

### **Recommendations for drafting a scientific Essay (*Studienleistung*)**

A scientific essay is a short and clearly structured, yet critical text. At its core, it is a matter of thinking about a concrete question from different perspectives and developing your own viewpoint in an original way during the course of the essay.

In an essay, a line of argument for answering a question is to be developed in a stylistically elegant way. The chosen topic/object should be examined from different perspectives in a main section and presented with the help of a few, but scientifically relevant sources. It is important to note that the focus must not be on your own opinion, but on a sound and objective argumentation with which you try to convince the reader. The title should already be chosen suitably and interestingly.

As a *Studienleistung* in my seminars, an Essay 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 essays as a *Studienleistung*.

### **Recommended approach**

#### **Thematic focus and question**

The essay should be developed and structured on the basis of an explicit question. It should make clear what it is about, i.e. what you want to show/work out. The content and scope of the question must fit the topic. Often the question poses a stronger limitation of the topic. After you have selected a topic and carried out initial research, we can narrow down and define the topic as well as the question together during my office hours. All essays must be **discussed with me personally** before starting your writing process.

#### **A proposal to develop a question and argumentation structure**

I recommend reading some texts on the topic first in order to collect ideas and arguments through a brainstorming, which will enable you to develop a question afterwards. Based on the concrete question you can then evolve a line of argument in keywords on one page: Question - individual arguments - answer(s) to the question.

### **Components of an Essays**

Although an essay consists of an introduction (1), a main part (2) and a final section (3), the text should not contain subheadings but rather guide the reader through a clearly identifiable "red thread". The individual parts should be clearly separated from each other by paragraph spacing. The introduction should introduce the topic as swiftly as possible and present your thesis/question (text ratio approx. 10% (1); 80% (2); 10% (3)). In the final part, you should reach your own position. This is primarily intended to provide a cause for thought for subsequent discussions. Here, it is not a question of summarizing your entire line of argument, but rather of resolutely defending a well-founded opinion that you have developed through your line of argument in the main section.

## **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 incl. literature references (with usual formatting, i.e. serif font: 12 pt.; line spacing: 1,5; page margins: 2,5 cm);
- Bibliography;
- 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.

*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!