

Paper Proposal

Why do I want you to hand in a 'Paper Proposal'?

In the past, I had (too) many papers that did not really have/argue a thesis. This is frustrating for me and for you, since a paper without a thesis is not going to be a good paper. Grading it is no fun; receiving a not-so-good grade is no fun. The paper proposal forces you to formulate a thesis and tell me (roughly) what you will be doing.

What does it look like?

In one or two sentences, you tell me what the **topic** of your paper is going to be. You will then have a sentence starting **In my paper I will argue...**

Example:

"In my paper I want to examine how Joseph Conrad deals with colonialism and its racist bias in *Heart of Darkness*. **In my paper I will argue that *Heart of Darkness* is ambiguous: it is critical of (Belgian) colonialism, but still uses racist imagery in the description of blacks.**"

How will it work?

You hand in your paper proposal before you start writing. You either come to my office hour – then we can talk about your proposal immediately. Or you send me an email with your paper proposal, preferably **as a PDF file**. Either in my office hour or via email I will then give you feedback on your proposal. If I see serious problems, I will ask you to change the proposal; if all looks well, I will give you the 'go ahead' and you can start writing.

In your own interest: do not start writing your paper before I have approved your paper proposal!

What happens if you change your thesis while you work at your paper?

If you only modify your thesis, this is no problem. But make sure that your paper still has/argues a thesis! If you change your topic completely, hand in a new paper proposal!