

# Guidelines for writing assignments at MF

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Dear MF Student. In this document, you will hopefully find the answers to all your inquiries on formal and practical aspects of turning in a written assignment here at MF. If there is anything that you do not find an answer to, you can send an email to your lecturer/professor so that this document can be updated.

This document has three main sections: First, a general guide on the use of sources, followed by various general templates that can be used when turning in assignments, and lastly we have collected some of the most commonly asked questions.

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# Part I: Referencing

Scholarly texts are usually written in dialogue with other texts. What others have written is cited, analysed, discussed and criticised. It is then crucial that this is referred and referenced in an orderly manner – both in the text and in a list of references at the end. This is important so that what you write is verifiable and so that people are recognised for their contributions.

There are various methods of referencing. Here you will find an introduction to this topic which all students at MF can choose for all of their studies at MF. It puts references in parentheses in the text instead of in footnotes at the bottom of the page. If you study social sciences at MF, this style is recommended. If you write in a discipline where there is often much text in the footnotes, you should choose footnotes instead of parentheses. In Church History, it is normal to use footnotes. The difference looks like this:

Grimen discusses this by use of the concepts participant and observer (Grimen 2004, p. 293-299).  
Grimen discusses this by use of the concepts participant and observer.<sup>1</sup>

If you want to develop your reference style to a higher level, you can learn specific reference styles. If you study social sciences it is recommended that you use the style called «APA 7th», and the introduction below is a simplified version of this style. If you major in Biblical studies or ancient church history, we recommend the style «SBL Handbook of Style», but if you major in other disciplines, we recommend «Chicago 16<sup>th</sup> A (footnotes)». There is a good webpage which describes these styles in detail. It is called [sokogskriv.no](http://sokogskriv.no), and you can select “English” in the top right corner. There you will find good advice on reading and writing. There is also much information about these styles other places on the internet and in the different handbooks for the different styles, which can be borrowed at the library.

It is very important to avoid plagiarism. Plagiarism is considered a serious offence, so if you are caught for plagiarism, you lose your grade and will not be allowed to study anywhere in Norway for a year. We use a plagiarism program to check all material for plagiarism.

## ***How to write in-text-citations***

Often other people’s texts are referred to by indirect quotation, which means that you rephrase what they have written in your own words. In that case you should refer by citing author and year of publication, for example like this:

Example: Grimen (2004) writes about methodological individualism and methodological collectivism.

If you refer to something specific in Grimen’s book, you must write the page numbers:

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<sup>1</sup> Grimen 2004, p. 293-299.

Example: Grimen also discussed the relation between researcher and research object (Grimen, 2004, p. 289pp). (pp. means “and the following pages”).

If you want to refer to a specific number of pages, it should be done like this:

Example: Grimen discusses this by use of the concepts participant and observer (Grimen, 2004, p. 293-299).

If you refer to only one page, it is written like this:

Example: Grimen discusses how thunder and lightning can be understood as meaningful phenomena (Grimen, 2004, p. 300).

If you have used an article in a book or anthology, refer to the author of the article, and not the editor of the book:

Example: Fretheim (2010) writes about ethical problems arising from doing research on children soldiers.

When quoting directly, you should use quotation marks (not italics), and page numbers must be given:

Example: Furseth and Repstad discuss different methodological questions and what they call “methodological agnosticism” (Furseth and Repstad, 2003, p. 238)

Quotations shorter than three lines are written in-text, with quotation marks, like in the example above. Quotations longer than three lines are written in their own paragraph, with indentation of the entire paragraph, and with no quotation marks.

Example: Furseth and Repstad write:

... usually modern scholars have learnt to have to live with different and conflicting perspectives. Most of them do research on religion as a human and social phenomenon, but add that a social perspective does not tell the whole story about religion. (Furseth and Repstad, 2003, p. 246)

Here the authors emphasize the plurality of perspectives...(etc).

If you read a book where the author describes what another author has written (for example if Gunnar Aakvaag writes about Pierre Bourdieu), you shall refer to the book that you are actually reading.

Example: (If you have read Aakvaag’s text:) Bourdieu argues that good social science requires both an objectivist and subjectivist break (Aakvaag, 2008, p. 149).

If you read a book where the author directly quotes another author, and you want to quote the quotation, you still refer to the book that you have actually read, but you add the origin of the quotation.

Example: Bourdieu was critical to theory not connected to empirical studies. He called it “theory for the sake of theory” (Bourdieu, quoted in Aakvaag, 2008, p. 148).

If you want to refer to an edited book, your reference should refer to the author of the text you are referring to, and not the editor(s). The editors will be mentioned in the list of references at the end. See below how to write it in the list of references.

When it comes to internet references, the main rule is to try to make such references as similar as possible to ordinary written sources when you refer in-text. If you find author and year of publication, you can cite the reference as if it was a book or an article. But there are many different kinds of documents online, and different rules apply to different kinds of sources. We therefore recommend sokogskriv.no where you find examples on references for all the main kinds of sources you find on the internet. (Unfortunately, the examples from the APA 7<sup>th</sup> reference style are only on the Norwegian pages of sokogskriv, and not the English pages. But there are plenty of English examples of APA 7<sup>th</sup> which are easy to find online.)

Example: (in-text:) Noack and Seierstad (2003) have investigated ...  
(in the list of references:) Noack, T. & Seierstad, A. (2003, 26 March) Samboerskap ved tusenårsskiftet: Dagligdags og utforsket. Retrieved from [http://www.ssb.no/emner/00/02/10/ola\\_kari/familie/](http://www.ssb.no/emner/00/02/10/ola_kari/familie/)

If you use text from an internet page that is likely to change over time you add which date you accessed the internet page.

Example: (in-text:) Noack and Seierstad (2003) have investigated ...  
(in the list of references:) Noack, T. & Seierstad, A. (2003, 26 March) Samboerskap ved tusenårsskiftet: Dagligdags og utforsket. Retrieved 4 August 2012 from [http://www.ssb.no/emner/00/02/10/ola\\_kari/familie/](http://www.ssb.no/emner/00/02/10/ola_kari/familie/)

If you use text from an internet page with no author information, the title should be used instead of the name of the author.

Example: (in-text:) Freud is considered as the inventor of psychoanalysis (Psychoanalysis, 2010).  
(in the list of references:) Psychoanalysis. (2010). In *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Retrieved from <http://global.britannica.com/bps/additionalcontent/14/117886/psychoanalysis>

You may have used other kinds of sources than the ones mentioned here. These may be oral communication, notes from a lecture, a movie, a TV program etc. What is important is to refer to

these in a way that makes it easy to understand precisely what you are referring to. At sokogskriv.no you can find examples of many different kinds of sources.

Conversations with teachers and notes from lectures are usually not sources to be referenced. You should ideally find other sources instead. But written material from a teacher accessible online should be cited in the same way as internet sources, but using sources such as textbooks, scientific article etc. is preferable. Material marked with “work in progress”, “do not quote”, etc., must not be used.

## ***How to write a list of references***

At the end of your paper, you must write a list of references. It should be well structured and in alphabetical order after the surname of the author. Note how italics are used on *book titles* and *journal names*.

A book is listed like this:

Example:       Socks, B. (2004). *Social Science* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.) Oxford: Oxford University Press

A book with several authors is listed like this:

Example:       Johnson, J., Jackson, J. & Haroldson, J. (2005): *Introduction to Social Science*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press

Note that you should write which edition of the book it is, but not which printing it is. That is because new editions have new pagination, but printings are just new prints of the same text and thus have the same page numbers.

An article in a book or anthology is listed with the author first and the cited article in normal text (Note that it should not be quotation marks on articles and book chapter in the reference list in APA 7<sup>th</sup>). Then comes the editor(s), and finally the title of the whole book or anthology in italics – like this:

Example:       Fretheim, K. (2010): Moral Principles and Participation in Practice, in Mæland, B. (ed.), *Culture, Religion and the Reintegration of Female Child Soldiers in Northern Uganda*, (p. 233-254), New York: Peter Lang

Journal articles are written with the title in normal text and the *name of the journal* in italics, followed by which volume it is and the pages:

Example:       Fretheim, K. (2007): Egoistiske idealister. Konstruksjonen av bistandsbransjen i nyere norsk bistandsdebatt, in *International politics*, 65, 45-70.

If you have referred to a newspaper, this should also be listed in the list of references, like this:

Example: Thuen, F. (2006, 12 September). The Price of Unfaithfulness. *New York Times*, p. 12.

If you have used material from the internet, it should be listed as a source in the list of references. There are many variants here, but a typical example will be that you have author and date of publication, and that you write after the title: "Retrieved from" and then the internet address.

Example: Noack, T. & Seierstad, A. (2003, 26 March) Samboerskap ved tusenårsskiftet: Dagligdags og utforsket. Retrieved from [http://www.ssb.no/emner/00/02/10/ola\\_kari/familie/](http://www.ssb.no/emner/00/02/10/ola_kari/familie/)

Example: Noack, T. & Seierstad, A. (2003, 26 March) Samboerskap ved tusenårsskiftet: Dagligdags og utforsket. Retrieved 4 August 2012 from [http://www.ssb.no/emner/00/02/10/ola\\_kari/familie/](http://www.ssb.no/emner/00/02/10/ola_kari/familie/)

### ***How to refer to Biblical texts***

There is one standard for references to Biblical texts in English (for those writing in Norwegian, there are two alternatives):

A colon separates chapter and verse, and a comma separates single verses when several single verses are listed up from the same chapter.

Semicolon is used as main separation sign between references.

For texts in Norwegian, we recommend the abbreviations used in the Norwegian translation Bibel2011. For texts in English, we recommend the abbreviations found on page 73 and 74 in the SBL Handbook of Style (see below). In the list of references, the Bible can be listed like this: *The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version* (1996), New York: Oxford University Press

#### Examples:

Referring to

- |   |                                |
|---|--------------------------------|
| - a single verse:                             | John 1:18                      |
| - a paragraph:                                | John 1:19–34                   |
| - several sections:                           | Gen 1:26–27; Ps 8:4–9          |
| - a verse and the following verse:            | John 1:19f                     |
| - a verse and the following verses:           | John 1:19ff                    |
| - several verses from the same chapter:       | John 1:14, 18                  |
| - several whole chapters:                     | John 1–3                       |
| - a section stretching over several chapters: | John 2:23–3:21                 |
| - different references in a row:              | Gen 1:1–2,3; Ps 8:4–9; Heb 1:2 |

English abbreviations of Biblical texts, from SBL Handbook of Style:

### 8.3.1 HEBREW BIBLE/OLD TESTAMENT

Gen	Genesis	Eccl (or Qoh)	Ecclesiastes (or Qoheleth)
Exod	Exodus	Song	Song of Songs (Song of Solomon,
Lev	Leviticus	or (Cant)	or Canticles)
Num	Numbers	Isa	Isaiah
Deut	Deuteronomy	Jer	Jeremiah
Josh	Joshua	Lam	Lamentations
Judg	Judges	Ezek	Ezekiel
Ruth	Ruth	Dan	Daniel
1-2 Sam	1-2 Samuel	Hos	Hosea
1-2 Kgdms	1-2 Kingdoms	Joel	Joel
	(LXX)	Amos	Amos
1-2 Kgs	1-2 Kings	Obad	Obadiah
3-4 Kgdms	3-4 Kingdoms	Jonah	Jonah
	(LXX)		
1-2 Chr	1-2 Chronicles	Mic	Micah
Ezra	Ezra	Nah	Nahum
Neh	Nehemiah	Hab	Habakkuk
Esth	Esther	Zeph	Zephaniah
Job	Job	Hag	Haggai
Ps/Pss	Psalms	Zech	Zechariah
Prov	Proverbs	Mal	Malachi

### 8.3.2 NEW TESTAMENT

Matt	Matthew	1-2 Thess	1-2 Thessalonians
Mark	Mark	1-2 Tim	1-2 Timothy
Luke	Luke	Titus	Titus
John	John	Phlm	Philemon
Acts	Acts	Heb	Hebrews
Rom	Romans	Jas	James
1-2 Cor	1-2 Corinthians	1-2 Pet	1-2 Peter
Gal	Galatians	1-2-3 John	1-2-3 John
Eph	Ephesians	Jude	Jude
Phil	Philippians	Rev	Revelation
Col	Colossians		



## ***Can I cite my own previously submitted work?***

In general, you shouldn't duplicate text from your own previously submitted work. To duplicate your own text without proper citation is not allowed and considered self-plagiarism.

It is *possible* to use your own previously submitted work as a source (with citation), but you need a good reason to do so. If you find that it is necessary to use your own work, the use should be limited. Note that when you submit a home exam or an exam essay, you need to confirm that your submission has not previously been submitted for assessment. This also pertains to parts of the text you are submitting.

Even though it is your own previous work, you must still refer to it, both in the text and in the list of references. Otherwise, your work may appear to be plagiarism for the examiner.

Standard rules for referencing apply, with some exceptions: Because exam submissions must be anonymous, you should write |Own Work| instead of the author's name. The title of the cited work may for instance be presented as |Home exam in EX1022: Examen Facultatum|. It should be noted if the source is unpublished (see information regarding unpublished material in your style of reference at <https://sokogskriv.no/en/>). In the list of references, the sources should be placed under the letter O.

Exception: You do not need to cite your own work if you *re-submit* an exam in a course where the form of exam is essay submission, portfolio exam or master's thesis. The most common example of this is when you have failed an exam and later submit a revised version.

## ***Examples of when and how to cite references***

Below is an original text with examples of how this text could have been presented in a student assignment. Each of the examples is commented upon. The point of these examples is better to understand acceptable ways of using and citing sources.

ORIGINAL TEXT. Translation from page 134 and 142-143 in Svare, Helge (1997): *I Sokrates' fotspor*. Oslo: Pax)

Page 134:

### ***\*A Roman from North-Africa***

Roughly one hundred BC North-Africa was conquered by the Romans. The Romans started plowing the earth on a grand scale, and North Africa became the grain chamber of the Roman Empire, feeding the population in the big cities of the empire with cheap grain. Here, surrounded by fields of grain, was the little town of Tagaste, where Augustine was born in 354 AD. In his autobiography, *Confessions*, Augustine describes his upbringing in vivid imagery. His father served in the Roman State Administration. His mother adhered to the new religion, Christianity. She made sure that Augustine was raised as a Christian.

At the age of 16, Augustine moved to Carthage to study. Carthage, situated at the coast of North Africa, was one of the biggest cities in the Roman Empire. Here young people from all of North Africa came to study. The goal for most of them – Augustine included – was to become a lawyer and have a career in the Roman State Administration.

During his studies, Christianity faded away for Augustine.

Page 142-143:

### The swirling mists of lust

Parallel to this positive view of the body, Augustine maintains throughout his life a critical stance towards it. Augustine underscores that it is the soul that revolts against God. For that reason, the soul is responsible for human evil, and not the body. But very often, it is the body that tempts the soul to revolt.

We all know how the body can be a source of pleasure. Well prepared food, a hot bath or good sex are pleasures we would not know without a body. And these pleasures are strong. They mean a lot to us. Sometimes they mean so much that we forget everything else. Nobody was more aware of this than Augustine. In his autobiography he admits that prior to his conversion he enjoyed life and its bodily pleasures. And throughout his life he had to fight against such desires.

The problem with the desires of the body is that they are so strong that they constantly threaten to draw our attention away from God, Augustine says. With this as his point of departure, he strongly attacks the body. The body makes us strive for earthly goods: good food and beautiful women. It draws the soul down to the “swirling mists of lust”, he complains in his *Confessions*.

Augustine’s understanding of the dangers of the body shows that he is still influenced by the Neo-Platonic negative view of the body. Since the body is created by God, it is not evil in itself. But often it tempts the soul to forget God. Therefore it will often in practice be a jail where the soul is held captive.

## EXAMPLES

1) Roughly one hundred BC North-Africa was conquered by the Romans. The Romans started plowing the earth on a grand scale, and North Africa became the grain chamber of the Roman Empire, feeding the population in the big cities of the empire with cheap grain. Here, surrounded by fields of grain, was the little town of Tagaste, where Augustine was born in 354 AD. In his autobiography, *Confessions*, Augustine describes his upbringing in vivid imagery. His father served in the Roman State Administration. His mother adhered to the new religion, Christianity. She made sure that Augustine was raised as a Christian.

*Comment: This is a direct quote without citing a source. That is the worst you can do, and is considered plagiarism.*

2) Roughly one hundred BC North-Africa was conquered by the Romans. The Romans started plowing the earth on a grand scale, and North Africa became the grain chamber of the Roman Empire, feeding the population in the big cities of the empire with cheap grain. Here, surrounded by fields of grain, was the little town of Tagaste, where Augustine was born in 354 AD. In his autobiography, *Confessions*, Augustine describes his upbringing in vivid imagery. His father served in the Roman

State Administration. His mother adhered to the new religion, Christianity. She made sure that Augustine was raised as a Christian (Svare, 1997, p. 134).

*Comment: A source has been cited, but nothing shows that it is a direct quotation, and thus it is again plagiarism. Direct quotations should be marked with citation marks if it is a short quote or indention if it is a long quote.*

3) “Augustine was born in 354 AD. In his autobiography, *Confessions*, Augustine describes his upbringing in vivid imagery. His father served in the Roman State Administration. His mother adhered to the new religion, Christianity. She made sure that Augustine was raised as a Christian.” (Svare, 1997, p. 134).

*Comment: This is formally correct since the quotation has citation marks and a reference. But still, it is not very good to quote such paragraphs directly. Quotations should be used when the author says something special that you then comment upon, or if a very special expression has been used (see next example). If there is no reason to quote, you should rather paraphrase with your own words. Otherwise, the reader will think that you quoted it because you were unable to formulate it yourself.*

4) Augustine had a negative view of the body. He held that the body tempted the soul away from God, and dragged it down to “the swirling mists of lust” (Augustine, quoted in Svare, 1997, p.142.) Augustine was influenced by Neo-Platonism, which also held a negative view of the body (Svare, 1997, p. 142-143).

*Comment: The whole paragraph is a presentation in your own words of the content of Svare’s text. Then it is ok just to put a reference at the end of the paragraph. In the middle of the paragraph there is a direct quotation, and there should always be a footnote (or reference in parentheses) directly after quotations. Since it is a quotation of a quotation, it says “Augustine, quoted in Svare...”*

5) Roughly one hundred BCE North-Africa was conquered by the Romans. The Romans started plowing the earth. North Africa became the grain chamber of the Roman Empire, feeding the population in the empire with cheap grain. Here was the little town of Tagaste, where Augustine was born in 354 CE.

*Comment: This is very close to the original text and without reference. That is also plagiarism.*

6) Roughly one hundred BCE North-Africa was conquered by the Romans. The Romans started plowing the earth. North Africa became the grain chamber of the Roman Empire, feeding the population in the empire with cheap grain. Here was the little town of Tagaste, where Augustine was born in 354 CE (Svare, 1997, p. 134).

*Comment: This is also very close to the original text. Your writing must be more independent than this, so even if it is not plagiarism, it is very poor writing and will receive a low grade.*

7) Augustine was born in North-Africa in 354 AD. His mother raised him as a Christian, but when he started studying, he left Christianity (Svare, 1997, p. 134).

*Comment: This is an exposition in your own words, and it has a reference in the end. This is good.*

8) Augustine was born in North-Africa in 354 AD, and was raised as a Christian by his mother. At the age of 16, he went to Carthage to study (Svare, 1997, p. 134). There Augustine met many temptations, and he admits in his autobiography that he enjoyed life and especially bodily pleasures (Svare, 1997, p. 142).

*Comment: If one paragraph in your text cites different pages or sources, there should be a reference before you move to the next source.*

9) Augustine had a negative view of the body. He held that the body tempted the soul away from God (Svare, 1997, p. 142). Here we see another example of how Augustine in his theology emphasizes what was considered rational in his own time.

*Comment: Try to write so that it is clear when you are referring others, and when you are commenting yourself. Here, you first refer to Augustine's views – with a reference – and then to your own comment, which does not need a reference.*

10) Augustine had a negative view of the body his whole life (Svare, 1997, p. 142). Augustine had to fight desires his whole life (Svare, 1997, p. 142). The problem with the desires of the body is that they tempt us away from God (Svare, 1997, p. 142).

*Comment: If all the references are from the same place, it is enough to have a reference at the end of the paragraph.*

## Conclusion:

The logic behind these examples is that the assessor should understand that you know what you are writing about. You cannot lie too close to other sources, since the assessor will then not know if you understand what you are writing. On the other hand, it should be possible to check what you say, and the sources you use should be given due credit, so that it why it is important to cite references. YOU MUST AVOID PLAGIARISM. Plagiarism is considered a serious offence, so if you are caught for plagiarism you lose your grade and will not be allowed to study anywhere in Norway for a year. We use a plagiarism scanner to check all material for plagiarism.

Do not have many quotes in a row. It is best to write with your own words, and use quotations only when there is something special. Do not lie too close to the sources when you write – write without having an open book/webpage or a copied text on your page. If you are in doubt whether to cite a reference – cite it. If you have further questions, ask your teacher.

## Part II: Requirements and templates for submission

### ***General requirements for all written submissions that will be graded***

In addition to other requirements you should make sure that submitted assignments that will be graded include the following:

- Information you may have been asked to supply, for example sub-discipline
- Word count (see the next page for which parts of your submission that is included in the count)
- Page numbers on the first page (and running page numbers in the header)
- Title/research question/the question for the assignment

Use the font Times New Roman, spacing 1,5 and font size 12 (10 in footnotes), and otherwise normal margins and consistent use of headings.

Exam submissions must be anonymous. Do not write your name anywhere, neither in the submission file or the file name.

If required to submit several papers as one exam (portfolio exam), combine them all into one file.

### ***General templates for the cover page of assignments***

When you hand in your master's thesis, the cover page should be based on the general template found here: <https://www.mf.no/en/mastersthesis>

You can find a template for home exams/essays etc. at: <https://www.mf.no/en/exam-submissions>. The use of this template is not mandatory.

## Part III: FAQ – Frequently Asked Questions

### ***What belongs in the word count in a paper?***

Everything counts, except the front page, the table of contents, the list of references and attachments for those who need that. In master's theses, the acknowledgement, the abstract and any list of abbreviations do not count either.

### ***What happens if I write more or less than the given word limits?***

The word limits already include a margin of error. If you exceed the limits, you risk getting a lower grade.

### ***I have a question I do not find the answer to in this document – what shall I do?***

See [www.sokogskriv.no/en](http://www.sokogskriv.no/en) or <http://www.kildekompasset.no/english>

### ***Where can I read more about reading, writing and referencing?***

See [www.sokogskriv.no/en](http://www.sokogskriv.no/en)