

Guidelines for the Completion of Academic Assignments

Fachrichtung Gesellschaftswissenschaftliche Europaforschung |
Department of European Social Research | October 2025

The following guidelines apply to assignments and examinations completed for courses in European Social Research. Lecturers may, however, specify deviating requirements. These guidelines indicate the direction to be taken by lecturers and students; detailed instructions can be found in current module handbooks and legally binding examination and degree programme regulations. In general, regular attendance and active participation are expected, as well as wider reading and assimilation of compulsory reading material.

- Written assignments for practical exercises (courses which typically support lectures) (max. 10,000 characters¹, excl. bibliography)
- Written assignments for seminars and/or pro-seminar essays (max. 10,000 characters, excl. bibliography) and term papers (max. 25,000 characters, excl. bibliography)
- Written assignments for advanced and research seminars (max. 35,000 characters, excl. bibliography)

Attendance regulations (excluding lectures)

Two absences are acceptable; three further absences are permitted only under exceptional circumstances, together with an accompanying medical certificate. Medical certificates must be submitted without delay. More than five absences are unacceptable. Possible alternative tasks must be agreed with the lecturer. Absence from a scheduled presentation **is only acceptable with a medical certificate and after prior consultation with the lecturer**, in order to organize an alternative opportunity for the presentation to take place; unexcused absences will lead to unsuccessful completion of the course and the withholding of the course credits.

Deadlines for submission of written assignments

For the winter semester: 31 March

For the summer semester: 15 September

Failure to meet deadlines (without a medical certificate) will result in the incompleteness of the course, which must be retaken in its entirety. It is not possible to repeat only the written assignment. Written assignments (term papers, essays, etc.) submitted in due time, that fail to meet the requirements (i.e. are graded as 5) can be repeated with a new topic within a deadline of 6 weeks. For lectures, a resit date is usually offered for written examinations.

¹ A standard page has approximately 1,800 characters. All word counts including spaces.

Types of assignment

If you have any questions about formal or content-related structures, please contact the responsible lecturer.

Term paper

A term paper applies scientific theories and methods to answer a research question. In this respect, it constitutes an independent piece of research in preparation for a Bachelor's or Master's thesis.

Essay

An essay addresses a scientific issue in a concise form. The form of the essay can vary. In some courses it may require an answer to the research question through independent argumentation, in others an outline of the state of research on the issue. Like other written assignments, essays are expected to follow the principles of proper academic conduct.

Excursion report

As a rule, an excursion report is a **record of results (not a descriptive log or chronological account)**, e.g. a report on key locations and topics of the excursion, or a didactic concept for an excursion. Requirements regarding scope and form vary from lecturer to lecturer. As you will be required to take detailed notes, please bring notepads or alternative equipment for note-taking: notes are essential in order to write the report. Depending on requirements, reference should also be made to academic literature.

Internship report

An internship report recounts and reflects on experiences gained in the internship in relation to the degree programme. The internship report for Bachelor's degree programmes in European Studies will comprise 15,000 characters for a professional internship and 18,000 characters for an internship abroad. For further information see European Social Research or CEUS websites.

Portfolio

The portfolio relates to the period spent abroad and consists of the following components: letter of motivation for semester abroad or application for internship abroad, and a personal reflection. In the Bachelor's degree programmes, the reflection comprises 4,000 characters, in the Master's degree programmes, 9,000 characters. Guiding questions for structuring the personal reflection are provided on the programmes' websites.

Oral presentation

Presentations are short academic talks on a specific topic, research question or text. They are typically lively, but stringent, focussing on the most important points, yet providing the audience with a significant gain in knowledge. Suitable media should be used for this purpose (e.g. PowerPoint, handouts, blackboard, etc.). Texts and sources must be cited correctly and attention must be paid to the specified length of the presentation. It is advisable to practise beforehand.

Design and layout of written submissions

- Paper format: DIN A4, single or double-sided
- Page margins: left, right & top 2.5 cm, bottom 2 cm
- Line spacing: 1.5
- Please choose a font type and size that is easy to read, for example:
 - Times New Roman, font size 12 (corresponds to 16pt line spacing)
 - Arial, font size 10 (corresponds to 13pt line spacing)
- Text alignment: justified (with syllable division) or left-aligned (without syllable division)

Citation and bibliography

All passages from external sources (including those generated by artificial intelligence) must be marked as such, whether cited verbatim (direct quotation) or paraphrased (indirect quotation). Failure to indicate sources amounts to plagiarism, which may have legal consequences, including loss of the right to take an examination.

References in text and bibliography must be stylistically uniform, complete, and comprehensible, and meet the following criteria:

- scholarly sources (NOT e.g. forums, blogs, Wikipedia)
- standardized, professionally appropriate citation style (e.g. APA, see <https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/references/examples>)
- alphabetical listing of literature by surname of author

Further guidelines are available in the practical exercise *Academic Work Techniques* and may be given by lecturers.

Citation abbreviations

- *ibid.* = in the same place
- *et al.* = and others (for more than two authors)
- *cit.* = cited in (for secondary citations)
- *f.* = one further page
- *ff.* = several further pages

Gender-sensitive language

Be aware that language and style influence the way in which your writing is perceived. There is no obligation to use gender-sensitive language, but if you intend to do so, you should use it throughout the document and in accordance with gender-sensitive language guidelines, e.g.

<https://www.chancenvielfalt.uni-hannover.de/de/chancengleichheit/geschlechter-und-diversitaetsgerechte-sprache/gender-sensitive-language#c8542>

Assessment criteria

- Structure: coherent, logical argument organized in meaningful steps.
- Content: clear statement of the issue (and where applicable, research question); review of relevant literature (state of research); correct use of scholarly/scientific concepts and technical terms; statement of method and theoretical approach; presentation of results with reference to the issue(s) addressed.
- Form: cover sheet for the examinations office, and assignment cover sheet (with matriculation number and number of characters); declaration of independent authorship; correct citation and bibliography; other specifications (page numbers, meaningful paragraphs, clear layout, uniform font size etc.).
- Language: spelling, punctuation, grammar; scholarly/scientific style; appropriate expression.

Further reading

These guidelines are based on recommendations from the following publications:

Berninger, I., Botzen, K., Kollé, C., Vogl, D., Watteler, O. (2023). *Grundlagen sozialwissenschaftlichen Arbeitens: Eine anwendungsorientierte Einführung*. Stuttgart: utb.

Eco, U. (2020). *Wie man eine wissenschaftliche Abschlussarbeit schreibt: Doktor-, Diplom- und Magisterarbeit in den Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaften*. Heidelberg: UT.

Kindler, H., Weber, F., Kühne, O. & Halder, G. (2019). *Wissenschaftlich Arbeiten in Geographie und Raumwissenschaft. Ein Überblick*. Wiesbaden: Springer VS.

Leuze, K., Unger, H. v. (2015). *Wissenschaftliches Arbeiten im Soziologiestudium*. Stuttgart: utb.

These publications can be viewed as e-books via the SULB online catalogue.

Use of generative AI

The use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) is generally permitted as an aid for the completion of assignments, examinations, and degree theses. Its use and documentation are governed by the declaration of independent authorship (see below); they can be restricted to certain functions or completely prohibited by the lecturer or examiner.

- The obligation to provide evidence applies to all material, either verbatim or paraphrased, created with an AI tool, e.g. using prompts such as *rephrase*, *grammar check*, *proofread*, *summarize*, *shorten/develop text* etc. The obligation to provide evidence does not apply to non-generative tools such as spell-checks and online dictionaries.
- Documentation of the use of generative AI-based tools includes type of use, name of AI tool, and (if applicable) version of the tool, designation of the affected parts of the work, and (if applicable) chat history with prompts (in annex).
- Unauthorized or undocumented use of AI-based aids in coursework or in an examination may count as attempted deception and lead at least to failure of the course or examination; serious deception may entail loss of the right to take an examination.

Submissions

Every written assignment must be accompanied on submission by a signed declaration of independent authorship:

Declaration of independent authorship / affidavit

I, _____ [name], hereby declare that I have written this work on
_____ [topic] independently and without
the involvement of third parties, and that I have not used any sources or aids other than those
specified. All passages taken verbatim or paraphrased from publications or other sources
external to the work are indicated as such.

In particular, I confirm that I have listed all AI-operated software with product name and scope of
use, and/or have indicated affected parts of the work.

In particular, I confirm that in completing this assignment I have used AI-operated software
exclusively for the following aspects:

1. ...
2. ... [specify aspects]

All parts of the assignment work generated and/or edited using AI-operated software are
indicated as such, e.g. in a table listing prompts and AI tools used as aids. I agree that the
assignment may also be checked for the use of such software using a plagiarism-checking
program. I am aware that failure to comply with the assurances given here may result in failing
the examination or even losing the right to take an examination.

Place and date, signature

Formal cover sheet

As well as the cover sheet for the relevant examinations office, written assignments must also include a cover sheet adapted to the following template:

Submission cover sheet

Saarland University
Faculty of ...
Department of European Social Research
Winter semester 2025-2026
Title of seminar:
Name of lecturer:

Title of work

Subtitle (if applicable)

Student:
Email:@uni-saarland.de
Matriculation number: 123456

Degree programme: BA/MA
Semester: 1st semester
Word count: characters (excl. bibliography)

Place, date