



CHECKLIST FOR THE TERM PAPER IN THE LEUPHANA SEMESTER MODULE “PROBLEMATISING KNOWLEDGE: CRITICAL THINKING”

This checklist is meant to provide some guidance concerning instructors’ expectations and grading criteria. This list focuses on aspects that you will want to consider during the writing process and especially shortly before submitting your work.

Tip: Even though writing is something you have to do on your own, it is possible to ask for and receive feedback. For example, you could ask your instructor for feedback on your work in progress or have someone else read a draft of your paper. While doing so is, of course, not required, another perspective on your text could be helpful during the writing process. Feedback not only allows you to improve your text but also helps you to develop your writing skills and, specifically, your ability to revise your own writing. We therefore strongly encourage you to take advantage of this opportunity.

<p>Do you introduce your readers to your topic and do you explain why it matters?</p> <p>You need to introduce your topic in the introduction of your paper. In addition, your readers need to know why this topic is relevant. Please keep in mind that there might be more than one way to accomplish these goals.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Is it focused?</p> <p>Tip: If you were to visualize your introduction, it would look like a funnel. You begin with a very broad topic (for example climate change or food security), but with each sentence, your text becomes increasingly specific, as you guide your readers toward your research question. Is it possible for you to (further) limit the scope of your investigation, for example in terms of time, space, or perspective?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Does your paper include a research question?</p> <p>Developing (and providing an answer to) a research question is at the core of your writing project. Accordingly, the final grade of your paper will be determined, to a considerable extent, based on the research question you pose at the beginning and answer at the end of your paper. Developing research questions is often a challenging (and an exhausting) process because doing so requires a lot of time and effort. Please keep in mind that your research question will continue to evolve, especially during the early stages of the writing process.</p> <p>see: the discovery phase</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Is the question phrased in a way that readers can easily recognize and understand it?</p> <p>In academic texts, writers use either direct or indirect questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • direct question: “How does your attitude toward your multilingual background affect your writing?” (question mark at the end) • indirect question: “In this paper, we will investigate how attitudes toward one’s multilingual background affect writing.” (period at the end) <p>In addition, writers may use either</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the first person (singular): My research question is/is ...; I pose the following hypothesis... • or an impersonal style: This paper examines . . .; In this paper, the following research question is/is investigated... 	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Is it clear how this research question is related to the topic and why this question matters?</p> <p>Tip: Make sure to establish an explicit connection between the problem/topic and the research question.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>



<p>Did I answer the question I posed at the end of the introduction?</p> <p>Tip: Readers expect you do provide an answer to the questions posed toward the end of the introduction. In other words, the beginning (introduction) and the end (conclusion) must be connected, with the middle section of your paper explaining in greater detail how and why you came to this conclusion. Please keep in mind that there are several approaches to developing a coherent and complete argument and to creating a sense of closure: Some writers draft an introduction, which they will then use as some kind of “roadmap” for the process. The draft version of the introduction must be reviewed at the end of the writing process and, if necessary, revised. Others write the introduction only after they have finished writing the main part of the text. Choose the approach that works best for you.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Did I also use academic literature that I found on my own?</p> <p>As an undergraduate student, you will need to develop the ability to search for, review, and evaluate the literature on a given topic (in your discipline and, ideally, beyond).</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Do I consider my audience and the expectations and needs of my readers?</p> <p>Readers must be able to understand the structure of your text and your argument. To ensure that this will be the case and to provide some guidance, you can use a wide range of strategies. These include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• a description of your approach to the topic or problem• use of conventional structural patterns (of chapters and/or paragraphs)• definitions of key terms or concepts when they are used for the first time• use of words or phrases that establish logical connections between individual sentences and/or paragraphs• short previews or summaries of longer sections or chapters	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Is it possible for readers to distinguish between my positions/descriptions/ideas and those of other authors/sources? And: Is all content adopted from other sources (and integrated into the text as quotations, paraphrases, or other kinds of references) marked as such?</p> <p>Knowledge presented in academic texts is subject to intellectual ownership and copyright. Deliberately (or perhaps even unintentionally) omitting sources is considered intellectual theft and plagiarism. (If individuals complete an academic degree or gain access to other privileges in this manner, they also commit fraud.) While you may have yet to master many of the key skills when it comes to writing papers, you will still want to follow the ethical and legal guidelines to the best of your ability.</p> <p>That said, no one assumes that you, at this point in your development, are aware of or familiar with all of the studies published on a given subject. Especially in subject areas that are well researched, that is, that have been addressed in many publications, it is possible that an idea that you came up with on your own has already been discussed by another person, and you may not have read this study. At this stage of your development, this is completely fine and will not have any major consequences. Lecturers usually know the literature in their fields very well, and they usually can tell the difference between work that has been produced independently and work that has been plagiarized. If you reviewed the literature carefully (see also the points discussed below), it is very unlikely that you will commit plagiarism.</p> <p>Note: As a general rule, you do not have to provide evidence (that is, provide a reference to an outside source) when it comes to common knowledge. For example, most people know that the earth revolves around the sun, and in a paper on, for example, tides, this knowledge can be regarded as common knowledge. In contrast, a paper taking a historical perspective on this phenomenon, that is, one that aims to analyze the emerging scientific consensus that the earth revolves around the sun (and not vice versa) would include references to key sources on this very issue.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>



<p>Are ideas and words from the literature fully integrated into the text, for example by framing, introducing, and/or contextualizing ideas from the literature (quotations, paraphrases) using my own words?</p> <p>Researchers engage with the work of others for several reasons. Among other things, they aim to describe the current state of research, to introduce or define terms, or to provide evidence for their assertions. In addition, references to the work of others are used to support one's position or to point out and deal with shortcomings in arguments by others.</p> <p>Readers need to understand right away why, for example, a quotation from another text is needed to move the argument forward.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Do references included in the text clearly refer to sources included in the list of works cited?</p> <p>Readers have to be able to find and check the source you used in your paper. For this reason, you have to provide complete references in the text and the full bibliographic information in the list of works cited.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Can readers understand my argument? Are there any gaps or missing transitions?</p> <p>The deeper you have immersed yourself in any given subject area, the harder it is to discover gaps or lapses in your argument. Because you are intimately familiar with the topic, it is easy for you to relate one idea to the next in your draft even if there is not explicit connection. In contrast, your readers need, for example, transitional expressions to follow your line of reasoning. For this reason, it is easier for other people to identify gaps and to provide you with feedback on your argument.</p> <p>If you need to revise or edit your own writing, you could use different strategies that allow you to see your work in a new light. These include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• temporal distance: Do not work on your text for a few days, and you will notice that you now have a different perspective on your work in progress. You may also see that it is easier for you to edit your own prose. However, implementing this strategy requires good time management, as deadlines must be met.• different appearance: If you have worked on your text for a long time, you will have become accustomed to the font and the layout. Change the font and/or font size to get a different perspective on your text.• feedback: The best option (but also one that requires time) is to ask someone you trust to read your text and to provide you feedback on your text.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Do the table of contents and chapter headings provide some guidance to readers? Are individual chapters or paragraphs structured in a way that allows readers to quickly find their way around?</p> <p>Academic texts are not novels meant to entertain. Instead, they are means for researchers to communicate their ideas quickly and efficiently, and texts are organized accordingly. Conversely, readers may only want to skim a text to find key points. Features such as chapter headings and paragraphing can be helpful in this respect.</p> <p>Please keep in mind that the conventions of academic texts in the English-speaking world differ from those in other contexts, for example in the German academy.</p> <p>Tip: If you are writing your text in English, consider the basic principles of paragraph writing.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Have all nonstandard forms and colloquialisms (for example contracted forms) been removed from the text?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Has the text been checked for unnecessary words, and have they been removed?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Are sentences easy to read and clear, that is, have sentences been checked for length, syntactical correctness, and emphasis?</p> <p>Tip: Read your text out loud. If you have to slow down, or you run out of breath, or if you slip up, it is possible that you need to revisit and rewrite a sentence.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Are all references (in the text, in footnotes) complete and also included in the list of works cited?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>



<p>Check for consistency: All sources referenced in the text (and notes) should be listed in the list of works cited. Please note that texts that you have read but not used in your paper must not be included in the list of works cited.</p> <p>Tip: If you use a reference manager such as Citavi or Zotero, chances are that most of the sources you referenced while writing will show up in the list of works cited.</p>	
<p>Do I follow the instructor's guidelines regarding citation?</p> <p>Tip: If the course instructor does not provide explicit guidelines, use one of major citation styles (for example APA [for example in a psychology class] or MLA [for example in literary and cultural studies]). An overview can be found here.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Are the following documents and sections included?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cover sheet with the following information:<ul style="list-style-type: none">– name of the module and title of the course– name of the instructor– semester (e.g. WiSe 2021/2022)– name, matriculation number, address, and e-mail (if applicable, telephone number)– degree program and semester– title of the term paper– date of submission <p>Please note: The Leuphana logo must not be used.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• table of contents• page numbers• declaration of authorship <p>Other parts (if applicable):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• list of figures• list of abbreviations• list of tables	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Did I check spelling and grammar?</p> <p>Tip: Most word processors nowadays have a spell-checking function. Please note that words used in academic and disciplinary contexts may not be included in the dictionary used by the program. MS Word also has a grammar-checking tool. Please make sure that you have selected the right language from the menu.</p> <p>Alternatively, you can ask someone to proofread your text.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Grading Rubric for Term Papers

Seminar
Name Lecture

0	Total score (maximum): 40
0	additional points (maximum): 5
	40 points = 1,0; 20 = 4,0 (German number format)

Last name 0
First name 0
Matriculation no. 0

Cateories	2 points	1 point	0 points	Points
Topic	The topic is introduced in a systematic and understandable manner.	The paper only includes a vague or rudimentary explanation for choosing the topic.	The relevance of the topic is not discussed in any way.	0
	The topic chosen can be covered comfortably in the paper.	The topic is not specific enough, i.e., it is too broad or vague.	The topic is not clear.	0
Research Question	The research question is stated clearly.	The research question is vague/unclear.	There is no research question.	0
	The research question is developed in a systematic and understandable manner.	The research question is discussed to some extent.	The research question is not addressed.	0
	The research question is answered over the course of the paper and taken up again in the conclusion.	The question is answered over the course of the paper, but not revisited at the end.	The research question is not answered.	0
	The research question is related to the discourse on the topic.	The question is related to the discourse on the topic, but the discussion of this issue may be incomplete, lopsided, or not entirely accurate.	The question is inappropriate given the topic or subject matter.	0

Grading Rubric for Term Papers

Approach	The approach chosen is appropriate in light of the intended outcomes and likely to yield an answer to the research question.	—	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The approach has no discernible relationship to the stated goal and/or intended outcomes. OR • The approach/method used is inappropriate. 	0
Use of Academic Literature	The literature used allows for a thorough and nuanced discussion of the topic.	The literature used is, to some extent, appropriate for the topic, which is discussed in an adequate manner.	The literature used either does not allow for an adequate discussion of the topic under consideration OR is not relevant at all.	0
	The paper draws on literature provided by the instructor and on sources identified by the student. The ratio between the former and the latter is appropriate.	—	The paper draws on literature provided by the instructor and, to a lesser extent, sources identified by the students. The ratio between the former and the latter suggests that the student either did not conduct research or did so only in a superficial manner.	0
	It is possible to identify and verify all sources used in the text.	There are some sources in the text that cannot be identified or verified (e.g., because references in the text or entries in the list of works cited are incomplete or wrong).	The sources used in the text cannot be identified or verified.	0
Intertextuality	Words and ideas taken from the academic literature are presented accurately and integrated into the argument (e.g., by supporting the argument or by critiquing the content of said sources in the text).	Words and ideas from the literature are used in the paper, but they are either not integrated into the argument or integrated in a way that misrepresents the source or does not make sense.	The argument does not draw on or engage with the academic literature.	0
Argument	The argument is coherent, consistent, complete, and reasonable. Ideas are clearly related to one another.	The argument is, by and large, coherent and consistent. Key ideas are related, but there are also gaps in development and inconsistencies.	The argument is flawed, perhaps because it is based on a logical fallacy. Ideas are not related, and there might be major gaps in development.	0

Grading Rubric for Term Papers

Organization	The structure of the paper supports the argument made, and the ways in which ideas have been organized in chapters or presented in individual paragraphs support readers as they navigate the text.	It is somewhat difficult for readers to navigate and comprehend the text because it is either too intricately structured or not structured enough.	It is very difficult to comprehend the text because it is organized in a way that does not make sense or that is difficult to discern. It may also be unstructured.	0
Reader Orientation/ Audience	The term paper takes the reader's perspective into account by, for example. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • introducing terminology to readers OR • making the organization of the text explicit OR • providing an appropriate level of abstraction. 	The perspective of readers is, by and large, taken into account.	The needs and expectations of readers are not considered at all.	0
Technical Terms	Technical terms are used correctly and introduced or explained/defined when needed.	Technical terms are used (but not always properly introduced, defined, or explained).	Technical terms are <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • not used correctly • or not used at all. 	0
Linguistic Expression/Use of Academic Language	The language used is appropriate for an academic term paper.	The language used is, for the most part, appropriate for an academic paper, but it may also contain choices that, for example, are more appropriate in colloquial language.	The language used is not appropriate for an academic paper (e.g. because journalistic writing is used throughout or the expression is strongly characterized by orality).	0
Formal Requirements	The paper follows formal conventions to attribute ideas and words to sources and distinguishes between these contributions and positions and those of the author of the paper.	It is not always clear as to who is "speaking," that is, it is, at times, difficult to tell the difference between the author's position and those included in the literature.	It is, for the most part, not possible to tell the difference between the ideas and words of the author and those included in the literature.	0
	References in the text and the list of works cited are formatted correctly.	References in the text and the list of works cited are partly formatted correctly.	References in the text and the list of works cited are not formatted correctly at all.	0

Grading Rubric for Term Papers

	The term paper complies with the formal requirements, i.e. it includes a cover sheet, table of contents, page numbers, etc.).	The term paper partially complies with the formal requirements.	The term paper does not meet any criterion of the formal requirements.	0
Formal Linguistic Structure/Spelling and Grammatical Correctness	The term paper is largely error-free in terms of spelling, punctuation, or grammar.	The term paper contains some errors (up to 3 on one page).	The term paper contains many errors (4 or more on one page).	0

Sum 0

Bonus Section

An additional point can be awarded for each of the aspect listed below.

Approach	The paper carefully considers the approach chosen, and the author reflects on the relationship between this approach and	0
Intertextuality	The relevance of the question is discussed vis-à-vis the academic discourse on the subject matter.	0
Dealing with controversies	Opposing views are considered, and different perspectives on the topic are discussed and related.	0
Positioning	The writer's position is clear both when it comes to the argument proper as well as in discussions of other sources.	0
Ambition	The term paper adopts an original position on the topic or proposes a novel approach to answer the research question.	0

Sum Bonus Area 0

Formative Feedback on Linguistic Competencies

Linguistic background of the student: Is the paper written in a foreign or second language?	—	
It is difficult to understand the text due to	• many grammatical errors or other problems (spelling, word choice, and so on)	—
	• many grammatical ambiguities (for example problems with pronouns)	—
	• syntactical problems (for example mixed constructions, lack of emphasis, over-reliance on long complex-compound sentences)	—
	• problematic word choices and/or use of non-idiomatic expressions	—

Grading Rubric for Term Papers

Recommendation

If the term paper is written in **German** and characterized by at least two issues listed above, students are encouraged to sign up for an individual consultation at the Schreibzentrum / Writing Center.

If the term paper is written in **English** and characterized by at least two issues listed above, students are encouraged to sign up for an individual consultation at the Language Center.

Total **0**

Grade

Additional Comments