author seems to overlook or to neglect?

You have to cite the exact source of every quotation. **This is done either within the text ('MLA style') or in footnotes** (see “Documenting your sources: Style Sheet” below). Do not

use a mix of both. Regardless of which option you choose, you have to list all your sources in the ‘Works Cited’ list / Bibliography at the end of your paper.

Avoiding Plagiarism

As you know, **plagiarism** is a serious breach of academic ethics, regardless of the copyright status of the information used. Whether you paraphrase or copy just one sentence or submit an entire essay that was written by someone else as your own, you are stealing what is most valuable in an academic context: ideas. Even if you unintentionally take ideas from someone else because you did not keep good enough notes on the source, you are responsible for your writing. Any form of plagiarism will lead to a rejection of the essay or paper, and depending on the severity may also lead to further consequences, including legal action. Therefore, in addition to being honest about where your ideas come from, you should familiarize yourself with strategies for avoiding unintentional plagiarism (see [“Citing Sources and Avoiding Plagiarism”](#) from Duke Libraries in the list of further readings below).

When you use reference works, you always have to quote them or paraphrase them and give the sources.

3. Writing your essay or seminar paper

Writing for an audience

As a general rule, you should **write for a reader who is another scholar in the field**, someone who usually knows the primary text and the scholarly context. Adapt your style, focus and line of argumentation to his or her interests in reading your writing: not to learn about you, the world at large or the evils of society today as you see them, but solely to understand something new about the primary text(s) that is not obvious on first or second reading and needs to be supported through a careful analytical argument. The essay or paper should be clearly focused on supporting your **main claim** based on your analytical ideas and should not contain extraneous information irrelevant to your reader such as excessive “background” information, author biographies and mere paraphrase of the primary source. **Anything in your writing that does not support your argument will weaken it.** Following the structural conventions of academic writing helps you write well for your intended audience.

- ✓ Use appropriate terminology and avoid subjective opinions and statements.
- ✓ Use the present tense when referring to fictional events in literary works.
- ✓ Avoid contracted forms such as “don’t,” “isn’t” etc.

Your **writing style** should suit the occasion: a neutral, objective, analytical style is usually best. Avoid highlighting your own subjective position—the point is to make interesting statements about the text(s) not about yourself by showing what you personally like or dislike about a literary work. Colloquial style, slang or abbreviations are inappropriate. Furthermore, stay away from truisms, clichés, vague formulations (“somehow,” “in a certain way,” etc.), generalizations, meaningless repetitions, and metaphorical expressions. On the other hand, your writing should engage your reader and show your passion for your argument. Being

ponderous or dull is not a replacement for a sound analytical argument. For example, you should avoid passive voice: contrary to popular belief, it does not make your writing more objective.

Outlining

Though academic writing follows tight rules and conventions, it is also a creative process and every writer develops his or her own procedures and strategies of invention. However, regardless of what strategies you use, it is advisable to **plan and structure** your essay or seminar paper before you start writing. You may start by gathering all the notes you have collected in your research. Read through them, write new ones and rewrite old ones if more or different ideas come to your mind, and make sure each of them has a label or heading. Put the headings together in a logical order (headings, sub-headings, maybe even sub-sub-headings) on a sheet of paper in the form of an **outline** of the essay. The outline is your “map” of the essay. This map will show how to arrange the information and ideas you have in your notes and reveal gaps in your notes that you still need to fill to complete your paper.

Paragraphs

Paragraphs are the basic structuring units in an essay or seminar paper, and they are marked by indenting the first line. Basically, every paragraph is a building block and should be coherent and consistently represent and flesh out a single idea. Well developed paragraphs are usually a third to half a page in length. **Avoid one-sentence paragraphs.** The paragraph has the same basic structure as any piece of writing: introduction, main part, and conclusion. It should have what is called a topic sentence, near the beginning, which announces the main topic of the paragraph. The paragraph should not deviate much from this topic or introduce any new ones. The first sentence also serves as a transition from the last sentence of the previous paragraph. The final sentence provides a conclusion. It helps to make each paragraph a solid unit that develops a clearly announced sub-topic of the essay. (Do not, however, explicitly place subheadings before each paragraph.)

Structure of the essay or seminar paper

As all kinds of academic writing, essay and seminar paper have the same basic building blocks: **introduction, main part, conclusion and works cited list** (for the distinction between essay and seminar paper please see “Forms of writing: essay and seminar paper” above).

TABLE OF CONTENTS

The table of contents lists all chapter and subchapter headings, including the introduction, the conclusion, and the works cited (and their respective page numbers). Make sure that the headings and page numbers you list in the table of contents exactly correspond to those found in the body of the text. **In a short essay there is no need for a table of contents.**

INTRODUCTION

In terms of topic, logic, and structure, a seminar paper (like an essay) revolves around **a single issue or guiding question**. The introduction should clearly **contextualize** and explain this question, and should **specify the terms and conditions that are required for answering it**. As a basic rule, the introduction should be about one-tenth of your paper. In the further course of the paper, you should meet the expectations raised in the introduction. The first paragraph should clearly announce and contextualize the topic. Explain why your topic needs analytical attention and identify the problem it raises: it may, for instance, contain particular difficulties or apparent contradictions, or it may be especially important for an understanding of the primary sources. You should also explain your choice and selection of primary sources. It may be helpful to also provide an answer to your question at the end of the introduction (referred to as '**thesis statement**'). In short, the introduction should give your reader a clear sense of the problem you set out to solve, the main question you are going to answer and how you will answer it. You should maintain that sense of direction throughout the essay or seminar paper.

An introduction should:

- ✓ introduce the guiding question;
- ✓ provide context information;
- ✓ give a brief outline and scope;
- ✓ formulate the thesis statement;
- ✓ give an outline of the chapter structure;

MAIN PART OF THE PAPER

The main part of the essay or seminar paper provides the argument that answers your research question and supports your main claim. Since in literary and cultural studies academic writing makes statements about literary and/or visual texts (primary texts), this consists of an in-depth, coherent, and logically consistent analysis of one or several such texts. A seminar paper should be organized by thematic sub-headings (not necessarily explicit in an essay). A clear structure of argumentation is important: a logical development of thoughts (concept of order), a connection of thoughts, sentences, paragraphs and sections by suitable logical connectors (concept of coherence), and a focus of each paragraph and section on one major sequence of ideas (concept of unity). Make sure to develop conclusions from premises based on the analysis of your primary sources, and to do so without internal contradictions and in a manner that is intersubjectively verifiable. This involves fairly precise and consistent use of terminology. Provide evidence for ideas and arguments by means of quotations from your primary sources. Whenever possible, also try to consider evidence that apparently does not match or seems to contradict your arguments. All arguments and results must be open to possible falsification by means of the primary sources. In a seminar paper, you also need to survey the state of current research on the topic and position your argument in the context of what other scholars have said.

CONCLUSION

In your conclusion, you should summarize results and perhaps give an idea of aspects you could not adequately consider in your paper and that might need further

discussion in a larger context. In other words, the conclusion “mirrors” the introduction: it should begin with a reformulation of your main claim and delineate how your analysis has responded to the research question. You can also open new areas of inquiry that have emerged in the course of your analysis. It should also be no longer than one-tenth of your paper.

WORKS CITED / BIBLIOGRAPHY

The (List of) Works Cited (or Bibliography) contains full bibliographic information of **all** primary, secondary, and tertiary sources cited in your paper. This means that each source you refer to in your text has to appear in your works cited list. These sources are listed in alphabetical order of the authors’ last names (or the title if there is no author). The citation standards are those of the MLA (see the following section “Documenting your sources: Style Sheet”).

4. Documenting your sources: Style Sheet

This style sheet outlines the formal and structural requirements for essays and seminar papers. It follows the standards of form and citation of the Modern Language Association (MLA). Wherever deviations from the MLA standard have prevailed in Germany, we have marked them as such. For more detailed questions not answered in this style sheet, we refer to Joseph Gibaldi, *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 7th ed. (New York: MLA, 2009, or latest edition).

MLA Style is the mandatory style for writing papers in English and American Studies classes. Being able to meet the formal requirements is an integral part of writing a good academic paper, so please make sure that your paper is formally consistent. Please also note that the formal presentation of your paper will play a role in its evaluation.

Citing Sources

Whenever you use formulations and passages from other texts, you have to mark them as quotations. If you paraphrase ideas and arguments you find in secondary texts, you have to document them as well (see “Quoting from Sources” and “Avoiding Plagiarism” above).

Quotations should not be put in another font (e.g. italics, different font size).

Verbatim quotations are enclosed in double quotation marks (“. . .”), quotations within quotations in single quotation marks (“. . .”). **Quotations of more than three lines, so-called block quotations, are indented and not enclosed in quotation marks.**

All changes you make in verbatim quotations must be marked as such. **Use square brackets for additions and changes and three dots for elisions.** If you want to emphasize a word or a phrase, italicize it and mark the emphasis as yours after the quotation.

Some examples:

“The continual reference in [contemporary] critical debate to a distinction between structuralism and post-structuralism has several unfortunate effects” (Culler 28).

“The continual reference [...] to a distinction between structuralism and post-structuralism has several unfortunate effects” (Culler 28)

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

In-Text Citation ('MLA Style')

In-text citation ('MLA style') requires you to document your source directly within the text. More precisely, you insert the author's last name and the page number in parentheses right after the quotation, as in the following example:

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

For better readability, you may also integrate the author's name in your text:

It is certainly true, as Culler maintains, that “[t]he continual reference in critical debate to a distinction between structuralism and post-structuralism has several unfortunate effects” (28).

If you cite several works by the same author or several authors by the same last name, include **a short version of the title**. It is separated from the author's name by a comma:

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

“Structural and thematic values combine in this most profound level of narrative self-analysis” (Matlack, “Voices” 352).

Indirect quotations are also marked within the text:

Derrida develops some of his central ideas in his discussion of Saussure's linguistics (Culler 97-102).

When you cite from poems and verse plays, you should use line instead of page numbers. In order to avoid misunderstandings, insert the word “line(s)” when you first cite from a poem. When you cite from verse plays, give the act, scene, and line numbers.

“And when a dark ship arrived, / I entered that water” (Magdaleno lines 12-13).

Meander’s “he was never sprung of human race” shows the Persians’ respect for Tamburlaine’s superhuman traits (Marlowe 2.4.11).

If you use in-text citation, you may still use footnotes for further references and comments, but not for purposes of citation. As a rule of thumb, everything not directly related to the thread of your argument goes into a footnote.

Footnotes

As an alternative to in-text citation, you can cite all sources in footnotes. Footnotes are numbered continually and in ascending order throughout your paper. They still require a list of works cited at the end of the paper. When you cite a source for the first time, give the full bibliographical information in the footnote. The format resembles that of the list of works

cited, but periods are replaced with commas or parentheses and the author's name is given in normal order. For example:

¹Jonathan Culler, *On Deconstruction: Theory and Criticism after Structuralism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1982) 28.

²James H. Matlack, "The Voices of Time: Narrative Structure in *Absalom, Absalom!*," *Southern Review* 15 (1979): 333-54, 352.

When you cite a source you have cited before, you only need to give the author's last name and the page number:

³Culler 28.

If you cite several works by the same author or several authors by the same last name, include a short version of the title. It is separated from the author's name by a comma:

⁴Matlack, "Voices" 352.

When you cite from poems and verse plays, you should refer to lines instead of page numbers. To avoid misunderstandings, insert the word "line(s)" when you first cite from a poem. When you cite from verse plays, give the act, scene, and line numbers.

⁵Magdaleno lines 12-13.

⁶Marlowe 2.4.11.

For important sources that you cite often (such as the literary text you are discussing), you may use abbreviations. However, you still have to give the full bibliographical information in a footnote when you use the abbreviation for the first time. For example:

"Sitting on the seat was a woman and a boy of about twelve" (LA 271).⁷

⁷ Quotations from William Faulkner, *Light in August* (New York: Vintage, 1987) will be cited parenthetically in the text, abbreviated as *LA*.

As noted above, **additional information that does not directly belong to your argument but offers interesting references or sidenotes** may also be provided in footnotes!

Preparing a list of works cited / bibliography

At the end of your paper you have to list all the works from which you have quoted and those that provided important ideas and arguments for your paper. **They are listed in alphabetical order of the authors' last names.** Important: Do not forget to specify precisely the edition of the primary source you are using.

Begin your works-cited list on a new page, with the appropriate page number.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

In the list of works cited, all lines are indented except the first line of each entry. Where there are more than three authors or editors, list only the first of them, followed by "et al." Anonymous works are listed by title. If you have cited several works by the same author, list

them alphabetically by title. Give the author's name in the first entry only; in the following entries, replace it with a dash (see Morrison example below).

If the work you cite has been published in several places, include only the first of them in your entry. If the place name is ambiguous or not widely known, give some additional information ("Ithaca, NY," "Frankfurt/M."). The term 'University Press' is usually abbreviated 'UP': 'Brandeis UP,' 'U of California P.'

Cite web sites as you would any other publication and list them alphabetically by the last name of the author or the title along with the print sources. If you cite websites, give the date at which you accessed it as well as the date of the 'publication' of said website. Provide all the bibliographical information available on the site.

Below, you will find examples for the most regularly used types of publications. Since we cannot cover every possible case, please refer to §5.6 in the MLA-Handbook (available in the library) for further information.

MONOGRAPHS AND OTHER BOOKS

Culler, Jonathan. *On Deconstruction: Theory and Criticism after Structuralism*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1982. Print.

Morrison, Toni. *Beloved*. New York: Knopf, 1987. Print.

—. *A Mercy*. New York: Knopf, 2008. Print.

Heise, Ursula. *Sense of Place and Sense of Planet: The Environmental Imagination of the Global*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2008. Print.

Marlowe, Christopher. *Tamburlaine the Great*. 1587. Ed. John D. Jump. Part 1. Lincoln, NE: U of Nebraska P, 1967. Print.

ANTHOLOGIES AND COMPILATIONS

Baym, Nina, et al., eds. *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*. 6th ed. 5 vols. New York: Norton, 2003. Print.

Zapf, Hubert, ed. *Kulturökologie und Literatur: Beiträge zu einem transdisziplinären Paradigma der Literaturwissenschaft*. Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2008. Print.

ENTRIES IN ANTHOLOGIES AND COMPILATIONS

Hassan, Ihab. "Toward a Concept of Postmodernism." *A Postmodernism Reader*. Eds. Joseph Natoli and Linda Hutcheon. Albany: State U of New York P, 1993. 273-286. Print.

Magdaleno, Rita. "The Leaving." *¡Floricanto Si!: A Collection of Latina Poetry*. Eds. Bryce Milligan, Mary Guerrero Gilligan, and Angela de Hoyos. New York: Penguin, 1998. 157. Print.

Nabokov, Vladimir. *Pnin. The Portable Nabokov*. Ed. Page Stegner. New York: Viking, 1968. 362-512. Print.

ARTICLES IN JOURNALS

Matlack, James H. "The Voices of Time: Narrative Structure in *Absalom, Absalom!*" *Southern Review* 15 (1979): 333-54. Print.

Steinberg, Marc. "Inverting History in Octavia Butler's Postmodern Slave Narrative." *African American Review* 38 (2004): 467-476. Print.

ARTICLES IN NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES

Bisky, Jens. "Seit zehn Jahren zu innovativ: Eine Jubiläumsfeier am Zentrum für Literaturforschung." *Süddeutsche Zeitung* 19 May 2006, 18. Print.

Peterson, Peter G. "Public Diplomacy and the War on Terrorism." *Foreign Affairs* Sept./Oct. 2002: 74-94. Print.

ARTICLES IN REFERENCE BOOKS

"Deconstruction." *The Oxford English Dictionary*. 2nd ed. 1989. Print.

Schulz, Dieter. "Emerson, Ralph Waldo." *Metzler Lexikon amerikanischer Autoren*. Eds. Bernd Engler and Kurt Müller. Stuttgart: Metzler, 2000. Print.

REVIEWS

Pizer, Donald. Rev. of *Stephen Crane in Transition: Centenary Essays*, ed. Joseph Katz. *Studies in the Novel* 5.2 (1973): 261-62. Print.

Little, Jonathan. "Erasing the Buddha." Rev. of *Charles Johnson's Fiction*, by William R. Nash. *Contemporary Literature* 44 (2003): 743-47. Print.

WEB SITES, ARTICLES IN ONLINE PERIODICALS

Broeck, Sabine. "When Light Becomes White: Reading Enlightenment through Jamaica Kincaid's Writing." *Callaloo* 25 (2002): 821-843. JSTOR. Web. 17 June 2014 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3300119>>.

Postmodern Culture. Ed. Lisa Brawley and James F. English. 2002. Web. 1 Oct. 2014 <http://www.iath.virginia.edu/pmc/>.

Whitman, Walt. "By Emerson's Grave." *Prose Works*. Philadelphia: McKay, 1892. *Bartleby.com*. Web. 20. Oct. 2005 <<http://www.bartleby.com/229/1244.html>>.

FILMS

8 Mile. Dir. Curtis Hanson. Perf. Eminem, Kim Basinger, Brittany Murphy. Universal, 2003. DVD.

WORKS OF ART

Courbet, Gustave. *The Painter's Studio*. Oil on canvas. Musée d'Orsay, Paris.

5. Formatting your essay or seminar paper

Once you have your final draft, you need to produce a clean copy that your instructor can read well and that physically (or electronically if required) presents your work in the clearest and most accessible manner. Use a typewriter or a word processor for the final draft of your paper (for American studies classes you need to submit a printed and an electronic version of your final paper). Use a paper clip for fastening the pages of your essay or paper instead of stapling them.

Proofread your paper very carefully before submitting it!

SPELLING

Do not mix spelling standards: use **either** American **or** British English. Carefully check your paper for grammar and spelling mistakes before submitting it.

SPACING AND MARGINS

The essay or term paper has to be printed on A4 paper, and use only one side of the paper. Though the style sheet of the department uses MLA style, some of the formatting differs because of different paper sizes. The font size is 12 point and please use a standard, easy-to-read font (Times New Roman or Arial). Please use 1.5 line spacing. Please leave margins of 3-4 cm on the left and 2 cm on the right. Justify your lines at the left and right margin (Blocksatz) and indent the first line of each paragraph by 1 cm. The pages must be numbered; page numbering begins with the introductory paragraph (essay) or with the introduction (term paper/thesis).¹

TITLES AND HEADINGS

In the text as in the works cited list, titles of monographs, collections, journals, films, and works of art are italicized; titles of articles, essays, poems, and short stories are enclosed in quotation marks. Words and phrases in foreign languages are italicized as well, except within quotations. You may underline instead of using italics, **but do not mix the two.** In headings and titles, all words are capitalized except articles ("the"), short prepositions ("of"), conjunctions ("and"), and particles ("to"). The first and last words of a title are always capitalized.

University of Bayreuth
WS 2015/15
PS, "New York in Black and White"
Dr. Christian Schmidt

The Role of the City in
John Dos Passos's *Manhattan Transfer*

TITLE PAGE

The title page provides the following information: top left, the names of the university and the field (English Literature / American Studies / Anglophone Literatures), the title of the seminar, the lecturer's name, and the semester in which the seminar was offered; in the center, the title (and subtitle) of your paper; bottom right, your name and address, your Semesterzahl, Studiengang (BA,

Johny English
Mtr. Nr: 1234567
BA, American Studies
5th. Semester
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¹ For information on how to use sections in Microsoft Word to start with page number 1 on the third page of text please refer to "How to create a Word document that uses different page numbering formats." Microsoft Support. 1 Feb 2007. Microsoft. Web. 6 Jun 2011 <<http://support.microsoft.com/kb/326536>>

MAIAS, LA etc.), and Studienfach (include: HF – major; NF – minor) and the date at which you submitted the paper.

6. Recommended further sources on academic writing

Booth, Wayne C., Gregory G. Colomb and Joseph M. Williams. *The Craft of Research*. 3rd ed. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2008. Print.

Practical introduction to the process of research from finding a topic to finalizing the draft you submit. It addresses beginning researchers as well as PhD candidates, providing useful guidelines relevant for the social sciences and humanities.

“Citing Sources and Avoiding Plagiarism.” *Research & Reference*. Duke Libraries. 20 Nov 2009. Web. 6 Jun 2011 <<http://library.duke.edu/research/plagiarism/>>.

A lucid and useful overview of how to cite sources correctly and how to avoid plagiarism.

Gibaldi, Joseph. *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. 7th ed. New York: MLA, 2009. Print.

The handbook that is the basis for the departmental style sheet. Provides detailed information on how to cite sources using MLA style.

Purdue Online Writing Lab. Ed. Linda Bergmann and Tammy Conard-Salvo. Purdue University, 2011. Web. 6 Jun 2011 <<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>>.

An excellent web cite that gives detailed information on many issues relevant to academic writing, including [paragraphs and paragraphing](#), [active and passive voice](#), [conciseness](#), and [developing an outline](#). It also outlines some of the most important research skills such as [evaluating sources](#), [quoting, paraphrasing, and summarizing sources](#), and [avoiding plagiarism](#).