Guidelines for Academic Research and Writing of the Department of Political Science

University of Lucerne

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The Essay

Formal standards

- Arial (10pt) / Times New Roman (12pt), line spacing: 1.5, continuous page numbering.
- Extent: 5-8 pages. Pay attention to the provisions of the specific lecturer.
- All literature used has to be referenced in the text. It needs to be made clear whose ideas you have worked with.
- At the end of the essay a bibliography/list of references of all used sources (monographs, journals, lectures, etc.) has to be attached. Wikipedia may serve for background information but is generally not a reliable source and should NOT be used.

Standards in respect to content

The (social) scientific essay always builds on a research question (see guidelines for research questions) and a subsequent thesis. It reviews and assesses the different scientific positions in regard to the thesis in an argumentative manner. These positions have to be evaluated critically and you should develop your own conclusions and positions. The essay therefore resembles an article in a debate within a renowned newspaper. Contrary to a seminar paper, an essay does not contain an extensive empirical or theoretical analysis but rather a trenchant evaluation of the different positions and shows a systematic and profound examination of the topic. An essay is shorter than a seminar paper and not clearly structured into a theoretical and an empirical section, but unfolds along the arguments to be discussed. Because it is not possible to provide a detailed analysis within the extent of an essay you rather work with theses than with concrete, provable hypotheses.

An Essay consists of an introduction, a main part and a conclusive part. Those parts do not have to be numbered as in a seminar paper. However, you must clearly structure your essay along its content.

Introduction
- Present the starting point of the essay, illustrate the problem you will investigate and its relevance, and introduce your thesis.
- Shortly review the structure of the essay.

Main part
- Structure your argument along several core statements.
- Compress the core statements to a research question, analyse it and possibly refute it (critical assessment of the different authors).
- Plausibly explain your own position and underpin it with theoretical arguments and practical/empirical examples.

Conclusion
- Shortly summarize your essential argument.
- Draw your conclusion, possibly bring in your own evaluation.
- Possibly raise new questions.

References

Haas, Melanie (2004): *Was ist ein Essay? URL*: www.melaniehaas.de/docs/Essay.pdf (last access: 5. Juli 2014)

Kruse, Otto (1995): *Keine Angst vor dem leeren Blatt*. Frankfurt/Main; New York: Campus Verlag.

Bibliografisches Institut GmbH (2013): *Essay, der* oder *das.* In: Duden. URL: http://www.duden.de/rechtschreibung/Essay (last access: 5. Juli 2014)

The Research Design

The short research design for a seminar paper or a BA- / MA-thesis contains the following elements in abbreviated form and has the extent of 2-5 pages:

1. Topic and delineation
2. Research question, empirical and/or theoretical relevance (see guidelines Research Question)
3. Short justification of the theories used to answer the research question.
4. Hypotheses, theses, sub-questions.

a) For empirical papers:

Hypothese(s) = Answer(s) to the research question inferred from theory. It normally sets the explanandum (the dependent variable) in correlation with specific explananses (independent variables).

Example: Empirical research question:

Research question:
How can the establishing of the International Criminal Court (ICC) be explained? Empirical relevance: strong legalization / infringement on national sovereignty / instrument to battle human rights violations etc. Theoretical relevance: Why do nations agree to such a loss of sovereignty? What role do norms play in this decision, what role do interests or power play?

Hypothesis 1:
The establishment of the ICC can only be explained with processes of persuasion and through the mediating role of NGOs during the negotiations of the contract (Dependent variable = ICC, independent variable = processes of persuasion, engagement of NGOs) (> Text Deitelhoff[1])

Competing hypothesis 2:
The establishment of the ICC can only be explained with the rational interest of those nations which in recent times witnessed systematic violations of human rights, through civil wars or similar. (> modified hypothesis of Moravcsik[2], independent variable = activities of nations with a past riddled by civil war or genocide).

b) For theoretical papers:

Theses or sub-questions = Substeps to answer the research question.

Example: Theoretical research question:

Research question:
Can the concepts of peace regimes advanced by political realism be adapted to the „new wars"?

Sub-question 1:
What is the understanding of „peace" in political realism? (> Literature: Thukydides, Morgenthau und Waltz[3])

Sub-question 2:
What are „new wars"? (> Literature: Münkler, Kaldor[4])

Own contribution:
What peace is achievable in „new wars" under the conditions of „Realpolitik"?

Notice: Different types of research questions lead to different types of hypotheses, theses and sub-questions. (See guidelines on the research question).

5. Operationalization of the variables (for empirical papers): How can the hypothesis be made measureable? For the example above: On the basis of what can the interests of nations be determined? → What kinds of indicators are used? This needs to be made clear for the dependent variable as well.
6. Methods, sources used, eventually case selection.
7. (Provisional) Outline (Structure of the paper).
8. A bibliography of the most important references and sources already collected.

Reference

Van Evera, Stephen (1997): Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

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[1] Deitelhoff, N. (2009): The Discursive Process of Legalization: Charting Islands of Persuasion in the ICC Case. *International Organization* 63 (1): 33-65.

[2] Moravcsik, A. (2000): The Origins of Human Rights Regimes: Democratic Delegation in Postwar Europe. *International Organization* 54 (2): 217-252.

[3] Cf. Jäger, Thomas et al. Hrsg. (2011): *Handbuch Kriegstheorien*, Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, S. 149 und 154; Waltz, Kenneth (1988): The Origins of War in Neorealist Theory. *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 18 (4).

[4] Cf. Münkler, Herfried (2003): Die neuen Kriege, Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt; Cf. Kaldor, Mary (2007): Neue und alte Kriege. Organisierte Gewalt im Zeitalter der Globalisierung, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.

The Research Question

The research question asks for the specific answers the research aims to develop and thereby determines which theories, methods and data to use and how the work should be structured. The proper formulation of an interesting research question is therefore the most basic step in academic research and has to meet the following criteria:

- Precise wording.
- The question is developed from an unsolved problem, a contradiction or an open question in the existing academic literature, rendering its answer relevant for your area of studies.
- The question can be answered in the given page-range and timeframe.
- There should be only one question, not multiple parts and no statements.

Posing the research question also determines the research goal. Various types of research goals exist which are indicated by signal words. It is for example possible to define, evaluate normatively, compare, explain, and interpret or to undertake an output evaluation (see types 1-7 below). It is important to use a corresponding signal word for a specific research question; for example, when a comparison of different cases is intended it should be avoided to use „explain" in the question, as the latter implies a causal analysis of a specific phenomenon.

Types of *research goals* and their corresponding *research questions and methods* (in brackets):

1. *Clarification of terms (definitions, conceptual analyses)*

   - What is a democracy?
   - What is multiculturalism?
   - What is globalization?
     → cf e. g. Göhler/Iser/Kerner (2004): Politische Theorie. 22 umkämpfte Begriffe zur Einführung

2. *Programmatic concepts and Valuations (normative analyses)*

   - How can we imagine democratic self-determination beyond the nation state?
   - Should voting for expatriates be facilitated?
   - Is the allowing of double citizenship good for democracy?
   - Did the public debate on the „initiative for deportation" (Ausschaffungsinitiative) adhere to the quality standards of deliberative democracy (level of justification, mutual respect)?

3. *Correct and meaningful descriptions and comparisons (comparative analyses)*

   - What are differences between Swiss federalism and other types of federalism?
   - In which sense does a European identity exist and how does it vary among the EU-member-states?
   - Did the Swiss political system shift from a system of consensual democracy to a majoritarian democracy within the last ten years?
   - How did the idea of political steering and integration (governance) shift during the 20th century?

4. *Ascertainment of correlations and causal explanations (Correlation and causal analyses)*

   - Is a strong national identity compatible with a strong European identity?
     → Interest lies in a positive, negative or non-existing correlation
   - Does the progress of democratic development depend on the economic welfare of a nation?
     → Interest lies in the conditions of a political factor: the dependent variable (development of democracy) is in the centre of interest.
     → Hypotheses:

- ◦ The wealthier a nation, the higher is its democracy developed. (Probalistic hypothesis)
  - ◦ A certain extent of economic welfare is necessary, but not sufficient for democratic development. (Possibilistic hypothesis)
- Are federalistic nations economically more successful than centralistic nations?
  - → Interest lies in the consequences of a political factor: the independent variable (federalistic/centralistic) is in the centre of interest.

5. *Reconstruction of meaning (interpretative analyses)*

- What ideas of globalization do exist and who benefits of them? (Critical theory)
- With which patterns of justification was the intervention of NATO in Kosovo justified und why were they successful? (Discourse analysis)
- Which patterns of justification are offered in favour of and against the „initiative for deportation" (Ausschaffungsinitiative)?

6. *Combinations of causal and interpretative analyses*

- Do information and debates influence the perception of problems and the positions of voters?

7. *Output evaluation (evaluative analyses)*

- Where the goals of a specific political program (regulations / development schemes) achieved?
- How much influence does the political programme have on the achievement of the goals?
- What did work and what did not? How can the program's implementation be optimized?

The Review of Literature for Research and Reading Techniques

Academic research is unthinkable without a comprehensive review of literature. It provides the necessary entrance to and overview of the actual scientific discourse on the topic. This discourse takes place both within monographs and in academic journals in the field. Therefore, both media have to be reviewed for a comprehensive perspective on the existing literature on a specific topic. Monographs reflect the established debate while journals provide the newest perspectives. Monographs can be found in the ZHB over its electronic catalogue IDS (for the ZHB assets) and Swissbib (for several Swiss university libraries). Journals can be read online via databases to which you get access via the ZHB; a systematic search is necessary here. To this end, all political science students have to visit the mandatory courses on information competence at the beginning of their studies. Anyone who missed that course should visit one of the courses the ZHB offers to all students.

For the **review of literature** in the field of political science we primarily recommend the following four starting points:

- iluplus: Is the central search-tool of the ZHB Luzern which searches simultaneously for different types of media (books, journals, databases, ...) placed in the ZHB. Because some databases are not included in those searches and because iluplus is still in beta-phase, it does not cover all available literature, but is already quite comprehensive. Log into both in your ZHB-account and into the internal network of the university at the beginning of the search in order to get all matches.

- Google Scholar: Looks simultaneously for various types of media (Books, Journals, and Citations) and helps to get an overview of publicly published literature. Full text is only available for free access literature. Google Scholar is very helpful to gather bibliographical data for many texts. A downside is the lack of transparent information about which sources are searched and by which principles the search output items are ranked.

- Political Science Complete: Is part of the EBSCO databases. Those databases provide access to full text articles from various publications and journals and may very well be the most comprehensive reference collection for the field of political science. The EBSCO databases provide an app for mobile devices.

- WISO: Is the most comprehensive reference database in German for social sciences and economics. Using the SFX system you can view articles in full text, as long as the ZHB provides access to the publication. Moreover, WISO contains articles from many daily and weekly newspapers in German. Especially useful is WISO's social science thesaurus, which provides concise key words for your literature review in WISO, as well as translations in English.

A helpful starting point for your review is ZHB's subject specific research website:
http://www.zhbluzern.ch/en/research/subjects/political-science

For the review of a large body of texts, good reading technique is key. Not only fast reading but also systematic comprehension of information is needed in order to digest all the reading you will do within your studies. Depending on the text you have at hand you need to learn to apply the *examining*, the *analytic* or the *comparative* technique; also you should learn why it is not necessary to read every paragraph:

Stykow, Petra, Christopher Daase, Janet MacKenzie, Nikola Moosauer (2010): Politikwissenschaftliche Arbeitstechniken. Paderborn: Wilhelm Fink, Kap. 2: Lesen Lernen, Kap. 3: Vom Lesen zum Schreiben.

The Presentation

Method (time specifications are minima)

- **Three weeks** ahead: Read mandatory literature, gather information on topic**.**
- **Two weeks** ahead: Ask lecturer for focal points and additional literature, if necessary.
- Extensive examination of literature (See guidelines for review of literature)
- Meeting, discussion: Core topic, research question, thesis, concept (See guideline on the research question and on the research design)
- **One week** ahead: Discus concept with lecturer and eventually tutors
- Assignment of the different tasks
- **The day** ahead**:** Send Handout and Presentation to the lecturer and put it on OLAT
- Print out Handout for all participants

Content

Duration: 20 to 25 Minutes plus discussion: Pay attention to the specific provisions of the lecturer

The Presentation should be more than just a summary of the mandatory literature. Therefore additional literature should be integrated and own conclusions and positions developed. A presentation follows a similar structure as a seminar paper, where a **topic** and a **theory** lead to a **research question** from which a thesis is inferred. In the main part, **arguments** in favour and against the **thesis** are brought forward and the debate is finally summarized in the **conclusion**. A presentation offers the additional opportunity to **discuss** the conclusion with the audience (cf. Figure 1).

It is important to show some courage in selection (Mut zur Lücke), because the given time-frame is too short to cover a plethora of points. A trenched research question is very helpful in this regard. It can also be expected that the audience possesses prior knowledge of the field and the general themes, because everyone read the mandatory literature.
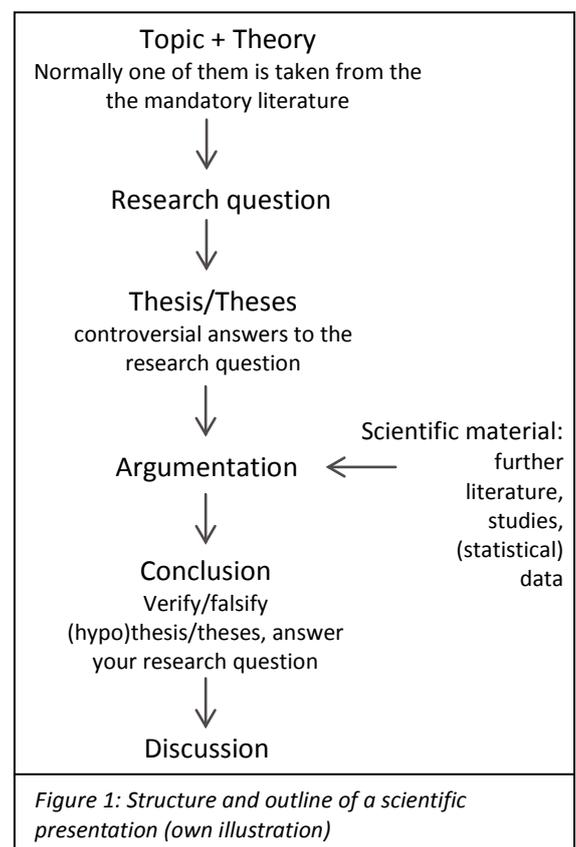
<u>Structure</u>

Introduction:

- Positioning the presentation and its topic within the whole course. Justification of own focus
- Development of a research question and thesis from topic and theory
- Eventually a very short overview of the presentation's structure

Argumentation (= main part):

- Mandatory literature is the starting point: Reflection of its arguments and evidence for own research question. Express in your own words (but level of precision must be kept).
- Supplementation with arguments and evidence of other, self-searched literature. Only select what is relevant for the specific research question.
- Support your argument through slides. Pay attention to correct referencing on them (see guideline on quoting).

Conclusion:

- Reference to the research question and the thesis developed in the introduction.
- Emphasize a few (2-4) core points.

Topic + Theory
Normally one of them is taken from the the mandatory literature

↓

Research question

↓

Thesis/Theses
controversial answers to the research question

↓

Argumentation ← Scientific material: further literature, studies, (statistical) data

↓

Conclusion
Verify/falsify (hypo)thesis/theses, answer your research question

↓

Discussion

Figure 1: Structure and outline of a scientific presentation (own illustration)

- State questions still left open.

Questions, Discussion:

- The audience should have the possibility to ask questions of comprehension.
- The presenting group has prepared 1-2 questions for discussion. They should be inferred from the presentation and be discussed on its content as background. The group presents the questions and moderates the discussion. Before a discussion with the entire group it is possible to first let the participants debate in smaller groups.
- Relevant content for questions for discussion includes e. g. the adaption of the issues learned on a case example, ideas that lead further, alternative theories etc. Closed questions which could be answered with only yes or no must be avoided.
- The role of the presenters: Add information, clarify comprehension questions, moderate the discussion, have prepared answers and arguments of your own, and annotate the discussion (blackboard, flipchart, projection).

Form of Powerpoint-Presentation

- Not too many slides (ca. 10 – 15). On each slide only one topic and in maximum 7 lines. Font size 16 – 24 pt.
- Uniform Layout and fonts.
- Use graphics. Quotations are possible, but should not be long.
- The presentation is held freely towards the audience, structured by keywords and not read from the screen completely.
- Each member of the group should present more or less the same amount of content; the different parts must be presented in a coherent manner.
- Calculate enough time for each slide.

Hand-out

- 1-2 pages printed on one A4-page.
- The hand-out provides a short overview of the presentation. It supports the audience in understanding the presentation and serves as summary and remembrance tool later on. Rather use an abbreviated style (keywords) than prose to not enthral the audience in two narrations (presentation and hand-out) at the same moment.
- Content:
  - Topic, research question, thesis
  - The most important argumentative lines of the main part
  - Summary and evaluation of the thesis
  - It is important to note the formal information of the presentation (name of seminar, lecturer, date, topic, presenters) in the headline and the bibliography.

References

Metzger, Christoph (2010): *Lern- und Arbeitsstrategien. Ein Fachbuch für Studierende*, Oberentfelden: Sauerländer Verlag.

Scharloth, Joachim (2004): *Wie halte ich ein gutes Referat?* Last accessed: 3rd of July 2014 at:
http://www.scharloth.com/files/Handout_Referat.pdf

Schlichte, Klaus (2006): *Einführung in die Arbeitstechniken der Politikwissenschaft,* Opladen: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.

Spoun, Sascha (2011): *Erfolgreich studieren*, München: Pearson Verlag.

The (Pro-)Seminar Paper

Formalities

- Length: 4500 words (ca. 15 pages) for a Proseminar paper, 6000 words (ca. 20 pages) for a seminar paper; these specifications refer to the main text without title, abstract, table of contents, list of references and appendix. The amount of words should be indicated at the end of the paper.
- Font: Arial (10pt)/Times New Roman (12pt), line spacing: 1.5, pagination: consecutive
- Title page: name of the university, paper title; name, address and matriculation number of the author; title of the course, name of supervisor; submission date, term.
- Submission: Hand in the paper electronically (pdf). A hardcopy is only needed if the supervisor so wishes. Note that a digital version allows for a check for plagiarism. The submission deadline is to be arranged with the supervisor and the paper is to be handed in accordingly, in due time!
- Style/mode of expression: Write in a comprehensible, clear, consistent, reasonable and gender-fair[5] writing. Be mindful of logical consistence and precise use of terms. Define key terms.

Proceedings

- Find a topic.
- Develop a research question (see guideline on the research question).
- The research question asks for the specific answers the research aims to develop and thereby determines which theories, methods and data to use and how the work should be structured. It has to meet the following criteria:
  - Precise wording.
  - The question is developed from an unsolved problem, a contradiction or an open question in the existing academic literature. Subsequently its answer is relevant for the area of studies.
  - There should be only one question, not multiple parts and no statements.
  - The question can be answered in the given page-range and timeframe.
- The research question determines which theories, methods and data are used, and how the paper is to be structured. Therefore, it has to be developed in the very beginning.
- Review of literature for research and thorough reading (see Guideline on review of literature for research)
  - Choose (an) appropriate theory/theories → depends on the research question.
  - Choose (hypo)thesis and method → depend on the research question and the theory.
- Develop a research design and discuss it with the supervisor (see Guideline on research design).
- Write the paper – good time management is essential! Subdivide the overall task into smaller ones, plan realistically and review your time plan regularly.

Content

A seminar paper should be structured according to the following scheme:

- Title page
- Abstract: Must be placed at the beginning of the paper (after the title page) and is a condense description the most important results of the paper (max. half a page).

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[5] For the different possibilities to gender-fair language you might refer to the „Guidelines for Gender-Fair Use of Language" of the National Council of Teachers of English (http://www.ncte.org/positions/statements/genderfairuseoflang, last access: 03.07.2014). Please note that for the German language different indications apply, refer to the German version of this guideline.

- Table of contents
  - The structure should not exceed four levels.
  - If there is a section 2.1, there at least also has to be a section 2.2.

- If applicable: List of figures (from more than three figures/charts), list of tables, and list of abbreviations (only if you use many abbreviations).

- Introduction:
  - Lead-in to the topic, context; show the relevance of your topic, possibly through a hook (current fact of interest);
  - Develop a research question; mention the (suitable) theory/theories and method(s) used;
  - Short review of the structure of the paper.

- Main part:

  a) In an empirical paper:

  Presentation of the topic
  Introduce your topic and concrete research question through a review of the current state of research. You should here clarify the epistemological interest of your paper.

  Theory
  Embed your topic theoretically. Justify your choice of theory: Which theory or theories is/are utilized why? Present and possibly modify theory/theories. Develop general and case-specific hypotheses on the basis of theory.
  Please note: Good papers often include a test of competing expectations regarding the question to be investigated, formulated on the basis of different theories.

  Method
  Explain and justify your procedure. All steps have to be made transparent. This particularly includes information on basic population and sample, methodology and procedures used.

  Analysis of data
  Test your hypotheses. The results are generally presented according to the order of the hypotheses.

  Answering the research question and interpretation
  Discuss your results.

  b) In a theoretical paper:

  Description of the problem
  Review the theoretical debate on the basis of existing literature. Introduce your topic and concrete research question. You should here clarify the epistemological interest of your paper.

  Depiction of the lines of theory / essential theorists
  Justify your choice of the theorists to be examined; Account of the most contentious core areas in relation to your problem. Present the existing arguments and discussions with your own evaluation.

  Please note: Good papers often compare the arguments of different essential authors from competing schools or camps and evaluate them with respect to the research question used.

  Epistemological gain / own contribution
  Discuss your insights with regard to the original problem; develop your own proposal to the solution. Present the result of your argumentation, assess your original thesis and thereby answer your research question.

For concrete examples of other kinds of research questions and their goals refer to the guideline on the research question.

- Conclusion
  - Short summary of your main arguments.
  - Reflect the validity and interpretation of the theoretical expectations you introduced on the basis of the empirical data (a) or summarise the epistemological gain and your own contribution (b).
  - Raise new questions.

- List of references
  - In the list of references you must list all books, journal articles, databases, websites etc. alphabetically. The list must be consistent and systematic.

- If applicable: Appendix
  - In the appendix you should append important documents, minutes or interview transcripts.

References

Wolfsberger, Judith (2010*): Frei geschrieben. Mut, Freiheit und Strategie für wissenschaftliche Abschlussarbeiten.* Wien, Köln, Weimar: Böhlau Verlag.

Booth, Wayne C.; Colomb, Gregory G.; Williams, Joseph M. (2008): *The Craft of Research*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Quoting (according to the Harvard System)

Text sample:

„Die in der Nachkriegszeit geborenen Frauen machten den ‚toten Punkt' (Goldberg 1979: 287), den die Männeridentität erreicht hat, unübersehbar; auch für die Männer selbst."[6]

Direct quotes

„Die in der Nachkriegszeit [nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg] geborenen Frauen machten den ‚toten Punkt' (Goldberg 1979: 287), […], unübersehbar; auch für die Männer selbst." (Preuss-Lausitz 1991: 100)

Omissions:	[…]
Additions:	[nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg]
Quoting according to third authors:	Die Männeridentität erreichte einen „toten Punkt" (Goldberg 1979, zit. in: Preuss-Lausitz 1991: 100).

If the same source is quoted several times consecutively, name and publication year are abbreviated with ibid. (ibidem): (ibid.: 100)

If the publication has been has co-authored by several authors one only refers to the first author within the text and complements it with „et al.": (Müller et al. 2010: 23)

Indirect quotes

Durch die Frauenbewegung gerieten die Männer in eine Identifikationskrise, da ihr Verständnis von Männlichkeit durch die Emanzipation der Frau erschüttert worden war (vgl. Preuss-Lausitz 1991: 100).

1. From monographs

In the list of references:	*In the text:*
Benhabib, Seyla (2004): The Rights of Others: Aliens, Residents, and Citizens. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.	(Benhabib 2004: 171)

2. From edited volumes, handbooks

In the list of references:	*In the text:*
Saward, Michael (2008): Democracy and Citizenship: Expanding Domains. In: Dryzek, John, Bonnie Honig and Anne Philipps (eds.): *The Oxford handbook of political theory*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 400-422.	(Dryzek et al. 2008: 405)

3. From journal articles

In the list of references:	*In the text:*
Rigstad, Mark (2011): Republicanism and geopolitical domination. In: *Journal of Political Power* 4(2), 279-300.	(Rigstad 2011: 281)

4. From internet sources

In the list of references:	*In the text:*
EvB (n. d.): Europe-wide resistance against Syngenta's patent on pepper. URL: http://www.bernedeclaration.ch/media/press-release/europe_wide_resistance_against_syngentas_patent_on_pepper (last access: 17.09.2014)	(EvB n. d.)

> Internet sources must be dated with the last actualisation date of the website. If this is not evident, one uses „n. d." (no date).

It is also possible to apply a different citation method. In any case, such a method has to be applied consistently.

Useful links:

Harvard-Style: http://www.bournemouth.ac.uk/library/how-to/citing-refs-harvard.html

Several citation methods: http://www.ub.fu-berlin.de/service_neu/einfuehrung/bookmarks/zitieren.html

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[6] Note that this text example is taken from the following edited volume: Preuss-Lausitz, Ulf (ed.) (1991): Kriegskinder, Konsumkinder, Krisenkinder. Zur Sozialisationsgeschichte seit dem Zweiten Weltkrieg. 3rd, unmodified edition, Weinheim; Basel: Beltz.