

Midterm exam review

- You have access to your midterm exam until approx. 2:20pm today.
 - Feel free to ask questions
 - Additional review of the exam possible in my office hours
 - Interactive syllabus → week about literature review → link to the test is at the bottom of the page

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Clarification

- A literature-review thesis
 - Number of articles on the topic: 30+ , ideally 40-50
 - depends on the topic
 - My personal recommendation (after consulting with colleagues), no formal rule
- The question of using "I think..."
 - Depends on the context. Use it when it enhances your writing (makes it simpler, easier to read)
 - Also OK to say "This thesis shows that...", "Based the analysis of XY data, this thesis argues..."
 - Definitely allowed (I checked with colleagues at the dept.)

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Research paper

- Addresses a gap in scientific knowledge
 - tells us something we don't know from the literature
 - in a BA thesis, this contribution can be small
- Presents an argument based on empirical analysis
 - the argument speaks to existing research
- May present a new concept or theory
 - presenting a new theory may be a bit too challenging at BA level

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Structure of a research paper

1. Introduction
 - State the topic, defend its relevance, state your research question
 - Summarize what is known about the topic and what gap in knowledge you are addressing
 - Briefly summarize your findings and **state your argument**
 - argument = a statement based on empirical results that ties the results to theories
 - the argument makes the results relevant outside the cases you studied
 - May describe the structure of the chapters

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Structure of a research paper

2. Literature review/ Theoretical part

- Review literature
 - What answers to your research question does the literature provide?
- Say what is missing/wrong in the literature
 - plus emphasize that you are going to address it (&how)
- State the expectations for your analysis, supported by arguments derived from literature or reasoned arguments
 - Expectations stated in the form of hypotheses (sometimes research questions)
 - Each hypothesis should have a theoretical explanation

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Structure of a research paper

3. Data and variables

- Describe your data
 - what, where from, ...
 - Why these data are suitable
- Describe variables
 - describe and defend your choices on conceptualization (may already appear in theoretical part) and operationalization

4. Analysis

- Identify the type of analysis and defend your choice
- Present your results, tie them back to hypotheses
 - Keep the hypotheses in mind, avoid tangents
- Could be more than 1 chapter

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Structure of a research paper

- 5. Conclusion
 - Summary: What& why, findings, argument
 - Discussion of the weaknesses
 - Argument's implications
 - Often includes suggestions for future research
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- Does my thesis include everything it should?
 - <https://irep.fss.muni.cz/bachelor/current-students/bachelor-thesis#>
 - Bottom of the page: Thesis evaluation criteria
 - Good as a check list
 - Ideal for peer feedback

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Extended position paper

- Adopts and presents an argumentative stance in response to a position held by another author
 - similar to a research paper but more focused on challenging an argument
 - not necessarily filling a gap in knowledge

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Structure of a position paper

- Similar to a research paper, plus the following:
 - Emphasizes the challenged thesis
 - No hypotheses, "just" a defended counter-thesis
 - Data analysis has less space&importance than in a research paper
 - discussion of arguments in existing literature as a source of evidence plays an important role
 - The conclusion evaluates the strength of provided counter-argument
 - In addition to summarizing your counter-argument

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Examples to follow

- Extended position paper
 - Sovacool, B. K. 2016. "How long will it take? Conceptualizing the temporal dynamics of energy transitions." *Energy Research & Social Science* 13: 202-215.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.erss.2015.12.020>
- Research paper
 - Your homework (plus the syllabus)
 - Discussion of the homework questions

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Structure of a research paper

- Online resource:
 - <https://zuzanaringlerova.weebly.com/for-students.html>
 - "Recommended thesis structure"
 - Resources on other types of thesis will be added when time allows