

Recommendations for writing a Book Review (*Studienleistung*)

Book Reviews are central in the scientific discourse. They inform their readers about content and quality of a book, and they align it within the state of research of a discipline. The aim is to present and acknowledge scholarly publications by describing the text's structure and logic, the selection and arrangement of arguments, the theoretical and methodological foundation as well as the empirical background and its reflection.

As part of the course work, writing reviews allows students to probe their text comprehension, summarizing and paraphrasing of longer texts as well as to practice the phrasing of one's own standpoint and lines of argument. As a *Studienleistung* in my seminars, a book review consists of *a cover page with all necessary information about the author (see below), a running text without headings/subheadings (between 4 and 6 pages long) and a signed declaration of intellectual integrity.*

These guidelines are intended to help you prepare and conduct book reviews as a *Studienleistung*. First of all, an important note: Please discuss your book selection with me **personally** before starting your writing process.

Components of a Book Review

1. Book title and name of the author

The review begins with a bibliographical indication of the work reviewed as well as information on the number of pages, price and ISBN number. Example:

[Phillips, David & Schweisfurth, Michelle (2014). *Comparative and International Education. An Introduction to Theory, Method, and Practice*, 2nd Edition, London: Bloomsbury, 222 pages, 109,00 €, ISBN: 978-1-4411-2242-1].

2. Content

The main text with the actual book review offers a short introduction to the book's topic, provides concise information about the author(s), the context/development of the work reviewed and the conditions of writing. The research problem and aim(s) of the book are also presented and explained here. This is followed by a concise, focused description of the book's content (What are the individual chapters of the book about?). The organisation of the book is also briefly described (length, book parts, chapters etc.). Next, the theoretical and methodological framework is assessed before the empirical procedures and use of methods are described (How does the work proceed empirically? Which methods of data collection and analysis are used?). The final part includes the presentation of the central results of the book.

All citations – direct or indirect – must be marked. It suffices to mention the page number in square brackets (e.g.: [p. 8] or [cf. p. 14f.]). External sources should only be used in exceptional cases and then very sparingly. These are listed in with the help of endnotes.

3. Assessment

A concise assessment of the book in its scientific context (In which research tradition/discipline can this book be embedded?), the quality of the presentation (structure and logic, selection and arrangement of arguments, examples, clarity/readability, etc.), the quality of the methodology, as well as one's own opinion (clearly presenting one's own position/opinion at selected points – commenting on or critiquing passages in the text) are the central elements of a book review.

4. Appraisal and recommendation

The critical appraisal of the reviewed work concludes with an assessment of the book with regard to the author's achievements. Here the self-imposed goals – as they are often presented in the introduction – are of particular importance. Furthermore, the suitability of the work as an introduction, study book or book of specialization in a subject area or for a specific audience is to be assessed: Would you recommend the book to others? If so, to whom and why? If not, give reasons for it!

Formal design

- Cover sheet: university, department, module, course, lecturer, semester, type of work; (sub-)title of the paper; name, telephone number, e-mail, study semester, matriculation number, date of submission, indication whether the paper must be graded;
- Scope: 4-6 pages (with usual formatting, i.e. serif font: 12 pt.; line spacing: 1,5; page margins: 2,5 cm);
- If applicable, bibliography or endnotes;
- Do not forget a signed declaration of intellectual integrity (!)

Notes on scientific work

Please have a look at the file *Notes on Scientific Work*.

On my homepage you will also find the *feedback form*, which I use for grading written assignments. Please have a thorough look at it.

Samples of Book Reviews:

All relevant scholarly journals have a *Book review* section, which can be read as samples of this text genre. The following journals are useful sources in (International and Comparative) Educational research:

- Journal „*Tertium Comparationis (TC)*“: <https://www.waxmann.com/waxmann-zeitschriften/>
- Journal „*Erziehungswissenschaftliche Revue (EWR)*“: <https://www.klinkhardt.de/ewr/>
- Journal „*Comparative Education Review (CER)*“: <https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/toc/cer/current>

Deadline for submission is always the end of the semester period (*summer semester usually end of September, winter semester usually end of March*) - please contact me if you need a justified extension. The submission does not have to be personal, the printed paper can be dropped in my mailbox. Please let me know at an early stage if separate registration deadlines or similar have to be taken into account. Please also note this on the paper.

I will read *all written assignments* thoroughly and make use of the entire range of grades; a short explanation will be attached to the grade. All papers will be reviewed as soon as possible. Please refrain from individual requests by e-mail in unjustified cases.

Good luck and much success!