

# UNIVERSITÄT HOHENHEIM

Institut für Volkswirtschaftslehre  
Lehrstuhl für Volkswirtschaftslehre, insbes.  
Umweltökonomie sowie Ordnungs-, Struktur-,  
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## GUIDELINES FOR THE WRITING OF SEMINAR PAPERS

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Seminar papers are scientific texts and are thus subject to certain requirements regarding format and content. The following paragraphs provide the most essential standards for the writing of seminar papers.

The seminar paper constitutes one out of three sub-requirements that have to be achieved when attending a seminar at the chair. Constituting the first sub-requirement, the seminar paper has to be graded at least 4.0. Only in this case is the participant admitted to continue the seminar. An overview of all sub-requirements is displayed in the following table.

Sub-requirements	Weighting of the final mark
Seminar paper (12 pages)	50 %
Seminar presentation (15 minutes)	25 %
Presentation as a discussant of another paper (5 Minutes)	25 %

Each sub-requirement is graded and the final grade is calculated according to these weights.

### *Structuring the seminar paper*

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The seminar paper, including introduction, main section and concluding remarks must not exceed 12 pages. An appendix may only be added, if the topic requires the use of large-size figures and tables or comprehensive mathematical expositions. Before adding an appendix, the supervisor must be consulted.

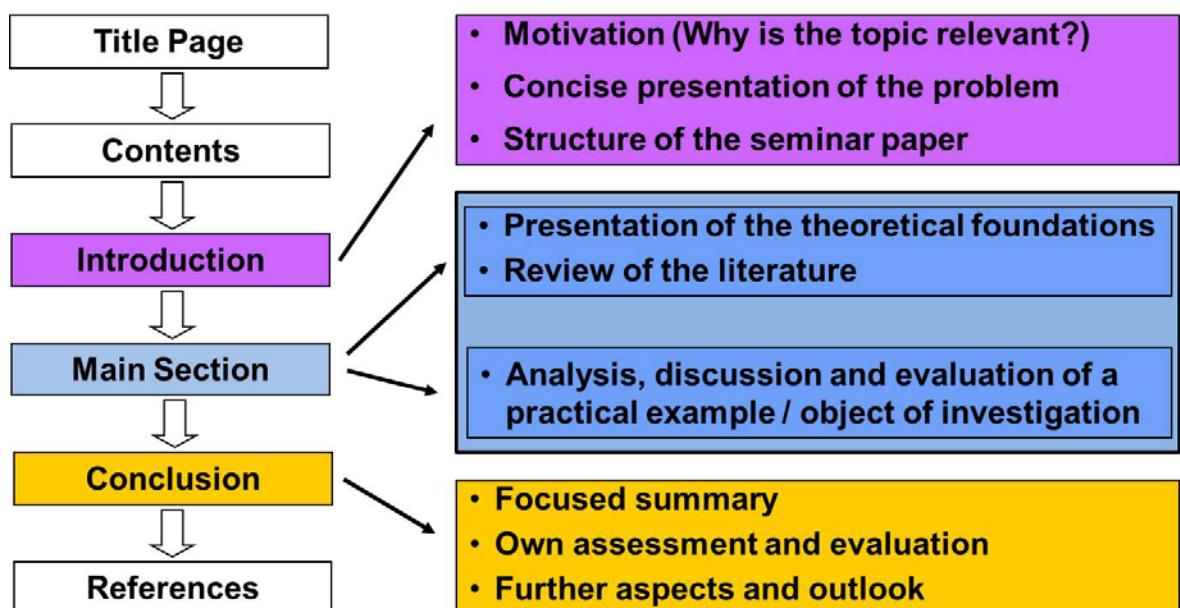
Seminar papers have to be clearly structured. This implies that sections and subsections follow in a logical order and do not merely constitute a random enumeration of aspects relevant to the main topic. The paper has to be subdivided into paragraphs, sections and (if necessary) subsections. Employing sections and subsections is making sense only if 1.1, for instance, is followed by 1.2. Subsections should not be shorter than half a page.

When structuring your seminar paper, please make sure to include reader-friendly transitions to guide the reader from one section to the subsequent one.

The contents (i.e. the structure) should be outlined directly following the title page. It should contain the headings of all paragraphs, sections and subsections.

The introductory paragraph provides a first characterization of the topic. It answers the question why this topic is worth investigating and is concluded by an overview of the structure of the paper. In the subsequent paragraphs, firstly the theoretical foundations of the topic have to be displayed. This is usually done in the form of a review of the relevant literature in the respective field. After that, the specific topic (i.e. a case study or a specific economic or political issue) is dealt with and the results are discussed according to the criteria developed in the theoretical section. The last paragraph contains some concluding remarks. This part emphasizes and evaluates the main findings of the paper (avoid mere summaries!). The concluding remarks should also provide interesting perspectives for future research.

The structure of a seminar paper can be displayed in schematic form:



## Writing the seminar paper

The scientific nature of a seminar paper is closely connected to the use of literature that has been published in the relevant field. Existing statements by other authors have to be quoted, controversial approaches should be analyzed and a position regarding their content has to be developed. Please note, however, that the literature review is (merely) of auxiliary nature and does not make up for an independent interpretation and analysis of the relevant economic issue.

Throughout the text, all direct and indirect quotations have to be clearly marked and corresponding references have to be indicated. A seminar paper lacking a complete

bibliography and references in the text will not be accepted. Please make sure to indicate all sources quoted in the text. This also applies to all quoted numbers, tables and figures.

Deliberately passing off the work of another author as one's own effort constitutes a serious violation of the rules of scientific duty of documentation. Please also read the document "Guidelines on dealing with plagiarism" which is available on the chair's website. Do not forget to complete the "statutory declaration" form provided by the chair and attach it to your seminar paper as the last page. The form is available for download on the chair's website. Seminar papers lacking the completed and signed form will not be accepted.

## ***The use of existing literature***

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Quotations have to be made according to the Harvard Style of Referencing. According to this set of referencing rules, the source of a direct or indirect quotation has to be inserted in brackets just after the quotation. Footnotes shall not be used to indicate quotations but must contain independent statements to be added to the main text.

The following examples illustrate the above quotation rules:

- Direct quotations<sup>\*</sup>
  - „Life is hard“ [Meier (1993, p. 32)].
- Indirect quotations
  - Meier (1993, p. 32) maintains that life is hard.
  - [...] some authors take the view that life is hard [cf. Meier (1993), p. 32].

The bibliography (also called "references") must contain all references of the seminar paper. They must be ordered alphabetically. Please do not list references which are not quoted in the text. The following examples might help to edit the bibliography:

- Carson, R. and Hanemann, M. (2005), Contingent valuation, in: Mäler, K.-G. and Vincent, J. (eds.) *Handbook of Environmental Economics*, 821 - 936.
- Endres, A. (2011), *Environmental Economics: Theory and Policy*, Cambridge.
- Graham, D. A. (1992), Public expenditure under uncertainty: The net-benefit criteria, *American Economic Review* 82, 822 - 846.
- Samuelson, P. (1954), The pure theory of public expenditure, *The Review of Economic Statistics* 36, 387 - 389.
- Varian, H. (1992), *Microeconomic analysis*, 3rd edition, New York.

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\* Please make only limited use of direct quotations. In most cases, you should present ideas and findings from the relevant literature in your own words and therefore employ indirect quotations.

Quotations from the internet that do not have a specific author should be given a distinctive keyword as reference in the text, which should then be used in the bibliography. Please make sure that all internet references are accessible through the information indicated in the bibliography. This comprises the internet link and the date of access. Please refer to the following examples:

- Melberg, H. O. (2001), A cost-benefit analysis of different treatment programs for drug addicts: Theory and application, <http://www.geocities.com/hmelberg/papers/001027.htm>, accessed: 30.1.2001.
- Bundesumweltministerium (2011), EEG-Umlage bleibt bei kräftigem Ausbau stabil, [http://www.bmu.de/pressemitteilungen/aktuelle\\_pressemitteilungen/pm/47849.php](http://www.bmu.de/pressemitteilungen/aktuelle_pressemitteilungen/pm/47849.php), accessed: 19.10.2011.

Remember that internet sources should only provide additional information in a seminar paper. The primary source of references should be the scientific literature relevant for the specific topic. As a consequence, the share of internet sources in the bibliography must not exceed 25 percent.

## ***Formatting of the text***

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When formatting the text of your seminar paper, please pay attention to the following general rules:

- The seminar paper should neither exceed nor be less than 15 pages.
- When formatting the text, make sure you have sufficient page margins (left 2.5cm, right 2.0cm, top and bottom 2.5cm, respectively), correct line spacing (1.5-times) and a font of 12 points in Times New Roman. Finally, set the text in full justification and activate auto-hyphenation.
- Footnotes have to be set in 10 points Times New Roman font.
- Headings of paragraphs, sections and subsections have to be set in **bold** 14 points Times New Roman font.
- Pages have to be numbered consecutively with the first page of the actual text being page 1 (i.e. not title page or outline).
- Please use the title page template available for download on the chair's website.
- The importance of linguistic, grammatical and orthographic correctness of the seminar paper should be borne in mind. In case a paper abounds in grammatical and orthographic mistakes, its overall impression becomes negative, even though the content might be correct.

## ***Supervision***

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In the past it has proven very helpful to discuss the outline with the supervisor before actually starting to write. You should contact your supervisor after you have already taken a close look at the relevant literature and have become acquainted with the topic.

Please do not send your structure via e-mail before the meeting with your supervisor but provide it in the meeting so that you can go through it together. About one week after you have submitted your seminar paper you can have another meeting with your supervisor in order to discuss the seminar presentation and potential improvements in your presentation slides.

## ***Lectorate***

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We offer to browse through your seminar paper prior to its final submission and to give you a short feedback how to further improve it. However, if you wish to make use of this opportunity, please hand in your seminar paper for the lectorate **at least three weeks prior to the final deadline.**