Master's in Philosophy 60/120 EC

Master's Thesis

Programme Syllabus 2019-2020

FTR-FIMA11
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1 MASTER’S THESIS WORKSHOP

1.1 Content, place, and function

The Master’s programme is concluded with a Master’s thesis. The preparation and supervision takes place during the “Master’s thesis workshop” (FTR-FIMA12), a practical course with mandatory attendance. Students develop a research question for their own Master’s thesis - supervised by a lecturer and with feedback from fellow students - during the first two meetings. For this they choose a research method and a subject - that matches the followed Master’s programme’s content - which they will develop in a first draft. The students will then look for a supervising lecturer with the expertise for the chosen subject and research method. These steps are carried out by the individual student and discussed in the workshop groups. The Master's thesis is completed at the end of the semester.

The workshop groups are scheduled and arranged for each Master’s programme. The course is scheduled on days when the students have to come to the university for other Master's courses (see overview below and the timetable website).

1.2 Objective

With the Master's thesis, the student provides a sample of their ability to research, think, and write scientifically and to do this independently, critically, methodically, and systematically. In concrete terms, the goal is to show, based on a well-defined and clear problem definition and by way of consistently structured discourse, that there is insight into the subject matter and into one or more ways in which the subject matter in question should be approached.

1.3 Linking the internship and Master’s thesis

For the specialisations of the Master's in Philosophy, a link between the internship and thesis means that the research conducted during the internship can be developed into a Master’s thesis topic. It is important that the students contact the internship coordinator for specialisations in time to discuss the rules concerning the internship. The students must conduct literature research, archive research, practice-oriented or theory-oriented research, do fieldwork, or conduct scientific research on behalf of third parties. It goes without saying that at this stage of the Master’s programme, high demands are placed on the nature, approach, and results of the work being performed by the student and that, as a rule, there must be a clear relationship with the content and level of the degree programme. The practical agreements (research question, objective, research design, and planning) must be established in an internship contract. The Master’s thesis amounts to 20 EC, which is a study load of approximately 560 hours.
14 Period, timetable, and study load

Project group meetings will start for each training programme at the beginning of the second semester. Students must register for this via OSIRIS.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Instructor</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Analytical Philosophy</td>
<td>Dr L.C. de Bruin</td>
<td>FTR-FIMA12-MSAF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continental Philosophy</td>
<td>Dr A. Dufourcq</td>
<td>FTR-FIMA12-MSFF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practical Philosophy</td>
<td>Dr M. van de Sande</td>
<td>FTR-FIMA12-MSPF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philosophy &amp; Science</td>
<td>Dr F.A. Bakker</td>
<td>FTR-FIMA12-MSPS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study load hours (SLH)</th>
<th>Contact time</th>
<th>Individual study time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20 EC = 560 SLH</td>
<td>4 CU = 8 SLH (4 meetings of 2 hours)</td>
<td>560 - 8 = 552 SLH</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2  MASTER'S THESIS

The Master's thesis has certain requirements and criteria that are stated in the faculty's Rules & Guidelines.

2.1 Requirements for Master's thesis in Philosophy

Requirements

1. Pdf format, A4, margins of at least 3.5 cm all around.
2. Commonly-used serif font, such as Times, Palatino, or Garamond.
3. Size: 10,000 - 20,000 words, excluding bibliography.
4. Written in good, clear, and grammatically correct Dutch or English and understandable for graduate philosophers in general.
5. Consistent references and a separate bibliography, both written according to a commonly used system.
6. Cites source texts or recognised translations.
7. Summary of at most 120 words.
8. The title page specifies:
   a. title
   b. the student’s name
   c. student number
   d. the supervisor’s name
   e. number of words (excluding bibliography)
   f. date
   g. the following text:
      Thesis for obtaining the degree of “Master of Arts” in Philosophy
      Radboud University Nijmegen
9. Back of the title page:
I, [student name], hereby declare and assure, that I have composed this Master’s thesis independently, that I did not use any other sources or tools other than indicated, and that I marked those parts of the text derived from the literal content or meaning of other Works – digital media included – by making them known as such by indicating their source(s).
Location: … date: …

¹NN: fill in the name of the degree programme and the Master's specialisation
If two or more students write a Master’s thesis together, separate contributions from each student involved must be included in addition to the collectively written chapters.

**Criteria**
The Master’s thesis:

- is the result of independent research. The Master’s thesis must be the creative result of thorough reflection. Therefore, one should not limit themselves to merely reproducing what others have already written or assessed.

- must be an independently written text that indicates critical insight and a self-motivated opinion. Therefore it cannot consist of a purely subjective representation of one's own experiences.

- links the study of an author, theme, or practice to the relevant context (society, history, religion, literary, etc.).

- has a research question, problem definition and objective that are clearly defined and relevant, given the state of affairs in the field.

- features a consistent, formal, and argumentative elaboration of the problem definition and research question (that is, it forms a consistent whole, from problem to conclusion). The introduction of the Master’s thesis must include a description and justification of the chosen method and an explanation and justification of the structure of the thesis.

- incorporates the literature relevant for the research. The choice of literature used for the Master's thesis must be justified and the literature must be included in a well-organised and correct manner.

- is in language that is correct and consistent; the style is formal and readable.

- has references, quotes, appendices, etc. that are functional; they support (the development of) the discourse.

**2.2 Supervision**

The supervision programme starts with the compulsory “workshop Master's thesis” in the first or second semester. By default, three meetings for developing a plan take place in the beginning. Afterwards, the individual students will be supervised by lecturers chosen by themselves. For this, students are entitled to five supervisory discussions. In order to progress properly when writing the Master’s thesis, it is important that the students start with the initial outlines and components of the thesis as quickly as possible. The students receive feedback on this from the supervising lecturer.

*If the Master’s thesis process is delayed, for example due to personal circumstances, the student must contact the student advisor as soon as possible.*
2.3 Assessment

The assessment of the Master's thesis takes place in accordance with Article 10 of the faculty’s ‘Rules and Guidelines’ in four phases:

1. Approval of the Master's thesis
   a. Request to the Examination Board to set up a committee of examiners (CoE):
      - At least one month before the intended submission date, the thesis supervisor requests that the Examination Board set up a CoE. For this they use the registration form (Radboudnet - FTR).
      - The thesis supervisor creates a Turnitin assignment in the Brightspace environment of the relevant Master's thesis course. This assignment has the name of the student.
   b. Creation of the CoE:
      The president of the Examination Board communicates the composition of the CoE by e-mail to the relevant examiners and to the STIP.
   c. Informing student about the CoE:
      The STIP informs the student by e-mail of the composition of the CoE (by forwarding the e-mail from the president of the Examination Board to the student).
   d. Submission of Master's thesis by student:
      The student submits the final Master’s thesis in PDF format via a Turnitin assignment of the relevant Master's specialisation in Brightspace (Master's thesis course).
   e. Plagiarism check:
      The thesis supervisor conducts a plagiarism check via Turnitin and creates a PDF file of the Turnitin test.
   f. Submission of Master’s thesis by thesis supervisor:
      - If, in the opinion of the thesis supervisor, the Master’s thesis is ready and if they have checked for plagiarism, then the thesis supervisor submits the thesis and the Turnitin test via a form on Radboudnet-FTR.
      - The name of the digital file must be formatted as follows: MA + academic year + last name (for example: “MA 19-20 Janssen”).
      - The STIP forwards the Master's thesis to the examiners and saves the thesis in a project group folder.
   g. Approval/disapproval of the Master’s thesis:
      The permanent and 2nd examiner inform the 1st examiner within 2 weeks of their assessment whether the Master’s thesis is sufficient. The requirements stipulate the minimum conditions that must be met before the Master’s thesis is eligible for further assessment.
   h. Is the Master’s thesis not sufficient?
      If the Master's thesis is not sufficient according to the 2nd examiner or the permanent examiner, the thesis supervisor asks the student to revise the thesis in order to rectify the cause of the relevant examiners' objections.
      > return to step d. Submission.
   i. Is the Master’s thesis sufficient?
      If the Master’s thesis is deemed sufficient by all examiners, then
      - the thesis supervisor informs the student of this
- the **examiners** move on to the assessment of the thesis
- the **student** determines the date of the defence of the thesis with the 1st and 2nd examiners and informs the STIP of this
- the **STIP** books a room for the defence of the thesis and informs those involved.

2. **Assessment of the Master's thesis**
   j. **Assessment of the thesis:**
      - The **1st examiner, 2nd examiner and permanent examiner** complete the assessment form independently prior to the final examination (Appendix 2 - Excel file on the intranet). They then independently submit the assessments to the permanent examiner. The permanent examiner determines the grade and records it by means of an assessment form.
      - The **permanent examiner** sends the assessments to the 1st examiner to determine the preliminary assessment of the Master's thesis.

3. **Verbally defending the thesis**
   k. **Verbally defending the thesis:**
      The **student** defends the thesis before the 1st and 2nd examiner.

4. **Final assessment of the Master's thesis**
   l. **Assessment:**
      The final grade is determined by the **examiners** by calculating the average grade of the assessments of the Master's thesis (90%) and the joint assessment of the oral assessment (10%). The 1st examiner can, as a supervising lecturer for the assessment of the process evaluation, increase or decrease the final mark up to 0.5. For this, the 1st examiner completes the final assessment form (Appendix 2) based on the 2 assessments (incl. the joint grade for the oral defence).
   m. **Handling of assessment forms:**
      - The **permanent examiner** submits the assessment forms (definitive assessment form, assessment forms of the 1st and 2nd examiners) to the STIP.
      - After the exam, the **1st examiner** sends the form with the final assessment to the student.
- The STIP archives the assessment forms and the final version of the Master’s thesis in the digital thesis archive.

n. **Starting the diploma application:**
The STIP enters the grade and title of the Master’s thesis in OSIRIS, checks whether all examination requirements have been met, and sends the student an e-mail with the suggestion to apply for a diploma.

o. **Diploma processing:**
The STIP handles the examination request and stores the consent form for inclusion of the Master’s thesis in the thesis archive.

p. **Inclusion of Master's thesis in the archives:**
Once the graduation date is known, the STIP will add the Master’s thesis into the archives.

q. **Career interview:**
The career service officer receives a CC of the diploma application and schedules a career interview with the student.
Annex A: Master's thesis assessment form

Assessment Master's thesis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject and research question (20%)</th>
<th>0.0</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>scope of the subject; formulation of the research question</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structure (20%)</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>layout and structure; distinction between primary and secondary</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Style and presentation (20%)</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>readability for a broad philosophical audience; explanation of key concepts and basic assumptions; clear perspective; critical distance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality argumentation (15%)</th>
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</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sources and references (15%)</th>
<th>0.0</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>use of source texts, translations, and references</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Originality (10%)</th>
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</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thesis grade (90% of the final grade)</th>
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</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thesis defence (10% of the final grade)</th>
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</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Final grade</th>
<th>0.0</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Final grade, rounded up</th>
<th>0.0</th>
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</table>
Appendix B: Fraud regulations

Section 1. Introductory provisions

Article 1. Objective of the regulations
1. To prevent fraud during examinations as specified in Article 7.12b of the Higher Education Act, the Executive Board of Radboud University (hereinafter: RU) has adopted the following regulations.
2. In order to coordinate the provisions in these regulations between faculties, the regulations have been created by the Executive Board as a “comply or explain” scheme.

Article 2. Scope of the regulations
1. With the exception of the provision in Appendix 1, these regulations apply to all of the initial degree programmes at RU and the students enrolled in them.
2. In the event of a separate decision by the Executive Board, components of these regulations may be declared to apply mutatis mutandis to other educational offerings from RU.

Article 3. Definition of terms
The terms used in these regulations, which are also used in the Higher Education and Research Act (Wet op het Hoger onderwijs en Wetenschappelijk onderzoek, hereinafter, “the Act”) will have the same meaning as these terms have in the Act.

Section 2 Definition of fraud, procedure, and sanctions

Article 4. Definition of fraud
1. Fraud at RU is defined as any behaviour or negligence on the part of the student that, by nature, is directed towards making it partly or entirely impossible to properly assess the knowledge, insights, and skills of the student or of another student.
2. Fraud in general is defined as:
   a) fraud when taking written examinations, including: i. having tools at one’s disposal that have not been authorised in accordance with the Regeling Huisregels Tentamenruimten RU (RU house rules for examination rooms); ii. looking at the work of others or exchanging information; iii. impersonating someone else or allowing someone else to represent oneself during an interim examination;
   b) fraud when writing theses or other papers, including: i. plagiarism in the sense of using or including the another person’s texts, data, or ideas without fully and correctly citing the source; plagiarism in the sense of using the work of another student and presenting it as one’s own; and other forms of plagiarism specific to academia; ii. the fabrication or falsification of research data; iii. the submission of a thesis or other paper that has been written by someone else
   c) other fraud during examination, including: i. acquiring the questions, answer sheets, or other similar information prior to the time of the examination; ii. changing answers to questions on an examination after it has been submitted for assessment; iii. providing incorrect information when requesting exemption, an extension of the validity period, and other similar requests regarding an examination.
3. Any attempt at fraud will also be considered fraud in the sense of these regulations.

Article 5. Procedure for suspected fraud
1. In the event that fraud is suspected, the Examination Board or the examiner will immediately inform the student. If fraud is suspected while an exam is being given, then the Examination Board or the examiner will provide the student with the opportunity to complete the exam.
2. The Examination Board or the examiner may order the student to provide the materials involved in the suspicion of fraud.
3. The Examination Board or the examiner will draw up a report of the suspected fraud. If the examiner draws up the report, they will send it to the Examination Board immediately.

4. For the application of the provisions in clauses 1 and 2, the examiner is understood to include the invigilator or another RU staff member.

Article 6. Procedure for investigating and determining fraud
1. The Examination Board will immediately make the report specified in Article 5 available to the student and will begin an investigation into it. The Examination Board will provide the student with the opportunity to respond to the report in writing. The Examination Board will hear both the examiner and the student.

2. Within four weeks of making the report available to the student, the Examination Board will determine whether there is evidence of fraud. The Examination Board will inform both the student and the examiner of its decision in writing. The period of four weeks may be extended by two weeks.

3. If fraud is determined, the Examination Board will declare the examination in question to be invalid.

4. If fraud is determined, the Examination Board will document the identification of fraud and the sanctions imposed in the student’s file.

Article 7. Sanctions
1. If the Examination Board determines an instance of fraud, it is able to:
   a) decide that the student is no longer able to sit for one or more exams during a period to be defined by the Examination Board, being no longer than a year;
   b) decide that no distinction will be granted on the student’s diploma;
   c) recommend to the Dean of the Honours Academy that the student not be admitted into the honours programme of the university or faculty, or that the student’s participation in the university or faculty honours programme be terminated.

   If the Examination Board determines a serious instance of fraud, it is also able to:
   d) recommend to the Executive Board that the student’s enrolment in a degree programme be definitively terminated.

2. After serious fraud has been determined by the Examination Board, the Executive Board may definitively terminate the student’s enrolment in a degree programme at the suggestion of the Examination Board.

3. The sanctions as specified in this provision will be imposed on the day following the date on which the student has been informed of the decision to impose the sanctions.

Section 3. Transitional provisions
(no transitional regulations)

Section 4. Final provisions

Article 8. Decisions and legal protection
1. Decisions on the basis of these regulations may be sent to the student digitally or by e-mail.

2. For decisions based on these regulations, the student is permitted to appeal the relevant decision within six weeks of the decision date to the Examination Appeals Board (EAB).

Article 9. Establishment and amendments
1. These regulations have been adopted by the Executive Board in accordance with the comply or explain principle.

2. If the content of these regulations relates to the duties and powers of the dean of the faculty or the duties and powers of the Examination Board of the degree programme, that content must be approved by the dean or the Examination Board. Without any explanation from the dean or the Examination Board as specified in clause 1, this approval is considered granted within five months of the regulations being adopted.

Article 10. Entry into force
In accordance with the provision in Article 9, these regulations will enter into force on 1 September 2018. On that date, these regulations will replace the preceding regulations.
**Article 11. Publication**

1. The Executive Board is responsible for publishing these regulations and any amendments thereto.
2. For the purposes of adequately and clearly informing the (prospective) student, the dean and the Examination Board include these regulations as an appendix to the Education and Examination Regulations (EER) and to the Rules and Guidelines of the degree programme every year.


Students must include and sign the following statement on the back of the title page:

**Declaration of own work**

Hierbij verklaar en verzeker ik, NN, dat voorliggende eindwerkstuk getiteld TITEL, zelfstandig door mij is opgesteld, dat geen andere bronnen en hulpmiddelen dan die door mij zijn vermeld zijn gebruikt en dat de passages in het werk waarvan de woordelijke inhoud of betekenis uit andere werken – ook elektronische media – is genomen door bronvermelding als ontlening kenbaar gemaakt worden.

Location: … date: …

I, N.N., hereby declare and assure that I have composed the present thesis with the title (…..), independently, that I did not use any other sources or tools other than indicated and that I marked those parts of the text derived from the literal content or meaning of other Works – digital media included – by making them known as such by indicating their source(s).

Place, Date
Annex C: Learning outcomes for Master's in Philosophy

After successful completion of the study, the students have an academic attitude, which contains the following aspects:

1. Knowledge and insight
   a) The graduate has thorough knowledge of and insight into a philosophical specialisation, and therefore knows:
      - the core problems and basic concepts that arise within the specialisation;
      - the primary texts of the most important authors as well as the relevant secondary literature in the relevant field.
   b) The graduate has thorough knowledge of and insight into another philosophical specialisation, and therefore knows:
      - at least one author or philosophical problem within that specialisation;
      - the primary and relevant secondary literature associated with the author or problem.
   c) The graduate has knowledge of and insight into the connection of his specialism with philosophy in general on the one hand and contemporary culture in the broadest sense of the word on the other.
   d) The graduate has knowledge of the professional field of graduate philosophers.

2. Application of knowledge and understanding
   a) The graduate can independently perform the various steps in a philosophical research study, specifically:
      - formulating a philosophically relevant problem and converting it into a research question and an outline for the development of this question;
      - collecting relevant literature (primary and secondary) in the light of the problem definition and research question;
      - providing a careful interpretation of texts used and a critical analysis of the philosophical problem;
      - drawing conclusions from the conducted research and relating it to the problem definition and research question.
   a) The graduate possesses the skill to carefully handle both philosophical and non-philosophical texts according to current academic standards, more specifically, how the material should be incorporated into notes and a bibliography.
   b) The graduate is able to translate the acquired philosophical knowledge in different forms to a wider audience and to apply this knowledge to a concrete case from social practice.

3. Forming judgements
   a) The graduate can independently form an opinion regarding authors and philosophical problems in the field of their specialty. To that end, they can:
      - put a studied text or issue into the relevant context;
      - analyse the argumentative structure of philosophical texts, and issues and assess their formal correctness;
      - critically evaluate philosophical texts and issues according to their content and purpose.
   b) The graduate is able to adopt their own position with regard to an issue in the field of his specialty.

4. Professional skills
   a) Communication: The graduate can report the results of his own research both orally and in writing and communicate to both a philosophically and a non-philosophically trained audience.
   b) Collaboration: The graduate can work towards a (final) product in collaboration with others
and contributes actively to this. They organise the work in consultation with others and take responsibility for their part of the work in the collaboration.

c) Feedback: The graduate can evaluate and improve a product, partly on the basis of feedback from others and can give feedback to others that supports them in evaluating and improving their work.

5. Learning skills
a) The graduate has learning skills that enable them to independently design and conduct philosophical research.

b) The graduate has the learning skills to apply parts of their specialisation to or relate them to current philosophical issues or new issues.
Appendix D: Writing the paper/thesis

Compulsory literature:

Writing a paper or thesis within a certain time frame requires good preparation. Anyone who starts to work at random will lose a lot of time by getting sidetracked. This can be educational, but if you have limited time, it is advisable to draw up a good plan. The first phase starts with thinking about the subject and coming up with a good problem definition.

1. Choosing and exploring a suitable subject

By choosing a subject for a research project that results in a paper or thesis, you commit yourself to a specific period of time. This decision must therefore be well considered. In this section we deal with the question of which considerations play a role. We will discuss:
- interest in and importance of the subject
- types of subjects
- using texts
- defining the preliminary work.

1.1. Importance of the subject

A philosophical paper has threefold importance: its own importance, the scientific importance, and the social importance. In the event that, within the framework of the study (whether or not within certain limits), you can choose which subject you are going to address, determining your own interest is of course the most important thing. As you progress in the study and certainly after your studies, other considerations are also important.

Scientific importance consists of the fact that the research you will use to conclude a paper will result in an increase in your knowledge or insight. This importance requires that you consult others who have previously (and perhaps better) considered the same matter. However, you may also add something to the knowledge that already exists.

Social importance means that clarifying or answering the question may also be important in social discussions or could even mean the start of such a discussion.

The choice of subject is also a matter of time and of study planning. Pay particular attention to the following:
- Choose a subject that you think you can work on for a long time. If possible, continue working on a topic that you have worked on before and which you already somewhat comfortable with.
- Find out if any good, accessible literature on the subject can be found. You should not spend all your time looking for suitable literature.

---
3 The most important source for this manual is: M. Terpstra (red.), Onderzoeken, lezen, schrijven, spreken. Handleiding academische vaardigheden, Nijmegen, KUN, 2003.
- Write down what you would like to write (or say) about the subject. Do not choose a topic “blindly”; identify central issues or aspects.
- Be careful that the subject is not too difficult, too broad, or too lofty. If the subject has too many aspects, choose one of those aspects. If a term has multiple meanings, focus on one meaning. If research into the subject requires a lot of prior knowledge, shift your attention in that direction instead. If the literature is too extensive, deliberately limit the amount of text.

1.2. Types of subjects and initial considerations
Many types of topics are conceivable within the field of philosophy. Some examples of what you may work on:
- a text from a classical author
- a specific philosophical problem
- a historical or current phenomenon
- a practical problem
- a social, cultural, or political issue.

Initially, your subject may frequently seem unclear to you. By making notes and by talking to a supervisor or others, you may be able to find clues about what to focus on. There are a few things you can do by gaining more certainty about the choice of your subject:
1. Write down briefly why you have an interest in this subject. If you do not know what to write at this stage, it probably means your interest is either too vague or too complex.
2. Write down briefly what you want to learn about the subject. A subject is connected to questions. You must ask these questions explicitly so that you know what you are looking for. Are you looking for an explanation about the subject? Do you want to know more about the history of thinking about it? Are you looking for arguments for or against a certain statement or idea? You can read more about the type of research questions you can ask when drafting a paper in section 2.2.
3. Write down a number of keywords that you think are related to your subject. Write down briefly what you want to look at (a specific author, a specific book, etc.). This will be necessary when seeking out literature. Regarding the keywords: sometimes you might not get very far with the subject as a keyword, but you might actually find something with the help of other keywords. You can also use additional keywords to reduce the material found (focusing the subject). Make sure that your list of main keywords also contains the corresponding terms in English and German, since you typically will be unable to limit yourself to Dutch references and literature. The name of the author or the title of a book that you are interested in also provides you with entry points for your search.
4. Read short and informative texts about the topic (see next section) and make a list of the consulted texts. You can read texts before, during, or after the above activities. Reading is important if you do not have a clear idea yet of what you are actually addressing in a subject. Remember that you are reading to determine your subject, not to collect material for your paper just yet.

1.3 Exploration using texts
You have to be selective when reading texts during the preparatory research. We assume that you have a limited amount of time at your disposal for this phase and that you mainly want to use that time for reading truly relevant texts. These texts only serve to help you arrive at a good problem definition for your research. You are looking for concise information about
- different aspects of your subject
- different views on your subject (including the corresponding authors and movements)
- various topics that are related or have common ground with your subject
- other literature on the subject.

These are suitable texts:

1. Dictionary, encyclopaedia, manual, introduction. You can also search the FTR library for short articles (also called: lemmata) on the subject using a keyword. This exploration of your subject provides information about authors, trends, definitions of a concept and so on. There is typically a literature list as well.
2. Short, preferably current articles in magazines. These texts can already provide you with an example for your own paper, but also contain information about authors, points of view, arguments, and so on.
3. Texts that search engines provide you with in catalogues, especially through the library.
4. Sources on the internet. You can expand your horizons with a search. Research results are increasingly accessible via the internet. An exploration can give you ideas. However, these texts vary wildly in quality.

1.4 Defining the preliminary work and individual approach
The first thing to do when you start researching, is to compose a file. Keep everything together and make notes during every step of the research. Each investigation starts with an initial idea, that you capture in a working title. The working title indicates the subject or the direction in which you want to research something. A working title is always temporary. You may arrive at a better title while preparing or writing. An example: "Thomas van Aquino's views on justified war in light of the current state of the world." With this working title you have indicated the author whom you are looking at, the term you are researching in particular, and that you want to make a connection between Thomas' views and the current situation.

For the method of documentation (notes, file) and the subsequent steps, we can provide general instructions at most. This is due to the fact everyone has their own learning style with their own approach to research and writing. One person may be resourceful in collecting interesting material, but has difficulty describing it concisely or coming to a coherent vision. The other might like to analyse texts thoroughly, but is unable to bring this material together. Someone else might prefer to work precisely, according to prescribed rules or an example, while another person writes quickly and intuitively and creates a cohesive whole by trimming off the excess information. Try to be aware of your own strengths and weaknesses and consult quickly with your supervisor if you are stuck.

2. Determining problem definition and research questions
Exploring your subject quickly leads to the risk of getting lost or drowning in the abundance of information. It is time to make a choice and decide which way you actually want to go. Which aspect of the subject now deserves the most attention? Do you have to include all visions, perspectives, and perceptions in your research? Or do you have to take the step towards a related subject or common ground that precisely concerns the core of your question? Once you have made that choice, you can start developing your decision. You are no longer looking for a single keyword that represents your initial interest, but for multiple and more specific keywords or key terms. These limit the amount of information that you will find when searching. Moreover, you can now determine the method(s) to be used based on the level of your research questions.
We will now address the following:
- finding a problem definition
- types of research questions

2.1 Problem definition and research questions
The idea that you start with should be focused on a problem definition and then developed into manageable research questions. A problem definition is the concise and accurate description of the issue that you want to clarify, the question that you want to answer. Try to formulate this in one sentence. It is about more than just asking a question. The problem definition must be a suitable starting point that clarifies the research questions that you will study and how you will conduct your work.

An example (based on the working title mentioned above): "What contribution can Thomas van Aquino's vision of the justified war make to an analysis of current world politics?" This type of problem must have a potential solution, so it must be sufficiently defined, but it must also be a real problem. During the course of the research it may sometimes appear that the problem must be further refined, but a well-considered problem can usually be sustained until the end. However, this definition of the subject is not enough for the preparation of the study. You must also have a guideline when studying the material that you are about to collect. You conduct the actual research based on the problem definition and on the basis of one or multiple more specific research questions. These are questions that indicate what you want to know exactly when reading those texts. Research questions make it possible to deal selectively with the information that is provided to you.

You can prepare such research questions based on your initial notes, in which certain key concepts regularly occur. However, the key concepts are also part of the problem definition, as in the example:
- current world politics
- Thomas' vision of the justified war

For a paper it is sometimes suffices to limit yourself to a problem definition. In a thesis, a few research questions usually provide useful pointers. But every research question that you permanently include in your paper must be answered: this should be preferably done explicitly in the conclusion. The set of research questions then also provides an initial structure for the paper: three or four paragraphs.

2.2 Types of research questions and objective
The amount of research questions that can be asked is limitless. Each question raises new questions. The trick is to formulate exactly those manageable concrete questions based on the problem definition; the answers that follow will flesh out your argument.

To set up manageable research questions, it is useful to briefly consider different types of research questions in philosophy:
- questions about clarifying a concept, theme or point of view of a great classical or modern author, especially based on the corresponding argumentation
- answering a focused philosophical problem
- questions about the analysis of a historical or current philosophical phenomenon
- coming up with solutions for a practical situation.
- defining a point of view in the discussion on a social, cultural, or political issue.

Each type of research question not only has its own type of question, but also its own approach or method of answering, as we will see. Moreover, you can tackle the various problems at various
levels: more in width or more in depth. A text or issue about which little is known or published will first have to be explored, while a topic about which piles of books have already been written can be dealt with more thoroughly or in more detail. You can distinguish a few levels of treatment (from texts, from opinions, from phenomena):

- exploration
- taking stock
- description
- analysis
- interpretation
- explanation
- comparison
- discussion
- synthesis of reconstruction
- conceptualisation
- recommendation.

If you determine the level at which you want to address your research questions, you have the objective and thus the theoretical level of your research in mind. These do not need to be stated explicitly in your paper, but it is good to formulate them with a view to the choice of method and further approach.

### 3. Working hypothesis

Setting up and testing a working hypothesis can be a good way to structure your research. In the working hypothesis, the outcome of your research is formulated before you conduct the research yourself. It is therefore an assumption that you have based on prior knowledge. During the research you then focus on finding clues to confirm or refute your assumption. A working hypothesis can either turn out to be correct or incorrect. It is typically correct in part, but you will find a lot of data that will force you to adjust your initial view on the case. Starting from a working hypothesis has a major advantage in setting up a research and presenting the research results. After all, it already provides you with the structure of the discourse. Furthermore, you can read with great accuracy while studying the literature. You select the relevant sections of text based on three criteria:

- What do I need in order to explain to the reader or listener what the subject is?
- What do I need to test the working hypothesis?
- Where can I find variants that can have an (affirmative, negative, nuanced) influence on the hypothesis?

Those who have to complete a time-sensitive research study will benefit from such a selective approach. The structure of the working hypothesis-research-outcome can also give shape to your final paper. You can already include this structure in your work plan. In the introduction you explain what you initially thought and why you thought this. Next, you report on your research: what did you find? Finally, you state in the conclusion how what you found matches or deviates from the working hypothesis. In other words, you say what you have learned through your research.

A danger of this form of research design is that you do not treat your material “fairly”. You might only include what confirms your working hypothesis and disregard everything that contradicts your assumption. You must therefore ensure that you state and take into account all important points of view or outcomes.

Do not hesitate to submit your (provisional) working hypothesis to your fellow students in the thesis workshop. This can lead to invigorating informative conversations and sometimes useful
suggestions. However, this “thinking out loud” often provides more clarity because you are formulating the issue in your own words. As soon as the problem definition and research questions have been determined, it is wise to have this result checked by the supervisor.

4. Collecting literature and setting up a work plan

Once the above has been completed, you can begin a new phase, specifically the collection of literature and setting up a work plan. You can consider these two steps as the first elaboration of your research questions.

4.1 Developing the problem definition and research questions, collecting literature

Developing the problem definition is done with the help of keywords that you use in the search systems to try and find literature. Do not immediately start studying all these texts. During this phase of the preparation you use the texts available in the library to further orient yourself. You consult the available texts on possible usability for later and especially on information about the most useful sources. You should write this down. Or you can find references to other articles on the same subject.

Summaries of articles that you find, e.g. in the search files of the library catalogue, are also very useful. In this phase it is also useful to consult encyclopaedias, bibliographies, and manuals.

Please note! If you are already stuck in this phase of your preparation because you cannot find suitable texts, you may not have used the right keywords. But perhaps it is also wise to think about another related topic on which there is sufficient suitable and accessible literature. In summary, this elaboration of the problem definition involves:

1. Make a list of keywords based on the research questions.
2. Use the keywords to search in various search systems (catalogues, encyclopaedias, manuals and so on).
3. Consult certain texts for further information about useful material.
4. Make a (provisional) selection of the texts that you are going to read for your paper.

Search systems for collecting literature are available at different levels. We do not elaborate on this further because it has been addressed at other times during the course. In short, there are search systems for literature in encyclopaedias and manuals, then by subject in bibliographical journals, and finally, there are general and subject-specific electronic files available in the library. The latter are accessible via the library's website under 'subject areas’ - for us this mainly concerns the subject areas ‘Philosophy’ and ‘Social Sciences’. Furthermore, the library catalogue has its own keyword system and, moreover, access to other libraries’ catalogues around the world. If you don’t know how to use this, staff from the library’s information desk will assist you further on request. Another general electronic search engine for sciences is scholar.google.com

4.2 Assessment of literature

To assess the literature you do not read the found texts themselves, but you rather try to get an idea of the content of the texts and the extent to which these texts could provide an answer to your research question based on the following instructions. You must pay particular attention to the status and quality of the texts. Based on the summary (at the end), introduction, the headlines or the bibliography you can often get a good impression of the scope and level of a text, or the position of the author.

For the assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of independent publications (handbooks and monographs) it is advisable to look for reviews in authoritative magazines. Such journals have registers per volume, but sometimes also cumulatively (across several volumes). One useful tool is the Internationale Bibliographie der Rezensionen, which contains almost a million reviews since 1985 in many scientific fields and is accessible via the internet: http://gso.gbv.de/
When collecting literature, it is useful to make a distinction between primary and secondary texts. With a more historical and text-oriented approach, a critical edition should be used as primary literature, for example from a classical author, and then preferably in the original language. Comments in books or articles serve as secondary literature here. With a systematic approach to a problem definition, the trick is to find one or a few strong, central texts (for example a monograph on the subject in question); texts that do not deal directly with the problem in question or that contain rather different points of view can provide secondary material. When you have established a discipline for the problem, the use of authoritative journals from this discipline is obvious. These contain the most recent state of affairs.

4.3 Selecting literature
The texts have still not been read thoroughly. You can’t search for too long. It is not easy to indicate the moment when you must stop collecting and instead determine your selection of texts. You must have sufficient texts to answer your problem and your research questions.

If you decide to stop collecting texts, you can then quickly make a selection. Based on the problem definition, research questions and method, you determine what your central or primary texts are (which you must first and thoroughly read) and which are secondary. You probably also collected texts that you should omit from the selection; they go to the reserve bank and may not appear again. Immediately use your first impression of the content to determine the order in which you will study your texts.

When in doubt about the right moment for the selection or about a sensible selection, it is best to consult with the supervisor. It is not useful to keep searching for a long time.

Make a photocopy of texts that you think you will most certainly need, for example an article from a philosophical encyclopaedia. On the photocopy, carefully note the title of the encyclopaedia, the number of the volume and the year of publication (both of the entire encyclopaedia and of the volume). However, remember that photocopying is not the same as studying. And thorough study is not the same as editing a photocopy with a marker when you first read it. Try to keep the text clean during the first reading, since you cannot yet know what is really relevant in the scope of the entire text.

Finally, you have to take into account the possibility that during when incorporating the literature or while writing, urgent questions arise that require a little extra literature to be studied, or that an excellent text appears that you end up including (instead of one you selected earlier). But the main issues are fixed.

4.4 Preparing a working plan
When determining the order in which you will study your literature, you are more or less preparing a work plan. The best thing to do now is to make a plan for the entire completion of the thesis, because if all is well you should have all your material collected. The following components must be included in the work plan.

1. The problem definition and research questions, meaning the question or questions you want to get answered exactly. You should constantly keep these questions in mind while working.
2. List of keywords that indicate what to look for when reading the selected texts.
3. Texts, the list of the material that you are going to edit or the texts that you are going to study. Also clearly state the order and status. Which text do you read first, which ones later? Which texts will you read entirely, which ones only partially?
4. Method and approach. Try to get clear idea of how you are going to study the texts and what you want to retain from your reading. Do you first skim everything quickly and then read the important parts more closely? Do you make a summary, a structure, or individual notes for each text you’ve read?
5. **Table of contents.** Create a preliminary table of contents for your paper. This way you know where the material can be used while working. When drafting the research questions, we could already draw up an interim structure based on the keywords or key concepts that emerge from it.

6. **A schedule.** Make a timetable in which you record the various steps of your research and their completion and make an estimate of the amount of time that each step will take plus a total overview. A few rough indications: from the total time available, a quarter has gone into the preparation (first two phases, so far), half will be needed for processing the material or texts, and the last quarter is for writing the paper. You can reserve 3-5 pages per hour for thorough study of primary literature, 8-10 pages for reading secondary literature, and three hours for writing and finishing one page of text. Allow some spare time at the end.

After drawing up the work plan, the right time has come to coordinate with the thesis supervisor. You can now offer a good overview of the probable design of your thesis and the time you need for the coming steps. The supervisor can check the work that has been done and propose any changes.

### 4.5 Conducting the research and processing of the literature

We cannot comment on the next phase of the work, which is the research itself. In general, it mainly consists of studying and processing the selected literature. You must have gained so much experience in this matter during your studies that you no longer need any special instructions for the different ways of reading and documenting. We consider the following two notes to be sufficient.

With the goal of incorporating references or quotations in the thesis, it is useful to accurately note remarkable statements or striking phrases from the literature, or to already reserve a spot for them if necessary.

Use the timetable (see previous section) as an encouragement while working. If you notice that you are going to end up being delayed considerably, you can best consult with the supervisor about this.

### 5. Writing

For the writing process we limit ourselves to general instructions. Here too, just as with documenting, students can have a rather different approach. One may type quickly and ends up with twice as much text, only to delete half the produced text during the second phase of the work plan. The other writes sentence after sentence and paragraph after paragraph based on a detailed overview or structure, and nearly achieves a good result in just one round of writing. Keep in regular contact with your supervisor. Always have the important parts of finished text (per chapter or so) corrected. The general instructions relate to the following main points about the paper or thesis:
- overview of the permanent components
- the introduction
- the main part
- the conclusion
- writing with care, source references, bibliography and final editing.

5.1 Components of a paper or thesis

5.1.1 Common and specific component
A thesis or paper consists of at least six parts: title page, table of contents, introduction, main part, conclusion, and bibliography. A summary is also required for the thesis.

- **Title page**: state the title of the paper, your name (and student number if you present it to a lecturer for review), your degree programme, and the date.
- **Table of contents**: state all the components that make up your paper (including sections).
- **Introduction**: state what the paper is about.
- **Main part**: provide the actual report of your research.
- **Conclusion**: state where your research has led or may lead, and potentially evaluate the research as well.
- **Bibliography**: list the texts that you have used in your research.
- **Conclusion**: this is part of the formal requirements of the thesis and preferably covers no more than one page.

It is fairly common for a thesis to contain a *preface*, but this is not necessary. You can use the preface for personal notes: something about the cause or context of the thesis, an acknowledgement, or an assignment. A preface should be written last, after everything else has been completed. It should be placed between the table of contents and the introduction.

Finally, it is possible for evidence (short source texts, reports, calculations, illustrations) to be added as an *appendix*. This material is too specialised or too extensive for the actual text, but it makes sense for the reader to have it at hand. Multiple appendices are numbered and listed in the table of contents in order.

5.1.2 The purpose of a preliminary table of contents
You have already provided an initial sketch of the content of your thesis or paper in your work plan. Before you begin the actual writing, you must adapt the original design to the material that you have collected in by now. If all goes well, you now have extracts, notes, and structures that you must incorporate into your paper. You need to answer two questions:

1. Is the original layout of the paper still usable? If not, what needs to be changed?
2. What material belongs to specific sections?

With regard to the latter, it is advisable to arrange your material yourself in accordance with the (new or adapted) layout of the paper. If you have everything on paper, you can probably start cutting and organising the clippings. (Make copies first, so that you continue to have access to the original notes!) Working with index cards - a somewhat older approach - is also handy, but you have to use them from the start.

If you are working on a computer, it will be very easy to do. (But always save previous versions under a different name in a separate folder). Remember to regularly create back-ups of your texts, of course. If the full text of your thesis plus all notes are lost due to a computer crash, it will be almost impossible to recover from the aftermath.
In the definitive table of contents, the titles of chapters, sections and other important parts (bibliography, summary, appendices) should be clearly listed, with the pages on which they begin.

5.1.3 Making a first draft
On the basis of the adapted table of contents you now work towards a first interpretation of the content of the paper. Divide the material in such a way that you know what belongs to which part of the paper.

The first layout that you use for this is the well-known three-way division: introduction, main part, and conclusion. The second formatting determines where you put things in the three main parts. We will look at what you should pay attention to next. Based on this assignment of the material to the various parts of the paper, you make a brief overview (possibly in telegram style) of the entire paper. Read this carefully once and assess whether the structure shows a coherent argument.

You will then develop this shortened overview step by step. You use your extracts and notes to develop the text. It is not necessary to work from start to finish. You can start with the main part and in it starts with the passages in which you feel most secure or which are easiest to write. Always briefly indicate what should come first and what should follow. Feel free to set aside a section that gives you some trouble for a little while.

5.2 Introduction
The introduction should briefly explain to the reader what the text is about. An introduction may also contain additional preparatory information that is necessary for an understanding of what follows. An introduction roughly contains the following parts:
1. The intro: the opening text.
2. The problem definition and research questions.
3. The objective: the level and possibly the purpose of the discussion.
4. The sources used.
5. Overview of the structure of the continuation (main part and conclusion).

It is sufficient to initially provide a rough outline of the introduction. You will only know what exactly needs to be said in the introduction when the paper is nearly finished. In the introduction you can then include what the reader needs as prior knowledge to properly understand what you are going to explain in the main text. You can start writing down the first draft of the introduction earlier, of course.

5.2.1 The intro (the opening text)
The first lines must convince the reader that they should continue reading the text. Intriguing, clear sentences are therefore important. The simplest and dry opening line is the announcement: “This paper addresses ...”. The opening line must make clear what the text is about. If you want to make the opening text a little more exciting, start with an anecdote about the subject or the reason for writing this paper. You can also start with the context of the problem to be discussed.

5.2.2 Problem definition and research questions
Sometimes a longer opening text is needed and the outline of the problem definition will need to be postponed a little bit. Do not wait too long to state it.
Make a distinction between the problem definition and the research questions. The problem that you discuss in the paper can be indicated in one or two sentences. There can be several research questions, depending on the problem definition. You can differentiate the questions as much as you want. There is only one rule: only ask questions that you will answer in your paper. Save other questions for the conclusion, because those are questions that you will not answer and that you will probably discuss in the next paper.

5.2.3 Objective

We will now tell you a little bit more about the reasons for writing about this topic. Why is it an interesting problem? And why is it of interest to find an answer to the question or questions. “Of interest” sounds a bit more imposing than it actually is. What is important is placing the problem definition within a network of other possible problem definitions, in order for the reader to understand what the subject relates to. You can point out four elements:

1. Your personal interest.
2. The history of your topic (status quaestionis).
3. The potential interest for the reader.
4. The objective, or positioning in a broader context.

It is often enlightening to indicate what the most important, current views are regarding your problem (2, status quaestionis). With this you immediately present the authors that the reader can expect to appear in your main text. You can also identify the problems, gaps, or points of discussion that currently exist.

5.2.4 Sources used

If certain texts play an important role in your paper, state this in the introduction. That gives the reader guidance. Of course, this does not mean that you should list the entire bibliography. This list is already included at the end of your paper. The introduction must primarily be a justification. Only mention texts if they have been an important source for your paper, for the problem definition, or for your interest in it.

5.2.5 Overview of the structure of the text

The end of the introduction is the best place to tell the reader in a few sentences what is discussed in the paper and in which order. This will not only give the reader guidance and a little more insight into the structure of the text than the intermediate titles might do, but can sometimes announce the most important propositions as you progressively reach the conclusions.

5.3 The main part

In between the introduction and the conclusion you will write the actual argument of your paper: the answering of the research question or questions. We call this the “main part” but it can also be called “body”. In this main part you write down everything the reader needs to know to understand and accept the conclusion. You can work as closely with this principle as you feel necessary. A strict explanation may make the text somewhat dry. An overly broad explanation can cause the reader to lose interest because they no longer know “what it is about”.

It does not hurt to inform the reader of transitions, connections, digressions, etc. With this you also indicate that you have mastered the material and can distinguish between primary issues and secondary issues.

The structure of the main part is highly dependent on the subject you are dealing with and the way you treat this subject. We cannot really provide general rules for this. We saw that the material to be processed can vary from step-by-step text analyses to the representation of sociological research, from in-depth considerations to detailed proposals for practical situations.
Two common models for a structure are:
- the *hourglass model*, in which you switch from a general problem to a specific case of it (analysis, test), and then answer the general problem;
- the *orange model*, in which you discuss several perspectives of one core problem in order to draw a conclusion through a final discussion.

5.3.1 Structure of the main part
The main part of your paper is the longest piece of text. It is therefore advisable to further divide this text into sections and possibly subsections. You can also provide individual pieces of text with headings. All these parts can be found in the table of contents at the beginning of the paper.

The division into (sub) sections is intended to give the reader instructions on the structure of your argument. You can mark every important step in your argument by giving it a separate and visible place in the text. Then make sure that the most important steps are clearly distinguishable as such (sections) and the intermediate steps are observable in the same way as subsections. Give the (sub) sections clear titles. The outline of the argument should be easy to discern by reading the titles in succession.

For the numbering of chapters, sections, and subsections you can use either a decimal format (as done in this manual) or an alphanumerical system, e.g. with Roman numeral chapters, Arabic numeral sections, and subsections denoted by lowercase letters (a, b, etc.).

5.3.2 Intended readers, style, and opinions
For selecting a writing style and determining the level of explanations and reasoning, it is useful to have an idea of the intended audience. A paper or thesis is not only intended for the lecturer or the members of the Examination Board and their specialist professional knowledge. In this type of paper, you can also focus on interested readers who are reasonably well acquainted with the subject, such as fellow students from the degree programme. In that case you can assume that the basic knowledge of the field is known.

The level of a paper must be academic, but many styles can be used within it. The desire to reach a high academic level leads some students to construct complicated sentences. These are not an accurate measurement for that. Academic level is more closely related to a clear, well-arranged, and accurate argument. Subjective expressions (exclamations, expressions of dislike) do not fit well into this. If you have an outspoken point of view or an opinion that is important for the argument, make sure you substantiate it well. It is also wise to use abbreviations sparingly. When reading scientific documents (in papers by your fellow students), pay attention not only to the content, but also to composition and style. Also try to form your own opinion about the style in publications in other languages. A personal style is a precious asset.

In general, a business style is preferred in papers and theses. When in doubt about stylistic matters, you can consult guides such as the *Stijlboek van De Volkskrant* (The Hague, 1992 and later).

5.3.3 Instructions for the reader
The structure of the main part of your paper should not only be apparent from the division into sections and subsections or the corresponding subheadings. You make the argument more fluid by using all kinds of sentence constructions that give the reader clues about your train of thought. Think of it as adding signposts to your text (or a more modern example: a navigation system). In the studied literature you have already seen examples of tools that writers use to keep the reader focused. Based on the many clues in those texts, you as a reader can reconstruct the structure of the text and the structure of the reasoning. This time you are the author and you must use these tools for your own readers. We will limit ourselves here to some general
The sentence constructions we discuss here give the reader indications of where they are in the argument. This may concern general instructions about the structure, location specifications (you are now here), and references to earlier or later text.

1. General indications of the argument structure are explicit announcements about the order in which you will present the building blocks of your argument. For example: "Kant’s concept of ‘evil’ has three different meanings. I will discuss these meanings separately, keeping in mind the different texts in which they appear. After this explanation I will elaborate on the connection between these meanings.” This comment will give the reader an idea of what they can expect. You can extend these instructions by briefly providing the three meanings. That then belongs to the introduction of the main part (see earlier).

2. If you have provided general instructions, you must return to this in your argument. For example: “We will now continue with the second meaning of the concept of ‘evil’. We find this meaning primarily in the Metaphysik der Sitten. I begin with part I of this text, because he is the clearest in it.”

3. From the introduction, the reader has already understood what the paper is about to some extent and therefore also knows the direction that the author is moving in. However, it does not hurt to make this more explicit from time to time. Especially when working with longer digressions or when branching off towards a secondary idea, it is important to make it clear to the reader that this will be useful later on. For example: "It might be good to mention that ..."; "I will come back to this later, but first I must say something about ...".

4. Each summary afterwards reminds the reader of what he has just read. It is important to interrupt the argument, to look back and to indicate how you are going to proceed after a section (for example the treatment of some arguments). For example: "We have gone over the three meanings Kant gives to the concept of ‘evil’. Firstly ... Secondly ... Thirdly ... Now, what is the connection between these three meanings? Is there even a connection? I will discuss these questions in the following section.”

5. Both for the reader and for yourself it is helpful to close each chapter with a summary or a preliminary connection to the problem.

6. If you include a person, for example an author, in your text, state their first name or initial plus last name the first time you reference them. Later on, the last name by itself will suffice.

**5.3.4 Decision or conclusion**

The conclusion of your argument does not need to be a long text. After all, you have said “everything” already. The following applies: strictly speaking, the conclusion of your paper does not contain any new information. The conclusion is intended to convince the reader definitively and to direct them towards a potential follow-up. A good conclusion contains the following four elements.

1. The conclusion starts with a brief summary of your argument:

"We have seen that the three meanings Kant gives to the concept of ‘evil’ can ultimately be reduced to one meaning. Evil appeared to take on different forms at different levels, but in essence it is one and the same phenomenon. What does that mean for the usual interpretations of Kant?"
2. The core of the conclusion is of course the conclusion that you draw from the argument. You will compare this to your working hypothesis. What has this research led to? Has your working hypothesis been confirmed, refuted, or something in between? Have the problems and research questions presented in the introduction been answered or clarified? This is usually partly the case, and this must then be described precisely.

3. You can extend the summary of your argument to an evaluation from a “meta point of view”. You must also have that point of view appear in your argument. This concerns comments on your own argument, such as comments about your certainty (or lack thereof) with regard to certain arguments, interpretations, or facts. If you are not sure about something that you have written, say it out loud. This will be reflected in the conclusion as a nuance or amendment of your conclusion.

4. Following the conclusion you can complete your paper with a general evaluation of your research and your reporting thereof. What have you learned? What should the reader have learned from your paper? What (new) questions have arisen? If you can present a “moral of the story”, this often serves as an excellent ending.

5.3.5 Finishing the text

5.3.5.1 Writing with care and word processing

Proper structuring your paper, about which enough has been said in this part of the manual, is not enough. The sentences must also be correct and in the correct order. The reader must be able to keep their attention to the content of your argument and not be distracted by spelling mistakes, language errors, an annoying page layout, misleading subheadings, and so on. It is not only about what you say or write, but also how you say or write it. Finally, the most important thing: in an academic environment, a written presentation must indicate that you have proceeded with care. This requires proper finishing touches, such as referencing sources correctly. What should you focus on?

1. Start a paper with a title page with the title, name, date or other relevant information (such as student number, the name of the degree programme and the course, the lecturer for whom you write the paper).
2. Make sure that the table of contents after the title page comes before the text and corresponds to the actual headings and page numbers of the text.
3. Write your text in careful, well-thought-out Dutch (or in another language, after permission). Linguistic mistakes and spelling errors are avoidable. Also pay attention to the use of punctuation marks (periods and commas).
4. Use paragraphs, sections, chapters, headings, and the like to make the structure of your text visible to the reader.
5. Write in a gender-neutral style. It is easier to use the plural form than to write “he/she”, etc.
6. Number the pages and use a layout that is pleasing to the eye (margins not too narrow, possibly one and a half line spacing). Always use the same font. Only deviate from your font size if it serves a function in the text.
7. Indicate clearly when you quote (quotation marks) and provide the source where you found the quote. When you paraphrase or summarise a text, you must also provide the reference in notes.
8. Always make it clear in the text who is speaking: you or the author of a text. Example: "Kant says the following: ‘...’ (KRV, 237). I understand this as follows: ‘...’.”
9. Use one style for displaying titles and abbreviations.
10. Finish a paper or thesis with a bibliography.
11. Conclude your thesis with a summary and possibly with appendices after the bibliography. Word processing software on computers sometimes offers useful tools for these tasks and areas of concern. For example, they contain fixed settings for creating layouts, creating footnotes or endnotes, or for spellchecking. If you are not familiar with these tools, you can consult more
experienced fellow students or familiarise yourself with the “Help program” on the computer.

5.3.5.2 Source references and bibliography
First and foremost, these concern the question of when you should reference a source; and secondly how to reference a source. It is not always easy to determine what information must be cited. You do not have to cite knowledge that you can expect from colleagues (lecturer, but also fellow students).

Do refer to a text when your own text is somehow dependent on someone else’s. Not mentioning the source is (in the extreme case) plagiarism, a form of theft. The purpose of the reference is not only to indicate that you have used someone’s text, but also to give the reader the opportunity to read your source themselves. The academic obligation to provide adequate source reference also applies to information that you obtain from websites. Plagiarism from websites is also fairly easy to determine. Which rules do you have to follow in these cases?

- You literally quote a piece of text from someone else. You put the relevant text in double quotation marks (“….”). When you omit a piece of text and then continue quoting again, place three dots between both passages (so: “So ist es z.B. klar, dass der gegenständliche Hintergrund ... wirklich erlebnismässig ein gegenständlicher Hintergrund ist.”). You then refer to the source in a note and indicate the page(s) where the text can be found.

- You summarise a piece of text (or display a piece of text in your own words: paraphrase). This is not a literal quote, but you cannot pretend that you have written the text yourself. The reader must be able to read the original text. A reference to the source and to the pages where the summarised or paraphrased text can be found suffices here. If you summarise a longer piece of text, then you must provide multiple references (depending on the steps you take and the size of the text used).

- You use a concept, a distinction, a classification, or anything else from another author.

The following three types of source references are common:
1. Footnote. There is a number in the text that refers to a text at the bottom of the page. In the footnote text you then state the source and the page. See section 4.5.3 for representing literature information. In the case of paraphrasing it is also possible for you to include the original text in a note. This also applies to a translated quote in the text: if this is your own translation, it may be advisable to include the original text in a note.

2. Endnote. There is a number in the text that refers to a text at the end of the paper (or the chapter). In other cases the same rules apply for an endnote as for a footnote.

3. Text note. In the text itself, after a quote, paraphrase, or concept you will include the author, the year of the source, and the page in parentheses. This refers back to the bibliography. For example: (Terpstra 2004, 64). In the bibliography you will then find: Terpstra, M.J. (red.) (2004), Onderzoeken, lezen, schrijven, spreken, Nijmegen (Faculteit der Filosofie).

In footnotes and endnotes you can also include texts other than source references or quotes. You can record notes, references to other parts of text, additions, alternative interpretations, etc. that would interrupt the flow of the current text too much. Quite a few published authors use notes for all kinds of information for the benefit of the reader that they cannot or do not want to include in the main text. This is partly a matter of personal taste. Be careful with additional information in the notes. Sometimes such information simply fits into the main text or, upon closer inspection, might be simply unnecessary.

There is no standard in the academic world to indicate literature references in scientific texts. Various systems exist. The reproduction of literature information does not always mention the same things (sometimes more, sometimes less). Every scientific discipline prefers its own system or even several systems. In any case, the following applies: always use a certain referral style consistently and completely. Please refer to the Chicago Manual of Style Quick Guide. You can find
the most common styles of references and reference lists with examples here: 
http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html

5.3.5.3 Final editing and summary
Once the main body and conclusion have been approved, you can start the final editing. You can now give the introduction its final form. You can compile the bibliography, write the summary, and finally write the preface if you choose to include one. The final editing includes checking the entire structure of your text:
1. Are all necessary, stated steps and intermediate steps present and recognisable?
2. Are there any big leaps in your logic?
3. Are there any unnecessary passages?

Sometimes it may turn out now that you need to add or remove text. In general, trimming excess in early versions can make a significant contribution to the coherence and readability of a text. Other contributions to readability are: lively and varied use of language (for example, by avoiding passive sentences) and the use of (fun) examples in suitable places.

With the final editing you must at least check your language (style, spelling, sentence structure). Usually it may turn out to be useful to set the text aside for a day or more. This will allow you to look at your own words with a fresh pair of eyes and often in a more critical way. Print out the full text from time to time; it is easier to read than on a monitor. It is recommended to have someone else read through the text as well. You can then simultaneously ask for text corrections and a general opinion from this reader. After all, this is not just about what you like. It is about presenting your work to others, the audience.

The summary can range from a half page to a whole page. It must be a formal representation of your problem definition, the method, and your most important results or conclusions. You must therefore summarise longer sections of your main text in one sentence.

5.3.5.4 Frequently used abbreviations
- t.a.p.: loco citato (in the place cited)
- a.W/a.W.: cited work, the last named book of the intended author mentioned in footnotes or text
- conf: (Latin) compare
- ebd: ibid
- ebenda: in the same text (see a.W.), or: in the same place
- Ed(s): editor(s) of a book
- e.v.: and next
- Hg. (hg), Hrsg.: editor(s)
- ib.: ibid
- ibid (Latin) ibid: see ‘ebenda’
- infra: under, see below
- l.c.: loc. cit.
- loc. cit.: (Latin) loco citata
- op. cit. (the work cited)
- op. cit.: oper e citato
- passim: in different places: a page number is not required when referencing this text as it occurs everywhere in the cited work
- *pro manuscripte:* this text must be considered as a manuscript and not as a definitive, published, or publishable version.
- *s.: see*
- *supra:* above: see above, earlier in the text
- *s.v.:* (Latin) *sub verbo:* under the (key) word: in particular with references to encyclopaedias and dictionaries, it’s not the page but the keyword (lemma) that is mentioned.
- *t.a.p.:* in the place cited: in the same place as mentioned earlier (in footnote or text): sometimes exactly the same place, sometimes the same book/article; in that case a page indication follows
- *t.II:* (French) *tôme II:* volume II
- *v:* (French) *voir/voyez:* see.
- *vgl.:* compare