

Research Paper Outline plus Problem-Oriented Sample Analysis (RPOplus)

The RPOplus consists of two parts:

- (1) a research paper outline (RPO), which represents a plan for a term paper or other research paper (in future modules you will be asked to actually write research papers; in this module, you learn what steps are part of preparing for the writing process), and
- (2) a problem-oriented sample analysis of a text passage relevant to your research topic, demonstrating your ability to perform a structural and functional textual analysis, which you could integrate into the research paper if (and when) you are writing it (as you will be in future modules).

Research Paper Outline

Choose a question on which you would write a research paper of around ten pages in length and do the preparatory work that would allow you to actually start writing.

How to go about it:

- Preferably pick a question that interests you, a genuine question (i.e. one to which you do not already know the answer). --- NOTE: your question must address materials covered in the S/Ü Introduction to Literary and Cultural Studies.
- Find out whether other people have already written about this (or related) questions (you can use the MLA Bibliography, for example), and find out what their positions were, whether they agree with each other, or how and why they differ etc.
- Decide what your own position would be in this discussion and how you would support it (using, for example, some of the analytical skills and historical information that you have gained in the course of ang070/ang071).
- Then write up your research paper outline, which must consist of four parts:
 - 1) Title. This must state the research question that you are working on and perhaps even the particular view on it that you will seek to present. (Scholars often choose a two part title: a subtitle indicating the topic and material(s) they are addressing, and a catchy main title indicating their particular perspective.)
 - 2) Abstract (max. length of abstract: 1 page). This should consist of two paragraphs: one paragraph stating the question or problem you have chosen to work on, and giving a brief survey of the current state of research on this question. Your thesis statement, in which you state what the goal of your contribution is, should then conclude the first paragraph. Alternatively, it may also open your second paragraph in which you go on to explain how you will go about reaching this goal, and why your problem is relevant (i.e. what difference it makes and to whom).
 - 3) Table of Contents. This must function as a structural outline, with "chapter headings" that give an indication of the structure of your paper and your argument.
 - 4) Bibliography (again according to the specifications of the style sheet) that lists the texts and sources you would use. This should include at least around six titles of critical and scholarly articles or books relevant to your theme.

Problem-oriented Sample Analysis

Choose a brief but meaningful passage, poem, or frame from the primary text you have addressed in your RPO and discuss it by composing a *close reading*, i.e. a formal and genre-specific analysis of the passage that fits in with the research question and thesis statement put forward in your RPO. NOTE: You may not use any of the passages, poems or frames for which we have uploaded model solutions to the wiki.

How to go about it:

- Choose several suitable passages, poems, or frames from your primary text (cf. length of passages in the various assignments) which are relevant for your research question and your thesis statement. Bear in mind in your selection process that the passages you pick relate to each other meaningfully and will have to serve as textual proof to support your overall argument. [Remember: You may not use any of the passages, poems or frames (partly or entirely) for which we have uploaded model solutions to the wiki.]
- Choose **one** passage, poem, or frame (with source) which you want to analyse closely.
- Then write up your problem-oriented sample analysis (max. 3 pages) which must consist of the following four parts:
 - 1) Briefly state why the passage, poem, or frame you have chosen is relevant for your topic by demonstrating that the research question of your RPO is also central to the chosen passage, poem, or frame.
 - 2) Produce a formal and media-specific analysis of the passage (cf. assignments). Make sure that you address and make use of the specific analytical tools and techniques that are relevant for your primary text (cf. handouts):
 - Poetry*: communicative situation; thematic structure and possible subdivisions; formal aspects (figurative speech; genre; metre; rhyme scheme)
 - Drama*: dramatic communication; characterisation; rhetoric; structure and possible subdivisions; development.
 - Fiction*: narration; focalisation; characterisation; structure and possible subdivisions; development.
 - Non-fiction narrative*: narration; focalisation; characterisation; discussion of key concepts (identity; discourse; representation; media)
 - Graphic Novel*: modes of visual-narrative representations (reading track; panels; colour scheme; text containers; etc...); discussion of key concepts (identity; discourse; representation; media)
 - Film*: mise-en-scène (visual design; cinematographic design); discussion of key concepts (identity; discourse; representation; media)
 - 3) Use your findings to discuss your passage in a way that considers supporting as well as potentially contradictory aspects (at least one each). In doing so, present your argument forcefully and make sure to demonstrate that your close reading supports your thesis statement. However, do not unduly reduce the complexity of your passage, e.g. by glossing over inconsistent aspects, but comment on possible alternatives to your reading.

- 4) Choose a second passage from the ones you have initially selected. Make sure it corresponds or contrasts with the one you have chosen to discuss in one particular aspect. Briefly describe the nature of the correspondence or contrast and relate it to one central theme/ topic of the text.
- Reproduce both passages, poems, or frames (with source), i.e. the one you have analysed closely and the one you have chosen to compare it with, and attach them to your assignment.

Date due: February 28 (winter term) / August 15 (summer term)

You will be asked to discuss the current state of your work on this assignment in the final meeting of our courses.

RPOplus (max. 200 points)

Research Paper Outline (80 points)

- 20 points: title (does the (sub-)title match the project described in your abstract? does the title give a sense of the goals or propositions of the paper?)
- 20 points: quality of outline / structure (does your proposed table of contents have an inherent logic, and does it correspond to your description of your project in the abstract?)
- 20 points: quality of abstract: (is the problem that you are planning to work on stated clearly? Are the reasons for choosing this problem made clear, have you considered possible alternatives? Do you give concrete indications, how you would proceed, and what possible results might be?)
- 20 points: bibliography (formal correctness, topicality, up-to-dateness of titles)

Problem-oriented Sample Analysis (100 points)

- 20 points: stating the relevant link between your RPO topic and the passage you have chosen to analyse closely.
- 30 points: formal analysis of the passage (with regard to genre-specific techniques and terminology)
- 30 points: discussion of the passage (based on the findings from your formal analysis; including supporting as well as potentially contradictory aspects)
- 20 points: correspondence/ contrast (brief discussion of a second passage with regard to one central aspect both passages have in common)

Overall Assessment (20 points)

- 20 points: consistency and coherence; use of academic tools, techniques, sources, and register; all components are complete, formally correct and in a plausible order.

For the overall grading of the portfolio please see: HO Portfolio and Grading