

**Guidelines for term papers/essays** (December 2016)

When submitting your essays, you are obliged to attach a signed copy or scan of the „**Declaration of Originality**“. The document can be found here:

<https://www.ethz.ch/students/en/studies/performance-assessments/plagiarism.html> (December 11, 2016)

**Choice of the topic**

In this course there are two ways of choosing a topic for your essay:

1. In the essay, you can discuss a **text of your own choice**; the topic should relate to the course and it should be agreed upon with the lecturer. Before you discuss and interpret the text, provide a short summary of its main arguments and content. Refer at least to one additional text in your discussion.
2. Alternatively, you can choose a **text that was discussed in the course**. In this case you can omit the summary; instead, formulate – based on your additional research – your **own** thoughts on the text and the topic. (This means your treatment will go beyond what was already being discussed in the course or seminar sessions.) To do so, the text should be juxtaposed and contrasted with another – ideally oppositional – view; for this purpose, it will make sense to draw on an additional **scientific** text or paper (not just a newspaper article or an entry in Wikipedia).

**Structure of the text**

The essay should focus on a central theme and guiding thread, i.e. it should pursue a clear-cut question and be structured in a comprehensible way.

Basically the essay should contain three parts: an introduction, a main part, and a conclusion.

- The **introduction** should contain the question, the structure, and some introductory thoughts/remarks.
- The **main part** will consist of a descriptive part and a more interpretive part; the latter will contain the bulk of *your* argument/interpretation and should be distinguished in the text.
- In the **conclusion**, you should answer the question and summarize the core ideas of the essay.

**Formal requirements**

- Justified print, 1.5 line spacing, right margin: 3 cm
- The header/footer should contain: name of the author, degree course, matriculation number, title of the course, semester, name of the lecturer, institution (ETHZ), and of course the title of the essay.
- Length: 3-4 pages (ca. 1.000–1.300 words including the bibliography)

**Interpretation/discussion**

In addition to the formal requirements of complete and consistent scholarly citation and a clear-cut structure, you should above all analyze the text and discuss it critically. For this purpose, it is necessary to relate the text to its historical context and to identify its strengths and problems.

## Citation and bibliography

In an essay, like in any scholarly paper, sources have to be provided for all statements, propositions, and evidence you cite. The purpose of citation is to provide clear distinctions between what the author of the text – in this case, you – is saying and what originates from other authors; it also serves the purpose of documenting the source of a certain argument or piece of information.

Some rules for citing correctly:

- Give references also for **indirect citations (paraphrases)** from books, articles, or online resources in order to document to which texts and authors your argument is referring – for example by indicating the reference in the text in brackets: (author year: page).
- For each citation, give the **source** mentioning the name of the author, the year of the publication and the page reference in the text in brackets – example: (Mollenhauer 2001: 100). For articles in edited volumes, cite just the authors and give the full citation including the editors of the volume in the bibliography.
- At the end of the essay, provide a list of all sources cited in the text in an alphabetically arranged **bibliography**. This applies equally to journal articles, newspaper articles, or online resources.
- **Online resources**, much like any other source, have to be referenced when quoted explicitly or when paraphrased. Also give the date of access in the bibliography. (Since many web pages are only temporarily available on the internet or are constantly being revised, it is advisable to actually print the online texts that you referred to, i.e. save as hard-copy; you will then be able to present your actual source material, if requested.)

See also: <https://www.ethz.ch/content/dam/ethz/main/education/rechtliches-abschluesse/leistungskontrollen/plagiarism-citationetiquette.pdf> (December 11, 2016)

There exist numerous citation styles. You are not obliged to use the citation style indicated above. It is, however, important to cite **fully and consistently**.

The literature in the bibliography must contain the following information:

- Name, forename
- Title of the publication
- Place of publication
- Year of publication
- Page reference
- For journal articles add the title of the journal and the number of the issue.
- For articles from edited volumes add the title of the volume and the names of the editors.
- Websites/online resources: full reference and provide the data of access.

## Examples

Chapter in edited volume:

Shapin, Steven: The Philosopher and the Chicken: On the Dietetics of Disembodied Knowledge, in: Christopher Lawrence and Steven Shapin (eds.): *Science Incarnate. Historical Embodiments of Natural Knowledge*, Chicago 1998, pp. 21–50

Monograph:

Kuhn, Thomas: *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Chicago 1962.

Article:

Dobzhansky, Theodosius: Biological Adaptation, *The Scientific Monthly* 55, Nov. 1942, pp. 391–402.