Guidelines for Term Papers, BA and MA Theses

University of Leipzig
English Department
Literary Studies

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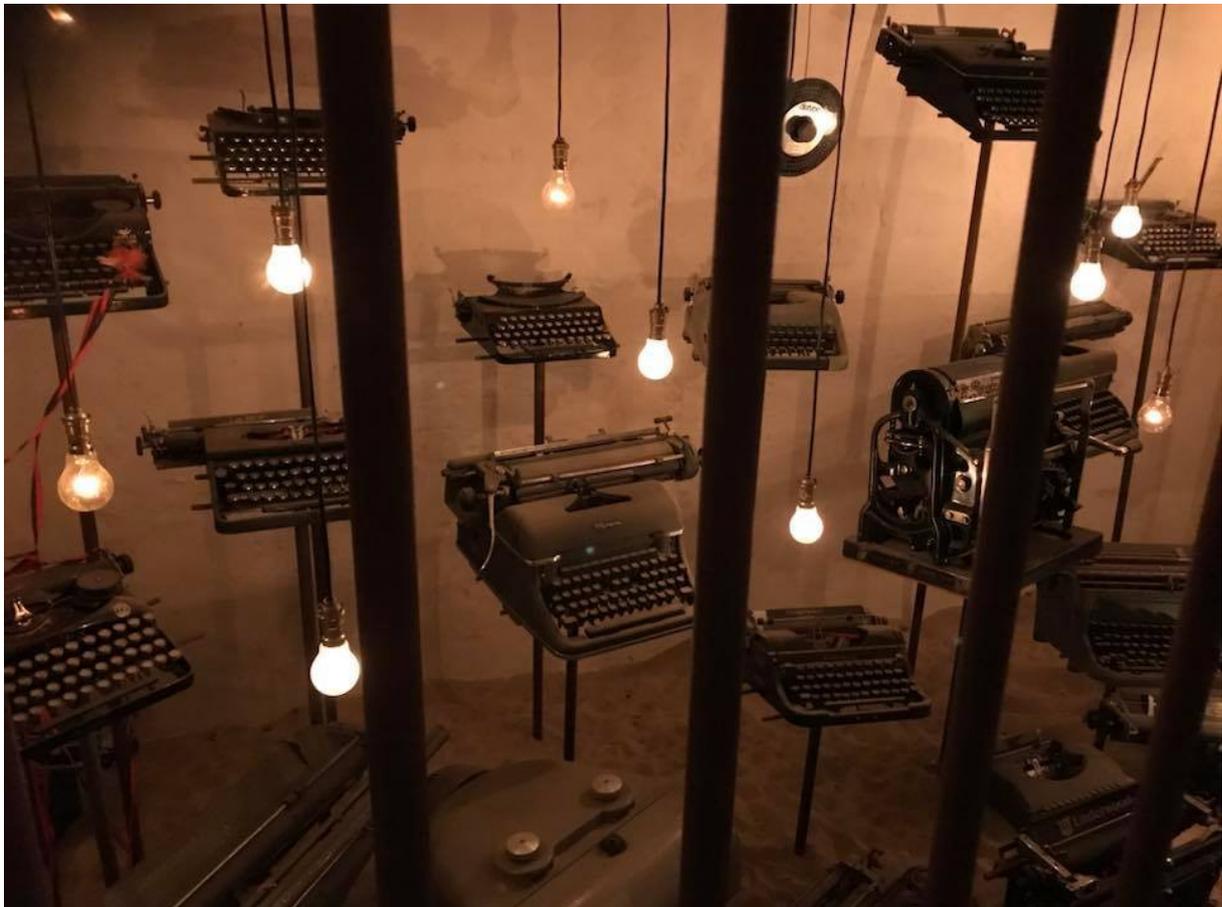
1. Choosing a Topic

- Choose your **topic** according to your **individual preferences** (interests, abilities, knowledge)
- If it is a term paper, choose the topic with the **subject of the seminar** in mind, as well as the **discussions** in class, **questions** raised, **critical and theoretical texts** discussed (consult your notes taken during the seminar)
- Possible ways to find your topic: it can be concerned with **elements in the text** that you find relevant; it can be concerned with the **socio-historical context** of the work, or it can be centred around a **theoretical question**

   Examples:
   1. "Melancholy in William Shakespeare's *Hamlet*"
   2. "William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and the Early Modern Practice of Mourning"
   3. "William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* in the Light of Performance Theory"

- Formulate a clear **hypothesis** that is linked to a **research question**: it is important that you bear in mind that academic texts do not merely accumulate information, but combine facts, ideas, and observations into an overall argument (see Purdue University's Thesis Writing Tips, or the Ashford Writing Centre)

2. Formal outline

2.1 Length
- BA term papers: approx. 10 pages (not counting title page, table of contents and bibliography)
- MA term papers: c. 12 pages
- BA Theses: 30-40 pages
- MA Theses: 50-60 pages

(You have 23 weeks to work on your theses after registration of your topic at the Prüfungsamt. Registration deadlines are usually the beginning of June and December to graduate at the end of the following winter term and the summer term respectively.)

Wissenschaftliche Arbeit (Teacher Training Programme):
- Primary School (Grundschule): c. 40 pages
- Secondary School (Oberschule): 40-50 pages
- Secondary School (Gymnasium): 50-60 pages

For deadlines and further rules and regulations, please see "Allgemeine Hinweise" and § 11 Wissenschaftliche Arbeit.

➔ **Please note that all essays and theses are in English! You can choose whether you want to use UK or US spelling, but you have to be consistent!**

2.2 Layout

- font: Times New Roman or Garamond
- size: 12pt. for main text, 11pt. for indented quotes and 10pt. for footnotes
    → Please only use footnotes for explanations which are necessary but do not fit into your argument at that point, like references to related texts or explanations about form and content.
- spacing: 1.5-space for the main text, single for indented (block) quotes and footnotes
- margins: 2.5 cm on the left, right, top, and 2 cm bottom (Microsoft Word's normal setting)
- Chapter headings and subheadings should be numbered

2.3 Title Page

- Upper left section: name of university and institution, semester, title of class and module number, instructor's name (for BA and MA thesis, add both supervisors' names)
- Middle section: Title of Paper (20 pt., bolded, book titles in italics)
- If BA or MA thesis, add according remark above title
- lower right section: student's name, student registration number, course of studies, semesters studied, e-mail address, and date of submission

2.4 Table of Contents/Index

Example:

3. Structure and Argumentation

A term paper should adhere to logical argumentation and be consistent in its structure which follows a certain scheme: 1) Introduction – 2) Main Part – 3) Conclusion

3.1 Introduction
- Length: approx. 1-2 pages
- Introduces the topic of your paper and gives the readers an idea of what the paper is about
- Should centre around a research question and a thesis statement / hypothesis (In the broadest sense, the thesis statement addresses your research question. Try to be as specific as possible)
- Explains your method: i.e. how you intend to conduct your analysis (approach, selected aspects for discussion and analysis, theoretical background, etc.)

- Short overview of the main trends of criticism relevant to your topic

3.2 Main Body
- In the main body you develop your arguments, provide evidence for your thesis and elaborate on the aspects mentioned in your introduction
- It should start with a brief historical/theoretical contextualization of your topic and contain a critical summary of existing research with regard to your own research question
- Most importantly, however, you analyze your primary literature

3.3 Conclusion
- Repeats the thesis and topic statement but should not just rehash the various arguments.
- Summarizes the main arguments of the paper and adds the results of the main part to the thesis of the introduction.
- Is an analytical recapitulation of your main arguments, showing what conclusions you derive from what you have written so far.

4. Citations and References

- We ask you to use either the 7th or the 8th edition of the MLA Style Guide [MLA shortcut site by Purdue University](#)

- The Works Cited list should be ordered alphabetically by the author's last name. Works by the same author will be listed according to the alphabetical order of the works used. If you refer to several works of the same author, you may leave out the full name and substitute it with ---. *Title*. etc.

Please note: For a BA thesis or a 'wissenschaftliche Arbeit' (Grundschule), you have to use at least 15 secondary sources, whereas you will need approx. 30 secondary sources for a MA thesis or 'wissenschaftliche Arbeit' (Oberschule/Gymnasium). When writing a research project for a seminar, ask your instructor how many secondary sources they expect you to use.

- The following examples follow the 7th edition of the MLA Style Guide:

Basic Structure for Monographs:
Last Name, First Name. *Title of the Book*. Place: Publisher, Year of Publication. [note: in the case of pre-1900 publications, you may name the city of publication instead of the publishing house (Verlag)]

Basic Structure for Book Chapters:
Last Name, First Name. "Title of the Chapter." *Title of the Book*. Ed. First Name Last Name. Place: Publisher, Year of Publication. Page Numbers.

Basic Structure for Journal Articles:
Last Name, First Name. "Title of the Article." *Name of Periodical/Journal* Volume Number. Issue Number (Year of Publication): Page Numbers.

Examples:

A Book by a Single Author:
Ishiguro, Kazuo. *The Remains of the Day*. London: Faber and Faber, 1989.

A Book by Two or Three Authors:
Gilbert, Sandra M., and Susan Gubar. *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1979.

A Book by More than Three Authors:
Plag, Ingo, et al. *Introduction to English Linguistics*. Berlin: Mouton, 2007.

Two or More Books by the Same Author:
Austen, Jane. *Emma*. Ed. Alistair M. Duckworth. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2002.
---. *Persuasion*. Ed. Gillian Beer. London: Penguin, 2003.

A Critical Edition:
Austen, Jane. *Persuasion*. Ed. Gillian Beer. London: Penguin, 2003.

An Introduction to a Critical Edition (if you mainly cite the editor):
Beer, Gillian, ed. Introduction. *Persuasion*. By Jane Austen. London: Penguin, 2003.

A Work in an Anthology:
Bronfen, Elisabeth. "Silencing Voices." *Dichotomies. Gender and Music*. Ed. Beate Neumeier. Heidelberg: Winter, 2009. 23-28.

An Article in a Reference Book:
"Orchestra." *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*. 4th ed. 1989.

A Translation:
Dostoevsky, Fyodor. *Crime and Punishment*. Trans. Jessie Coulson. Ed. George Gibian. New York: Norton, 1964.

An Article in a Scholarly Journal:
Esposito, Elena. "The Arts of Contingency." *Critical Inquiry* 31.1 (2004): 7-25.

A Work Cited Only on the Web:
"The History of Photography Is a History of Shattered Glass." *New York Times Magazine*, 15 Nov. 2017, www.nytimes.com/2017/11/15/magazine/the-history-of-photography-is-a-history-of-shattered-glass.html. Accessed 6 Oct. 2020.

A Work on the Web with Print Publication Data:
Dickens, Charles. *A Christmas Carol. In Prose. Being a Ghost Story of Christmas*. London, 1858. *Google Book Search*. 16 January 2012.

A Periodical Publication in an Online Database:
Tolson, Nancy. "Making Books Available: The Role of Early Libraries, Librarians, and Booksellers in the Promotion of African American Children's Literature." *African American Review* 32.1 (1998): 9-16. *JSTOR*. 5 June 2008.

5. In-Text Citations

All references to primary and secondary sources need to be included in the text ("parenthetical reference"). You must include all the information necessary for finding the quotation using parenthetical reference and the bibliography at the end of your paper.

Quotations and references fulfil three important functions in academic texts: they help "[t]o avoid the charge of plagiarism, [. . .] give more authority to your writing, [. . .]" and they ensure that "[t]he reader can find the original source by using the reference section" (Bailey 73). Plagiarism is theft of someone else's works and ideas and is therefore an academic crime. Authors of plagiarised papers will automatically fail the module. [This website offers a self-test](#) which allows you to test your knowledge of various types of direct and indirect plagiarism.

Basic Structure of Parenthetical References:
- Bibliographical information is added at the end of your sentence in brackets (author's name page). The same applies if you are only alluding to a secondary source without actually citing it (cf. author's name page). Cf. stands for the Latin *confer*, meaning "compare," and is only used for such indirect references. The abbreviation p. is not required before the page number.
- If your works cited contains more than one author with the same name, add the first initial in your reference. If you cite more than one work by the same author, include the shortened titles of the respective works.
- If you use several titles by the same author, use a short title to indicate the work you are quoting from (Name, *Short Title* Page). Example: (Woolf, *Lighthouse* 170)
- If you include the author's name in the sentence, you do not have to repeat it in the following parenthesis. Example: Virginia Woolf implicitly compares painting with the art of writing (cf. *Lighthouse* 170).
- Place the full stop behind the parenthesis, not within the quotation marks, with the exception of block quotes.
- If you cite the same work and exact same page number within a single paragraph and on one single page, you may use (ibid.) instead of giving the full source again, to indicate that you are still referring to that particular source/page.

Block Quotes:
If you are quoting short passages up to three lines of text, try to integrate them into your own sentence. Use English quotation marks. If your quotation is four lines and longer, indent all lines, use single spacing and leave out the quotation marks. Use single quotation marks for direct speech within your quote. Block quotes are the one exception in which the period closes the quote before the source in brackets.

Ellipsis:
If you omit words, phrases or sentences or paragraphs from a quoted passage, you have to mark the omission by using "[…]". Remember that the final sentence must still be grammatically correct and that the omission should not change the meaning of the original source. However, if you quote only one or two words, it is obvious that you left out something and you do not need to mark it. Sometimes, you have to change or add words in your direct quote to make it grammatically correct or to connect different parts, use [ ] as well. (i.e. Hamlet wishes, "oh, that [his] too, too solid [alt.: sullied] flesh would melt […]" (*Hamlet* 1.2.129).

Citing Poetry:
When citing poetry, cite the line(s) including the word line (line 24) in the first reference and afterwards only the line number (33).

Citing Drama:
When citing drama, do not refer to the page but act, scene and line(s): (*Hamlet* 1.5.35-37.)

Citing Film/Series/Music:
When citing a sequence or scene from a film, video or piece of music, always include the name of the piece/episode and the time stamp (hour:minute:second) to which you refer (i.e. "A Study in Scarlet" 01:15:22-01:17:45).

Citing a Multivolume Work:
If you are using several volumes, give the name of the author/editor, then the volume and page number separated by a colon. (2: 24-26). If you are using only one volume and state the volume number in your bibliography, you need to give only the page numbers in your reference.

Citing a Work with an Unknown Author (listed by title in the bibliography):
These works might for instance be articles from reference books. In this case, you give the title of the article (full if it is short, abbreviated to the first one or two words if it is longer) in quotation marks.

Citing from a Web Source:
Apply the same rules as for printed sources: If you have an author, name them (even if it's a name like LuckyLuke1999; check the bottom of websites for information, with newspapers etc. the author's name is usually listed under the headline). If not, give the (abbreviated) title of the article you are citing. If your source does not have page numbers, you have to give the author's name/title even if you have already mentioned it in the text.

Examples:

Citing a Work by a Single Author with the Author's Name in the Reference:
At first, the audience is given a hint that a crisis occurred, or that "something happened" (Phelan 634). OR:
Their narratorial pact is, on the one hand, one with the reader (cf. Rimmon-Kenan 248), but also with the other characters and their own conscience.

Citing a Work by a Single Author with the Author's Name in the Text:
Austen describes Sir Walter Elliot as "conceited" and "silly" (6).

Citing a Work by Several Authors:
"Is it crazy, neurotic, splenetic, to want to be a writer?" (Gilbert and Gubar 61).

Citing a Work by an Author with More than One Work:
The distinction of several levels of responsibility emerges from the identification of four "ethical locations" (Phelan, *Living* 23, and "Rhetorical" 632-3).

Citing a Work Listed by Title (unidentifiable author):
As a reviewer remarks in *The Spectator*, "Michael Ondaatje's legion of admirers will not expect a novel constructed around a linear narrative, or even cohering in the developing consciousness of a central character" ("Patterns from the Past").

Citing a Multivolume Work:
This anthology contains English literature from Sir Thomas More's *Utopia* (Greenblatt A: 521-590) to Salman Rushdie (F: 2854-2863).

Citing Someone's Words in Someone Else's Work:
Samuel Johnson admitted that Edmund Burke was "an extraordinary man" (qtd. in Boswell 2:450).

Citing from a Web Site without Page Numbers:
At least one account of the life of Mary Shelley depicts a child who was "treated as if she were born beneath a lucky star" (Bridges).

Abbreviations:

cf.   compare (in references; used for indirect quotes, references or reformulated thoughts)
ed.   editor, edition, edited by; plural: eds.
e.g.   for example (Latin: exempli gratia)
et al.   and others (Latin: et alii/aliae)
ibid.   ibidem (the same place; used only within the same page and the same paragraph to avoid repetition of the source when the same source and exact same page number is used several times)
introd. Introduction (by)
n.d.   no date of publication
n.p.   no place of publication/no publisher
n. pag. no pagination
p., pp. page, pages
qtd.   quoted
rev.   revised (by), revision, review, reviewed (by)
rpt. reprinted by, reprint
trans.   translation, translated, translator
UP   University Press

6. Checklist before you hand in your paper

- Cohesion and coherence: is my paper well-structured and does it have a consistent logical line of argumentation?
- Do I have a clear thesis statement (or research question) in the introduction of my term paper or thesis?
- Do I refer to the current state of research on my topic?
- Have I actually used the methodology introduced in the introduction?
- Has my working thesis changed in the meantime or do I need to re-write my introduction?

- Are quotes and examples sustaining/supporting my arguments?
- Is my text fluent with smooth transitions between sentences and paragraphs?
- Have I checked my spelling, grammar, and syntax?
- Check all references and the Works Cited list (MLA Style)
- Have I signed my Affidavit?
- Ask a fellow-student to proofread you term paper

7. Submission

Print your essays on 80g/m paper in black ink on one side only. Make sure they are numbered. Add your matriculation number to the header of each content page.
For BA/MA theses and Wissenschaftliche Arbeit: bring to a copyshop of your choice for binding.

7.1 Essays/Term Papers
Submit one copy of your printed text by placing it in the green mailbox ("pigeon hole") of your instructor in the Department of British Studies (opening hours GWZ: Monday – Friday, 7am – 9pm, 3rd floor, opposite the FSR room). Fasten the pages of your paper with a paperclip. Make sure your matriculation number is printed on all the pages of your essay (except the title page, which already carries your number). Refrain from submitting term papers in plastic folders. Please ask your individual instructors whether they would like to have digital copies as well. (See further instructions in the examination regulations.)

7.2 BA Theses and MA Theses
Hand in two printed and bound copies as well as two digital copies (CDs) at the examination office during their office hours.

7.3 Wissenschaftliche Arbeit (Teacher Trainees)
Submit one printed and bound copy as well as one digital copy (e.g. CD) of your thesis to the LaSub during their office hours and two printed and bound copies as well as two digital copies (e.g. CDs) to your supervisors; See further instructions in the examination regulations for teacher training programmes.

We strongly recommend you to meet your instructors before you hand in your papers and after your papers have been marked. Thus, you can get individual feedback on your work.

8. Appendix

8.1 The Paragraph

- A paragraph is an essential unit of meaning in a longer essay.
- It consists of several sentences: topic sentence and explanatory sentences.
- The subject of the topic sentence should also be the subject of all consecutive sentences within that paragraph. A new subject means a new paragraph.
- A paragraph should be at least four to five sentences long.
- The sentences following the topic sentence contain arguments, examples, descriptions, explanations and illustrations.
- The topic sentence is rather general, whereas the other sentences are meant to make its meaning more concrete, illustrating the topic sentence.
- A paragraph has to be coherent in itself, but it also contributes to the coherence of the entire essay; paragraphs have to follow one another logically and apparently "naturally"
- If you find that the link between two paragraphs is missing, insert a transition (a sentence, a connective, another paragraph) to make the reader understand the connection.
- see also use of connectives below
- Try to avoid ending your paragraphs on a quote. Try to summarise your findings in your own words.
- Each title or subtitle should be followed by at least one paragraph.

8.2 Connecting Paragraphs

In order to make sure that your essay reads fluently and that your argument is well structured, use connectives or transitions to show how your ideas connect and derive logically from one another. Here are some of the most common connectives and conjunctive adverbs:

- accordingly, as a result, consequently, subsequently, in conclusion, therefore, hence, thus, in this way, likewise
- besides, furthermore, moreover, even more, what is more, in addition, first(ly)/second(ly), etc., finally, in the first place, next, then, also
- still, nevertheless, nonetheless, however, now, even so
- for example, for instance, similarly, in other words, that is, specifically
- on the contrary, on the one hand, on the other hand, conversely, instead, otherwise
- as a matter of fact, indeed, certainly, in fact, after all
- at the same time, meanwhile
- for more examples, see the TUC Writing Centre's handy collection!

8.3 How Should I Use Connectives?

- they are used to join independent clauses within a paragraph and to create a connection between two different paragraphs, i.e. to ease the transition from one set of ideas to the other
- they help to set emphases, create contrasts, add further information, express cause and effect, describe similar situations in relation to each other, give examples for a specific purpose, or draw conclusions
- they have the same meaning and function as the coordinating conjunctions *and, but, for*,

nor, or, so, and *yet* (which should be avoided in academic writing to use a higher register)
- they are used instead of these in order to avoid repetition and ensure the harmonious flow of the text

Please note: Generally, connectives have to be separated from the rest of the sentence by a comma.

8.4 What to Avoid

- Too many subheadings: over-fragmentation
- Summaries: summarise the plot only if this is indispensable to your argumentation! When retelling parts of a story, use the present tense!
- Biographies: include only thesis-related information and keep it precise
- Don't write down your opinion; try to be as objective as possible. Analyse from a meta-perspective!
- Don't quote too many secondary works. Try to summarise or reformulate important thoughts but focus on your own analysis and interpretation. Your own analytical work (*Eigenleistung*) is part of the grade.

8.5 Research Resources

- The university library: https://www.ub.uni-leipzig.de/start/
- Available Databases via the UBL: https://www.ub.uni-leipzig.de/recherche/fachspezifische-datenbanken/?libconnect%5Bsubject%5D=4
- The MLA Bibliography (International Bibliography of Books and Articles on Modern Languages and Literatures) at: https://www.ub.uni-leipzig.de/recherche/fachspezifische-datenbanken/detailansicht-dbis/?libconnect%5Btitleid%5D=76
- Oxford Reference (Literature): https://www.oxfordreference.com/page/literature
- Oxford Reference (Media Studies): https://www.oxfordreference.com/page/mediastudies/media-studies
- British National Archives: https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/
- British Library Digital Collections: https://www.bl.uk/catalogues-and-collections/digital-collections
- JSTOR: https://www.jstor.org
- Project Muse: https://muse.jhu.edu/
- WorldCat (union catalogue): https://www.worldcat.org/

8.6 Academic Language

- Academic Phrase Bank: http://www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk/ (pdf version: http://nnkt.ueh.edu.vn/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Academiv-Phrase-Bank.pdf)

8.7 How to Evaluate Internet Resources

- Berkeley Library: https://guides.lib.berkeley.edu/evaluating-resources

- University of Toronto Guide: https://library.utm.utoronto.ca/services/alumni-visitors/internetresearch

8.8 E-text Sources

- World Digital Library: https://www.wdl.org/en/
- Representative Poetry Online: https://rpo.library.utoronto.ca/display/index.cfm
- Poetry Foundation: https://www.poetryfoundation.org/
- Google Books: http://books.google.com/books
- Bibliomania: http://www.bibliomania.com/
- World Literature Today: https://www.worldliteraturetoday.org/

8.9 Title Page – Example

Universität Leipzig
Institut für Anglistik
Summer Term 2029
Modul 1104: British Literature and Cultures: Theory and Practice
Seminar 1104-2a: Critical Readings of Modernist Literature
Prof. Dr. Ralf Haekel

A Feminist Critique of Futurism:
Mina Loy's *Feminist Manifesto*

Jane Doe
Matrikel-Nr. 1234567
Anglistik B.A., 6. FS
doe@studserv.uni-leipzig.de
12.07.2029

8.10 Affidavit

Affidavit

I hereby certify that the submitted work is wholly my own work, and that all quotations and lines of reasoning from primary and secondary sources have been acknowledged. Plagiarism and other unacknowledged debts will be penalised and may lead to failure in the whole examination and degree.

Date and signature: _____

Eigenständigkeitserklärung

Ich erkläre hiermit, dass die von mir vorgelegte Arbeit gänzlich von mir verfasst wurde und dass alle Zitate und Argumentationslinienaus primären und sekundären Quellen als solche gekennzeichneten wurden. Plagiat oder die Verwendung von nicht ausdrücklich als solche gekennzeichneten Hilfsmitteln hat rechtliche Konsequenzen und kann dazu führen, von der Prüfung und dem Studiengang ausgeschlossen zu werden.

Datum und Unterschrift: _____