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Rules, suggestions and tricks for students that write a paper

About writing a paper and working with the literature – (not only) for students of economics

In this brochure you will find help on literature research that you have to do when writing a paper. It contains also some rules that apply when you write a paper or a thesis that I supervise. The document does not claim to be complete. If you miss something or if you have suggestions, please let us know.

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[a]dbecker@europa-uni.de, http://www.wiwi.euv-ffo.de/iwbz. Previous versions were co-authored by Jörg Spiller. Even if it is only "me" who is responsible for the current version, I left "we" as it is. Consider it laziness or being prepared for a future co-author, not a pluralis majestatis.

1 Welcome!

You are probably reading this because you are preparing to write a BA- or MA-thesis or a seminar paper. If it is under our supervision, you can find all rules that we will ask you to comply with.[1] But you will find out that we do not have too many rules and do not need 16 pages to write them down. We do not care whether you are using Times New Roman to typeset your paper, or whether your bibliography contains a dot here or a colon there. (But we care about your way of citing relevant literature, as you will find out below.)

When writing a paper start with generating an idea or a problem that you think is interesting. You should then take the time to write that idea or problem down–sometimes it is possible to lose track of what the starting point for a paper was and then you can just have a look and remind yourself. So: Try to formulate a (research) question. When you write your paper, please ask yourself from time to time if you are really dealing with the question you had in the first place. The only reason to include something in your paper ist to adequately answer the question you have asked.

Your next step should be to find and read the relevant literature to understand what the answers are that others found to your question or related questions. Then start answering your research question, i.e start thinking and writing. A part of your paper should contain a good description of the literature and how it answers your question. Sometimes, a good review of the literature, together with interpretation by the author, is enough to understand a problem or answer a research question. Also try to develop an original perspective. Your perspective.[2]

What follows, hopefully, helps you with this.

2 What you should do (suggestions and tricks)

This section will help you in writing a good paper. You do not have to strictly obey the advice given here. We will try to introduce some tools and procedures that make your life easier. They are useful for students or researchers or for anybody who wants to communicate with others by means of writing a paper. The next section will also contain a number of rules that apply for students that write papers under our supervision. But let's start with the problem of finding an interesting topic to write about and what to do next.

2.1 How to find find interesting research-topics and relevant literature

2.1.1 What is interesting? What is worth reading?

The first problem is to understand what kind of questions (that can be analyzed with the toolbox of an economist) there are. Here are a few ideas:

daily newspapers One thing that is important is to read a daily newspaper regularly - particularly the news and the business section. At the Viadrina library you can find german periodicals (Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Süddeutsche Zeitung, etc.) as well as international ones (El País, Le Monde, The Times). An overview can be found here.
Why should you? - Well, if you have no clue what is going on you'll have a hard time understanding what is relevant to the real world and current affairs.

[1] It should go without saying, but the rule of other chairs do not apply. Our own rules are such that you can keep your habits when you are used to a set of rules that fulfill a few minimum requirements.

[2] We are sometimes asked if it is ok to add your own point of view. Of course it is! But it should not come just as an opinion, but as the result of your work. Try to argue and not only give your opinion.

weekly newspapers are an alternative to the dailies. Especially interesting: the British magazine "The Economist" that is not only about economics. As often in weeklies, articles in The Economist usually contain more background and sometimes hints on interesting studies or papers. Don't miss the section "Free Exchange" which is especially interesting. Every week research on relevant topics is reviewed.[3]

textbooks, teachers, ... Another possibility is, of course, to concentrate on topics that were already covered in a lecture or seminar or are suggested in a textbook. Or you found an interesting research paper that you want to study in full and present and discuss in your own words. Also Blog-entries or newsletters from research-institutes are sometimes a good source for topics and ideas. Keep your eyes open!

2.1.2 You know the topic and now you're hunting for literature

If you figured out an interesting topic, the next step is to understand what the *course* and *state of the art* of the scientific discussion on a topic is. Here's how to:

If you don't know anything about the subject... you first need an overview. You can find that in many ways, e.g., on Wikipedia. Unfortunately, it is often unclear, whether Wikipedia articles are written to the required level. However, you will often get a good first impression and probably find out about the right search terms. But please try to avoid Wikipedia as a definite source to count on. Read on for alternatives.

If you already know about the subject and the search terms... you should search for scientific literature - but how?

review articles on your topic are especially helpful. Journals that are specialized in review articles are, among others, the "Journal of Economic Literature" or the "Journal of Economic Surveys". Journals adressed to a wider range of readers are "Journal of Economic Perspectives" or the german equivalent "Perspektiven der Wirtschaftspolitik" You should consider the time of publication when considering review articles, since fully up to date research might not be included.

Palgrave Dictionary of Economics is an encyclopedia containing excellent review articles, which also list the relevant literature in the field. The online-version, which is most up-to-date, is available at Viadrina University - http://www.dictionaryofeconomics.com). You should never forget to check the Palgrave Dictionary. Really!

other dictionaries Our library offers a list of available encyclopedias here: https://www.ub.europa-uni.de/de/externe_recherche/fachinformation/wirtsch/lexika.html

by routine If there is a particular journal you are interested in, you can subscribe to updates via Email (for example) about the latest issues. Big publishers like Elsevier (http://www.sciencedirect.com) or Springer (http://www.springer.com) and others also offer the possibility to get informed about particular topics across various journals and many more features to stay informed. At http://nep.repec.org/ you find several newsletters a volunteer provides for you.

Where to search? Please, note: a search engine is nothing without the right search items.

google like everyone does....

- too many hits? Just browse the results, see if you can further refine the search. But note: you will have to read, eventually.

[3]See also, the Blog "Free Exchange" on http://www.economist.com/blogs/freeexchange.

- Google is not limited to http://www.google.com. It is comprised of a lot of search engines - one of them is specialized for scientific literature: http://scholar.google.de. Keep in mind that there is an advanced research which gives you the possibility to narrow your search.

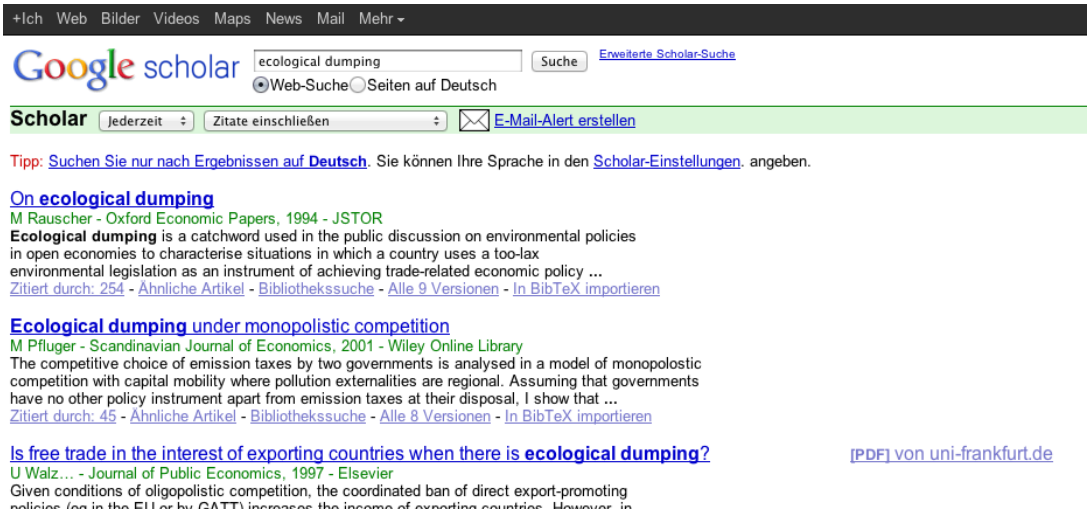

Figure 1: Results of a search for "ecologial dumping" at GoogleScholar

- Like other catalogues and search engines, GoogleScholar provides a variety of different services. You can get informed about new hits for your search, see who cited a certain paper and how many times it was cited (which can be an important information to assess relevance). You can show different versions of an article, follow links to the full text (usually a PDF, dependends on your access rights), download bibliographic data and much more.
- GoogleScholar also has a rival Microsoft counterpart: Microsoft Academic Search. Just give it a try. http://academic.research.microsoft.com

browse the library (non-digital browsing) Don't forget about actually, physically visiting the library. Take a look at the books in the area of your topic. You might even find something relevant by accident.

search specialized catalogues Every profession has special catalogues. Economists (including students of economics) can use:

Catalogue of the Kiel Institute for the World Economy http://www.econis.eu – this library collates almost all of the journals and books relevant to economists as well as working paper series of important institutions and universities. It also provides reference lists on several topics (http://www.zbw.eu/kataloge/econis_select.htm). The website for their databases is http://www.econbiz.de/. They offer a service where a professional librarian tries to help you. Yes, really. See http://www.zbw.eu/e_services/e_econdesk.htm.

Business Source Complete (EBSCO) Most important catalogue at Viadrina. Provides broad research and export options and – as long as the Viadrina has a subscription – access to full papers (usually PDF). Generally, access is possible when requested from the university network. The library also can help to get access from outside the Viadrina network.

Library's list of professional databases A list of databases provided by the Viadrina library, here: http://www.ub.europa-uni.de/de/externe_recherche/datenbanken/fachdatenbanken/wirtsch/index.html (Unfortunately, only in german)

RePEc RePEc (Research Papers in Economics, http://repec.org) is a free database of economic literature, based on voluntary participation of publishers, editors, authors, universities etc. It contains almost all relevant (for economists) journals and discussion paper series. Use http://econpapers.repec.org/ or http://ideas.repec.org/ for research. They also provide additional services, like export of bibliographic data, similarity searches and more. Also, take a look at http://repec.org for further services, like rankings, an author site and more.

Web of science / SSCI No access from Viadrina but, for example, via Humboldt University library. The database contains social sciences in general ("Social Science Citation Index"). If a journal is captured in the SSCI, this can be considered as an (although weak) indication of quality. An advantage is that literature used in a certain article is registered. This improves and simplifies *new-to-old* search strategies (see below).

When you find the first relevant article you'll also find the relevant literature post and prior to this article.

new-to-old research Good articles cite relevant literature from the(ir) past. From textbooks, lectures and presentations you can learn what others consider as important for a certain topic. Reading and listening will enable you to assess issues better.

old-to-new research A very important research method (which is often underrated by students) is the search for subsequent papers. A lot of databases provide this as a service.[4] If you are, for example, interested in eco-dumping and you already know that Rauscher (1994) is an important article on this issue, then on SSCI or GoogleScholar you can show all articles that cited Rauscher (1994) afterwards:

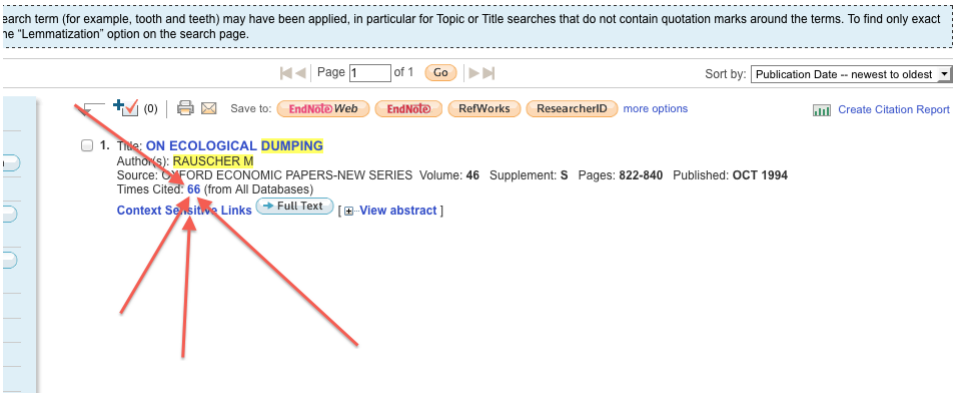

Figure 2: Results for searching "dumping" and "Rauscher" at Web of Science

If the article is well-chosen, you get a list of newer, relevant papers just like that. (Caution! "Relevant" here is defined as a "cited paper x".)

2.1.3 "good" and "bad" journals

In economics the majority of research is published in professional journals, not in books. However, there are so many of them that it's practically impossible to read everything. Some journals have a higher reputation than others. Rankings can help to identify the top journals. This can often indicate which articles are also top-level and which are not. However, at the end of the day you must decide on your own, whether an article is good or not. These are some journal rankings:

[4] See for example Web of Science / SSCI, GoogleScholar or BusinessSourceComplete.

- ranking of the Kiel Institute for the World Economy. Detailed: http://www.ifw-kiel.de/forschung/internal-journal-ranking
- Handelsblatt-Ranking of journals: http://www.handelsblatt.com/downloads/9665428/1/Journal-Ranking
- journal list of Vienna University of Economics and Business. Contains several professions: http://www.wu.ac.at/academicstaff/qual/journalrating
- Tinbergen list. (very important): http://www.tinbergen.nl/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/AIS-Econ-Bus-Fin-Marketing1.pdf
- RePEc. Only economic journals. Pretty up-to-date and also captures "grey literature". Ranking under http://ideas.repec.org/top/top.journals.simple.html
- Journal Citation Reports (ISI Web of Knowlege, Thomson Scientific). Collates journals of almost all disciplines. See http://www.isiknowledge.com/ for additional ressources.
- For Business Administration students: See, http://vhbonline.org/service/jourqual/ and http://tool.handelsblatt.com/tabelle/?id=34.
- and 28 rankings displayed jointly: http://zbw.eu/jrg/public/start.

Just take the time to browse the rankings a little and get a feeling for "what are the top journals?" Or "How many of which level are there?". Please note that the usefulness of rankings is disputed by some–but that is a topic for another day.

Non-scientific literature: Of course, you can cite articles from normal newspapers or magazines. You should not overdo it, though. Why? Newspaper articles are written by non-economist journalists to explain a topic to non-economist readers. So, the journalist (hopefully) browses the scientific work and simplifies it. You should show, that you understand the "full story" and, hence, refer to (and cite) the scientific sources.

2.2 Handling literature and bibliographic data

2.2.1 How to get papers and books into your hands

Eventually you will have to actually read the papers you found, which is why you need to get them. Some of the above mentioned services provide the possibility to directly download articles or borrow them from the Viadrina library. It's often crucial to access papers from the University network, not from home. To find out whether you actually have access to a paper, or to find a library to lend your a particular book, the following might help:

KOBV Catalogues of the Cooperative Library Group of Berlin-Brandenburg are always the primary address, especially when searching for books. The search request is applied to Viadrina library as well as other regional libraries (National library Berlin, Free University of Berlin, Humboldt university...). http://www.kobv.de/

Regensburg Electronic Journal Library Displays for which journal full text access is provided and gives the possibility to directly download. http://ezb.uni-regensburg.de/

Zeitschriftendatenbank (ZDB) ...if you found something in an "exotic" journal and you're looking for a library to lend you that very paper. http://www.zeitschriftendatenbank.de/

Virtual Catalogue Karlsruhe A catalogue that simultaneously searches plenty of libraries - best, if you know the book, but you don't know where it is located. http://www.ubka.uni-karlsruhe.de/kvk.html

substituting articles with working papers If you really want to read a certain paper but none of "your" libraries can provide access, you might try to find a working paper version of this very article. The final (published) versions often do not differ greatly from former versions. Such a search works good in RePEc or GoogleScholar.

2.2.2 Collating literature and citing it

When writing a scientific paper (and your essay, term paper, Bachelor or Master thesis are scientific papers) you should appropriately use the work of others and properly cite it. If you cite Becker and Gundlach (2007) in your paper than it has to be listed in the list references as well. In turn you must not list Becker and Gundlach (2007) in the references unless you cited it in the paper. To apply this one-to-one correspondence, you can either work thoroughly and manually or you can automatize the process using specialized software.

If you have to write a thesis or have to submit a paper, make sure to check the guidelines. Often, professors, journal editors etc. set rules you should just obey. Our own rules can be found below (page 9).

Having said that, the software listed below helps you to build the references section, and it often provides even more possibilities: support in searching the catalogues and databases, organization of downloaded papers, import of bibliographic data and much more.

Using MS Word / OpenOffice Writer

Zotero As a plug-in for Firefox (and therefore independent from the operating system) or as a stand alone version. No license fee. At http://www.zotero.org/ you find several tutorials and video tutorials. Updating Firefox to the latest version before installing the plug-in is recommended.

Mendeley Free software for Mac and Windows.

Citavi Very good and well designed software with additional brainstorming and project management tool. Commercial product but also available in a student version (free for up to 100 entries). For windows only. http://www.citavi.com/. Your university might own a university license, see http://www.ub.europa-uni.de/de/hilfe/bibliothek-von-a-z/Citavi/index.html

Endnote Commercial product by the market leader, rather expensive. Mainly designed for Word users, available for Mac and Windows. http://www.endnote.com/

Using LaTeX

You might also think about leaving MS Word and OpenOffice Writer behind and write your texts with LaTeX. This is a professional typesetting system with advantages:

- Automatic formatting.
- High-quality typography which is impossible to achieve with MS Word or OpenOffice.
- Unbeaten concerning the typesetting of mathematic formulas.
- Automatic creation of your reference list.
- Simplifies and accelerates your work.
- you don't have to pay for it.

...and disadvantages:

- It takes some time to get used to it. Do not try to learn LaTeX two weeks prior to your Masters thesis' submission deadline.
- The user interface is maybe more difficult than that of the Word-processor you are used to.

If you decide to learn LaTeX you will benefit from it in the long run. A starting point for diving in can be the following tutorials:

- very good and detailed video tutorial in german:
  http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z-vFWybNrzQ&list=PLED4805BEB70D8A9B

- another video tutorial in english: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SoDv0qhyysQ
- Introduction (primarily) for Mac users: http://www.tug.org/mactex/2011/src/WelcomeToMacTeX.pdf
- Introduction for rookies: http://www.tug.org/begin.html (including help on the installation of LaTeX.)
- very good tutorial: http://www.tug.org/tutorials/tugindia/

For LaTeX, we recommend the following citation software:

JabRef Very flexible and with a lot of customization possibilities. http://jabref.sourceforge.net/

Bibdesk For Mac OS only. Software with several additional functions. http://bibdesk.sourceforge.net/ Automatically installed as a part of MacTeX, but also available separately.

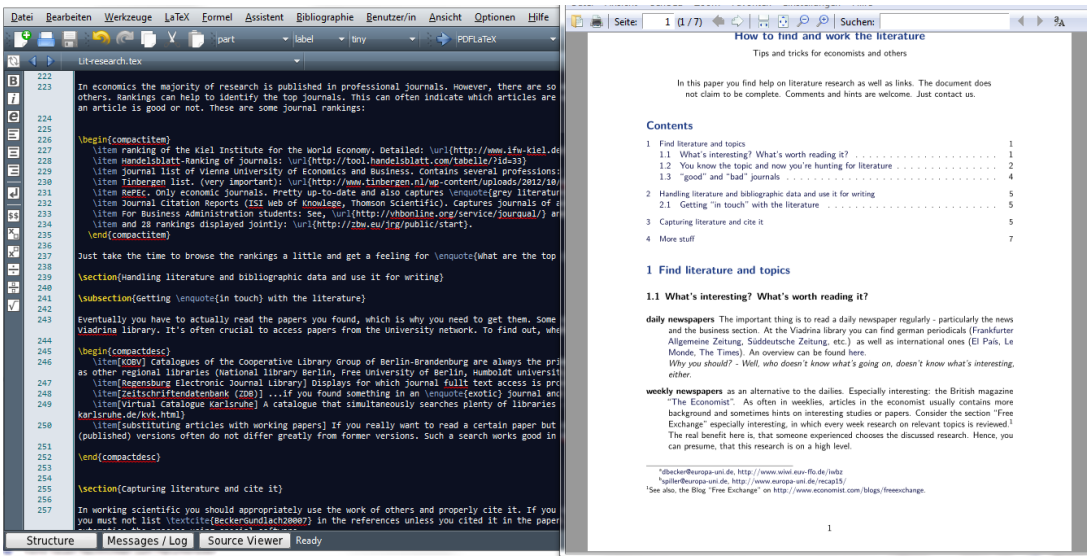

Figure 3: This handout in the writing process. Left: LaTeX-sourcecode, right: the PDF you are actually reading at the moment.

2.3 More stuff that didn't fit in elsewhere

- Please, use DOI numbers in the references wherever possible, like with Becker and Gundlach (2007). DOI is short for Digital Object Identifier and simplifies the literature search for the reader, if something is to be looked up. See Wikipedia for further explanations.
- If you really have to cite Wikipedia, cite a certain version, like with Wikipedia (2014). (See TOOLS → PERMANENT LINK on Wikipedia sites.)
- Some very good stuff on writing quality (especially for job starters, but very helpful for all writers in economics):
  - Thomson (2001), *A guide for the young economist*
  - Cochrane (2005), "Writing Tips for Ph. D. Students"
  - Varian (1997), "How to Build an Economic Model in your Spare Time"
  - Hamermesh (1992), "The Young Economist's Guide to Professional Etiquette". There are more papers by this author, see Hamermesh (2011).
  - If you are working empirically:
    Kennedy (2002), "Sinning in the basement: What are the rules? The ten commandments of applied econometrics" and
    Kennedy (2005), "Oh No! I Got the Wrong Sign! What Should I Do?"

  - Gans and Shepherd (1994), "How are the mighty fallen: Rejected classic articles by leading economists"
- Newsletter with conference announcements and job market offers: http://www.inomics.de
- For students of many subjects, including economics: http://lotse.uni-muenster.de - a joint project by several libraries to teach students how to find literature, avoid plagiarism, ... Includes text, videos, links. (in german only)
- Henning Klauß from the Viadrina-library wrote a text for students that have to find information in (our) library. In contains many useful general remarks about search strategies, see Klauß (2014).

3 What you have to do (the rules)

This section lists the mandatory requirements for theses. These are not debatable.

3.1 Scientific working

3.1.1 Citing in a one-to-one relationship

Scientific working (in the context of a thesis) to a large extent means gathering the relevant knowledge on a topic. One aspect of writing a thesis is to a) understand and b) write down in your own words what the current state of knowledge about your research question is. This is usually done by reading relevant literature and writing a compilation of the most interesting papers (or books, reports, ...) and stating conclusions or summarizing the main facts. It shall...

- ...provide knowledge about the subject to the reader.
- ...enable the reader to check the information or to investigate your topic further.

That is the reason why the literature used has to be cited. The references section (the list with full bibliographic details in the end of your paper) is not there to show how many books or papers the author has read. There are two main consequences:

A source cited in the text must also be cited in the references section. Otherwise readers can not find the source if they want to.

A source cited in the references section must also be cited in the text. Either the source provides relevant knowledge on the topic - then it must be written in the text what knowledge this is and there must be a citation - or it does not provide relevant knowledge - then it has nothing to do with the thesis and should not be listed.

Hint: Sometimes there is relevant literature but it would exceed the scope of the thesis to tell the reader in full detail. In that case you could write a footnote and/or a short remark and then citing.[5]

3.1.2 How to cite

There are many ways how to cite (so called citation styles). We recommend american style citation, which is commonly used in economics.[6]

[5] For further information on scientific writing, see for example Thomson, 2001, Cochrane, 2005 and Varian, 1997.

[6] We also accept other citation styles, for example citing completely in footnotes. If you decide that you prefer another citation style, it has to be consistent and provide the complete bibliographic information. Please show us an example.

In the text american citation is done by naming the author name and the year the source was published in. If the particular information is hard to find (usually it is) it is necessary to provide the relevant page(s) of the source. Examples:

Bolle (2000) when the source is used as part of the sentence, as in "Bolle (2000) mentions two things...".

(Bolle, 2000) when the source is used as an addendum, as in "This sentence is an example. (Bolle, 2000)".

Kosfeld et al. (2005) if there are three or more authors.

Bolle (1990a) and Bolle (1990b) or Bolle (1990a,b) if there is more than one paper of the same author(s) in the same year.

It should be clear what you are referring to exactly. Citing a 500 page textbook without any indication what parts are relevant for your work or citing the EU commission website doesn't make much sense. So: Fama and Miller (1972, pp. 24-28) or Fama and Miller (1972, chapter 2) is more useful than just Fama and Miller (1972).

The references section is supposed to enable the reader to easily find the cited sources. The necessary information depends on the type of the source. Please do not provide separate lists of references by publication type (books, papers, Websites, etc.)[7] Your list should be ordered alphabetically based on the surname of the authors - this allows the reader to quickly find the full reference based on the surname + year given in the text, see above. We list here what a good reference section should contain, for a number of typical items in your list:

monographs relevant information that must be cited:

- name of the author(s)
- year of publication
- title
- publisher
- Other information such as the location, an ISBN-number, a website or DOI (see page 8) that links to the electronic version of the book or to an accompanying website are useful and considerate friendly, but not essential.
- Example: Fama and Miller (1972) is listed in the reference section as
  Fama, Eugene F. and Miller, Merton H. (1972). *The Theory of Finance*. Hinsdale, Ill.: Dryden Press.

contributions to miscellanies (collections) relevant information that must be cited:

- name of the author(s) of the contribution
- year of publication
- title of the contribution
- editor(s) of the miscellany
- title of the miscellany
- publisher
- Other information such as the location, an ISBN-number, a website or DOI (see page 8) that links to the electronic version of the miscellany or to an accompanying website are useful and considerate friendly, but not essential.
- Example: Ethier (1984) is listed in the reference section as
  Ethier, Wilfred J. (1984). "Higher Dimensional Issues in Trade Theory". In: *Handbook of International Economics*. Ed. by Jones, Ronald W. and Kenen, Peter B. Vol. 1. Amsterdam: Elsevier, pp. 131–184.

[7] If you need an example, see the reference section that starts at page 15.

journal articles relevant information that must be cited:

- name of the author(s)
- year of publication
- title
- journal title and issue
- pages
- Other information such as a website or DOI (see page 8) that links to the electronic version of the miscellany or to an accompanying website are nice and friendly, but not essential. Especially for journal articles, a DOI makes really a lot of sense since journal articles are read by most students and researchers using its electronic version.
- Example: Rauscher (1994) is listed in the reference section as
  Rauscher, Michael (1994). "On Ecological Dumping". In: *Oxford Economic Papers* 46.Supplement 1, pp. 822–840. DOI: 10.1093/oep/46.Supplement_1.822.

websites are cited similar to other sources and in addition require the following information:

- name of the author(s) (or editor) - if available
- title and subtitle of the contribution
- organisation (legally responsible person), can also be used as a substitute for a missing author.
- Hyperlink - if available, we recommend the DOI (Digital Object Identifier), see page 8), or other stable URLs.
- date the source was last checked
- in addition you should keep a copy of every website you are using as a source for a scientific paper. The easiest is to print it as an PDF. This an option that ships with Mac OS X (print - save as PDF) and is easy to install for other operating systems, see http://freepdfxp.de.
- Example: The Economist (2012) or Wikipedia (2014) are listed in the reference section as
  The Economist (2012). *Border follies: Liberalising migration could deliver a huge boost to global output*. (Economist-Blog: Free Exchange). URL: http://www.economist.com/news/finance-and-economics/21566629-liberalising-migration-could-deliver-huge-boost-global-output-border-follies (visited on 11/18/2012)

  Wikipedia (2014). *Digital object identifier*. Wikipedia. URL: http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Digital_object_identifier&oldid=624610502 (visited on 10/14/2014)

A good way to learn how to cite is to pay attention how it is done in professional journals and books.

You might have noticed that we do NOT force you to use a specific citation style. We do not really care about the difference between Becker (2014, p.2) or Becker (2014:2) and things like that.[8] But we do care if you can produce a paper that is supported by proper citation work. Don't miss the remarks about plagiarism below.

3.1.3 Quote or paraphrase?

paraphrases give the general thought of an author. This should be the standard way of citing.
Example: Bó (2005, p. 15) reports higher cooperation in infinitely repeated games.

[8] If you need more guidelines, please refer to the Chicago Manual of Style, 16th edition. See http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/ and sources like SFU (2013).

quotes give the exact wording of someone else. This way of citing should be used very scarce and only if the exact wording is important or the fact could not be expressed any better. The use of quotes is often overdone.
Example: Bó (2005, p. 15) says that the "threat of future retaliation casts "the shadow of the future"..."

3.1.4 Primary and secondary sources

Often, a source you read cites something important from another source. In that case you have to get the original source, read it and than cite what is important. Unfortunately, sometimes you do not have access to the original source. In that case, you have to cite the original source as a secondary source. So, if Bolton and Ockenfels (2000) say that Levine (1998) said something, and you cannot access Levine (1998), then you cannot cite Levine (1998). Instead you must cite Levine (1998) **after** Bolton and Ockenfels (2000).

3.1.5 Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the using of the words or ideas of others without citation. This goes not only for quotes but also for paraphrases. This is practically the reason, why citing is important. Every thought that is not marked as someone elses is interpreted as the thought of the author.

Surprisingly (to us), many students have a hard time understanding this. The idea is simple: Show, transparently, how your own work (a text, a paper, ...) is based on the work of others. Your reader should be able understand how your work is related to the work of others and recognize the value-added. The rules below about citation are there to help you with that task. In addition, they are in accordance with widely accepted standards when it comes to scientific work and a proper way to do and present research. You are expected to understand and follow these standards, see for example Princeton University (2011). Not only do we expect that, but also will your future employer and other persons that discuss an issue with someone who holds a university degree.

There are many ways to learn how to be a transparent, serious researcher, and to do proper citation, ... One way is to learn by example. But there are also dedicated websites and other sources, for example plagiarism.org. Please read plagiarism.org (2014).

Plagiarism is treated as cheating and therefore leads to the grade "not sufficient (5.0)". We have to report the incident to the examination board. All this might end with you losing the right to ever again write an exam or submit a paper at Viadrina and, as a consequence, at any other german university.

3.2 Formalities

There are some formal criteria the thesis must meet.

3.2.1 Extent

The extent of theses should not exceed certain limits. These limits are:

- 45 000 characters for a seminar papers (about 15 pages)
- 75 000 characters for a Bachelor thesis (about 25 pages)
- 120 000 - 180 000 characters for a Master thesis (40-60 pages)

These numbers include white spaces. Footnotes count. Title page, abstract, table of contents, list of abbreviations, list of tables, list of figures, appendix, including the reference section do not count. 10% deviation from these benchmarks is appropriate. If you think it is really inevitable to further deviate, please consult us.

The intention of this way of limiting the extent of the thesis is to prevent ourselves from formatting tricks using fontsize and margins to make the thesis look longer or shorter. Please concentrate on the content of the thesis.

3.2.2 Structure

A thesis always follows the same structure:

- **titlepage** containing *title, date, the title of the seminar or what kind of a paper it is, name of the academic advisor, name, matriculation number, address, e-mail address and possibly phone number of the author*
- **abstract** This should half a page in English describing the research question, the procedure and the results of the thesis.
- **table of contents** The table of contents shows the structure of the thesis containing page numbers. We recommend to avoid too many different levels in the sectioning.
- **list of abbreviations** (if necessary) containing only abbreviations that are not commonly known. Ususally it is enough to introduce an abbreviation in the text when it is used first, like here: *The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) ist an international treaty. The UNFCCC can also be seen as an ongoing political project to avoid climate change. Please don't pay attention to the content, only to the way the abbreviation UNFCC is introduced.*
- **list of symbols** (if necessary)
- **list of figures** (if necessary) This is usually necessary, when there are more than three figures.
- **list of tables** (if necessary) This is usually necessary, when there are more than three tables.
- **content** The main part, usually divided in several sections.
- **appendix**
- **references** See above how it should look like.

The lists of abbreviations, symbols, figures and tables often seem to be used to make the thesis look more professional. However, in most cases they do not. You should ask yourself, whether a list is really necessary. If there are three figures in the thesis, the reader will not have any trouble finding them. Why would they need a list? Concerning abbreviations and symbols, there is another way of thinking about it: is it really necessary to even use abbreviations? Do the abbreviations increase the readability of a text? This is the case, if a term is used very often and the abbreviation is much shorter. In many cases it is better to not abbreviate at all.

Short papers (less than 20 pages or so) just need a titlepage or a title containing title of the paper, date, the title of the seminar or what kind of a paper it is, name of the academic advisor, name, matriculation number, address, e-mail address and possibly phone number of the author. And the content and the reference section.

3.2.3 Elements

Figures, diagrams Use figures and diagrams to support your explanations and arguments. But do not use them to save on text. Everything, or almost everything that is contained in a figure or diagram needs to be explained in your text. Writing something like this: "As can be easily seen in figure 1, the demand for labor is decreasing with its price." without any further explanation

is probably not sufficient. Figures should be numerated continuously so that it is easier to refer to them in your text. If you need them to support your main text, the figures should to be put in the appendix.[9] (You shouldn't force your reader to flip through your paper all the time.) It is ok to use paper and pen to produce a clear and correct diagram and then a scanner to produce an electronic version that goes into your document. Using PowerPoint or other Software to draw a diagram or illustration can be very time consuming and the results not very convincing.

captions Figures and tables must contain clear and descriptive captions. Captions are usually directly above or below tables and figures. Additional information is written directly under the table or figure. Additional information could, for example, be the source of a figure. For the question whether a source has to be given or not, it is not crucial, whether you created a figure or just copied it. Whether you have to cite depends on whos idea the figure is. For example, if you use data from European Commission (2012) to plot a diagram that is not contained in the source, then this would be a proper way of citing it in the caption of your diagram: "Figure 99: Unit Labour costs. Source: own diagram. Data: OECD (2014)."

formulas must be numerated continuously. The variables should be described in the text. As in

$$a = b + c^2 \tag{1}$$

appendix The Appendix can be used for rather extensive material, tables, figures or mathematical proofs that provide additional information, but are not crucial for understanding the text.

Declaration of Originality Please add the following declaration at the very and of your paper. If it is a Master or Bachelor Thesis, please sign it (handwritten or scanned signature).

English:

Declaration of Originality
I hereby declare that this Master///Bachelor-Thesis is my own work and that work performed by others is appropriately cited.
I certify that no part of this work has been previously submitted to any other examination board.

place, date
Signature

Deutsch:

Ich versichere: Ich habe die [Master] [Bachelor] arbeit selbstständig verfasst. Andere als die angegebenen Hilfsmittel und Quellen habe ich nicht benutzt.
Die Arbeit hat keiner anderen Prüfungsbehörde vorgelegen.

Ort, Datum
Unterschrift

form of the thesis Theses must be submitted digitally. We prefer the *PDF* file format. Bachelor- and Master-theses furthermore must be handed in as paper, see the regulations of your study program.

formatting We do not have special requirements concerning the formatting of the thesis, since we want you to concentrate on the content of the thesis instead of the formatting. Choose an easily readable layout. Do not waste too much time on formatting text.

[9] Sometimes, you see papers that have all figures in the end, together with notes "insert figure xyz about here". This is because the paper has been prepared to be sent to a publisher that needs the figures separated from the text.

3.3 submitting your paper

If your paper is a Bachelor- or Master-Thesis, please read your study and examination regulations carefully (Studien- und Prüfungsordnung).[10]

If not otherwise stated, please submit two hardcopies of your paper. They should be cased, but we do not prefer any bookbinding-method. Together with the two hardcopies, submit a CD (or a USB-drive) with your paper (PDF preferred) and your sources if available. If you cite Webpages, please submit a collection of PDF's with copies, just to make sure your sources do not disappear.

You can submit your Bachelor- or Master-Thesis either directly to your examination office (Prüfungsamt) or at the Service Point in the Audimax building.[11] The examination office then checks the submission date and the title and sends your paper to us. We then try to be as quick as possible with the report (and the grade), but sometimes we need several weeks. If some deadline is approaching, please let us know.

That's it!

If you have further questions, please let us know!

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[10] For study programs of the Faculty of Business Administration and Economics, see https://www.wiwi.europa-uni.de/en/studium/index.html.

[11] https://www.europa-uni.de/de/struktur/verwaltung/dezernat_1/servicepoint/index.html

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2015-03-01 (DB): New Introduction. Added citations: Klauß (2014); Bó (2005) and a link to http://freepdfxp.de. Added a few remarks about the use of figures and diagrams.
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