

# Guidelines for written assignments (term papers, essays, and theses) for Scandinavian Studies

valid from the winter semester 2024/25

1. This guide regulates the most important points regarding the creation of a written assignment for Scandinavian Studies. If there are any ambiguities or if questions arise during the writing of an assignment, it is always best to contact the relevant lecturer! If aspects are not covered by these guidelines, they should be handled consistently in the assignment.
2. Basics regarding the term paper:
  - 2.1. A term paper for an intermediate seminar should have no less than 10 pages of pure text and should not exceed 15 pages. It should show that a research question, which has been developed in consultation with the lecturer, can be competently explored.
  - 2.2. A term paper for an advanced seminar should have no less than 15 pages of pure text and should not exceed 20 pages. In addition to the competent exploration of a research question, it should be distinguished by a certain degree of academic independence.
  - 2.3. Topics will be discussed with the relevant lecturer either via email or during an office hour. An outline, including a working title and the research question, should be handed in a month before the deadline at the latest, to which the lecturer will provide feedback.
  - 2.4. Extensions must be discussed with the lecturer at least a week before the deadline. The request for an extension should be plausibly justified.
  - 2.5. In addition to the text, a term paper contains a cover sheet, a table of contents, a bibliography and an anti-plagiarism declaration.
  - 2.6. A term paper formally consists of three parts: an introduction, a main part, and a conclusion. The introduction specifies and introduces the topic, while the conclusion briefly summarises the findings and may also provide an outlook. For the main part, see point 4.
3. Format and Design:
  - 3.1. A term paper begins with a cover sheet, on which the title of the assignment, the name of the university, the institute, the course, the course leader and the author of the assignment, as well as the semester of the course, are listed. This is followed by table of

contents with page numbers. The actual assignment itself (and therefore also the page count) begins on the third page. A bibliography as well as an anti-plagiarism declaration complete the paper.

3.2. Each new section should be marked by a subheading which appears in your table of contents.

3.3. On formatting the text:

Font size: 12 point (Times New Roman).

Page layout: margins of 2,5 cm on each side, justified or aligned left.

Line spacing: 1,5 space.

3.4. New paragraphs should be indented via the Tab key, rather than be marked by empty lines, as the latter takes up too much space.

3.5. Special emphasis, book titles of secondary literature, and all titles of primary texts should be italicised. Bold spelling is only useful for subheadings.

3.6. Quotes from the primary literature are given in the original language based on editions. Translations should follow in the associated footnote. This also applies to secondary literature in languages other than German or English.

3.7. Footnotes are used when there is a substantive reference to other authors/works/texts in the main text (e.g., through a quote, paraphrase, reference or an intellectual borrowing). We do not use references in brackets in the body of the text. Footnotes can also be used to explain other aspects or to add extra information, which would otherwise interrupt the flow of the main text. This should, however, be done sparingly.

3.8. Information taken from other sources should always be recognisable as such, otherwise you are engaging in plagiarism! This means that paraphrases should also be marked by footnotes. Literal quotations are marked by quotation marks. For further information on referencing, see points 5 and 6.

4. Content:

4.1. The first thing to be done in a term paper is to develop a research question in the introduction. This question should run through the argumentation of the main part of the term paper like a thread. The introduction should also explain the various steps one will take in answering this research question. The main part then follows these steps, by first exploring the secondary literature and then applying the insights gained onto the primary literature.

- 4.2. As such, the argumentation is focused on those points which are needed to answer the research question. The argumentation should be compelling and self-contained. The arguments should be supported by references to secondary literature and quotes from primary literature.
- 4.3. To argue a point means, firstly, to put forward a hypothesis (usually based on secondary literature), which is then substantiated by examples from the primary literature. This should include the testing and rejecting of counter-arguments. The argumentation is ended with a conclusion.
- 4.4. Individual arguments should not appear in isolation, but rather be connected by meaningful transitions. The aim is to create a fluid, coherent, and constructive text.
- 4.5. Relevant secondary literature should be employed sensibly during the argument and be tested through primary literature. A good term paper therefore relies not solely on either primary or secondary literature, but rather uses both adequately in order to support its own argument. During this process, the contents and the usage of secondary literature should be critically reflected upon; just because something is published does not mean it is automatically correct or useful! This critical evaluation is especially essential in term papers for advanced seminars.
- 4.6. A term paper for an intermediate seminar should use at least 5 sources of secondary literature, and a term paper for an advanced seminar at least 10. If this regulation cannot be fulfilled, this is to be discussed with your lecturer.
- 4.7. A term paper employs an elevated writing style, which means informal and casual language should be avoided. A factual style is more convincing than everyday language. The tense is generally present tense.
- 4.8. Ensure that the referencing and formatting is coherent across the term paper! For this, the guidelines in point 5 and 6 are to be followed.
- 4.9. Generally, a clean, formal layout, including correct usage of the English language in spelling and grammar (including orthography and punctuation), makes a term paper much more readable and appealing than a messy first impression. Term papers are inherently a practice in academic writing, and thus these elements play into the final grade.
- 4.10. Quotations of primary literature should be taken from academic editions, which have been agreed upon with the lecturer. The Íslenzk fornrit editions should be used for the Sagas of Icelanders and Kings' Sagas, as well as for the *Poetic Edda*; Faulkes for the *Prose Edda*; for most of the other genres use the relevant Editiones Arnamagnaeanae.

To get an overview of what is available, one should use Snerpa (<https://www.snerpa.is/net/isl/isl.htm>). However, this source should not be referenced within the term paper, and neither should Wikipedia entries.

- 4.11. Seemingly academic sources, especially those found online, must be checked to see if they have gone through the academic publication process (e.g., peer review). This is especially true for articles on platforms such as academia.edu. This also applies to BA theses, which should not be used.
- 4.12. Plagiarism is the theft of intellectual property. This refers not just to unreferenced quotes or paraphrases, but also to the usage of LLMs such as ChatGPT. The use of ChatGPT and similar LLMs is generally not accepted in term papers for Scandinavian Studies. If you believe your assignment requires its use, please discuss this with your lecturer. Plagiarism will be penalised and will lead to the students being de-registered from the university. For this reason, term papers must contain an anti-plagiarism declaration (see website: Study, General Information). This is not merely a formality, but an affidavit!

## 5. Quotations:

- 5.1. Students of Scandinavian Studies must work with the original texts in Old Norse. Students from other subjects, who have no knowledge of Old Norse, will only cite the translations. In the latter case, translations are cited in the main text, not in footnotes.
- 5.2. Quotes from the original texts must be integrated into the syntax of the English sentence, so that a grammatically correct sentence emerges. The English sentence should not be constructed around the grammar of the translation; see also the next point. For this reason, it is recommended to create one's own translations.
- 5.3. Quotes from primary sources are given in Old Norse, with a translation given in a footnote. For example:

A good example for this are Kotkell, Gríma and their sons in *Laxdæla saga*, who damage their society not just through magic but also through theft: they *gera sér óvært í fjárránum ok fjölkynngi*,<sup>1</sup> and Þórðr brings the family to court for *þjófnað ok fjölkynngi*.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Laxdæla saga*, p. 98: 'plague her [Ingunn] with thefts and magic'.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, p. 99: 'theft and magic'.

If students do not produce their own translations but take them from published translations, the relevant page number from the translation should be given. It should be explained which process one is following:

<sup>1</sup> *Kjalnesinga saga*, p. x; [translation]. All translations are my own, unless otherwise stated.

This statement only needs to be given in the first footnote.

or

<sup>1</sup> *Kjalnesinga saga*, p. x; [translation]; trans. by Cook and Porter, p. y.

These statements should always be given in the first footnote in which they are referenced. Translations must of course be listed in the bibliography. The square brackets [] above mark place holders and should not be reproduced!

- 5.4. The example above demonstrates that footnotes should be placed outside of the punctuation: first a comma or full stop, then the footnote.
- 5.5. Ellipses (i.e.: [...]) at the beginning and end of quotations of incomplete sentences are unnecessary and should not be used.
- 5.6. Quotations of entire stanzas/verses should be indented as a block. Quotes of single lines should be given as follows: *Sorg má eg síst því byrgja. / Sit eg ein, trega greinum.*
- 5.7. Quotes from Old Norse primary sources are italicised and given without quotation marks. The translations, however, are marked by quotation marks.
- 5.8. When a quote includes direct speech, it should be given as follows:  
*Signý reiddist mjök ok mælti: “Illt varð þín ganga in fyrsta, ok munu hér margar illar eptir fara, ok mun þó verst in síðasta”.*
- 5.9. Titles of Old Norse works are always italicised and written in the following format:  
*Kjalnesinga saga; Grettis saga Ásmundarsonar; Egils saga Skalla-Grímssonar; Skirnismál* etc.
- 5.10. If a single word in Old Norse is cited, this too should be italicised, with the translation following in brackets:

Grimkell accuses Hörðr of *ofsi* (arrogance).<sup>3</sup>

The same is true for technical terms, which cannot be translated, such as *ergi* or *berserkr*; and as such no translation follows.

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<sup>3</sup> *Harðar saga*, p. 35.

5.11. Quotes from secondary literature which is not in German or English should also be translated.

5.12. Old Norse names are always given in their complete nominative form:

Þorgeirr, Þorsteinn, Grímkell, Hörðr, Þórir, Ásdís, Ketilríðr etc. Pay attention to the correct spelling, including accents!

In the genitive, standard English rules are to be followed: e.g. Þorsteinn's, Ketilríðr's, the Ingimundarsynir's.

6. Referencing secondary literature:

6.1. Abbreviated titles can be used in footnotes, as long as it is clear which publication is being referred to. Example:

Larrington, *Brothers and Sisters*, p. 24.

This refers to: Carolyne Larrington, *Brothers and Sisters in Medieval Literature*.

Ármann Jakobsson, 'Good, Bad, Ugly', p. 12.

This refers to Ármann Jakobsson, 'The Good, The Bad and the Ugly: *Bárðar saga* and its Giants'.

Alternatively, the year of publication can be given, e.g.: Larrington, 2015, p. 24.

You have to follow one version consistently and not mix them!

6.2. The names of Icelandic authors are always given in their entirety, as their patronyms (or matronyms) are not last names! This also means that in the bibliography they are listed by their first names. Jóhanna Katrín Friðriksdóttir therefore is listed under J, not F.

6.3. Abbreviations such as *ibid.* can be used when consecutively referencing the same source. See the example in 5.3.

6.4. f. and ff. should be avoided; always provide the precise page range.

6.5. En dashes – instead of hyphens - are used for page ranges, dates, and similar. Em dashes — are used for inserts into the sentence.

6.6. Citations of dictionaries should appear as follows:

'Forað', *Dictionary of Old Norse Prose*, <<https://onp.ku.dk/onp/onp.php?o22475>>, [18.11.2024].

6.7. In case individual issues are not addressed in these guidelines, it is worth contacting your lecturer.

## 7. Bibliography:

7.1. The bibliography gives a complete overview of the literature which has been used, but only those sources which are actually mentioned in footnotes or in the body of the text are listed here.

7.2. Each entry ends with a full stop.

7.3. The bibliography is divided into primary literature (which includes translations) and secondary literature.

7.4. The bibliography is alphabetised according to last names (so entries begin with these), except with Icelanders, see point 6.2. So Finnur Jónsson is listed under F, but William Ian Miller under M as Miller, William Ian. The next level of organisation is publication year and title of the publication, see 7.6.

7.5. If multiple places of publication are given, it is enough to use the first one.

7.6. For multiple entries by the same author, only mention the name for the first entry. Instead use — (two em dashes —) instead of the name from the second entry onwards. Entries are then listed chronologically, beginning with the oldest publication:

Ármann Jakobsson, 1998. 'History of the Trolls? *Bárðar saga* as a Historical Narrative', *Saga-Book*, 25, 53–71.

— 2003. 'Troublesome Children in the Sagas of the Icelanders', *Saga-Book*, 27, 5–24.

7.7. If an author has also published together with others, then this entry is listed after the independent publications, in the alphabetic order of the second author.

7.8. 'et al' can be used when more than three authors or editors are listed.

7.9. The following guidelines follow the MHRA Style Guide

(<https://www.mhra.org.uk/style/>). Should something be unclear, check this style guide.

7.10. Primary Literature:

*Bárðar saga Snæfellsáss*, in *Íslenzk fornrit XIII*, ed. by Þórhallur Vilmundarson and Bjarni Vilhjálmsson. Reykjavík: Hið íslenska fornritafélag, 1991.

*The Poetic Edda*, trans. by Carolyne Larrington. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.

7.11. Monographs:

Bandlien, Bjørn, 2005. *Strategies of Passion: Love and Marriage in Medieval Iceland and Norway*, trans. by Betsy van der Hoek. Medieval Texts and Cultures of Northern Europe 6. Turnhout: Brepols.

Jackson, Rosemary, 1981. *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion*. London: Routledge.

7.12. Articles in edited volumes:

Bampo, Massimiliano, 2017. 'Genre', in *The Routledge Research Companion to the Medieval Icelandic Saga*, ed. by Ármann Jakobson and Sverrir Jakobsson. London: Routledge, pp. 4–14.

O'Connor, Ralph, 2014. 'Bárðar saga between Orality and Literacy', in *Folklore in Old Norse, Old Norse in Folklore*, ed. by Daniel Sälvborg and Karen Bek-Pedersen. Nordistica Tartuensia 20. Tartu: University of Tartu Press, pp. 139–69.

7.13. Articles in journals:

Frankki, James, 2012. 'Cross-Dressing in the Poetic Edda: *Mic muno Æsir argan kalla*', *Scandinavian Studies*, 84.4, 425–37.

Vésteinn Ólason, 2007. 'The Fantastic Element in Fourteenth Century *Íslendingasögur*: A Survey', *Gripla*, 18, 7–22.

7.14. Articles in multi-volume works:

Czennia, Bärbel, 2004. 'Erzählweisen in literarischer Prosa und ihre Übersetzung', in *Übersetzung: Ein internationales Handbuch zur Übersetzungsforschung*, Volume 1, ed. by Harald Kittel et al., Handbücher zur Sprach- und Kommunikationswissenschaft 26. Berlin: De Gruyter, pp. 987–1007.

7.15. Websites:

*Ordbog over det norrøne prosasprog*, <https://onp.ku.dk/onp/onp.php> [20.11.2024].

7.16. Unpublished Theses (MA or PhD):

Dale, Roderick, 2014. *Berserker: A Re-examination of the Phenomenon in Literature and Life*, unpublished PhD thesis, University of Nottingham.

7.17. If individual cases are not covered in these guidelines, you should contact your lecturer.