Universität Erfurt – BA Anglistik/Amerikanistik

Seminar:

Lecturer:

Winter / Summer Term 202X

Title of Term Paper

Name

Student ID number:

E-mail address:

English and American Studies: major / minor subject

Other subject:

Course module and no of credit points:

Date of submission:

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# 1. Introduction

State the topic of your term paper, contextualize your topic and explain why it is worth investigating. Then define your goals, i.e. research question(s) as precisely as you can. Finish up your Introduction with a very brief preview (route map) indicating the overall structure of your term paper. Your introduction should not be longer than 1 to 2 pages – if you are writing a small term paper, then the introduction may be even shorter, e.g., half a page long.

When planning your paper, keep in mind that you should develop a deeper understanding of the field/problem that goes beyond what you have learnt/discussed in class. You should thus present a clear argument – and maybe even data/analysis – of your own and not just summarise previous work. Term papers of a more theoretical nature will include a more detailed review of a larger amount of specialized literature on the topic in pursuit of the answer to a specific question. Term papers of a more empirical nature will include more data analysis.

Any academic paper must be clearly structured, whereby the structure follows from the topic of the term paper. Ensure that your argument can be followed easily. This can be achieved by using a clear section structure with adequate section or subsection headings and by making adequate use of paragraphing.[[1]](#footnote-1) Each paragraph introduces a new aspect in your argument. However, not each sentence needs a new paragraph. Very long running text without paragraphs should be avoided because it is hard to follow.

To get an idea of what it takes to complete a good term paper in terms of work load, think about the following: Students completing a course with a “small” term paper for 3 credit points will minimally invest 1 credit point (30 hours of work) into the term paper itself. Students completing a course with a standard term paper for 6 credit points will minimally invest 3 credit points (90 hours of work, i.e. more than the entire course) into the term paper.[[2]](#footnote-2)

# 2. Literature review

This part of your term paper presents the results of your own review of the existing relevant literature. It is often called “Literature review” or “Theoretical background” or “State of the art” – if in doubt about what this part of your term paper ought to be called, please consult your teaching staff. It is meant to inform your reader about the larger background to your specific question/topic. In other words, you do not just repeat from the literature, but summarize this literature in such a way that it directly supports your research question/topic. Usually, you go from more general to more specific aspects that are directly related to your research question/topic.

This should include explanations or definitions of the more specific concepts and terminology required for following the argumentation presented in your term paper. Do not forget to illustrate your explanations with suitable examples. Sometimes, there are several terms for or different perspectives on the same phenomenon, this can also be discussed.

As you will nearly exclusively report ideas from the existing literature, this part of your term paper will show a high number of in-text citations – even if you paraphrase the ideas taken from the literature in your own words (see the style sheet for in-text citation conventions). Note that similar ideas from different authors need not be repeated, but should be paraphrased/summarized in your own words only once (with all relevant citations of these authors given at the end of the relevant paragraph).

As indicated above, your paper can be of a more empirical nature (i.e. present data/analysis of your own) or of a more theoretical nature (i.e. review larger amounts of literature on a specific topic) – depending on which kinds of assignments are available in the seminar you are writing your paper for. In the case of a more theoretical paper, the entire assignment is a big literature review that focusses on answering a specific question. In such a case, the section structure of this template does not fully apply. Instead of “Literature review”, “Methodology”, “Results and discussion” you will use sections of your own choice in such a way that they best reflect the major aspects of your argument/discussion.

# 3. Methodology (for empirical term papers only)

If working with empirical data, you need to provide your readers with sufficient information on these data, i.e. you need to state which data you have worked with and how you have analysed your data. As stated above, you do not need this section if your term paper is theoretical.

If you use a *questionnaire/interview technique* (i.e. if your data is elicited), you should include information on participant details and the precise kind of elicitation performed. If you investigate *corpus-data*, you should inform your reader with details about the corpus/corpora used and the way in which you have retrieved your data from it. If you analyse *discourse* (texts, conversations, etc.), you should also inform about your data and context as well as your framework and procedure of analysis.

In any case, consult your teaching staff about the details of this in your special case.

# 4. Results and discussion (for empirical term papers only)

In this chapter, you should present your results clearly and in sufficient detail (given your precise research question). Consider using tables and graphs to present your results. Do not forget to label and number these consecutively throughout the section and insert them below and/or above but not within your running text (simply speaking, your term paper should not look like a newspaper) .

Discuss your findings with respect to the facts from the literature previously reported in the Literature review as well as your own expectations and hypotheses (if there were any) from the Introduction. Most importantly, make explicit how your findings answer or relate to your research question.

# 5. Conclusion

Give an assessment of what you have achieved in your paper. This usually includes a short summary of the main points made as well as an evaluation of your results in the light of your own goals as stated in the Introduction. Very often, it also makes sense to mention what still appears problematic and/or what is left to further research. Importantly, no new content or facts should be introduced in this last section.

Usually the conclusions section should not be longer than one page. In the case of smaller assignments, it can be even shorter.

# References

Cameron, D. (2006). Performing Gender Identity: Young Men’s Talk and the Construction of Heterosexual Masculinity. In A. Jaworski and N. Coupland (Eds.), *The Discourse Reader*. Second Edition (pp. 419-432). Routledge.

Coupland, N. (1980). Style-shifting in a Cardiff work-setting. *Language in Society* 9: 1-12.

Finegan, E. (2004). *Language – Its Structure and Use*. Fourth Edition. Wadsworth.

Ungerer, F. & Schmid, H.-J. (2006). *An Introduction to Cognitive Linguistics*. Second Edition. Pearson Longman.

# Appendix

The Appendix is optional and does not belong to the body of the text of your term paper (i.e. the pages of the Appendix do not count for the total page number required by your lecturer). It gives you the opportunity to document material that would interrupt the flow of the text in the “Methodology” or “Results and discussion” sections. For example, questionnaires or (larger parts of) corpus concordances and pieces of discourse could be placed here. Specific examples that are discussed in detail in the text should not go in the Appendix but should be provided in the main text, right where they are discussed.

# Confirmation of Authorship

Hiermit versichere ich an Eides statt, dass ich die vorliegende Arbeit selbstständig und ohne fremde Hilfe verfasst und keine anderen als die angegebenen Quellen und Hilfsmittel benutzt habe, alle Ausführungen, die anderen Schriften wörtlich oder sinngemäß entnommen wurden, gekennzeichnet sind und die Arbeit in gleicher oder ähnlicher Form noch kein Bestandteil einer Studien- oder Prüfungsleistung war.

Erfurt, den 11. Januar 2023

1. Two section levels are sufficient for term papers at this stage (i.e. avoid third-level sub-sections like 1.2.3). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. New sections of a term paper do not require a page break, unless the room left on a given page does not allow for more than the insertion of the (sub)section heading itself (i.e. if there is not enough space for the whole paragraph of the next section, as is the case here.) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)