



Guidelines seminar paper MSD – Focus area in Social Sciences

Module allocation: Preparation Master's Thesis in Social Sciences

Types of seminar papers: There are two types of seminar papers. For one, seminar papers can be written in the thematic context of a seminar a student has attended. And there are papers that are not attached to an attended seminar, a so-called free seminar paper.

Supervisor: If the seminar paper is done within the context of an attended seminar, the lecturer of that seminar acts as the supervisor. In case of a free seminar paper any staff member holding a PhD within the Department of Social Science, preferably the Sustainability Research Group can act as supervisor.

Learning Contract: In case of a free seminar paper details regarding the topic, content, name of supervisor, submission date etc. are stipulated in a learning contract (via MOnA application).

Topic of seminar paper: The topic is to be fixed with the supervisors; in general, a theoretical or an empirical focus is possible. Also, a (systematic) literature review is welcome. The seminar paper is ideally related to the planned master's thesis, therefore the paper should be submitted when starting with the master's thesis.

Credit points: 5 ECTS;

Scope: Approx. 20 pages or 9,000-11,000 words;

Structure:

Introduction: clearly outlines the topic, its relevance, the research question(s) and approach;

Main part: contains the main argument(s) and usually consists of several chapters, e.g., concepts/theory, methods, analysis, discussion;

Conclusion: answers the research question(s) and perspectives for further work are formulated;

Other parts: abstract, reference list, table of content;

Optional: Appendix, lists of figures, tables etc.;

References: No specific reference style (e.g. APA guidelines) required, but consistent application of a particular style of your choice.

Evaluation: structure, argumentation and formality.

Grading scale with marks: 6 being the best mark, 4 the lowest mark to get a pass; steps of 0.1 are possible;

Deadline: The seminar paper should be submitted before the student starts with the master's thesis. Ideally the completion would lie within the semester for the supervisors to be able to enter the grade until 31.07./31.01., hence, for the credit points and grades to appear on the transcript of records of the same semester. If this is not possible, the deadline can be scheduled later (in advanced, and in agreement with supervisor).

Postponement of deadline: Chapter 5.5. of the guidelines of MSD states:

«If students are unable to take an examination for valid reasons, or cannot meet the due dates for submitted work (essays, seminar papers, master's theses, etc.) on classes managed through the MSD, they must apply to the MSD teaching committee for a postponement.

This must be done at least three weeks before the due date with assertion of the valid grounds. If the examination or due date is missed for health reasons, a medical certificate must be provided. If this is not possible immediately, then no later than five days after the missed examination or due date. Students who do not deregister or submit proof of participation and do not apply for an extension in accordance with the requirements will be assessed as fail or non-attendance, or awarded the grade 1.0 (based on the grading scales in the course directory)».

Request of extension of deadline: to be submitted individually to the teaching committee MSD via coordination-msd@unibas.ch. There is no template for this, but the following points must be listed:

Reason: **Health reasons** have not to be listed in details, since the application must be accompanied by a doctor's certificate stating the duration and extent (percentage of sick leave) of the sick leave.

Problems of (technical) implementation have to be listed and explained;

mention of **duration of the resulted delay** in days, if longer than 6 days then in weeks;

mention of the **current submission date** according to the learning contract (free seminar paper) or agreement with supervisor;

mention of the **desired extension in days**, if longer than 6 days then in weeks. Note: as a rule, the duration of the above-mentioned failure is taken for the deadline extension. If you would like to apply for a longer period you would have to justify and explain why;

mention the **new submission date**.

Plagiarism/scientific rules: the submitted paper is the own work of the student who fully acknowledged the assistance received in completing this work and that it contains no material that has not been formally acknowledged. In the paper they mention all source materials used and cite these in accordance with recognized scientific rules. For that the following

Declaration of independent authorship is to be included in the seminar paper and signed:

«I attest with my signature that I have written this work independently and without outside help. I also attest that the information concerning the sources used in this work is true and complete in every respect. All sources that have been quoted or paraphrased have been marked accordingly.

Additionally, I affirm that any text passages written with the help of AI-supported technology are marked as such, including a reference to the AI-supported program used.

This paper may be checked for plagiarism and use of AI-supported technology using the appropriate software. I understand that unethical conduct may lead to a grade of 1 or "fail" or expulsion from the study program».