

Helpful Hints for a successful course of study at the Department 03:

Excerpt

1. Introductory remarks

Below, you will find some useful information on how to write excerpts, which may be useful for a successful semester at the Department of Social Sciences and Philosophy. We would like you to familiarize yourself with our requirements for the excerpt as an examination method. Please also speak with the person examining you regarding additional guidelines.

An excerpt is a brief summary of a larger original text. When writing an excerpt, important passages must be separated from unimportant passages and central themes must be distinguished from explanatory statements. The structure and the main ideas of the original text must be reflected in the excerpt. Since you are working with a text that was written by another author, the excerpt is more than just a summary.

2. Formal aspects

Please observe the formal requirements that are summarized below.

Length: 5 to 8 pages,

Cover sheet: List your name and contact information, your degree program, the title of the work, semester, course name, and the name of the instructor,

Table of Content: Number headings, include page numbers,

Text: Font size: 12 pt, spacing: 1.5-spaced,

Indent longer quotations (more than two lines), use footnotes or endnotes,

Bibliography/Reference list: provide complete information on the author, title, place and year, and use a uniform citations format.

3. Content

The excerpt deals with a specific original text written by an author or a particular scientific approach by an author in an abbreviated, concentrated way (e.g., understanding social action according to Bourdieu). It is crucial to extract the author's basic theses.

The structure of the excerpt can follow the structure of the original text, if the excerpt summarizes a single work. At the beginning, however, a brief introduction should be provided which specifies the original literature and why it is relevant for the course. You may wish to introduce the main ideas at this point.

In the main body of your excerpt, you should outline the core ideas of the original text in your own words. Key terms that the author introduced into the scientific debate and discussed in support of his thesis should be mentioned in your excerpt. Don't forget to add a page reference pointing to the author's work when you use such a key term. Show the author's line of reasoning and mention specifically if the author contradicts him/herself in your view. Position the author and the author's text within the greater scientific context. Does the author represent a scientific school of thought or tradition? To what extent is the text characteristic for the zeitgeist at the time it was written? To what extent is it characteristic of a certain

social context? Did the scientific community debate the text? And, if so, did the scientific community express agreement or opposition?

As part of your excerpt, you may also want to mention which thoughts or questions went through your mind as you were reading the original text which could become research questions in the future. If your work with the literature is relevant as preparation for a larger paper (final thesis) and you are reading the text relative to a question you are pursuing, this should also be reflected in the excerpt.

Please discuss the selection of literature with your examiner!

Excerpts are graded based on these factors:

- Factual accuracy,
- Structure/arguments,
- Language,
- Formal criteria.

4. Citation rules and plagiarism

All source materials that are used to write the excerpt must be included in the list of references/bibliography at the end of the excerpt. Other persons'/authors' ideas, arguments or thoughts (including online sources) must be referenced as sources.

For example,

Becker, Alexander (2003) Plato and Formal Knowledge. In: W. Detel, A. Becker, P. Scholz (Ed.) Ideal and Culture of Knowledge in Plato. Stuttgart: Steiner 2003. pp. 97-113.

We also urge you to consult our "Helpful Hints" on how to handle source materials!

The following signed statement must be added to the excerpt:

I assure that I have written this paper independently and without outside assistance. I have clearly identified any sources that I extracted from other works, either verbatim or by paraphrasing. This paper was not used in any other course in fulfillment of a testing requirement, and it has not been published.