Near and Middle Eastern Studies

University of Basel

Guidelines Proseminar and Seminar Papers

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1 Formal framework of the proseminar and seminar papers

1.1 Proseminar paper

Proseminar papers are written in conjunction with *proseminars*. Proseminars are courses that introduce students to basic themes and methodology. Students are familiarized with the basic topics, working methods, and disciplinary approaches of the subject. The proseminar paper is therefore the way in which students are introduced to an independent scholarly and creative approach to a given or self-chosen topic. The proseminar paper is intended to arouse interest and pleasure in scholarly work. Therefore, assessment of the work focuses not only on the provision of a convincing and understandable argument, but also on formal criteria such as organized structure and adherence to the correct citation method. Research questions at this level are based primarily on secondary literature or primary sources in European languages or on translated sources from Arabic, Persian, and Turkish. Based on this literature, students develop their research questions, structure their work, and answer them independently. Even if the ability to work on Arabic-, Persian-, or Turkish-language sources is only acquired in advanced BA studies, insightful empirical approaches to the subject area are possible through the critical and comparative use of secondary literature and a source-critical approach to translated or European primary sources.

Participants who would like to write a proseminar paper within the framework of a proseminar should register with the lecturer at an early stage, i.e., during the semester itself. The preparation and writing phase of the proseminar paper is supervised individually by the lecturer. The proseminar paper is graded, though the grade appears only on the transcript and is not calculated as part of the final GPA. In order to ensure that students are prepared to write more complex seminar papers during their advanced studies, proseminar papers are supervised and revised until a good or very good paper has been achieved.

1.2 Seminar paper

Seminar papers are written in conjunction with *seminars*. The seminar paper serves on the one hand as the most demanding written performance record of the BA degree program, and on the other hand as a scholarly precedent for potential work on the master's thesis in the MA degree program. Participants who would like to write a seminar paper within the framework of a seminar should register with the lecturer in good time, i.e., during the semester.

In contrast to the proseminar paper, the seminar paper should demonstrate advanced skills in the scholarly approach to theories and methods as well as to secondary literature and primary sources. The proseminar paper must be completed and graded before work begins on the seminar paper. In this context, see the provision in the Program Guide (*Wegleitung*, Chapter 3.2): "Attending a seminar in the module *Fortgeschrittene Nahoststudien* is only possible once the proseminar paper has been accepted and conclusively assessed."

The preparation and writing phase of the seminar paper is supervised individually by the lecturer. In contrast to the proseminar paper, the seminar paper assumes that the formal skills have already been acquired. The focus of the seminar paper is thus on the intellectual cognitive

process as well as on the quality of the research design. In evaluating the seminar paper, lecturers thus look at more advanced questions: Have the relevant corpus of sources and literature as well as the relevant theories been sufficiently considered and correctly applied? Is the thesis of the seminar paper clearly formulated and convincingly justified? Is the methodology of the paper sensibly structured? Is the research question kept in view throughout the seminar paper and does the reader receive a conclusive answer?

The seminar paper is graded for students at both the BA and MA levels. For BA students, the seminar paper in Near and Middle Eastern Studies counts as one quarter of the overall grade (GPA) of the Bachelor's degree. Experience shows that many BA students are often pressed for time with the seminar paper at the end of the Bachelor's program and tend to hand it in at the very last minute. It is important that students carefully plan for the processing time of six weeks given the lecturers in the university regulations. Please also note that under § 3, paragraph 3, of the 2018 regulations of the Faculty of Philosophy and History of the University of Basel for the Bachelor's program, revision of the seminar paper is not possible after it is handed in.

1.3 Exception: Learning Contracts

Writing a seminar or proseminar paper via a learning contract is only permitted under exceptional conditions that are outside the control of the student. A learning contract regulates the conditions for the acquisition of credit points outside of regular courses on an individual basis. Students and lecturers agree on the details of student and lecturer expectations using an online form.

Please note: Students who fail to register or complete their proseminar or seminar papers as a part of a course in a timely manner must then wait to take a similar-level course in the next semester. It is in your interest to complete the proseminar or seminar paper in a timely manner. Waiting to write your papers leads to longer enrollment at the university! If a learning contract is absolutely necessary, a written request detailing the reasons for the exception must be first made to the chair of the program.

1.4 Registration, supervision and submission of the proseminar and seminar paper

Proseminar and seminar papers are supervised by the instructor of the respective proseminar or seminar. Interested students should contact the instructor at the latest before the end of the semester and express their concrete wish to write a proseminar or seminar paper. Immediately before the assessment of the respective proseminar or seminar, the lecturer will ask for confirmation of intent to register for a paper. If a student fails to register, the paper must be written for a new course in one of the following semesters. In the event that the failure to register was caused by the instructor, the proseminar or seminar paper can be registered as an exception by means of a learning contract. Students are recommended to discuss each step of research and written work with the advisor in order to prevent possible errors in preparation.

Proseminar papers must always be handed in three months after the end of the lecture period, i.e., at the end of March (for courses taking place in the fall semester) or at the end of August (for courses taking place in the spring semester). Seminar papers must be submitted by the end of the following semester, i.e. for a seminar in the fall semester, the seminar paper must be submitted by the end of July of the following year at the latest, for a seminar in the spring semester by the end of January of the following year at the latest.

2 Format and Layout

Complying with formal requirements for written work is not only essential to follow up on results but also reflects the scholarly seriousness and the aspired professionalism with which the student approached the work. Such ambitions should come through in the format of the paper!

2.1 Language and Style

The paper should use an academic style. It must be absolutely free of spelling mistakes. The usage of colloquial language should be avoided, and the style be maintained throughout the paper.

> *Tip:*
>
> ⇒ *"Gender equitable" language is a must in today's scholarship. Disregarding this gives a bad impression.*

2.2 Scope

The proseminar paper consists of 10-15 pages (approx. 3000-4500 words), not including appendix and bibliography.

The seminar paper consists of 20-25 pages (approx. 8000-10000 words), without appendix and bibliography.

Quantity does not mean quality! Often the trick lies in expressing oneself appropriately and briefly, without getting lost in long treatises.

> *Tips:*
>
> ⇒ *Brevity is the soul of wit. Put yourself in the position of your readers and think of what is really interesting for them.*
>
> ⇒ *Note any special requirements of the individual lecturer supervising the paper!*

2.3 Macro typography

A paper is clearly structured into sections and subsections and written with a word processing program (such as MS Word, Open-Office, Neo-Office). The paper format is a double-sided printed DIN A4 sheet. The right margin is at least 3 cm wide for corrections. Font and spacing should be chosen as follows: Font size 12 point and 1.5 line spacing for the main text; font size 10 point and single line spacing for block citations and remarks in the footnotes.

The main text should be formatted either fully justified (right and left justified) with syllable division, or left justified without syllable division.

Chapter headings should be set apart from the previous text using an extra line space. Page numbers (in Arabic numerals) will be centered or to positioned the right of the bottom margin. The cover sheet does not include a page number; numbering begins from 1 with the table of contents.

2.4 Micro typography

The paper should be written in a conventional font, preferably Times New Roman or Arial. Sometimes headings as well as quotations highlighted in paragraphs can be formatted in another font. In the main text never highlight a text using CAPITAL LETTERS, underlining, or **bold type**. Also, underlining should be avoided in headings as well. Quotations are to be indicated using quotation marks; topical and theoretical key concepts, foreign-language terms, emphases, expressions, as well as titles of books and films can be highlighted in *italics*. In doing so it is important to apply the style sheet consistently.

2.5 Scholarly apparatus

The formatting of the footnotes and the bibliography are significant indicators of the scholarly character and respectability of the work. Here, too, the systematic and uniform formatting is indispensable. Endnotes should be avoided because they complicate the reading. Shortened bibliographical references in parentheses in the continuous text, for instance (Lewis 2001: 14), are not common in Near and Middle Eastern Studies, but not fundamentally incorrect.

2.6 Transcription

Proper transcription of Arabic, Persian, and Ottoman script ensures that both the reader and writer approach the Near and Middle Eastern languages within a mutually held scholarly framework. Proper names and terms from Arabic, Ottoman and Persian are to be transliterated in accordance with scholarly norms. Longer quotations from these languages may be presented in the original (use indentation, justification, and a smaller text), or they may be transliterated. Unless otherwise stipulated by the lecturer, the transcription guidelines of the *Deutsche*

Morgenländische Gesellschaft (DMG)[1] for Arabic[2] and Persian as well as the Rules of *İslam Ansiklopedisi* (İA)[3] for Ottoman (see table 1) apply. For papers written in English, the transcription guidelines of the *International Journal of Middle East Studies*[4] are to be applied. However, in the English-speaking academic landscape the preference for meticulous transliteration is lower than among German-speaking scholars, so that a many renowned works from England or the United States work without a systematic transcription system. Turkish proper names and terms should be reproduced as in the original with the Turkish special letters and umlauts (â, ç, ğ, ı, î, İ, ö, ş, ü). Terms, which are naturalized into the German (or English) language, such as Koran, Pasha, Sultan, Islam, etc., do not have to be transliterated. Above all: The chosen formatting and transcription system must be maintained and consistently implemented throughout the text!

Table 1: Transcription of the Arabic-Persian-Ottoman Alphabet[5]

Consonants									
Form					**DMG** **Arabic (A)**	**DMG** **Persian (P)**	**IJMES** **A/P**	**İA** **Ottom-** **an**	**Turkey-** **Turkish**
Isolated	**Final**	**Medial**	**Initial**	**Isolated**					
آ	ـا	ـا	آ	آ	ʾ / ā	ʾ / ā	ʾ / ā	ʾ / ā	ʾ / -
ب	ـب	ـبـ	بـ	ب	b	b	b	b	b / p
پ	ـپ	ـپـ	پـ	پ	-	p	p	p	p
ت	ـت	ـتـ	تـ	ت	t	t	t	t	t

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[1] Transkriptionskommission der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft, Die *Transliteration der arabischen Schrift in ihrer Anwendung auf die Hauptliteratursprachen der islamischen Welt: Denkschrift des 19. internationalen Orientalistenkongress in Rom, 1935* (Wiesbaden: Kommissionsverlag F. Steiner, 1969).

[2] In revised form, see: Thomas Hildebrandt: *Die wissenschaftliche Umschrift der arabischen Sprache: Ein Leitfaden für die orientalistischen Fächer der Universität Bamberg*.

[3] Cf. İslâm Ansiklopedisi: İslâm Âlemi Tarih, Coğrafya, Etnoğrafya ve Biyografya Lûgati, Vol. 13. 1978, 5. Aufl. (Istanbul: Millî Eğitim Basımevi, 1978), Vol. 1, XXII.

[4] Cf. the home page of the International Journal of Middle East Studies, IJMES Transliteration System for Arabic, Persian, and Turkish, https://www.cambridge.org/core/services/aop-file-manager/file/57d83390f6ea5a022234b400/TransChart.pdf.The IJMES system for Arabic is almost identical to the system of the authoritative Encyclopaedia of Islam, with the crucial exception that the IJMES system omits the underlining. The IJMES system for Persian is a pragmatic mixture between EI and DMG Persian. The IJMES system for Ottoman is identical to that of İA.

[5] The authors would like to thank Dr. Robert Langer for preparing the transcription table. See also: Robert Langer, *Hilfsmittel für das Studium der Islamwissenschaft: kommentierte Bibliographie und Materialien*, (Heidelberg, Selbstverlag des Seminars für Sprachen und Kulturen des Vorderen Orients der Universität Heidelberg, 2000), here 36-41.

ث	ـثـ	ـثـ	ثـ	ث	t̲	s̲	th /s̲	s̲	s
ج	ـجـ	ـجـ	جـ	ج	ğ	ğ	j	c	c, ç
چ	ـچـ	ـچـ	چـ	چ	-	č	ch	ç	ç
ح	ـحـ	ـحـ	حـ	ح	ḥ	ḥ	ḥ	ḥ	h
خ	ـخـ	ـخـ	خـ	خ	ḫ	ḫ	kh	ḫ	h
د	ـد	ـد	د	د	d	d	d	d	d / t
ذ	ـذ	ـذ	ذ	ذ	ḏ	z̲	dh / z̲	z̲	z
ر	ـر	ـر	ر	ر	r	r	r	r	r
ز	ـز	ـز	ز	ز	z	z	z	z	z
ژ	ـژ	ـژ	ژ	ژ	-	ž	zh	j	j
س	ـس	ـسـ	سـ	س	s	s	s	s	s
ش	ـش	ـشـ	شـ	ش	š	š	sh	ş	ş
ص	ـص	ـصـ	صـ	ص	ṣ	ṣ	ṣ	ṣ	s
ض	ـض	ـضـ	ضـ	ض	ḍ	ż	ḍ / ż	ż	d / z
ط	ـط	ـطـ	طـ	ط	ṭ	ṭ	ṭ	ṭ	t / d
ظ	ـظ	ـظـ	ظـ	ظ	ẓ	ẓ	ẓ	ẓ	z
ع	ـع	ـعـ	عـ	ع	ʿ	ʿ	ʿ	ʿ	-
غ	ـغ	ـغـ	غـ	غ	ġ	ġ	gh	ġ / ğ	g / ğ
ف	ـف	ـفـ	فـ	ف	f	f	f	f	f
ق	ـق	ـقـ	قـ	ق	q	q	q	ḳ	k
ک	ـک	ـکـ	کـ	ک	k	k	k / g	k / g / ñ / ğ	k / g / n / ğ
گ	ـگ	ـگـ	گـ	گ	-	g	g	g / ğ	g / ğ
ل	ـل	ـلـ	لـ	ل	l	l	l	l	l
م	ـم	ـمـ	مـ	م	m	m	m	m	m
ن	ـن	ـنـ	نـ	ن	n	n	n	n	n
و	ـو	و	و	و	w	w	w / v/u	v	v
ه	ـه	ـهـ	هـ	ه	h	h	h	h	h

ى	ــى	ـيـ	ـيـ	ى	y	y	y	y	y
Vowels									

Form					DMG/IJMES Arabic	DMG/IJMES Persian	Ottoman (Arabic and Persian words and other foreign words)	Ottoman (Turkish words)	
Isolated	**Final**	**Medial**	**Initial**	**Isolated**					
ó				ó	a	a	a / e	a / e	
ọ				ọ	i	e/i	ı / i / e	ı / i / e	
ǒ				ǒ	u	o/u	u / ü / o / ö	u / ü / o / ö	
ا ى	ـا ـى	ـا	آ	ا ى	ā	ā	ā / â	a / e	
و	و	و	او	و	ū	ū (ō)/ū	ū / û / ô	u / ü / o /ö	
ي ى	ـىـ	ـىـ	اى	ي ى	ī	ī (ē)/ī	ī / î / ê	ı / i / e	
ـَو					aw				
ـَي					ay				

3 Structure

3.1 Cover sheet and contents

3.1.1 Cover sheet

On top, left-justified or centered: Title, type and date of the course as well as name and academic title of the lecturer; *in the middle, centered and bold or italic*: title and (if applicable) subtitle of the seminar paper; *on the bottom, centered*: name, matriculation number, combination of subjects, address, and number of semesters of the writer; date of submission.

3.1.2 Table of contents

The table of contents should be made automatically by means of a word processing program. For this the headings in the continuous text have to be marked as such in the style sheet. A manual made table of contents not only costs valuable time but may also look unprofessional. The structure can be organized with Roman ordinals and with letters or using segment pagination with Arabic numerals.

3.1.3 Structure with Roman numerals

I. Introduction

    A. Introduction to the topic

    B. State of research

          a. Classical works

          b. The cultural turn and its legacy

    C. Methodology

II. Main part

III. Conclusion

3.1.4 Structure with segment pagination and Arabic numerals

1. Introduction

2. Main part

    2.1. Historical context

        2.1.1   The Ottoman period

        2.1.2   The British period

        2.1.3   Decolonization

    2.2   Egyptian independence

        2.2.1   Elite discourse

        2.2.2   Education reforms

        2.2.3   Mass protests

    2.3   Discussion

3. Conclusion

Structure tips:

⇒ *Basic rule: You must finish what you start. If there is a point 2.1.1, then there has to be a point 2.1.2.*

⇒ *Three subdivision points for each structuring level are considered to be clear and easy to understand for the reader.*

3.1.5 Further possible elements

While unusual in the limited form of a proseminar and seminar paper, the following elements could be appended to the text:

- List of abbreviations (after the text)

- Appendix (between the conclusion and the bibliography)

3.2 Introduction

The Introduction serves different functions: It should spark interest in the paper topic and outline its scientific relevance. Furthermore, it presents the work as a whole, including its claim and its limits or scope.

Essentially, all introductions should contain following points:

- an interesting introduction into the problem statement;
- a scientific problem;

- a justification of the scope and relevance of the scientific problem;
- the presentation and evaluation of the sources and the literature and of the state of research as well as criteria for the selection of materials;
- a description and contextualization of the author's own approach (theory and methodology);
- definitions of the key terms utilized in the text;
- a presentation of the author's own hypothesis and possible results;
- an overview of the structure of the work.

It is important at the end of the writing process to thoroughly rework any previously written drafts of the introduction. In the German speaking tradition, it is usual to formulate the concrete results of the work in the conclusion and not in the introduction of the work. Therefore, while drawing a common thread through the text *(mystery plot)*, there will be certain aspects that will only come together in a conclusion at the end discussion *(puzzle effect)*. By contrast, in American academic literature, the conclusion of the work is already revealed in the introduction, in order to ensure a transparent cognitive process in the argumentation in the main body. Both approaches are legitimate if satisfactorily implemented. This question of style should be clarified with the advisor before starting the writing process.

3.3 Main body

The main body represents space for the author to demonstrate her or his scholarly performance. There is no set recipe for the structure of the main part, because it has to be adapted to the problem being addressed in the paper. Some elements that traditionally belong to the introduction (state of research, theory, or contextualization) could also be part of the main body, if these issues play a central role in the approach of the author. The following elements are frequently found in the main body:

- a theoretical categorization or historical contextualization is often useful as an entry point;
- different subtitles which make it clear how the problem is being dealt with;
- a critical discussion of the research positions of other scholars;
- a presentation and justification of the author's own argumentation;
- if necessary, a summary of the (interim) results *(interim conclusion)*.

Paragraphs and subtitles should be thematically and argumentatively interlinked through transitions *(reader guidance)*. Such transitions, however, should avoid disturbing the reading flow through redundant formulations and repetitions. The structure of the argument must be convincing.

3.4 Conclusion

3.4.1 Conclusion and Outlook

The conclusion forms a final parenthesis that closes the introduction and summarizes the results of the work. The conclusion should not be too long. The following elements normally appear in the conclusion:

- a summary and compilation of the results of the main body (*conclusion*);
- a final response to the problem identified in the introduction;
- a discussion of how the results fit into the context of the state of research;
- (optional) a description of the problem in larger correlations and contexts (*outlook*);
- (optional) perhaps a preview of further problems that might be addressed by future research (*outlook*).

Please note: Never introduce something thematically or theoretically new in the conclusion! Such discussions belong in the main body.

3.4.2   Appendix

In proseminar and seminar papers an appendix is relatively rare. An appendix might include illustrations, maps, tables, drawings, translations, detailed digressions, a glossary etc..

3.5 List of sources and bibliography

At the very end of a proseminar or seminar paper come a list of sources, the bibliography. The bibliography lists, in alphabetical order, all all of the works used directly or as reference during preparation and writing of the paper. In papers where primary sources are used, we recommend including separate lists for primary and secondary literature.

4 The Search for Literature

Literature research—the search for bibliographic material—is an essential part of the scientific process. Even well-written and convincingly argued works can fail in their scholarly purpose if they are based on an outdated, narrow, or partial selection of literature.

The challenge of literature search is to filter out of a potential endless choice of scholarly publication to a limited number of titles that reflect the current state of research and are useable for the chosen problem. In the end only a combination of different research strategies, which have to be practiced during studies and developed on an individual basis, can help you achieve this goal.

4.1 General search methods

4.1.1 Syllabus of the proseminar/seminar

Usually, the starting point for literature research is the syllabus of the proseminar or seminar you attended. Even if no article directly addresses the chosen problem you might find in articles and monographs which address the same subject area and the same region and era, possibly including extensive bibliographic references in the text or in the notes. Moreover, the authors featured in the syllabus could have authored something regarding the chosen problem, beyond their texts that were discussed in the course. Here it is worthwhile to search for this author on the Internet and in the library catalogue (see 4.1.4 Author searches)

4.1.2 Standard works, reference works and bibliographies

The search for literature should go from general to particular. Standard works or overviews about bigger subject areas usually have a bibliography which is structured thematically. This can give a first impression about the most important works. Here for example the Series *Cambridge History* (*of Islam, Iran, Turkey,* etc.) is highly recommended. Furthermore, reference works such as the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (latest edition: "Three") or the *Encyclopaedia Iranica* (https://iranicaonline.org/) are useful not only for giving a thematic overview, but also for providing insight into the current state of research. Annotated bibliographies are available for some topics.

4.1.3 Snowball system

If you have already found some useful publications, you can find further relevant titles by using their bibliographies. These newfound works can in turn point you to others, so that the list of potentially relevant literature increases quickly. A second stage is to review the literature assembled this way more clearly. Works that do not appear relevant on a second glace should be eliminated and the bibliography consolidated.

Tip: The problem with the snowball system is that one can always just find older works than the work with which you started.

4.1.4 Author searches

Most scholars who are concerned with a subject publish several articles and books about the same subject area. If you have found the relevant scholars in the field you are interested in, you should search in the catalogue and on the internet for further journal articles, contributions to edited volumes, and monographs. Most (still living) scholars have a homepage on a university web site where a list of their publications is usually available.

4.2 Library searching

4.2.1   Book-by-book search

In some academic libraries, books are catalogued by the subject area—this is the case, for example, in the library of Near & Middle East Studies. Here you can go through the relevant sectors book for book and check if the literature to the chosen topic is available. In a similar way, you can manually search through the tables of contents of the specialized and relevant journals available at the library.

4.2.2   Catalogue research

The internet search portal of the University Library of Basel provides a further research opportunity. Here you can search for information on the titles, authors, or themes of the relevant literature. The portal *Swisscovery* allows you to scan the inventory of other universities and if possible, order the book per interlibrary loan. There is no excuse if a book, which is crucial for the subject, is not available in Basel—important literature has to be read and cannot be disregarded because of difficult accessibility. Additionally, use the keywords in the catalog entries to find relevant works in German or other languages (French, for example, may be the most useful language when researching about North Africa). Many guides and resources on optimizing *Swisscovery* are available from the University Library.

4.3 Online research

Online research is the most important and most productive type of literature research. It allows you to research beyond the inventory and keywords categories used on the university library catalogue. Online portals for scholarly articles can refer you directly to the content of journals and edited volumes that may not yet be listed in the catalogues. The problem with a lot of proseminar and seminar papers is that they are based only on monographs and scarcely refer to journal articles or chapters from edited volumes. In English-language academia, journal articles are hierarchically seen the most esteemed scholarly works of an author, because they are usually subject to a strict selection and correction process (called *peer review*) and primarily addressed to an expert audience. The scientific quality and esteem of an English-language monograph can often be guessed by looking at the publisher (with university publishers at the top, followed by academically oriented commercial publishers such an I.B. Tauris, Brill, Routledge, Palgrave, Darwin, etc.). In the German-language social sciences and humanities, by contrast, monographs (especially extended essays for academic qualification such as dissertations and habilitation) still have a greater importance and impact than journal articles.

On the website of the university of Basel you can proof if there is a license for the online access for certain magazines:
https://ub.unibas.ch/de/e-books-e-journals-datenbanken/

It is important to also have a look at the Near East- or Islamic Studies-related database of the University Library:

Official section for Near and Middle Eastern Studies within the University Library:
https://ub.unibas.ch/de/islamwissenschaft-nahoststudien-orientalistik/

University of Basel databases of Near East Studies, Islamic Studies, Oriental Studies:

http://www.ub.unibas.ch/ub-hauptbibliothek/recherche/fachgebiete/islamwissenschaft/datenbanken/

A universal tool to research monographs worldwide is the "Karlsruher Virtueller Katalog":

http://kvk.bibliothek.kit.edu/

A database/blog for primary sources with digital resources in languages of the region is:
http://amirmideast.blogspot.com/

The reference work "Internet für Orientalisten: Eine Praxisorientierte Einführung" provides an overview of further databases and is available under the following call number at the Maiengasse library: E I 95.

4.3.1 JSTOR & Co.

The internet portal *JSTOR* (*Journal STORage*, www.jstor.org) as well as other database portals like *EBSCO* and *Wiley Online Library* etc. give a database entries and digital copies of journal articles (some, like JSTOR, now offer books as well). If the University of Basel owns a license to the journal, articles from that journal may be directly downloaded from *JSTOR* & Co. as a PDF document. To use this service, you either have to use a computer on the University of Basel network or, off campus, logging to your university account and using the university VPN. The searching function of these portals is useful in your literature search as well.

4.3.2 Google Scholar and Google Books

Another useful research tool is *Google Scholar* (https://scholar.google.com). The advantage of *Google Scholar* lies in the possibility to search journals as well as books and many edited-volume chapters. Particularly advantageous is that *Google Scholar* automatically provides links to the related PDF-documents from open access pages and internet databases. Hence it is beneficial to be logged into the university net (via VPN) during research to enable a one-click-access to database links. Remember, too, to use keywords from different langauges in your research. However, the quality of the search results should always be assessed critically, because journals are not listed according to their academic impact, but to the algorithm-based criteria of the search engine.

In general, the same is valid for *Google Books* (https:/ /books.google.com) too, where almost all books in the world are catalogued. When extracts of the books are available, which is often the case, these extracts enable you to foresee if a book is actually relevant for the problem you pose in your research. Through the full text search inside a book, you can search specifically and rapidly for the usage of certain terms and names. Nevertheless, *Google Books* only serves the extended book search because of its lack of full-text access. It does not replace the task of reading a book in its entirety.

4.3.3   Amazon & Co.

Search filters from online book-delivery services such as *Amazon* (www.amazon.com and www.amazon.de) are useful to find out what is currently being published. For some works, *Amazon*, like *Google Books*, offers the possibility to do a full-text search or to access several chapters in preview mode. In some cases, thematically related books are listed as recommendations or offers. For academic works, the reader reviews of *Amazon* & Co. are rarely valuable.

5 From Topic to Thesis Statement

Most first-year students tend to write papers that are thematically too broad. This lack of thematic focus can lead to considerable problems in the structure of the paper or even to unsatisfactory results in the assessment. Even if first-year students are initially occupied with summarizing and discussing scientific findings and practicing and the processes of research and writing, differentiating the essential from the non-essential and the concrete from the general is one of the main tasks of a paper. In advanced seminar papers, understanding and explaining a problem on the basis of acquired, reconstructed, juxtaposed, and critically treated data from various works and sources should systematically lead to the substantiation of a concrete thesis. Ideally, an advanced seminar paper not only leads to an expansion of the writer's knowledge, but also to a rise in knowledge for the reader (scholarship). The path from topic to thesis statement runs through the intellectual intermediate steps of problem definition and question formulation (see: Figure 1).

Figure 1: From topic to thesis statement
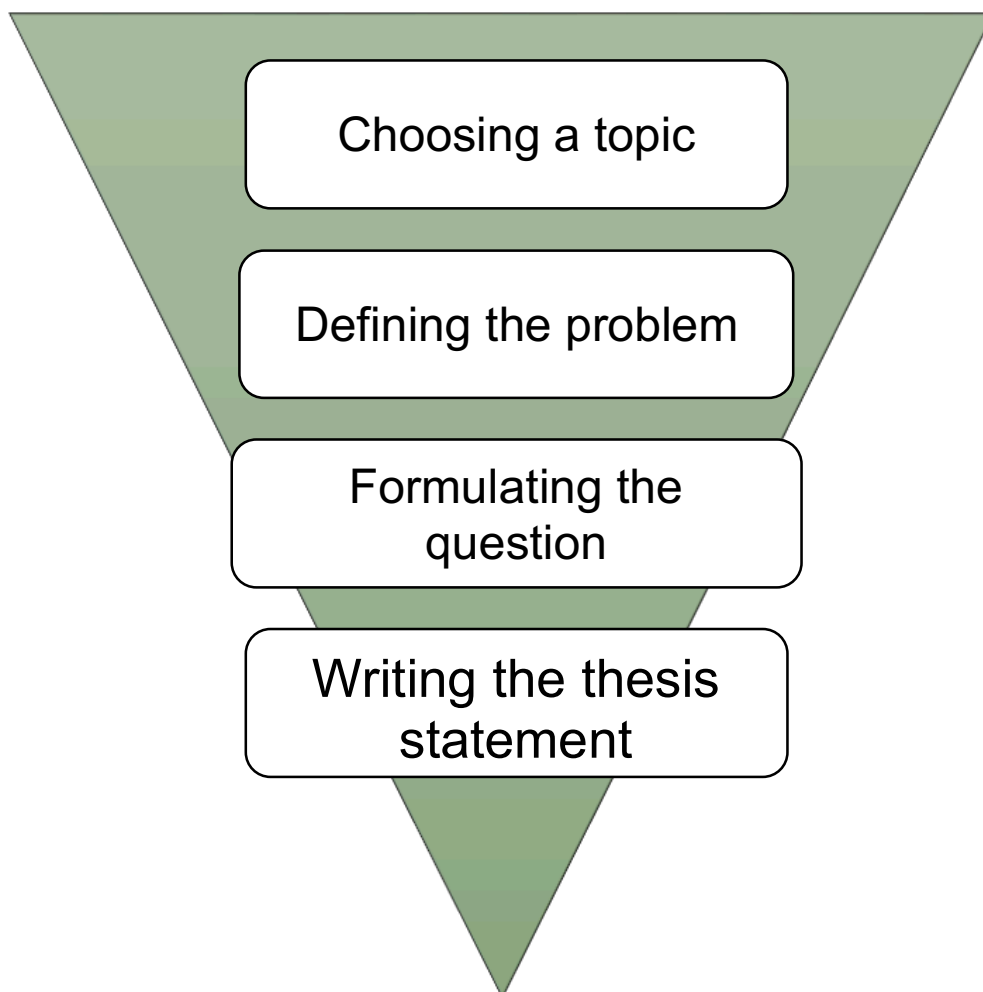
5.1 Choosing a topic

The topic of the written work is either given by the lecturer or agreed upon together with the lecturer. In most cases, it results from the topic of the presentation given in class (*Referat*). It is therefore advantageous to consider the topic of the *Referat* carefully. Within the framework of the *Referat*, basic knowledge of the topic is acquired and some general works have already consulted. The choice of topic is important in that it determines the motivation for writing the paper. Nobody likes to write about topics that do not interest them.

Topics are broad and cover different but interrelated problems. However, the topic should be neither too general nor too narrow. In addition, the topic should not be too banal or remote so that you can really deal with it in a factual way. Topics that concern current events that have just begun to be discussed in the news are difficult, since no literature or text sources - apart from journalistic articles - can (yet) be found to deal with them.

5.2 Defining the problem

Defining the problem is the first stage in narrowing down the topic. The problem statement reduces the breadth of the topic down to a specific problem. Most students find it difficult to narrow down the topic of the paper, and they tend to want to deal with huge complexes of topics in a few pages - an undertaking that is hardly manageable. Within the topic, the problem represents the concrete object of investigation, which is to be subordinated to the larger area of the topic. The problem is the object of investigation that is to be understood and explained. Several questions can be generated from one problem.

5.3 Formulating the question

The research question is closely related to the problem and is the next and most important step in making the task of the paper more concrete. This means that an important selection and reduction process must already take place from the topic to the question. The research question interrogates a specific aspect of the problem. It is the guiding question of the work and should be posed in such a way that it can also be answered within the framework of a proseminar or seminar paper. The question is very closely related to the understanding of the problem. Developing a meaningful and exciting question is only possible if there is already some understanding of a problem. It can therefore be very difficult to derive such a question without having already read into the subject matter. Nonetheless, a question that is formulated provisionally at the beginning can also be productive if it becomes more and more concrete towards its final form over the course of research (sometimes even during the writing phase).

When developing a question, it is important to avoid the following types of questions:

- Questions that can be answered with a simple description or retelling;
- Questions that can only be answered with a yes or no;
- Questions that are too broad;
- Questions that have a rhetorical, ideological, or moral weight;

- Questions that are speculative.[6]

A good question requires an analytical approach and interpretive skills and stimulates debate.

5.4 Thesis statement

A thesis statement is a *falsifiable* answer to a specific question based on evidence and reasoning. Every scholarly paper aims to answer a question. The answer to the question is the thesis statement, i.e. the scholarly argument or assertion of the work. The thesis of the paper is the summary of the basic idea of the paper in one or two sentences. The formulation of a thesis helps to tighten and refine the structure and argumentation of the work. The aim of the thesis is to provide an explanation, evaluation or interpretation of the research question, which is briefly substantiated by various arguments. The aim is not to convey particular knowledge, but to make a statement that is individually elaborated and technically justified, but also potentially falsifiable through other arguments or evidence. Accordingly, a thesis statement is neither a description of the topic nor a repetition of the question as an open statement. The thesis should also offer an interpretation beyond a statement of facts, but one that is factually substantiated and goes beyond a statement of opinion.[7]

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[6] Vgl. Mary L. Rampolla, A Pocket Guide to Writing in History. 6th ed. (Boston: Bedford/St. Martins, 2010), 68-70.

[7] Vgl. Rampolla, A Pocket Guide to Writing in History, 43-45.

6 Quotations, paraphrasing, plagiarism, and bibliography

6.1 General quotation rules

We distinguish between direct and indirect quotations. Direct quotations are literal quotations. The indirect quotation is the reproduction of an external statement through paraphrasing. All direct and indirect quotations have to be cited and verifiable.

6.1.1 Quotations

Direct quotations are used in two cases: first, if a description or a choice of word are particularly memorable or catchy; or else, if one wants to achieve an own, new statement by critically analyzing or interpreting the quotation.

- Every quotation must be exactly documented with a footnote (i.e., with a reference to page numbers).

- Direct quotations in the continuous text have to be placed in quotations marks ("").
  Quotations inside of a quotation are place in single quotation marks (' ').

- The footnote reference marks are placed either at the end of a phrase after the punctuation marks or directly after the concluding quotations mark.

- Quotations which are longer than five lines are not formatted like the rest of the text. As a rule, such quotations should be indented on the right and on the left by 1 cm. Single line spacing should be used. The text should be placed in a smaller font (10 or 11 pt.). Such *block quotations* do not have to be placed in quotation marks. In general, it is recommended to use *block quotations* sparingly and with a specific purpose so as not to drown one's own analytical voice of the work out with a foreign voice.

- Direct quotations have to be introduced by the author. A direct quotation can never be placed in the continuous text without an introduction or a comment.

- The meaning of the original quotation must not be altered through insertion or omission. Omissions are marked with […]. Additions are also placed in square brackets, while acknowledging of the author's intervention (Example: […, my addition]).

- If the direct quotation has to be modified to fit your sentence grammatically, such modifications are indicated in [square brackets]. The author's intervention does not need to be indicated in this case.

- Misspellings in the original or passages that could be interpreted as misspellings, as well as misunderstandings or errors in thinking on the part of the author, are indicated by the addition of [sic!] (Latin for "really so").

- In the case of foreign-language quotations, as a rule only English and French are reproduced in the original. If primary sources in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish are quoted directly, they must be cited both in their own translation and in the original, usually in the footnote. An alternative possibility is to provide the translation in the main text, followed by the original text.

- When citing primary sources cited in a work of secondary literature, it is best to indicate both works in the footnote (Example: [primary source with page reference], cited in [secondary literature with page reference]). In some cases (archive documents, interviews, pamphlets, etc.), only the secondary literature can be given in the footnote, provided the source is presented in the main text (example: cited in [secondary literature with page reference]).

6.1.2 Paraphrasing

In most other cases, paraphrasing (indirect quotation), i.e., reproducing a fact or argument borrowed from the primary source or secondary literature in one's own words, is more appropriate. The footnote is placed at the end of the paraphrased section.

6.1.3 Reference works

It is also possible to cite works or specific chapters of a work in general as a reference without specifying the pages. These reference works are usually standard works or specific technical articles on a certain topic or issue. If the reference is directly dedicated to the subject area, then the bibliographic entry should be preceeded by "See." If the reference to the reference work is to be understood in a comparative way, the bibliography should be preceded by "Cf." This is the abbreviation for the Latin *confer*, meaning compare or consult.

6.2 Plagiarism and academic honesty

Plagiarism is defined as "the presumption of authorship through integral or partial verbatim reproduction or paraphrase of a text or thought originating from others without citation of the underlying source(s)."[8]
Plagiarism has serious consequences for the assessment of the work (grade 1/fail; no repetition) and must be reported to the Dean of Studies.

For more details see: http://www.philhist.unibas.ch/de/studium/studierende/plagiat/

Every proseminar and seminar paper must include a written confirmation with date and signature on a separate page after the title page or as the last page that the student has worked in an academically honest manner. The wording should be: "I hereby confirm that I am familiar with and have conscientiously followed the 'Rules for Ensuring Academic Honesty' published by the Faculty of Philology and History of the University of Basel.

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[8] Studiendekanat der Philosophisch-Historischen Fakultät der Universität Basel, Plagiat 20 (https://philhist.unibas.ch/de/studium/studierende/plagiat/) April 2020)

For the template see:
https://philhist.unibas.ch/fileadmin/user_upload/philhist/Dokumente/Studium/FOR_Erklaerung_Wissensch_Redlichkeit_schriftlArbeit.pdf

6.3 Citation system: *Chicago* system

Lecturers can decide for themselves which citation systems they want to use. Very different citation systems are used in the German-language humanities and social science disciplines. Even within German-language Near Eastern Studies, there is no uniform citation system. Internationally, the citation system of the Chicago Manual of Style (namely the "notes and bibliography" version, and not the "author-date" version) has prevailed in most humanities publications, with a few variations. The current *Chicago* system is based on the Turabian system, which was originally developed by Kate Turabian as a guide to scientific work for students and lecturers at the University of Chicago (first published in 1937). For orientation purposes, the Chicago citation system is presented below with supplements for German-language usage.

According to the *Chicago* system, in the first citation of a work, all relevant data are given in the footnote. In the next citation of the same work, only the author's surname and the title (or short title) are given, as well as the page number. In English titles, all nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs are capitalized.

For a complete guide to the the *Chicago*-system, see:

> *The Chicago Manual of Style*. 16th ed. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2010.

This is available for reference at the Maiengasse library under the call number: A I 41.

For the *Turabian*-system, see:

> Turabian, Kate L. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers*. Expanded by Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, Joseph M. Williams und University of Chicago Press. 9th ed. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2013.

As of the publication of this guide, the Maiengasse library has an open order on this book.

See also the quick guides:

> http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html

> http://www.press.uchicago.edu/books/turabian/turabian_citationguide.html

For monographs written by one author:

First footnote:

> [14] Erik J. Zürcher, Turkey: *A Modern History* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1998), 114.

Second Footnote:

> [23] Zürcher, *A Modern History*, 234.

Bibliography:

> Zürcher, Erik J. *Turkey: A Modern History*. London: I.B. Tauris, 1998.

In the second name, the title can be given in short form (here without "A"). If you work with short titles, it is important that you do so consistently and systematically. Furthermore, it is important to ensure that the same edition (in the example just given, the third edition) is cited. This is important because the page numbers can shift with revised new editions. In addition, it is often important to mention the date of first publication because this makes it easier to locate the publication within the specific context or research tradition.

For monographs written by two or more authors, the following applies:

First footnote:

> [2] Roger Owen and Şevket Pamuk, *A History of Middle East Economies in the Twentieth Century* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1998), 13.

Second footnote:

> [17] Owen and Pamuk, *History of Middle East Economies*, 43.

Bibliography:

> Owen, Roger, and Şevket Pamuk. *A History of Middle East Economies in the Twentieth Century*. London: I.B. Tauris, 1998.

If there are three or more authors, only the first is mentioned in the footnotes; all other authors are abbreviated with "*et al.*" (period only after *al*, which stands for "*alii*." All authors should be named in the bibliography. The order of the authors is not arbitrary and may not be changed.

Edited volumes

First footnote:

> [7] S. Carl L. Brown, ed., *Imperial Legacy: The Ottoman Imprint on the Balkans and the Middle East* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996).

Second footnote:

[11] Cf. Brown, *Imperial Legacy.*

Bibliography:

> Brown, Carl L., ed. *Imperial Legacy: The Ottoman Imprint on the Balkans and the Middle East.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1996.

Edited volumes are only cited as reference works. In most cases, you will cite a specific contribution or chapter from the edited volume.

Edited volume contribution (chapter)

First footnote:

> [88] Abbas Poya and Maurus Reinkowski, "Einführung: Was soll Islamwissenschaft bedeuten?" in *Das Unbehagen in der Islamwissenschaft: Ein klassisches Fach im Scheinwerferlicht der Politik und der Medien*, ed. Abbas Poya and Maurus Reinkowski, 9–15 (Bielefeld: Transcript-Verlag, 2008), 11.

Second footnote:

> [104] Poya and Reinkowski, "Einführung," 13.

Bibliography:

> Poya, Abbas and Maurus Reinkowski. "Einführung: Was soll Islamwissenschaft bedeuten?" In *Das Unbehagen in der Islamwissenschaft: Ein klassisches Fach im Scheinwerferlicht der Politik und der Medien*, ed. Abbas Poya and Maurus Reinkowski, 9–15. Bielefeld: Transcript-Verlag, 2008.

Chapter in a collection of articles by a single author

First footnote:

> [6] Albert Hourani, "The Ottoman Background of the Modern Middle East," in *The Emergence of the Modern Middle East*, 1–18 (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1981), 2–4.

Second footnote:

> [8] Hourani, "Ottoman Background," 1.

Bibliography:

> Hourani, Albert. "The Ottoman Background of the Modern Middle East." In *The Emergence of the Modern Middle East*, 1–18. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1981.

Journal article

First footnote:

> [2] Maurus Reinkowski, "Late Ottoman Rule over Palestine: Its Evaluation in Arab, Turkish and Israeli Histories, 1970-90," *Middle Eastern Studies* 35, Nr. 1 (1999): 72–3.

Second footnote:

> [12] Reinkowski, "Late Ottoman Rule over Palestine," 88.

Bibliography:

> Reinkowski, Maurus. "Late Ottoman Rule over Palestine: Its Evaluation in Arab, Turkish and Israeli Histories, 1970- 90." *Middle Eastern Studies* 35, Nr. 1 (1999): 66–97.

News article

First footnote:

> [19] Olmo Gölz, "Die Widerstandsfähigkeit des Systems," *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 27 May 2013, http://www .nzz.ch/meinung/debatte/die-widerstandsfaehigkeit-des-systems-iran-1.18106053.

Second footnote:

> [21] Gölz, "Widerstandsfähigkeit des Systems."

Bibliography:

> Gölz, Olmo. "Die Widerstandsfähigkeit des Systems." *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 27. Mai 2013. http://www.nzz.ch/meinung/debatte/die-widerstandsfaehigkeit-des-systems-iran-1.18106053 [last accessed on DD.MM.YYYY].

In the case of newspaper articles without author(s), the newspaper name is used instead. Multi-volume monographs or anthologies have various peculiarities that must be taken into account when assembling your bibliography. If individual volumes were published in different years (and by different authors/editors), one should list these volumes individually in the bibliography or, in certain cases, indicate the year, e.g. (1963-1971). If individual volumes have different subtitles but were published in the same year, the works can be listed together as one title in the bibliography. For completeness, the exact bibliography of the respective volume can be given with the appropriate subtitle in the first citation.

The following applies to quotations from the Koran:

The Koran is quoted according to the scheme "Sura: Verse." The corresponding sura and verse are given in the main text directly after the Koran quotation - i.e.: "It was Allah's Will to establish the truth by His Words and uproot the disbelievers (Koran 8: 7). If it is already clear that it is a quotation from the Koran, the word "Koran" should be omitted.

In addition to the sura and verse, the edition or translation of the Koran used must be indicated. If the work quotes from the Koran several times or refers to specific Koranic passages, it is advisable to refer to the edition or translation used in the introduction. Otherwise, this can be done in a footnote, e.g.:

First footnote:

[45] The following edition was used for Koran citations in this paper: Rudi Paret, ed. *Der Koran*, 1966, 12th ed. (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2014).

Bibliography:

Paret, Rudi. *Der Koran*. 1966, 12th ed. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2014.

Note that English-language studies of Islam now tend to prefer the spelling "Qur'an."

For encyclopedia entries:

First footnote:

[56] Feroz Ahmad, "Ṭal'at Bey." In *Encyclopaedia of Islam: Second Edition*, Vol. 10, ed. Peri J. Bearman et al. 12 Vols., 159–60 (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 160.

Second footnote:

[56] Ahmad, "Ṭal'at Bey," 159.

Bibliography:

Ahmad, Feroz. "Ṭal'at Bey." In *Encyclopaedia of Islam: Second Edition*. Vol. 10. Ed. Peri J. Bearman, T. Bianquis, C. E. Bosworth, Donzel E. van and W. P. Heinrichs. 12 Vols., 159–60. Leiden: Brill, 2000.

If the author of the entry is not indicated or is the same as the editor of the entire work, then the encyclopedia may be cited as a monograph or edited volume instead of the authorship., In this case, the entry title should be preceded by "s.v." (*sub voce*, "under the expression").

For online encyclopedia entries:

First footnote:

[88] Roger Allen, "Maḥfūẓ, Najīb" in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, THREE*, ed. Kate Fleet et al. (Brill Online, 2015). http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of- islam-3/mahfuz- najib-COM_2636 [last accessed on DD.MM.YYYY].

Second footnote:

[104] Allen, "Maḥfūẓ, Najīb."

Bibliography:

Allen, Roger. "Maḥfūẓ, Najīb" in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, THREE*, ed. Kate Fleet, Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas and Everett Rowson. Brill Online, 2015.http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam- 3/mahfuz- najib-COM_2636 [last accessed on DD.MM.YYYY].

The following applies to historical primary sources with named editorship:

First footnote:

[34] Ibn Khaldūn, *Die Muqaddima: Betrachtungen zur Weltgeschichte*, ed. Alma Giese, with contributions by Wolfhart Heinrichs (München: Beck, 2011), 83.

Second footnote:

[40] Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, 180.

Bibliography:

Ibn Khaldūn. *Die Muqaddima. Betrachtungen zur Weltgeschichte*. Ed. Alma Giese, with contributions by Wolfhart Heinrichs. München: Beck, 2011.

When repeating the same source from the preceding footnote:

In cases where the same source is cited again in the next footnote, all information (author/s, title, etc.) is abbreviated as follows:

In German: *Ebd.* (from *Ebenda*)

In English: *Ibid.* (from *ibidem* "at the same place").

[12] Reinkowski, "Late Ottoman Rule over Palestine," 88

[13] *Ebd.*, 89./*Ibid.*, 89.

[14] *Ebd./Ibid.* (In case of identical repetition of footnote 13 without page reference).