

# Merkblatt Masterarbeit

LEHRSTUHL FÜR BRITISCHE LITERATUR UND KULTUR – PROF. DR. VERA NÜNNING



Häufig entwickeln sich Masterarbeiten aus Seminararbeiten. Gleichgültig, ob Sie sich dazu entscheiden, eine Seminararbeit auszuweiten oder ein neues Thema in Angriff zu nehmen, sollten Sie folgende Aspekte bei der Formulierung des Themas und der Anlage der Arbeit berücksichtigen.

Erforderlich ist eine **klare Fragestellung**, ein dazu passendes Textcorpus, ein fundierter **methodischer Zugang** und eine angemessene **Gliederung**: Kurz, es muss sich um eine (wenn auch kurze) eigenständige wissenschaftliche Arbeit handeln. Das Textcorpus besteht in der Regel aus etwa **3 Romanen** oder **3 Dramen** bzw. einer **entsprechenden Anzahl von Gedichten, Essays oder nichtfiktionalen Texten**. Es können gerne auch gattungsübergreifende Fragestellungen gewählt werden.

Bitte beachten:

Prof. Nünning bietet einmal im Semester eine Sitzung zum Schreiben von Wissenschaftlichen Arbeiten an: Erkundigen Sie sich doch im Sekretariat, wann diese stattfindet und nehmen Sie daran teil!



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## 1. FORMATTING & FORMAL ELEMENTS

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- **Length:**
  - No more than 60 pages of text, plus table of contents, bibliography, etc.
  - The bibliography should start on page 61
- **Font (size) & orientation:**
  - Arial
  - 12 point
  - Justified
- **Line spacing: 1.5**
- **Margins**
  - Left: 3 cm
  - Right: 5 cm
  - Top/bottom: 2.8 cm

## 2. TITLE PAGE

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- Check the *Studienführer* for information on the details that should be included on your title page
- The “Tutorium zur Textverarbeitung” on the AS Homepage (same page as *Studienführer*) contains an example title page as well as information on how to format it

## 3. TABLE OF CONTENTS

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- Consult the *Studienführer* for an example of a finished table of contents
- Also check “Tutorium zur Textverarbeitung” on the AS Homepage (same page as *Studienführer*)
- Make sure to always include at least two subsections if you are further dividing your chapters
- Chapter headings should give an insight into the content of the section (i.e. refrain from using only a novel’s title)

## 4. CONTENT

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- **Introduction:**
  - Introduce your topic: make it interesting!
  - Explain your topic and the main research question: what exactly do you want to study?
  - Explain the relation between your research question and the texts you want to interpret – why does your selection fit?
  - Define the main concepts of your topic/approach and the method you want to use. Even terms like “identity” are not self-explanatory – always look up definitions, as they might provide you with aspects that you want to analyse. If you use narratological categories like “focalization” etc., you can just state that you will be using narratological methods. If you are

using more complex categories like “unreliable narrator”, you should explain what you understand by this and which theory of unreliability you will employ. If you need more than one paragraph for this, relegate this point to the theory section.

- Optional: Briefly state what has been said about your questions already
- Give a brief overview of your line of argument; show the logical relation between your chapters
- **Theory section:**
  - Optional: can be integrated into introduction
  - Provide definitions of the essential terms or categories that you are going to use in your analysis section (BUT: do not give an overview of the historical developments or background of the definition)
  - Only write about what you will be able to use in the analysis
- **Analysis section:**
  - Please do not summarize the content of the novels!
  - The analysis section should **not** be subdivided into chapters that are purely descriptive and one final discussion chapter containing your interpretation – you should take care to actually analyse and interpret your chosen works throughout this section!
  - Use the key terms, categories and/or methods described in the theory section
  - Back up your ideas with sources (use articles that deal with the works you are discussing)
  - Make sure to include quotes from the novels/plays you are discussing in order to illustrate your arguments
  - Use informative topic sentences at the beginning of each paragraph
  - Critically engage with your sources: respond to divergent opinions or add further thoughts in footnotes
- **Conclusion:**
  - Summarize briefly: answer the questions you raised in the introduction on an abstract level
  - Optional:
    - Weigh pros and cons
    - Comment on the relevance of your results
    - Mention other aspects that might be worthy of study

## 5. FOOTNOTES

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- Font: Arial 11pt.
- Do not use footnotes to provide citations – that is what in-text citations are for (see below)! Only use footnotes to provide further information that would otherwise interrupt the flow of your text.

## 6. CITATION STYLE, QUOTING, AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

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- **In-text citations:**
  - Use Chicago Author-Date
    - Müller argues that “[a] dog’s paws smell like popcorn” (2018: 54).
    - It has been argued that “[a] dog’s paws smell like popcorn” (Müller 2018: 54).
  - Be consistent (!)
  - Use cf. and ibid. (see explanation in section 8 on page 5)
  - If you want to cite several different sources (or different pages from the same source) in one in-text citation, please separate them with semicolons:
    - Several scholars have commented on the distinctive smell of dogs’ paws (cf. Müller 2018; Mustermann 2021; Schmidt 2017).
    - The narrator repeatedly describes the dog as “adorable” (Meyer 2019: 3; 5; 17; 35).
- **Bibliography:** (see examples on page 6)
  - Separate primary sources from further works cited
  - Sort in alphabetical order (do not use bullet points!)
  - Every cited work needs to be in the bibliography and vice versa
- **Block quotes:**
  - Use block quotes if your direct quote is longer than four lines
  - Indent on both sides: 0.6 cm
  - Line spacing: 1.0
  - Block quotations do not need quotation marks

## 7. MISCELLANEOUS

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- Do not randomly capitalize nouns
- Do not use contractions (wouldn’t → would not)
- Numbers from one to twelve should be written in letters
- Do not underline for emphasis
- Do not use German style quotation marks
- Consult the *Studienführer* for more general guidelines

## 8. EXAMPLES: IN-TEXT CITATIONS & BIBLIOGRAPHY

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For illustration purposes, the following excerpts are taken from different chapters in: Nünning, Vera & Ansgar Nünning (eds.). 2018. *The British Novel in the Twenty-First Century: Cultural Concerns—Literary Developments—Model Interpretations*. Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier.

### In-text citations:

Migration, mass displacement and mobility are often considered to be “the distinguishing feature[s] of our time” (Rushdie 2002: 425); yet, it is worth remembering that migration is no recent phenomenon. Many of the specificities of contemporary migration in Great Britain are rooted in the country’s complex histories of imperialism, colonization and exploitation. The diverse imperial projects entangled Britain into networks of trans-cultural exchange, opening the ‘mother country’ to the formative impact of seemingly other cultures and peoples (cf. Döring 2002: 49-53). With an eye to these histories of exchange, it would be wrong to set the beginning of Britain’s multi-ethnic diversity in the post-war years, i.e. after the period of decolonization and the eventual demise of the British Empire.

direct quote

indirect quote:  
use cf.

In his book *Evading Class in Contemporary British Literature*, Lawrence Driscoll (2009: 47) makes the deliberately provocative claim that “[i]n *Saturday*, the real issue [...] is not Iraq, or terrorism [...]. These are just diversions or screens, that in some way are necessary to cover over what the novel really wants to deal with which is the troubling problem of class.” This statement is intended as a corrective to the many readings of *Saturday* which limit their focus to the novel’s engagement with “terrorism and the specter of September 11” (ibid.: 46). Although valuable, Driscoll’s intervention is just as one-sided as the readings he rightly criticizes.

Source (Driscoll 2009)  
has not changed:  
use *ibid.*

→ for variations of this,  
see explanation below

### **Variations of ibid.:**

- (ibid.: 46) → Author stays the same, but page number is different  
(ibid.) → Author and page number stay the same  
(cf. ibid.: 46) → indirect quote (cf.), author stays the same, page number is different  
(cf. ibid.) → indirect quote (cf.), author and page number stay the same

### **Bibliography (example entries):**

#### Article from an online newspaper:

Banville, John. 2005. "A Day in the Life." *The New York Review of Books* 52.9. <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/2005/05/26/a-day-in-the-life/> (last retrieved on 1 June 2017).

#### Article in an edited volume:

Frank, Michael C. 2011. "A Contradiction in Terms': Patrick Neate's *City of Tiny Lights* as a Literary Intervention into Post-9/11 Discourse." In: Thomas Austenfeld, Dimiter Daphinoff & Jens Herlth (eds.). *Terrorism and Narrative Practice*. Münster: LIT Verlag. 61-79.

#### Monograph (with one or more authors):

Freeman, Mark. 2010. *Hindsight: The Promise and Peril of Looking Backward*. New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Tolan, Fiona, Stephen Morton, Anastasia Valassopoulos & Robert Spencer (eds.). 2012. *Literature, Migration and the "War on Terror"*. London/New York, NY: Routledge.

#### Article in a journal:

McGurl, Mark. 2016. "Everything and Less: Fiction in the Age of Amazon." *Modern Language Quarterly* 77.3: 447-71.

#### Online dictionary:

Merriam-Webster. Undated. "Repatriate." In: *Merriam-Webster.com* (n.d.). <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/repatriation> (last retrieved on 1 June 2017).

#### Website:

NATO. 2002. "Press Conference by US President George W. Bush and Vaclav Havel, President of the Czech Republic." In: *Nato.int* (20 November 2002). <http://www.nato.int/docu/speech/2002/s021120b.htm> (last retrieved on 1 June 2017).

## 9. EXAMPLE: OUTLINE

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The following outline is taken from a previously submitted thesis on musical intermediality in Zadie Smith's fiction – it is supposed to illustrate a possible way of structuring your paper and dividing the separate sections into chapters.

1. Introduction
2. Theoretical Approaches to Intermediality
  - 2.1. Formal Classifications
  - 2.2. The Intermedial Construction of Identities
3. An Intermedial Reading of Zadie Smith's Fiction
  - 3.1. Formal Analysis, or the Music of Zadie Smith's Fiction
  - 3.2. Functional Analysis, or the Orchestration of Identities
    - 3.2.1. "I'm Just Another Black Man Caught up in the Mix": Musical Intermediality and Identity Performance in *On Beauty* (2005)
    - 3.2.2. "Me, Myself and I": Musical Intermediality and the Struggle for Autonomous Self-Definition in *NW* (2012)
    - 3.2.3. "When the Music Changes, so Does the Dance": Musical Intermediality and Identity Construction in *Swing Time* (2016)
4. Conclusion

## 10. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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### Citations:

- *What do I do if a source has **different dates of publication** (e.g. a paperback novel that was published a few years after the hardcover version; a new edition of a Victorian novel; an early 20<sup>th</sup>-century text that I've found in a recently published anthology)?*

Please make sure to always indicate both the year in which the text was first published and the year of publication of the edition you are using. The original year of publication should be indicated in square brackets.

In your in-text citations, this might look like this: (Brontë 2006 [1847]: 50).

In your bibliography, this would be the right format: Brontë, Charlotte. 2006 [1847]. *Jane Eyre*. London: Penguin.

- *How do I quote a **text that is not in English**? Do I translate the quotation?*

There are several options:

You can translate the passage in question and include it in the form of a direct quotation – if you do that, please add “my translation” to the in-text citation, e.g. (Schabert 1997: 238; my translation).

You can also simply use an indirect quotation and paraphrase the quotation in question in your text. In this case, since you're not including a direct quotation, you would not have to add “my translation” – you can simply write (cf. Schabert 1997: 238).

- *If I just **mention a work** in my text (without actually discussing its contents or quoting from it), do I have to mention it in the bibliography?*

No, that's not necessary.

- *If I refer to a very **general feature** of a novel, such as a recurring theme, is it enough if I cite the novel as a whole without including page numbers, e.g. (cf. Brontë 2006 [1847])?*

Yes, that's fine!

- *I want to show that a particular feature occurs again and again in the novel I'm analysing, so I've included **all of the relevant page numbers in the same in-text citation** to support that claim. Now I'm worried that this interrupts the flow of the text – is there a solution to this problem?*

Yes, there is: while you generally shouldn't use footnotes to provide sources for your claims, this is one exception! You can include a few of the relevant page numbers in your in-text citation and point out the others in a footnote.

### **Formalities:**

- *Where do the **page numbers** start? And what counts towards the total number of pages allowed?*

Please don't include page numbers on the title page or your table of contents – the first numbered page should be the first page of your introduction; you can make that page 1 or page 3.

Only the body of your text (i.e. Introduction to Conclusion) counts towards the 60 pages of text allowed – the title page, the table of contents, the bibliography etc. do not count.

### **Miscellaneous:**

- *I'm supposed to have a **second supervisor**/"Zweitkorrektor\*in" for my thesis – how do I find one?*

This can work in different ways – if you have a member of staff in mind, you could ask them if they would be willing to act as your second supervisor, but Prof. Nünning can also suggest somebody to you if you're unsure whom to approach.

In any case, please discuss this with Prof. Nünning in advance!

- *Can I have a look at **MA theses that were previously submitted** to get an idea of what they should look like?*

Yes, that's possible – if you would like to look at a thesis, please contact [Brigitte.Brune@as.uni-heidelberg.de](mailto:Brigitte.Brune@as.uni-heidelberg.de) and ask her how to proceed.

- *According to the **Studienführer/the GPA/...**, I have to include a **German summary/abstract** in my MA thesis – what should this look like?*

The summary should be included in the back of your work (after the bibliography, but before the *Antiplagiatserklärung*). It should be around half a page to one page long and should briefly summarize your topic, research question/thesis statement, the structure and the results of your thesis.

Please note that this is only a formality – the summary will not actually count towards your grade.

- *How do I **submit** my thesis?*

You have to submit three copies of your thesis to the GPA (Gemeinsames Prüfungsamt) on or before the deadline. The GPA will stamp and sign these copies and keep one of them; you should then hand in one to Prof. Nünning and one to your second supervisor.

For further information on this, please consult the guidelines provided by the GPA (and take into account their opening hours when planning your submission).

Please note that the submission process may differ due to restrictions surrounding COVID-19! It may be enough to send a pdf of your thesis to the GPA and to Prof. Nünning.