

Information on how to write a term paper or thesis at the CCCP

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1 Introduction

Following introductory notes shall offer you basic guidance for writing scientific papers at the CCCP. You can gain more in-depth knowledge by participating in seminars on scientific working methods offered at the CCCP on a regular basis (via Studium Integrale).

Additional general information on scientific working techniques are available from the Institute of Political Science and European Affairs:

http://www.politik.uni-koeln.de/sites/politik/user_upload/Techniken_des_wissenschaftlichen_Arbeitens/Hinweise_zu_r_Technik_des_wissenschaftlichen_Arbeitens_en.pdf

For more information on assessment criteria for term papers and presentations, please visit the CCCP homepage:

<http://www.cccp.uni-koeln.de/de/lehre/information-for-students/>

2 Literature research

The basis for writing a term paper in the field of comparative political science is scientific literature. Therefore, literature research is one of your central tasks especially at the beginning of the research process. Since researching and obtaining relevant literature can take some time (books may be loaned, inter-library loan may not possible, etc.) you should consciously schedule sufficient time for this task. It is likely that you will return to literature research in the further course of your working process several times: having examined some relevant literature you come across other useful contributions (for example by studying reference lists, or finding articles or books citing the original work).

For literature research in the field of political science, there are two libraries available for you here in Cologne, the University and City Library of Cologne (UCL) and the library at the

Institute of Political Science. The respective **library catalogues** (accessible online) provide you with information on the libraries' literature stocks.

For the UCL catalogue visit:

https://www.ub.uni-koeln.de/index_eng.html

For the library at the Institute of Political Science visit:

<http://www.politik.uni-koeln.de/en/bib/>

For your literature research it is important to note that the library catalogues primarily list autonomous publications (monographs, edited volumes, etc.). There is a different procedure to search for journal articles (see below).

The UCL offers some information on how to use the library for efficient research on its homepage:

https://www.ub.uni-koeln.de/using/index_eng.html

Databases offer convenient possibilities to do literature research beyond the reference library. You can access the UCL's database offer on its homepage in the E-Media section:

http://www.ub.uni-koeln.de/IPS?SERVICE=TEMPLATE&SUBSERVICE=DBIS_BROWSE&VIEW=USB:Kataloge&LOCATION=USB&SID=IPS1:beabaadd36db9ea30158a56a3afa866e&SETCOOKIE=TRUE&LANGUAGE=en

Listed are general as well as discipline-specific databases. Which database is most suited for your purposes also depends on your research topic.

Here are some databases for literature research in the field of comparative political science:

Interdisciplinary

- Academic Search Complete
- JSTOR

Political science

- International Bibliography of Social Sciences (IBSS)
- Web of Science / Social Sciences Citation Index
- Worldwide Political Science Abstracts

In parts, these databases are available as full text database systems, meaning that you can download articles directly as PDFs. If this is not the case you should check via the UCL Search & Order system (the online catalogue) whether the article (or monograph, or edited volume, or journal) is available in print or digital at the library.

In case you look for a specific journal, try to find it among the E-Journals offered by the UCL. By entering the journal name into the search box "Suche nach Zeitschriften" you can verify whether the volume is accessible online.

http://www.ub.uni-koeln.de/IPS?SERVICE=TEMPLATE&SUBSERVICE=EZB_BROWSE&VIEW=USB:Kata

[log&LOCATION=USB&SID=IPS1:beabaadd36db9ea30158a56a3afa866e&SETCOOKIE=TRUE](https://rrzk.uni-koeln.de/vpn.html?&L=1)

Please note that a large part of the online databases and journals are only accessible within the university network. In order to make use of these services from outside the campus you can install a VPN client on your computer which connects to the university network. The Regional Computing Centre (RRZK) explains how this works:

<https://rrzk.uni-koeln.de/vpn.html?&L=1>

The RRZK also offers literature management programs, which can help you to organize, collect and edit the literature you found during the research process. As an enrolled student you can access two literature management programs (Citavi and EndNote) via the RRZK software shop for free.

<https://rrzk.uni-koeln.de/software.html?&L=1>

3 The term paper

Structure

At the CCCP we want your term paper to be an argumentative text and consisting of four major parts: **Introduction, Theory, Main part, Conclusion.**

In the **introduction** you formulate your research question (which question do you want to answer with your research?) and your method (how do you want to answer the research question? e.g. with an analysis of documents, survey data, or scrutinizing scientific literature?). Moreover, you should locate your research question within the current research landscape (which literature is already out there covering this or related topics, what are the central hypotheses?). Finally, the introduction serves to outline the structure of the paper.

The *theory* section allows you to combine your research question with existing theoretical approaches. Here you can outline existing assumptions and clarify how they reflect in your argument. Overall, the argument you put forward in your paper should comply with the theoretical perspective.

In the **main part** you examine your research question by scrutinizing your empirical material, sources and arguments from the literature according to your theory section. The material you collected is supposed to substantiate your argument. Remember that your research question remains your common theme throughout the paper. You should sharpen your arguments accordingly.

The **conclusion** summarizes the results and discusses them reflecting the research question. Furthermore, it points to the limitations of the work, attempts prospects for future research (e.g. are there any further questions that should be subject to future research? How may the phenomenon develop?) and formulates an own assessment of the topic.

Presentation and style

This is a rough outline of the formal requirements. Most decisive for your term papers are the specifications presented by your lecturer, especially relating to the number of pages required.

Next to your main text your paper should include a **cover sheet/title page**, a **table of contents**, a **reference list** and, as the last page, a signed **statement of compliance with the university's non-plagiarism rules** (see below for more information on plagiarism rules).

In general, you should stick to following guidelines:

- Hand in two copies of your paper, one printed and paper clipped, and the other one digital as PDF email attachment.
- The paper should be easily legible: 1.5 line spacing, font size 12, full justification and printed on one side only.
- There should be enough space at the margins for corrections.
- The cover sheet should contain following information
 - Institute, chair
 - Title of your paper
 - Course title, lecturer's name, your name, email address, study program and student-ID, number of semesters, and the date of submission.

4 Formal requirements: citation and list of references

Your term paper is scientific work, meaning that you have to comply with certain rules regarding citation and the use of literature.

Citation

Any thoughts or ideas, which are not originally the author's (e.g. yours), have to be labelled as such! We differentiate between a direct and indirect way of citation.

Direct citation means adopting words and sentences from another source literally. Such citations have to be embedded within quotation marks. The reference to the quote follows immediately after the quotation marks.

Using **indirect citation** you reformulate or paraphrase other writers' thoughts, arguments, assessments with own words. Indirect citations also require a reference note, this time at the end of the sentence or paragraph.

There are many different citation styles which we fall within two major categories (reference using footnotes and in-text citation): styles of the first category place references into **footnotes** at the bottom of each page. The second option is to insert **short references in the text** (in-text citation, also called American citation style). It is up to you to decide which option to choose as long as you stick to one style throughout the paper.

Below, **in-text citation** will be explained in more detail. You can find further information on using footnotes in the Institute's paper on "Scientific working methods" on page 14.

Using in-text citation the reference is placed within parentheses in the main text. These short references do not mention the whole literature source, only specific information that allow to identify the respective source in the list of references at the end of the paper.

Information listed in parentheses:

Name of the author/name of the editor, year of publication and where appropriate page number(s).

Examples:

Direct citation:

In his comparison between majoritarian and consensus democracies the author comes to the conclusion that consensus democracies are “kinder and gentler” (Lijphart 1999:275).

Indirect citation:

With regard to their economic performance the author does identify majoritarian democracies to be superior systems of government (Lijphart 1999:274).

Cases, where authors published multiple articles or books within the same year, are marked with a, b, c,... after the year (the same applies to the reference list).

Examples:

(Lijphart 1999a)

(Lijphart 1999b)

Reference list

In the structure of the paper the list of references follows right after the conclusion. It comprises all the literature and sources you have referred to in the text. Remember to list every reference you mentioned in the text in the reference list for the reader to identify the source. In turn, every reference from the list should be mentioned in the text at least once.

As opposed to the short in-text reference, references in the reference list comprise the whole literature information. One exception is that page numbers are not mentioned in the reference list (except from journal articles and book chapters, see below). Scientific publications have to be listed alphabetically in the order of the authors’ or editors’ surnames.

Example: References

Barnes, Samuel, Max Kaase (Hg.), 1979: Political Action. Mass Participation in Five Western Democracies, Beverly Hills: Sage.

Federal Constitutional Court, 2014: “Three-Percent Electoral Threshold in the Law Governing European Elections Unconstitutional Under the Current Legal and Factual Circumstances”, Press Release No. 14/2014 of 26 February 2014, accessible online: https://www.bundesverfassungsgericht.de/SharedDocs/Pressemitteilungen/EN/2014/bvg14-014.html;jsessionid=20E71B3905F53272EEDB25F9F6AAEAB5.2_cid383 (retrieved: 01.03.2014).

Lijphart, Arend, 1999a: Australian Democracy. Modifying Majoritarianism?, in: Australian Journal of Political Science, 34(3), 313-326.

Lijphart, Arend, 1999b: Patterns of Democracy. Government Forma and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries, New Haven: Yale University Press.

Nagel, Jack H., 2000: Expanding the Spectrum of Democracies, in: Crepaz, Markus M.L., Thomas A. Keolöbe, David Wilsford (Hg.), Democracy and Institutions. The Life Work of Arend Lijphart, Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 113-125.

Rankin, Jennifer, Jon Henley, 2017: “Juncker says Brexit talks will be 'very, very, very difficult' as press turns hostile”, in The Guardian, 18.01.2017, accessible online: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/jan/18/jean-claude-juncker-says-brexit-talks-will-be-very-very-very-difficult> (retrieved: 25.02.2017).

Supp, Barbara, 2014: “Flirting with Populism: Is Germany's AfD a Wolf in Sheep's Clothing?”, in: Spiegel Online International, 22.05.2014, accessible online: <http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/a-portrait-of-bernd-lucke-and-the-new-german-right-a-969589.html> (retrieved 01.06.2014).

5 Check for plagiarism

Including other authors' ideas or thoughts without reference is considered theft of intellectual property and constitutes plagiarism. Therefore, you should be citing conscientiously!

You can find more information about the rules dealing with plagiarism on the Institute's homepage:

<http://www.politik.uni-koeln.de/en/courses-and-studies/examinations/general-information-on-exams/>

Every term paper or thesis has to include a signed statutory declaration. You can find the official form sheet here:

<http://www.cccp.uni-koeln.de/sites/cccp/Lehre/EidesstattlicheErklaerung.pdf>

Please note that this declaration must be given in German even if the rest of the thesis is in English. The examination office has translated the statement for you:

<https://www.wiso.uni-koeln.de/en/faculty/managing-board/examination-office/2015-examination-regulations/theses/>

6 Further reading

On research and writing

- Booth, Wayne et al., 2016: The Craft of Research, Fourth Edition, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

On improving your English writing skills

- Sker, Timothy, 2011: Writing Scientific English, Wien: facultas wuv.
- Berkeley Center for Teaching & Learning, 2016: “Resources For Non-native English Speaker”, accessible online: <http://teaching.berkeley.edu/resources/reading-and-composition/resources-non-native-english-speaker> (retrieved 02.02.2017).