HOW TO BECOME A MASTER STUDENT MANUAL

Guidelines for Academic Communication Skills and Study Tips

Regional Institute of Gender, Diversity, Peace and Rights (RIGDPR) Ahfad University for Women (AUW), Sudan
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Dedication

This manual comes as an amalgamation of efforts to help all students of the Master Programmes at the Regional Institute of Gender, Diversity, Peace and Rights (RIGDPR) at Ahfad University for Women (AUW), Sudan.

Other Master students may find it a first-hand guide contributing to enhance their capacities. To all our Sudanese young generations and those who continue to pursue education regardless of age we forward this piece of work to support them in their pursuit for excellence, leadership and professionalism.

Balghis Badri
Director of the RIGDPR
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PART I

GUIDELINES FOR ACADEMIC COMMUNICATION SKILLS

0. Introduction

The purpose of the Master programmes at the RIGDPR is not only to provide students with the tools of knowledge, critical thinking and gender perspectives, but also to reinforce their communication skills. These will not only help them during the academic period but will also empower them in their professional and personal lives. The capacity to read and understand, to write and properly express, to talk and convince, and to listen and comprehend are necessary tools for students to have a voice in society, to be prepared to surely lead in both public and private spaces.

We expect that being part of a Master Programme in Gender Studies will stimulate our students’ desire to work for a society characterized by equality, peace and the respect for diversity. We believe that learning to condense ideas, to prepare and be part of debates, to read texts and watch visual documents critically, to write their ideas in an organized and professional way, to apply a gender perspective when thinking and writing, to summarize their thoughts or to make comments in an academic fashion will solidly contribute to that mission.

These short guidelines on academic communication skills are not to be taken as comprehensive and deep studies on the different topics tackled, but just as reader-friendly roadmaps to ease our students’ journey through the Master. Our intention is to help them confront the academic challenges they might face when asked to turn in assignments for the first time, to participate in class, to come up with brilliant conclusions after reading a number of texts with opposite approaches and so on, and, in general, to contribute to and benefit from the academic life and resources at the AUW campus. Furthermore, for those interested in going into in-depth descriptions and analyses, a list of available resources that we consider useful for that matter and that can be easily found at the AUW central library or otherwise online has been added.

With these guidelines we hope to contribute to empower RIGDPR students by reinforcing their skills.

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1. HOW TO ADOPT AN INTERSECTIONAL GENDER-SENSITIVE ATTITUDE

1. Introduction

Texts, whether written or spoken, are powerful means to transform society. They contribute to form particular images of reality and to construct identities. In this sense, the way we “write” appears as a very sensitive activity. Feminist academia started publishing studies on the topic in the 20th century sixties and seventies. Since then, members of many other fields of study have joined them in their vigilant attitude towards language and discourse, precisely because language and discourse can show (hence, reproduce, expand or undermine) stereotypes, and traditional images of certain identities, groups of people, events, ideologies, etc. that might not make justice to other alternative accounts of reality.

For this reason, because we consider it important to apply a gender perspective in this sense, and, for that matter, an intersectional one (i.e. one that includes more axes in addition to the category of sex: race, ethnicity, class, age, capability, religious or political belief, origin, sexual orientation, etc., and that considers their combinations), students are highly encouraged to give it a thought before starting to read and write, and to take it into consideration when doing both.

Students should practice language skills that avoid perceiving and judging members of groups with a negative or positive description, and should also be able to detect these perceptions and judgments made by others. This is related to a way of thinking which is open to dialogue and debate, and respectful towards processes of shifting, as it does not try to homogenize, naturalize or stereotype “the other(s)” By “others”, we mean the unprivileged groups of people within any categories of analysis. In other words, while students articulate their own perspectives (cultural/personal identity construction, religion, values, political opinion, etc.), they should also be receptive to other articulations that might differ in minor or more comprehensive points from theirs. Similarly, they should be alert to denounce discourses that hinder the advancement towards equality, peace and the respect for diversity.

2. Recommendations about how to use gender-sensitive language and discourses

In connection with gender, some of these linguistic strategies in English language are: writing double pronouns [e.g. s/he, his/her, etc.], using plurals, collective or grammatical gender-neutral nouns [e.g. they, people, human, etc.] to have women included; making sure names of professions are not gender-biased [e.g. firefighter vs. fireman; spokesperson vs. spokesman]; feminizing some apparently neutral words when necessary [e.g. girl child vs. child; she judge or female judge vs. judge, etc.], not specifying the marital status of women when men’s are not specified [e.g. Mrs./Mss. vs. Mr.; it is better to use Ms.], etc.

In this same sense, some discourse-related strategies (i.e. those connected to the detection of hidden meanings of certain words, terms, expressions or wordings due to traditional installed beliefs or costumes) can also help to avoid unwillingly reproducing sexist ideas in texts. For example, if the term “criminals” is used without specifying their gender somewhere else in the text, people might automatically visualize these criminals as being males. The same might happen the other way round with other examples, like “nurses, teachers, etc.”. These same strategies can be applied correspondingly to other sensitive areas like race, ethnicity, tribalism, religion, etc. Similarly, students should be aware of the strategic choices
to be made in this sense in each situation by taking into account to whom the text is written for, what the text is written for, by whom, etc.

To our view, master students should be capable of reflecting on these issues when reading and writing as a means to fight sexist, racist, classist, homophobic, fundamentalist and other discriminating discourses.

3. **What your teachers expect from your intersectional gender sensitivity:**

Adopting a gender perspective that is intersectional implies an updated understanding of the importance given to discourses, whether in texts, images, etc. by feminism. Being alert both when reading and writing will help you to be in control of your own discourse.

Your teachers expect you to:

- Write following the recommendations provided above
- Be alert not to (re)produce sexist, racist or intolerant messages unwillingly
- When reading a text or an image, take into account who wrote it, what for, why, what it says, what it does not explicitly say, how it says it, what is explicit, what it implies, what it hides, what it means, the references used, etc.
- Detect sexist, racist or any other intolerant messages.
2. HOW TO CRITICALLY READ A TEXT

1. Introduction

Good reading skills are essential for all degree levels and academic work in general. Reading materials include documents like books, articles in journals, in magazines, in newspapers or available on the web, as well as what is known as grey literature (research and field attachment reports, unpublished articles, thesis or dissertations, etc.). Other documents are visual, like photographs, drawings or films. Sources often include visual and written materials and sounds (e.g. advertisements, films, exhibits, etc.). This guideline introduces you to reading skills for written texts, and thus is not applicable to critical visual reading.1 If you use visual materials or online sources you should also read the guidelines on these topics.

Reading critically means more than just reading words. It also requires an in-depth reflection on the theoretical framework, argumentation and thesis, research findings, conclusions and style of the text you are dealing with. By so doing, you will get involved in continuing academic discourses about specific research fields, particular topics, issues or disciplines. Once you start practicing it, the process will never stop. You, as an active reader, should notice and annotate the source during and after reading.

You should be able to distinguish between published material and grey literature. The latter is usually found in University resource centres and department libraries. With regard to the grey literature available at the RIGDPR resource centre, it will most probably offer you information about the Sudanese context, which could be used for comparison with other case studies. You have to be careful not to make generalizations out of these documents, which are usually of limited research. Avoid also obsolete data unless working from a chronological perspective, and be aware of reports based on secondary sources (and not primary ones). Despite all these warnings, this grey literature can broaden your perspective on certain topics related to Sudan.

Last but not least you should differentiate between the author's approach, his/her interpretations of the sources (data or literature), his/her perspectives on topics and your own point of view. The following reading strategies are a good starting point for presenting texts in class, writing summaries, essays, comments or thesis. Furthermore it is a basis for preparing a debate on particular topics or issues.

2. Process Description and Tips

How you read a book or article depends on your purpose. There are different strategies for critical reading: scanning, skimming (also called previewing) and analytical reading.

2.1. Scanning

Scanning texts means locating key words when looking for specific information in them. Text scanning is a good tool for finding relevant information on your particular topic(s) or issue(s) of interest within a specific source. First you should look at how the source is organized. Are there any chapters on your subject? Look at the table of contents, the index or the headings. In so doing you should keep key words, terms or phrases in mind. Sometimes similar notions are written under different words, so also sometimes you might have to modify your key words. Search functions on the web or on your PC are also useful when

1 All topics in italics are further explained in other “How to...” chapters.
using digitalized sources. Reading abstracts of books or summaries of journal articles is useful when looking for relevant information too. Book reviews or the announcements of new journal volumes, which you often can find on the web, are also very helpful. Book reviews or journal introductions usually contextualize the respective topics within the state of the art in a research field or within academic discourses. Reviews and introductions are helpful to get further information about your topic(s) or issue(s) of interest. Before you start looking for information you should think about a pattern instead of scanning randomly: for instance, glancing quickly through the lines, called zigzag or Z-pattern, is a very useful strategy (McWhorter 2000:648-649).

2.2. Skimming

Skimming texts means quickly finding out what they are about in order to see whether they are relevant for your topics or issues. Text skimming allows you to get an overview of the text subject without reading it completely, which will help you to decide which parts of the text are worth analytically reading, or which ones provide data you are looking for. At this stage, it is useful to write down the references. It might be helpful for further reading and will save you time if you need to write a final bibliography at a later stage. When you skim a text, you should concentrate on the title, the introductory paragraph(s), the headings and subheadings, and the first and last sentences of each paragraph since they often mention the main topics of the text. You should consider your key words and main phrases, and pay attention to further key words/ phrases related to your topic when glancing quickly through the whole text. It is worth paying attention to any graphics (maps, charts, photographs or diagrams) and respective legends, titles or captions. Read all respective parts of the text referring to relevant key words listed in the index of a book. Pay special attention to the last paragraphs or final chapters, which are often headlined as “Conclusions” (McWhorter 2000:649)

2.3. Analytical Reading

Scanning and skimming will help you to select relevant sources for your research. Once you have chosen the relevant texts that deserve analytical reading, you should plan in which order and time you want to finish your readings. Before you start reading the text, you should be informed about the author(s) and his/her/their approach in the research field. Go back to the book reviews or announcements of journals or books you have already scanned. Read the information about the author(s) on the cover or in the last pages about the contributors to a book or journal.

Active text reading requires you to underline key information, circle key words, detect relating connectors and text distributor expressions, and take notes on the margin. The annotations should include the main points of the text, the sort of relation between the ideas (addition, opposition, etc.), the links to other texts you have already read, and your own thoughts. These annotations are very helpful for understanding the author's argumentation and conclusions, and for emphasizing your own reflections (Keene et al. 2006:15-16; Faigley 2003:65-68).

You should also underline sentences or terms you don't understand. If these parts are essential for understanding the text you should first of all paraphrase the sentences and look up the challenging terms. If this doesn't solve your problems you should formulate specific questions and ask them in class.

GM: global strategy for gender equality.

GM: guarantees implementation of gender perspective in all areas.

Comment: is it possible to have a global strategy?

Gender Mainstreaming

Gender Mainstreaming is a globally accepted strategy for promoting gender equality. Mainstreaming is not an end in itself but a strategy, an approach, a means to achieve the goal of gender equality. / Mainstreaming involves ensuring that gender perspectives and attention to the goal of gender equality are central to all activities - policy development, research, advocacy/dialogue, legislation, resource allocation, and planning, implementation and monitoring of programmes and projects.

Date: since 1997
Who?: Assistant Secretary General
What?: assessment of GM implementation.
Where?: all UN

UN Women role
- GM: support, advise, monitor, report.

Comment: Are these useful and enough?

Since 1997 the Assistant Secretary-General and Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women has been charged with supporting and overseeing the implementation of the policy mandates. / The mandate of the Special Adviser on gender mainstreaming covers the whole United Nations system, and the role of UN Women in this respect is, of necessity, largely a supportive and advisory one. An important additional element is monitoring and reporting on progress with gender mainstreaming. The office has two professional staff dedicated to supporting gender mainstreaming.

3. What Your Teachers Expect from Your Critical Reading

Critical reading skills are more than necessary to study a Master Degree. They come in handy for fully understanding texts, for relating ideas, for connecting authors’ argumentations, and also for revising. They will also make it easier for assignments and dissertation writing.

Your teachers expect you to:

- Search for key words in texts by scanning them
- Quickly find out what texts are about by skimming them
• Have clear criteria for text selection
• Annotate the texts you read
• Discover the internal structure of the text by detecting the distribution of ideas
• Detect connecting and text distributing expressions to fully understand the relations between the different ideas presented in texts
• Adopt an intersectional gender perspective
• Identify the author’s point of view and evaluate your own.
3. HOW TO CRITICALLY READ VISUAL DOCUMENTS

1. Introduction

Good reading skills can be applied to other sorts of documents apart from written texts. In academic work we have also to deal with visual material like photographs, paintings, clips or films, as well as maps, drawings and charts. Although there are many common skills that are needed when reading both textual and visual documents, critically reading visual ones requires also some specific skills. Visual materials are very much present in our daily (academic) lives and they influence our perceptions and points of view. Even if you are not—or don’t aim to become—an expert in visual or media studies you should reflect about visual material. The use of visual support in oral presentations and written texts is widespread. Therefore we have to reflect about the effects of visual materials and use them in a critical way.

Just like written texts, visual materials are not objective or unbiased. They represent a particular perspective on a subject, topic or issue. For example, pictures do not represent reality purely or unquestionably; rather, they offer only one vision of reality, and they can even be wrongfully manipulated. In this sense, showing —representing— reality is often problematic, and it offers great opportunities for reflection. In any case, access to easy applicable software is not the only reason why visual documents are manipulated. Deleting parts of an original photograph is a practice that has been applied before: there are many examples of how photographs were changed in former times.

In addition to adopting a suspicious attitude towards visual documents, you should always take into consideration who produces the photograph, film, clip, map, etc., in which context and for what purpose. Furthermore you should be aware of the context where these materials are circulating, since it might be different from the context of production. When you show your research results with charts, maps or drawings, you should think about the possible effects these visualizations have. Be aware that just adding colorful images is not enough, reflection is a must. This is also relevant when you want to illustrate complex thinking structures.

The following descriptions and tips give some basic information on how to analyze visual images like films, photographs, etc., on the one hand, and statistical data visualized in charts, maps or drawings on the other hand.

2. Process Description and Tips

Regardless of the type of visual material you are dealing with, you should always inform yourself about the author and the date of the production/publishing. Moreover, it could be very relevant to know if currently circulating images differ from the original ones, if they are only part of the former ones, or whether they have even been altered. Notes about the source where you found the images and their particular use in a context could be also relevant for your work.

2.1. Visual Images

When you start looking at images like photographs and films you should inform yourself about whether the image has been provided by professionals or not. For example, the composition of a snapshot differs from a photo taken by an artist or press photographer. There are also different genres/types of films: educational films, documentaries, short films
or feature films. The most distributed feature films which are currently screened worldwide in different cinemas, TV channels or distributed by DVDs are blockbusters. Every genre has its specific design.

When analyzing visual documents you should focus on the cultural/ethnic/gender perspectives and stereotypes which are inherent to the images, the narration or narrator and the relevant symbols, metaphors and messages. At last you should look at the links between the images and public or academic discourses: In which way are the images linked to dominant cultural discourses or marginalized ones?

2.2. Charts, Maps and Drawings

In addition to these visual materials, there is what could be called visualized materials, *i.e.* charts, drawings and maps that are the result of visualizing data from the text they accompany or complete. In other words, intra-textual data are turned into these elements that can be easily seen and understood.

These visualizations are often classified in two groups: charts (tables, bar graphs, line graphs, pie charts and organizational charts) on the one hand, and drawings to illustrate complex issues (processes, thinking structures, research designs, etc.) on the other hand. Charts and drawings are easily produced with PC programmes. In addition, maps are another type of visual information (topographic, political, natural resources, population, weather, military, etc.) that is also often based on textual data.

This sort of visual information is always accompanied by a legend, and is always connected to the information provided in the corresponding paragraphs. When dealing with it, make sure that you are aware of the context where they are published, and that you analyze the legends by comparing them all to the respective paragraphs in the text.

All types of visualization can mislead the reader or audience if out of context or if lacking a time or space spam (or others) that is big enough. Also, be aware that often both the data collection and visualization processes fail to include important perspectives like gender, culture, class or age. You can always take these into account when carrying out the critical comment. Examples of charts, drawings and maps in handbooks might help you to get an overview about the different types (see e.g. Faigley 2003:74; 138-141).

3. What Your Teachers Expect from Your Critical Viewing

Critical viewing skills are underestimated in academic work beyond visual and media studies. But nevertheless they are important, particularly if visual sources are integrated in texts and presentations, or if argumentations are linked to them.

Your teachers expect you to:

- Identify the author of the source, the context of the production and the purpose of the visual source
- Inform about the context where you found the source
- Discover the structure of the source (*e.g.* composition of photographs; content of films)
- Reflect on the narration and message with its respective links to academic or public discourses
- Analyze the captions of photographs and legends of maps or charts
• Be aware of the particular perspectives and biases of the visual source
• Adopt an intersectional gender perspective
• Reflect on the effects which your visualization of data might have.
4. HOW TO USE ONLINE SOURCES

1. Introduction

At present, the World Wide Web (www) is the biggest information container in the world. However, while being the biggest digital library in the world, it is not as well organized as traditional libraries. Rozakies compares the Web with a garage sale (flea market). In contrast to traditional libraries, which store sources in a constant order, the rules of the web shift often (Rozakies 2007:45). Thus, in order to properly indicate the reference of the consulted website or online space, what you need to do first of all is to save the URL (or internet address) and the date of your visit, as shown in the examples:


These examples illustrate two things: First, academic sources can be found on the web and are very useful for your studies. However, as it often happens that sources are only available on the web for a limited period of time, you should save the references immediately by bookmarking the websites or adding them to your “favourites”. You can also save the web pages as pdf documents. Pdf converters are software programmes that can be downloaded for free from the web. If you are checking documents that can be downloaded, you should save them in soft and/or print them.

Second, returning to the image of the web as a “garage sale”, Rozakies emphasizes furthermore that you can find “treasures side-by-side with trash” (idem). Sources with academic standards are available along with others produced by non academics. Online sources have to be critically read just as if they were printed sources (i.e. like books, articles in journals, newspapers or magazines, etc.). In this sense, the online sources you decide to use depend on your purpose: for example, every source is worth a look if you are doing research on the topic of racial discourse in online presentations, regardless of their academic level. If you are asked to present or write on topics within academic discourses you should use sources which have references for research results or literature.

Online and digital sources allow you to copy and paste very easily. But be aware that except from quotes with their corresponding references, this method is plagiarism.

2. Useful Online Sources and Tips

There are different types of useful online sources. Some of them are treated here: search engines, encyclopaedias, mailing lists and newsgroups, dictionaries, data, specific websites, as well as public lectures and book reading online.

2.1. Search Engines

The most popular search engine (a computer programme which finds information on the www) is Google (www.google.com). To avoid wasting too much time in searching the web, you should use specific words and phrases. Otherwise you will get many irrelevant responses,
i.e. useless for your purposes. For example, you can use inverted commas to look for information on a specific chain of words. Bookmark or add to “favorites” websites or sources at which you want to have a closer look.

When searching for books on a particular research field you can also use catalogues of the most important word libraries, like the British Library: http://www.bl.uk.

2.2. Encyclopaedias

Millions of people use Wikipedia. This is an encyclopedia written collaboratively by many volunteers and edited in different languages. Although contributors criticize the accuracy of articles or missing references, the quality differs from one article to another. You will find articles written by academics or according to academic standards and articles with questionable information, inconsistencies or poor language skills. Nevertheless this encyclopedia can be useful for first information on topics and provides links to other online sources.

If you use articles from Wikipedia for academic purposes you should verify the information by other sources, which you should refer to. It is not sufficient for academic work if your presentation, essay or thesis refers to articles of Wikipedia.

Helpful encyclopedias based on academic standards are:

- Encyclopedia Britannica: http://www.britannica.com (free access is limited, free trial is possible)

2.3. Newsgroups or Mailing Lists

There are also electronic mailing lists which inform you about conference announcements, reports of workshops/conferences, book reviews or new research projects or publications on specific topics or issues. Newsgroups keep you updated about ongoing academic discourses and activities. Ask your teachers, other students, or search on the web for newsgroups which can be helpful for your studies. If there is a relevant newsgroup you are interested in, you have to subscribe to their mailing list.

Another way of getting updated information easily is through the RSS technology. This system will allow you to see in your “welcome page” (be it Google, msn, yahoo, or other) any changes that might appear in any websites you might have previously selected and linked to.

2.4. Data

It is sometimes necessary to look for updated general data on specific issues. There are websites that allow you to do so, like Atlapedia (www.atlapedia.com) or the World Fact Book (www.cia.gov/library/publications/the -world-factbook) amongst others.

2.5. Dictionaries

Online dictionaries are a good support to look up vocabulary in a very convenient way. English-English dictionaries are published by Cambridge University Press, like the Cambridge Dictionaries Online: http://dictionary.cambridge.org. Other useful dictionaries are The Free Dictionary (www.thefreedictionary.com) or Word Reference (www.wordreference.com). There are dictionary engines that allow you to look up terms in different dictionaries at the same time, like OneLook (www.onelook.com).
2.6. Reading Books and Articles Online

You will find digitized books online. They are often offered by Google Books (www.books.google.com) or Amazon (www.amazon.com). Usually you can only read parts of printed books. They cannot be downloaded or printed. Although it is indicated, you should also be aware of missing pages of the printed version. If you read books online you have to handwrite your notes or quotes. In contrast to books, articles of journals can often be printed out or be downloaded. There are journals or articles that can be accessed for free. Others can only be used by subscriptions for which you have to pay. Ask in the library to which journals the AUW is subscribed to. These subscriptions allow students free access.

2.7. Public Lectures Online

Public lectures held by well known scholars are often available on the web. They are easily found by search engines. Listening to public lectures on your topics of interest can help you to get an overview on them and the state of art of related academic discourses.

2.8. Specific Websites

There are also websites on particular issues or projects with reliable sources according to academic standards. Access to these is mostly unlimited.

Also, most private companies, public institutions, Universities, Governmental bodies, UN agencies, EU, TV channels, Radio stations, etc. have their own websites.

3. What Teachers Expect from Your Online Sources Management

Online sources are increasingly being used for academic purposes. They often provide updated information, but it is for this reason that you are expected to use them for your academic assignments and study. However, since the quality of the information the web provides differs, you should make sure you are using reliable sources.

Your teachers expect you to:

- Discriminate between reliable and unreliable sources
- Be efficient and successful in your searches
- Write down the full references of the material consulted and the date of access
- Combine, if possible, your online sources with conventional paper-published ones
- Re-elaborate definitions and ideas with your own words. Copy-paste, unless in direct formal quotes, is not an option
- Know how to properly and efficiently use online encyclopaedias, dictionaries, etc.
- Adopt an intersectional gender perspective in your source selection process
- Save relevant documents that might not be available in the future.
5. HOW TO SUMMARIZE A TEXT

1. Introduction

Summarizing texts is a very important academic skill. Summaries are found not only in book announcements, thesis or journals, but also within abstracts, articles and books. Writing book or film comments is also based on summarizing skills. Good summaries show people’s capacity to condense complex information, to discriminate main ideas from secondary ones and to rewrite (not copy!) the message of the text.

2. Process Description and Tips

Summaries are very concise texts which briefly inform about the content of longer and more complex texts. It could be said that summarizing can be done in three stages: reading, condensing information and rewriting it.

2.1. Reading

The first thing to do when summarizing a text is to attentively read the source. This will provide you with a clear idea of the structure of the text, its purpose, the ideas and data presented, and its conclusion. Take notes of them all and try to come up with the hidden structure of the discourse.

2.2. Condensing and coming up with an idea-skeleton

After you have done the analytical reading you should focus on your notes about the authors’ approach and the key information (main arguments, research results and conclusions).

After you examine your notes, try to separate main ideas from secondary ones, take out also the examples, direct quotations and references. Once you have distilled the main ideas, try to make an outline from the introduction to the conclusion. Use connectors to reflect the relations between the ideas.

2.3. Rewriting

Take the outline with the main ideas and how they are related, and try to rewrite it clearly in complete sentences.

Writing depends not only on individual writing styles but also on different perspectives which depend on your theoretical approach or your academic discipline. Bear in mind that we all have a certain way of reading. Nevertheless the key information should be paraphrased in the summary.

Once you have written the summary, ask someone to read it if you can and then ask him/her to tell you what the text is about based on your summary. This way you will be able to test your information condensation and structure. It might be also helpful to read already published summaries. Comparing these with your own summary will support you in checking if you have understood the main points. But you should also take into account that summaries can have different styles and foci on key information.
3. **What Teachers Expect from Your Summaries**

Teachers use summaries to make you practice your reading, condensing and concise writing skills. For that reason, they will check:

- Your understanding of the text
- Your ability to discriminate primary and secondary information
- Your capacity to detect the main information and the internal text structure
- Your intersectional gender-sensitivity
- Your academic writing skills, *i.e.* high register, concision, etc.
1. Introduction

Abstracts represent an important text-type in academic work. Abstracts are short presentations of final texts, which are usually used to give an idea of what readers might find in the final documents, and why it might be interesting reading them. Abstracts might include summaries of articles, papers, books, dissertations, theses, or researches, as well as a short contextualization and the purpose. Good abstracts are short and concise texts that inform readers about the approach and main points of the text in question, as well as its justification and relevance. They can include research results or main arguments and conclusions.

2. Process Description and Tips

Abstracts usually appear at the beginning of research papers, dissertations, theses, books or articles. Sometimes, abstracts are written before, and revised after the final text is finished. Other times, abstracts are written only when the bigger texts are finished.

If you are required to present an abstract of a potential paper or article, you should try to justify as much as possible its relevance (referring to the context, to the state of the art, to new events, etc.), and state your approach and intentions: What do you attempt to achieve with it?

If, on the contrary, you are writing the abstract to be included at the beginning of a document once it is finished, you should follow the following steps:

First, you should go over the main text paying special attention to the introduction (which outlines your interest in research, your approach and your links to academic discourses) and the conclusion (and its larger implications). While reading the main parts of the text, you should concentrate on the key arguments or research results which are developed in detail in the text.

Second, once you have read the text, you should write a first draft. Abstracts have a length that varies from 250 to 500 words, depending on the length of the main text. They should include some sort of context that justifies the writing of the main text, and, of course, it should show the main purpose of the text, its structure and sometimes also the methodology used and conclusions reached.

Third, you should proof read your draft. It is very helpful to ask other people who are familiar with academic work to read it. They can give you advice on how to improve it. Criticisms are useful to write an abstract in such a way that it is understandable for academics who don't have detailed information about the main topic(s) of the text, and to make sure that you haven't missed key information.

Abstracts are used to attract people’s attention, so you should make sure that you do so by making it sound interesting through appealing questions, etc.

The following two examples of published abstracts may help you to get a better idea about what you are asked to do. These examples also show that published abstracts are often accompanied by keywords.

Abstract

In this article I map out the major debates on global governance and the feminist critiques of the mainstream interventions in these debates. I argue that the shift from government to governance is a response to the needs of a gendered global capitalist economy and is shaped by struggles, both discursive and material, against the unfolding consequences of globalization. I suggest feminist interrogations of the concept, processes, practices and mechanisms of governance and the insights that develop from them should be centrally incorporated into critical revisionist and radical discourses of and against the concept of global governance. However, I also examine the challenges that the concept of global governance poses for feminist political practice, which are both of scholarship and of activism as feminists struggle to address the possibilities and politics of alternatives to the current regimes of governance. I conclude by suggesting that feminist political practice needs to focus on the politics of redistribution in the context of global governance.

KEYWORDS: democratization, feminism, global governance, markets, neoliberalism, participation, recognition, redistribution, regulation, social movements, state, women’s movements.


Abstract

Across the African continent, women’s rights have become integral to international declarations, regional treaties, national legislation, and grassroots activism. Yet there is little research on how African men have understood these shifts and how African masculinities are implicated in such changes. Drawing on a year of ethnographic research in the Ugandan capital Kampala, this article investigates how ordinary men and women in Uganda understand women’s rights and how their attitudes are tied to local conceptions of masculinity. The author argues that a new configuration of gender relations is evident in urban Uganda —one that accommodates some aspects of women’s rights while retaining previous notions of innate male authority. This article therefore illustrates the complex and often contradictory engagements with human rights that occur in local contexts and how such engagements are shaped by — and are shaping— gender relations, including conceptions of masculinity.


3. What Teachers Expect from Your Abstracts

Teachers will use abstracts to check:

- Your ability to describe your work in a concise way
• Your capability to inform about your major research results and conclusions
• Your academic writing skills, i.e. high register, concision, etc.
• Your intersectional gender-sensitivity
• Your ability to attract people’s attention through your writing.
7. HOW TO COMMENT ON SOURCES

1. Introduction

Writing comments on sources is very useful to ease your work and the work of others. It will allow you to build annotated bibliographies, which might help in source selection in future research.

2. Process Description and Tips

Commenting on sources does not require that you read and analyse in depth all its components. However, you should very well know the structure of the book, film or website, its content, key information and how it is treated, etc. To do so, your critical reading, viewing and writing skills will come in handy.

The comment should include the complete reference of the source and a short description of its content (key information and approach), as if you were writing a summary. Bear in mind that comments should show your point of view about the sources. In addition, you should add the field you will classify it under, and what the source might be useful for.

Comments should be short and concise. They should not occupy more than two thirds of a page.

3. What Teachers Expect from Your Source Comment

Teachers expect your comment to be useful. It should provide basic information about the source as well as indicate what the source might be used for.

They will check:

- Your reading and writing skills
- Your contextual knowledge about the field
- Your ability to argue from your own point of view
- Your intersectional gender-sensitivity
- Your capacity to locate key information and to respond to it.
8. HOW TO DEAL WITH REFERENCES

1. Introduction

References are data about the sources where ideas or quotes have been taken from. They are important not only because they prove the origin of the information provided and because they show that you have read and consulted other relevant sources for the topic of your article, book, dissertation, etc., but also, and particularly, because they open windows for readers who might be interested in knowing more about any of the data or ideas referred to. References allow them to look for the source, which they can consult, and so continue reflecting on a specific subject.

Academic written works MUST include accurate references intra-textually and also in a final bibliography.

2. Process Description and Tips

The best thing to do to avoid forgetting to include them is to write them down when doing your critical reading of documents. Having that sort of information available (either in notes or because you have the books and articles around) is helpful to have references included in your text for sure.

Now, how to cite or quote is a different story.

2.1. Bibliographies

Bibliographies are lists of consulted and used books that appear at the end of academic works in alphabetical order. There are different systems to do so. Generally speaking, the only norm that should be applied in this sense is that you should be CONSISTENT with regard to the format. In all cases, you should adapt to the requirements of the specific review, publishing house, university, teacher, etc. you are writing the document for. In any case, the following information is always compulsory:

Books: family name and first name of the author/s, date of publication, title of the book, place of publication and publishing house. Translator/s, if any.

Articles: family name and first name of the author/s, title of the article, first name and family name of the author of the book/ or name of journal, title of the book/journal, place and date of publication, publishing house, and pages. Translator/s, if any.

Web pages: name of the website or web page, internet address (URL) and date of access.

This can be done in different ways. The following examples are based on the requirements accepted at AUW:

Books:

Depending on the number of authors, you might opt to write them all or to add simply «et al.».


When you know the translator, you just add it at the end:


**Articles:**


**Web pages:**


UN WOMAN web site: www.unwoman.org (last visit: 10th August 2011).

If not asked for a specific type of format, it does not really matter the one you choose if (and only if) you are consistent. More detailed information about how to write references can be found in the *Guidelines for Writing Master Dissertations*.

2.2. Intra-Textual References

Intra-textual references are necessary whenever the ideas of other authors appear in the body of your text, as well as when you quote directly another author. They should always go in brackets and should include the family name of the author/s and the year of the publication: (Badri 2005). If there is more than one author, either you write the two surnames (Badri and Hoffman 2005) or you add *et al.* (which means *et alter*: “and others” in Latin): (Badri *et al.* 2005). If you are not using the first or only edition of a book or article, you should consign the date of the first edition too: (Badri [2005] 2011). If you are using a translation, the date of the original version should appear too: de Beauvoir ([1949] 2010). If the idea or the quote appears in a specific page or pages, you should indicate it too: (Badri [2005] 2011:68) or (Badri [2005] 2011:68-75).

If an author has published different documents in the same year, you should add a letter in lower case to the year. This should be also added in the complete reference in the bibliography (Badri [2005a] 2011; Badri 2005b).

Quotes are literal words from another document. For that reason they should always appear between inverted commas and nothing in them should be altered. If you need to change the case (upper or lower) to make it correct when including it in your text, use [-] to mark the change. For example: ... Abbas said that “[w]omen’s status should be improved in Sudan” (Abbas 2001:25).

Quotes should be short and specific. If you are quoting a longer paragraph, it should be justified and it should be written in the text as an independent indented paragraph. Don’t abuse using quotes.
2.3. Footnotes and Endnotes

Footnotes and endnotes are comments made by the author to clarify or complete information that appears in the main text. They are called footnotes if they appear at the bottom of the pages, and endnotes if they do so at the end of the document.

They can be used to indicate the references too, instead of providing them intra textually. At present, footnotes are preferred to endnotes, and references are commonly given intra textually. In any case, the list of references should appear at the end.

3. What Teachers Expect from Your References

Teachers expect you to provide complete and accurate references of all the documents you have consulted and used. Through them they want to check:

- Your ability to look for relevant documents
- Your scientific maturity
- Your intersectional gender-sensitivity in the source selection process
- Your honesty in providing all necessary references whenever you are using someone else’s ideas
- Your consistency in formatting.
9. HOW TO WRITE AN ESSAY

1. Introduction

In a Master Degree level you will be asked to write essays on the different topics discussed in the various courses you attend. Writing essays might be difficult at the beginning, but once you are familiarized with the process, this will change.

Essays are texts written in a high register that offer conclusions based on personal reflections through sophisticated arguments. These arguments, which are often exposed either in a dialectic way or showing the different perspectives on the matter, are based on different sources and data.

For this reason, when asked to write an essay, you are expected to introduce the topic, to provide information about the different views of it, to present arguments that support or challenge these views, and to come up with a conclusion that reflects your justified personal view.

This will require from you not only looking for the sources and consulting them, but also a previous reflection about the main question(s) you want to/are asked to deal with in connection with the topic.

In short, writing essays implies thinking, planning, reading, drafting, writing, formatting and revising.

2. Process Description and Tips

Similarly, the process of writing essays can be divided into seven stages:

2.1. Thinking

Just like, when travelling, knowing your destination, the possible stops in the way and the means of transport available is needed, when writing essays you need to know what main question(s) you are required to answer, what other people have answered before according to their points of view and what might be lacking or particularly challenging in the arguments they have used.

2.2. Planning

TIME: Reading, drafting, writing, formatting and revising takes time, thus the first think you need to do is organize yourself to be able to meet the deadline. You might find this difficult the first time, but after you have done your first Master level essay, you will know the amount of time you need to finish the whole process. Failure to turn in essays by the deadline might mean that your essay is not accepted. Deadlines are of high importance.

SOURCES: A first research for sources will help you to know what documents, books, reports, etc. are available. Your teachers might have provided you with a list of references for you to consult. It is wise to follow their advice. However, it is always good to go to the library or to navigate the web on your own in order to look for more materials. Remember that quality is not equivalent to quantity. Try to choose relevant source texts that help you to reflect on the questions to be answered and that provide you with arguments for the different points of view that you want to present in your essay.

To organize your reading, it is a good idea to make use of book reviews and abstracts, as well as text skimming and scanning. Book reviews and abstracts are often available online
and will help you to have a general idea of the content of references, be them books or articles in journals, while skimming and scanning will help you to get a direct and quick idea of whether texts you might have chosen in a first selection will really suit your needs.

2.3. Reading

Reading at Master level has to be comprehensive and productive, *i.e.* it has to be done bearing in mind the main question you want to answer in your essay, and also, the different views that might exist on the topic you are dealing with.

Applying *critical reading* tools, such as underlining, note-taking, reference checking, etc. is wise at this stage. It will help you not only to absorb information by focusing on the key points presented in the text but also to assess the arguments of the author/s through your own criticisms or comments on them. Write down everything that comes to your mind when you come across the author/s’ points of view. This way you will clearly differentiate between his/her/their ideas and yours, which might coincide or not. In reality, reading is thinking, so the more you read the more you will understand and the more ideas you will come up with. However, endless reading does not guarantee a perfect essay. The world cannot be explained in one essay. For this reason, always keep in mind the question(s) you want to answer.

Don’t forget to write complete and accurate references of the texts you read.

2.4. Drafting

Once you have all the relevant information in your head, you need to organize it by drafting an outline. Clear concepts related to the topic are a must, so make sure you have them all in mind. All essays start with a short introduction that should include the main question to be answered, a brief and general state of the art and a clear explanation of how the essay is structured. Bear in mind that you might have to rewrite the introduction because writing also implies thinking, and you might see yourself changing the structure of the essay while you write. This is fine, as long as the final structure is properly explained in the introduction. The same thing might happen after you write the conclusion of the essay, as it should be linked to the introduction also.

The main part of the essay should include the key points on the topic and the different theoretical positions and/or empirical arguments put to the fore by the authors and/or sources consulted. Make sure you write the corresponding references and that you properly relate and contextualize the different ideas shown. You are also expected to offer your reasoned point of view in this part.

The conclusion should go back to the main question(s) you are required to answer and which opened the introduction. You should also summarize the main standpoints and the corresponding criticisms, including your own. A clear and final answer to the main question(s) should be provided.

2.5. Writing

Drafting is the only way to combat what could be called the “blank page syndrome”, which is connected to our desire to come up with a perfect and final version at our first attempt. The outline and the drafting of the main ideas as you think of them for the first time will provide you with material to start writing the essay (which will be in itself a draft too, though a more complete one, until you decide it is the final version).

Writing is putting your ideas into words, which is also an intellectual challenge. A clear presentation of the different notions and standpoints requires a high register wording that does not lead to confusion, that does not provide the reader with useless information and that
is not lacking accuracy. This means that sentences have to be clear, concise and efficient, and that statements have to be properly and wisely interrelated through connectors. Paragraph organization and subheading might help you to present the information according to the structure you designed when making the outline, as well as in a logical progression. Try to limit your paragraphs to one main point.

With regard to language, two things should be taken into account: first, the way we write reflects the way we think. In this sense, we should be aware of the stereotypes and connotations that either particular words or wordings might reflect. Sensitive language should be used by avoiding terms and expressions linked to sexism, racism, etc. And second, styles are directly related to text-types. Essays are to be written in an academic neutral language, with adequate terminology and precise referencing, both when alluding to a particular idea or datum, and when quoting directly from secondary sources. Class notes and people’s comments are not secondary sources.

The essay should be properly written but in your own words. Quoting is good but excessively quoting and referring to other sources destroys the purpose of the essay, which is to show your own funded opinion on a particular topic. All data have to be proved by references and should, of course, be relevant to the argument. Tables and illustrations should only be included if their content is discussed in the essay.

Essays should have a cover page (with the title, the name of the author, the name of the course, the name of the teacher, the date and the batch, as well as the name of the Institute), a table of contents, a body of text and a bibliography. Remember that the body of text should include a short introduction at the beginning and a short conclusion at the end.

Bibliographies have to include all sources referred to or quoted in the essay. A list of tables and illustrations, if any, should also appear.

2.6. Formatting

There are many standards for essay formatting. Any of these can be followed. The most important thing is that you follow one and stick to it throughout the text, i.e. that you are consistent. The RIGDPR follows the ones selected by the AUW.

The most important thing is to show a text that is easy and nice to read. Essays have to be neatly typed (if possible), with the same font and font size (usually Times New Roman 12), margins and space between lines (1.5) and paragraphs all along the text (paragraphs should be at least indented). The text has to be justified, and you are expected to revise the consistency of your formatting decisions (use of italics, underlining, bold, spelling system, etc.). Pages have to be numbered (except for the cover page). The titles in the table of contents have to coincide with the ones in the text.

For more detailed information, consult the last chapter of the Guidelines for Writing Master Dissertations.

2.7. Revising

Revising is as important as any of the previous stages of the process. It is the check point for the essay. It should be used to check the strength of your arguments, the consistency in your use of the terminology. You should also test whether you have provided an answer to the main question, whether complex notions are understandable and properly used, whether the text says what you want it to say, and whether the text is coherent in its logical structure and cohesive in the wording of the ideas. It will also help you to see spelling and punctuation mistakes, layout inconsistencies, etc.
Leaving the text “to sleep” for some time and reading it afterwards is a good strategy to become more critical with our own work. Asking someone to read your essay to check whether it is clear and fluent enough might also be a very good idea.

3. **What Teachers Expect from Your Essay**

   Teachers use essays as intellectual practice for the students but also as assessment tools. Through them they want to check:
   
   - Your ability to manage your time and meet the deadlines.
   - Your control of the concepts related to the topic
   - Your analytical capabilities
   - Your intersectional gender-sensitivity
   - Your ability to organize ideas and relate them logically and coherently
   - Your capacity to show a critical standpoint on the topic —*i.e.* answering the main question(s)— and to justify it/them rationally through reasoned arguments
   - Your ability to extract and use key points from complex texts
   - Your writing skills, which should include efficient, clear, adequate and correct writing
   - Your wisdom when selecting relevant readings
   - Your accuracy when referencing
   - Your consistency in formatting.
10. HOW TO PREPARE AND DELIVER ORAL PRESENTATIONS

1. Introduction

Along your life, you will be asked in many occasions to prepare and deliver oral presentations, be it in your academic or professional life (class presentations, project defences, conferences, etc.). If you are not used to doing it, it might appear to you as a very challenging activity, especially if you don’t like speaking in public very much. And even if you have done it before, it might appear to you as something difficult.

Oral presentations are good when speakers capture and maintain the attention of the audience, if they offer clear information on the topic to be presented and if they manage to get from the audience what they are looking for (you might want the audience to accept your argument, to understand difficult concepts, to believe you, to join a particular cause, to act in a particular way, to elicit new questions, etc.).

For this reason, the preparation of both the text to be followed and the visuals to be used, in addition to the delivery itself are relevant.

Since preparing oral presentations is so challenging, it would be a good idea to use other skills that you might have already acquired, like critical reading and viewing.

2. Process Description and Tips

The process of preparing and delivering oral presentations can be divided into three stages:

2.1. Preparation of the Discourse

There are three main factors that have to be considered in connection with oral presentations: LOGOS, ETHOS, PATHOS. These three Greek terms refer to reason/language, character/spirit, passion/emotions respectively. According to the Greek philosopher Aristotle (4th century B.C.), these three factors compose the practice of rhetorics, i.e. public speeches. According to this, you should know what you want to transmit, the wording of the idea, who you are and what is expected from you, and also the characteristics of the audience, since it is to their reason and emotions to which you are appealing.

Based on this idea, the preparation of the discourse could be divided into different phases in a sort of circle.

LOGOS: The most important thing at this stage is to have a clear idea of what you want to transmit. It is useful to make an outline in which you think about the number of parts of the presentation and their content. In this sense, it is obvious that there should be some sort of introduction before the main body of the information, and a conclusion after it.

With regard to the introduction, it is important that you use it to capture the attention of the audience, so try to use some interesting anecdote, a relevant quote, a joke, an example related to their life, impressive data or a question. Use it also to clarify the topic of your speech/presentation and try to share with your audience the structure of your talk. If there are different speakers, clarify who will present each part. If you have not been introduced, do so briefly. This way they will follow you more easily.

With regard to the body of the speech, follow a clear pattern when exposing your views or the information. It will help your audience if you:
• Explain acronyms
• Give easy figures in relative terms and make comparisons so that they can fully understand what they mean
• Give examples.

With regard to the conclusion, try to go back to your introduction to make it a circular thinking. Use this chance to raise a question, to ask for the participation of the audience and their commitment to your cause, etc. The end of the presentation should not be the end of your project, but a starting point for the audience, who are now affected by your message and hopefully interested in the discussion or topic you raised.

To make it easier for them to follow you during the presentation it is good if you use visual support.

2.2. Preparation of the Visuals

Bear in mind that it is SUPPORT ONLY: when you prepare your power point presentation you should not write complete paragraphs for the audience to read. They will do it so quickly and badly that they will not be able to pay attention to what you say. Use the slides for key words, figures, statistics, pictures, schemes and structures. Leave the explanations for yourself.

2.3. Delivery

ETHOS: You probably know yourself, your strengths and your weaknesses. Try to focus on your abilities and get the most of them when writing and delivering the speech. How the audience members are is also important. It is not the same to talk to a 15-year old audience than to do it to a group of experts, so try to adapt your paper to the expectations and capabilities of your public. Bear in mind that who you are, or whether you are known or not for the audience, plays an important role in the whole process. You need to connect with them, so make sure you also know their ethos, their character, and their expectations. It will help if you meet them. Certain resources (like jokes or anecdotes) might not be appropriate for all audiences. Taken the ethos into account, you will be able to decide whether certain strategies might work or not.

PATHOS: Appealing to the audience’s emotions is a key factor when delivering good speeches. First of all, you need to attract and keep their attention for the whole session. Secondly, your ideas will reach the audience better if you deliver them passionately. For this you have different resources: your voice and your body language.

Train yourself before the presentation. Read the paper out loud several times to check the time limits and to revise your security. Use the hard copy to mark where you should stop for a longer time, where you should go slowly, where you should name series of things, etc. Use your intonation to give life to the text (to show anger, surprise, sadness, happiness, seriousness, etc.). When delivering the presentation, avoid cliché words (ianiii, like, etc.) and lacks of language (aaah, eeeeh, mmmmmhh, etc.), use connector and discourse markers to help you organize your speech. Always try to stick to academic languages. We all feel the temptation to speak in a more colloquial way than we write. Presentations are serious communication scenarios, and your register should be high. Avoid, then, colloquial expressions.

With regard to your body, don’t dance while you talk. Use your hand and arms to point, to mark stress, to clarify ideas, etc. Look at the audience as much as you can so that they feel included in your vision scope and stay attentive. Try to avoid touching your hair, glasses,
scarf, necklace, watch or tobe all the time. It shows how nervous you are and it can distract the attention of the audience. Instead, hold a pen, a pointer or some hard note cards: this will help you to have your hands occupied while showing confidence at the same time.

3. What Your Teachers Expect from Your Presentation

Teachers use oral presentations as intellectual practice for students but also as assessment tools. Through them they want to check:

- Your control of the topic
- Your information organizing skills
- Your ability to attract and keep the audience’s attention
- Your intersectional gender-sensitivity
- Your wit
- Your ability to take the audience needs into account when preparing the paper
- Your solidity when addressing an audience
- Your control of your body language and voice
- Your correct use of visual support.
11. HOW TO PREPARE (FOR) DEBATES

1. Introduction

Debating might end up being part of your professional life, as it certainly is of your academic life. Debates happen in private informal gatherings (e.g. at dinners, etc.), but they also take place at your workplace or in public spaces like conferences, political meetings, TV, etc. In all cases, participants are required to show and defend their ideas based on reason and data, avoiding using only personal emotions as a strategy to persuade the counterpart, instead of using arguments. There are different kinds of debates, depending on the number of participants, the presence of experts, the topics or the purpose.

Debates can take place between two people or groups, or they can be multi-debates, with more participants (be them individuals or groups of people). In some cases, the audience can just listen to the discussion; in other cases, audiences are invited to participate with questions or comments. As academic exercises, they can be used to ask students to defend one particular idea, whether they really share it or not.

With regard to the topic, it can be a very specific one (e.g. views pro and against abortion), or it can be a general position on many issues (e.g. political agendas).

Your critical reading and writing skills, as well as oral communication skills, will be necessary to get ready for the debate.

2. Process Description and Tips

You can be asked to organize a debate or to participate in one. The steps to be taken are different.

2.1. When Preparing a Debate

When preparing a debate, the first thing you need to do is deciding and delimiting the topic, as well as the type of debate and its structure (turns, time for speaking, moderator, etc.). You need to look for a venue and to make sure it is ready and properly furnished for it. You also have to prepare a list of participants, contact them to invite them and check their attendance. Preparing a nice announcement as well of some marketing strategies might attract more people to attend it, either as participants or audience.

2.2. When Preparing for a Debate

When preparing for a debate, the first thing you need to do is to find out the topic, the type of debate, its structure and the venue. It might also be a good idea to know who the other participants are.

Once you find out all this information, you have to inform yourself of the state of the art on the topic, to prepare your arguments in notes and to organize a nice data folder.

If you are only part of the audience, it is good to think of possible questions for the participants.

When preparing your arguments, you should use logical strategies and methodologies. Contrasting, deducting, inducting, relating, etc. are your basic tools. Examples can be used to make your points clearer. Data should always be provided both in absolute and relative terms.
Moderators usually present the topic and introduce the participants. During the debate, they are responsible for the turn-taking and the time limits. Moderators are often expected to provide a brief conclusion at the end of the debate.

In all debates there are openings by all participants in turns. If you are given the chance to start, you should divide your contribution into three parts: short introduction, body and precise conclusion.

If you are required to reply to someone else’s argument, you have to either criticize it or support it based on reasoned arguments (contrastive/supportive data, different/similar logical arguing, diverse/same approach to the topic, etc.).

It goes without saying that rules are to be respected. Also, the participants’ opinions and arguments, no matter how much they might differ from yours, should be listened to and respected. The reply turn can be used to contradict them if necessary.

Oral communication skills are put to the fore in debates necessarily. Attentive listening is a must, but you should also take into account body language, intonation, and other public speaking strategies in order to sound more convincing.

3. What Your Teachers Expect from Your Debate

Debates are not only used to gather comprehensive information on a topic, but also to practice and make use of your reasoned thinking and your communication skills.

Your teachers expect you to:

- Organize, announce, carry out and evaluate the debate in a serious and caring way
- Inform yourself about the state of the art
- Gather relevant data and good examples
- Adopt an intersectional gender perspective
- Develop reasoned arguments that support your points
- Respect the other participants’ opinions and arguments
- Easily react to the other participants’ comments with reasoned counter-arguments
- Attentively listen and come up with intelligent questions for the participants.
12. HOW TO WORK IN TEAMS

1. Introduction

Being able to teamwork is not only good and necessary for academic purposes, but also probably unavoidable in your current or future professional life. Despite its service, it is often challenging, since it implies working with people who might have very different views on how to work and what to do.

It might be that you are familiar with them. This can be an advantage, either because you know your weaknesses and strengths already, because you get along or because you are already used to each other’s working habits. However, it can also be a disadvantage, because you do not get along, because you might expect both of you to adapt to your standard roles or because it might not be as enriching as you expected because you already know what the other one thinks.

It can also happen to you that you are required to teamwork with someone you just met. This has many advantages, because what the other one has to offer is a surprise for you, and that is stimulating. However, it can also be that some of you do not feel very comfortable at the beginning, and this might consume some time.

In any case, it is usually a very enriching process. If you think about it, it actually reflects how we really work, even when we believe to be doing so on our own, because in some way or another, we normally look for feedback. Team working provides you direct and immediate feedback. It works as a creative machine, in which the result is hardly ever what you imagined on your own at the beginning.

2. Process Description and Tips

Team working is a social activity, thus it requires social skills. The first thing to do is make sure you know your group. Introduce yourselves if it is the first time you work together, exchange your contact details if necessary.

The second thing to do is connected to pure management. Make sure you all understand what the assignment or the purpose of your teamwork is. Organize yourselves by quickly defining a time schedule, and choose one or two note-takers.

It is usually very useful to have a short brainstorming session. It might be illuminating, and it is also a good way to see how each of you is (more active, more passive, more creative, more pragmatic, etc.). If you are able to divide the work in small tasks, agree on the task distribution, timing, methodology (work system), etc., and decide when to meet next. Be aware that some people might have very tight agendas, so be responsible to turn in assignments on time and to make the most of each work session. In the meantime it is necessary that you communicate with each other in a sort of common follow-up. That way you will make sure that you are all working properly, and you will be able to share your partial results, which will guarantee that you all have a more comprehensive overview, and avoid duplicating efforts.

When people have particular skills, take into account when distributing the tasks. However, you should try that all members of the team are confronted with new challenges.

If you have to work together all the way through, that is another story.
Teamwork forces people to properly argue and defend their ideas, as well as to think collaboratively. You are always dependent on the rest of the group just as much as they depend on each other and on you. It is important that you share your ideas, but it is as important that you drop them when they are clearly not accepted, no matter how convinced you might be of your argument. The best way is usually to combine your suggestions and points of view by looking at the common grounds. This flexibility is needed from everyone. You might be allowed to show that the group does not agree in some conclusions. In that case, explain what the disagreements are.

Generally speaking, discussions might be eternal. To avoid the risk of running out of time, try to make the work fluent by reaching conclusions and writing them now.

Teamwork requires the efforts of all members of the team. Should it happen that one member is not working as expected, make sure you remind him/her of it. If that does not work, just keep working but do not include the name of this person in the final version of your assignment, presentation, etc. Of course this is a very drastic option, so take it as a last resource. Make sure you do your best to contact and involve this person.

Also, try to mediate when a discussion is going too far. A good work atmosphere is essential.

3. What Your Teachers Expect from Your Teamwork

Teamwork means cooperative work, so your final result should show that. All members of the teams shall be responsible for any of the parts of the work.

Your teachers expect (you) to:

- Present a better result that if you were working alone, so make sure it is an enriching experience
- Manage your team work in a responsible and reliable way
- Adopt an intersection gender attitude towards your colleagues, opponents and work
- Reach a common conclusion that is the result of proper negotiations
- Present your disagreements, if any, on any particular topic
- Overcome disagreements, and show an open minded attitude towards differing points of view, be them related to the content, its presentation or the way work should be organized
- Present your conclusions in a consistent and common way —term, format and framework wise—. This is compatible with the fact that conclusions can be presented in very different ways.
13. SUPPORT MATERIAL ON HOW TO…


² Available at the Resource and Documentation Centre at the RIGDPR
³ Available at the Central Library at AUW (shelf mark: 378.198 ELL)
⁴ Available at the Central Library at AUW (shelf mark: 808.042 FAI)
⁵ Available at the Resource and Documentation Centre at the RIGDPR
⁶ Available at the Central Library at AUW (shelf mark: 808.042 KEE)
⁷ Available at the Resource and Documentation Centre at the RIGDPR
⁸ Available at the Central Library at AUW (shelf mark: 808.042 WHO)
⁹ Available in DVD at the Resource and Documentation Centre at the RIGDPR
¹⁰ Available at the Resource and Documentation Centre at the RIGDPR
PART II

STUDY TIPS\textsuperscript{11}

\textbf{0. Introduction}

This part includes the activities that will help students reflect on the study recommendations connected to the following areas: motivation, time, communication, class notes, resources, reading, thinking, memory, assignments and tests and health. It also includes tips for each of these sections.

These activities are to be undertaken within the seminar to be offered to new Master students at the RIGDPR during the first month of class at the beginning of each academic year, preferably when they have already had one or two sessions of class. Seminar instructors are to facilitate all the activities and to go over the tips with the students. The \textit{Instructions for Teachers} have also been prepared and are available in soft for instructors.

The objectives of the seminar are that students:

1. Recognize their involvement in the teaching-learning process
2. Acknowledge and take responsibility of their study techniques
3. Acquire and/or improve study-related skills, so that they can apply them to their own cases
4. Learn to use all human and material resources available for them at the RIGDPR and AUW.

\textsuperscript{11} This material has been prepared by Dr. Katharina Hoffmann (visiting lecturer at the RIGDPR from the University of Oldenburg) and Dr. Nuria Brufau Alvira (full time lecturer at the RIGDPR). Their work in this part II is partially based on the book by Dave Ellis ([1998]2003), from which they have adapted some parts, like the discovery wheel and most of the tips. All the activities have been designed by them personally. Ellis, Dave ([1998]2003) \textit{Becoming a Master Student}, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. It can be found at Al Hafeed Library under the shelf mark 378.198 ELL.
1. MOTIVATION

1. Answer the following questions:

   a. Why did you join the Master?

   b. What for?

   c. Why did you choose a Master on Gender Studies?

   d. Have you ever felt frustrated whether personally, academically or professionally?

   e. What strategies do you use to overcome these frustrations?

   f. Do you ever imagine your future?

   g. Do you ever think of your success stories in the past, whether personal, academic or professional?

   h. Have you rewarded yourself for them in any way?

MOTIVATION TIPS:

- Think of the personal and professional advantages of acquiring a master level.
- Think of what you have already achieved. You will feel more confident to face new challenges.
- Discuss your feelings towards the master in an honest way with your colleagues and teachers. They might be feeling like you. Try to encourage each other.
- Don’t interpret your teachers’ comments as destructive criticism, but as constructive help to make the most of your academic qualities.
- Volunteer for activities and tasks you are good at. It might remind you how valuable you are.
- Don’t measure yourself in comparison to others but to your own personal development goals. On the contrary, be aware of the richness of sharing your classroom with people with different views and abilities. You can all learn from each other.
2. TIME MANAGEMENT

1. Fill in the week schedule provided.

2. Spot time blocks for the following topics (use colours if you want):
   a. Study
   b. Rest
   c. Family
   d. Work
   e. Self Care
   f. Time gaps

3. Are these blocks proportionate? If so, think of ways of restructuring them (try to see your time gaps as opportunities to study).

### TIMETABLE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>SATURDAY</th>
<th>SUNDAY</th>
<th>MONDAY</th>
<th>TUESDAY</th>
<th>WEDNESDAY</th>
<th>THURSDAY</th>
<th>FRIDAY</th>
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</table>
3. COMMUNICATION

1. Draw what the instructor is reading for you:
   a. 
   b. 
   c. 

TIME MANAGEMENT TIPS:
- Schedule fixed blocks of time.
- Make lists of tasks.
- "Filter" tasks before scheduling them.
- Include time for errands and other responsibilities.
- Schedule time for fun.
- Set realistic goals.
- Allow flexibility in your schedule.
- Study two hours for every hour of class.
- Avoid scheduling marathon study sessions.
- Set clear starting and stopping times.
- Plan for the unexpected.
- Involve others when appropriate.
- Back up to a bigger picture.
COMMUNICATION TIPS:

- Pay attention in class, especially when teachers are giving instructions, deadlines, and other organizational information and write it down.
- Check your email every day to see whether there are any organization changes.
- Listen carefully to your teachers and classmates.
- When you make comments out loud, use the time you are given, but not more. You are not alone in the class. More people might want to participate.
- Participate in class. Your opinions may be of great interest for your colleagues. It might also be a good way to continue reflecting on a particular topic, and to improve your English-speaking skills if necessary.
- Don’t be afraid to make mistakes or ask questions. Don’t feel bad. Classes are spaces where you should feel safe. You are there to learn. No one expects you to know everything already.
- Be concise.
- Raise your voice so that everyone can hear you.
- When working in groups, make sure you understand the tasks you are supposed to complete, try to organize yourselves at the beginning by distributing the tasks.
- When writing the conclusions down or coming up with a result, be open-minded. Think that the more people that participate, the richer the product.
- Be nice when expressing your different opinions. Never take it personally. Try to put yourself in your colleagues’ shoes.
- Don’t get stuck at disagreements. Try alternative ways, and consider including all the perspectives. They might be more compatible or complementary than you think.
- Make sure that you revise the work results of your group together at the end.
- Be aware that there are standard ways of addressing other people. Be polite, and correct. When you contact teachers, make sure that you can explain clearly what you need. Always sign your letters, emails and sms.
4. NOTE TAKING

1. Invent small drawings or symbols or abbreviations for the following terms:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Drawing/Symbol/Abbreviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Power</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>President</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woman</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Racism</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Beginning</td>
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<tr>
<td>End</td>
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<tr>
<td>Because</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evolution</td>
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<tr>
<td>Man</td>
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<td>Development</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Governance</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
NOTE TAKING TIPS:

- Look at your teacher. Pay attention to your teacher’s words, body language and blackboard writing. S/he might be stressing specific ideas, and you might want to note that.
- When you take notes, get just the ideas. Don’t try to write complete sentences, unless absolutely necessary (complex concepts, titles, etc.).
- Pay special attention to the connection of the ideas, the titles of the sessions, and the essential readings referred to in class.
- Choose symbols that you can use to remind yourself that you disagree with something, you don’t understand something, you lack information about something, etc.
- Use contractions of your own to save time when note-taking. This is especially useful to give priority to notions over words.
- Use different colours if you can. They might help you distinguish categories. Timelines, if possible, are also very useful. They will allow you to follow the evolution of events or ideas.
- Revise your notes within 24 hours after the lecture if possible.
- Make sure you fill the gaps, and find answers to the questions you indicated during the lecture, or you might have when revising. Remember to consult other sources or to ask your mates in your working group or in the next lecture.
- Compare your notes with your classmates in your working group.

5. RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

1. Answer the following questions about references 1-4:

   a. Who wrote it?
   b. When was it written?
   c. Is it an article or a book?
   d. What’s its title?
   e. Who published it?
   f. Where was it published?
   g. In what pages can I find it inside the book (if applicable)?


**RESOURCE MANAGEMENT TIPS:**

- Visit the University Library and the Resource Centre at the RIGDPR as often as possible. Even walking around the shelves might help you to find new sources.
- Make sure you are able to find material on a specific topic. Finding documents (books, journals, etc.) in a library or resource centre is usually done following standard procedures, like asking or checking for shelf marks, going to topic-locations, etc.
- Going through books and articles might help you to come up with new ideas, or perspectives on a particular topic.
- Remember to write down the references of all consulted documents. It might seem a boring task, but it saves a lot of time at future stages.
- Interchange your materials and findings within your work group.
- Make sure you consult relevant information sources on the web. There is so much to select from that it is important to know that you are checking reliable sources.
- Save your online documents with their reference. Remember they might disappear.
- Use the reference lists provided by your teachers. Ask for extra references if necessary.
1. Practice your critical reading skills with the following text:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender Mainstreaming</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gender Mainstreaming is a globally accepted strategy for promoting gender equality. Mainstreaming is not an end in itself but a strategy, an approach, a means to achieve the goal of gender equality. Mainstreaming involves ensuring that gender perspectives and attention to the goal of gender equality are central to all activities - policy development, research, advocacy/ dialogue, legislation, resource allocation, and planning, implementation and monitoring of programmes and gender projects.

Since 1997 the Assistant Secretary-General and Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women has been charged with supporting and overseeing the implementation of the policy mandates. The mandate of the Special Adviser on gender mainstreaming covers the whole United Nations system, and the role of UN Women in this respect is, of necessity, largely a supportive and advisory one. An important additional element is monitoring and reporting on progress with gender mainstreaming. The office has two professional staff dedicated to supporting gender mainstreaming.

UN Women website: http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/gendermainstreaming.htm (accessed on the 26th of September 2011)

Also, write down the general structure of the text:
READING TIPS:

- Always have pen and paper with you when you read.
- Always have complete dictionaries, whether in soft or in hard, when you read. Pocket dictionaries may be good to carry, but they will not solve most of your understanding challenges.
- Check encyclopedias and glossaries for particular notions (they are seldom explained in dictionaries).
- Make sure that you always carry readings with you, so that you can benefit from unexpected “pockets” of time.
- Before you start reading, have a look at the text in order to get a general overview (title, author, date of publication, length, sections, layout, etc.).
- Ask yourself questions about the topic of the reading. How much do you know about it? A short brainstorming might come in handy.
- Be aware of the goal of your reading. What are you looking for? Specific data, general notions, deep reflections and arguments, etc.?
- Make sure you understand key information in one paragraph before you proceed to the next one.
- Write down words or notes in the margins on the information obtained from that paragraph or the questions or comments it has elicited from you.
- Write down your comments and questions in your own words. It is an important step for understanding.
- Underline, circle, etc. important sentences, dates, connectors or key words. They will help you to draw a schedule of the information organization in the text.
- Use page markers to indicate where relevant information is.
- It is a very good idea to draw a schedule of the information in the text. Use the back of the page, or a piece of paper that you can attach to your document. Big page markers can also be used to write down the vocabulary and your brief schedules.
- Take care of the materials. The ones you get from the library are there to be used for ever by many people.
- Make sure you write down the references, just in case.
## 7. THINKING

### 1. Connect these thinking strategies with their corresponding names:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thinking Strategy</th>
<th>Induction</th>
<th>Deduction</th>
<th>Comparison</th>
<th>Conclusion</th>
<th>Causes</th>
<th>Brainstorming</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Power, control, rule, access, accountability, money, contacts, resources, advantages, decision making, etc.</td>
<td>Induction</td>
<td>Deduction</td>
<td>Comparison</td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>Causes</td>
<td>Brainstorming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is widely recognized that societies in which traditional gender roles are highly fixed, the risks for the following are also high: legal discrimination, gender pay gap, gender based violence.</td>
<td>Induction</td>
<td>Deduction</td>
<td>Comparison</td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>Causes</td>
<td>Brainstorming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This is the reversibility test. If something applies to one sex in social terms, it should also be applicable to the other. If it does in reality, there is equality, if not, there isn’t. Thus, if women cannot drive in certain societies (whether by legal prohibition or by social censorship), there is not equality in that country.</td>
<td>Induction</td>
<td>Deduction</td>
<td>Comparison</td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>Causes</td>
<td>Brainstorming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are two basic forms of discrimination: direct (e.g. female street decency code, male military conscription) and indirect (e.g. in a country were women are not allowed to practice sports, all citizens can participate in the Olympic games).</td>
<td>Induction</td>
<td>Deduction</td>
<td>Comparison</td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>Causes</td>
<td>Brainstorming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You: Basically, I’m just saying that education was important to Mary. Friend: So what? You: Well, it was important because it was a key to her feeling like a free and equal citizen. Friend: Why should anybody care? You: That’s important because in her country different powerful groups were trying to keep women from being educated so that they could maintain control. When Mary obtained an education, she undermined that control personally. Friend: Fair enough. Education is always empowering.</td>
<td>Induction</td>
<td>Deduction</td>
<td>Comparison</td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>Causes</td>
<td>Brainstorming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’ve noticed that countries where women are not allowed to drive are usually called countries with inequalities. I guess that societies in which only men must go to war must also be called unequal. All women are peaceful.</td>
<td>Induction</td>
<td>Deduction</td>
<td>Comparison</td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>Causes</td>
<td>Brainstorming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender based violence, which includes partner or ex-partner battering, rape, sexual aggression or hassling, insults, etc. is mostly due to strong beliefs in traditional gender roles and lack of women’s empowerment. It might also be related to a history of violence (whether physical or other) on the part of the aggressor.</td>
<td>Induction</td>
<td>Deduction</td>
<td>Comparison</td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>Causes</td>
<td>Brainstorming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whereas suffragists used moderate means of fight for the right to vote for women, suffragettes adopted much more aggressive means to attract political attention on the suffrage campaign.</td>
<td>Induction</td>
<td>Deduction</td>
<td>Comparison</td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>Causes</td>
<td>Brainstorming</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THINKING TIPS:

- Brainstorm as often as possible. Ideas that are apparently disconnected might have relevant connections under your perspective.
- Don’t be afraid to brainstorm in group. Idea interchange is a very healthy exercise and it will stimulate your thinking.
- Always carry a notebook with you to write down ideas that come to you in unexpected moments.
- Use the time you spend in mechanical tasks to free think of different topics.
- Don’t be afraid of trying to see specific data from different perspectives. Contradictory thinking is part of your reflection.
- Read your notes and materials many times. The same texts might mean differently to you depending on your experience, context, acquired knowledge, etc.
- Ask yourself questions all the time. Critical thinking means asking and answering questions. Get into the habit.
- Don’t expect to answer all questions, or in a definite way. Different perspectives might make many answers possible at the same time. You just have to choose one and argue for your choice.
- Write down while you think. That way you will capture your ideas (they are slippery sometimes), you will slow your thinking process and you will think more precisely. It will also show you where your argumentation gaps are.
- Don’t feel bad to change your opinion on matters. That’s part of the process, and maybe also its result.
- Look for reasons, causes, influences, similarities, consequences.
- Describe, contextualize, exemplify, generalize, compare, contrast, put in order, relate, connect, judge, reject, induct, deduct, explain, conclude.
1. Try to memorize the following lists. Test yourself. Now reflect on your memorizing process.

- First feminisms of the second wave: liberal, socialist, radical, cultural.
- Politics towards multiculturalism: integration, assimilation, othering, domination.
- French Revolution: 1789.
- Sufragists: the Grimke sisters, Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Elisabeth Pankhurst, Lucy Stone.

2. What methods or tricks have you used (writing down, looking for connections, etc.?)

**MEMORY MANAGEMENT TIPS:**

- Exercise your memory as much as possible (with little things like the timetable, course topics, notions, dates, the names of your mates, etc.). The more you memorize, the better you will memorize.
- Create associations (between ideas, names and faces, dates and events, etc.).
- Use acronyms.
- Count the number of bullet points to be recalled.
- Draw schedules: visual memory is powerful.
- Use your imagination to visualize events, contexts, etc.
- Try to memorize when you are relaxed. Ideas will fix much better.
- Never memorize the night before tests. Knowledge is best fixed when you sleep, but not on the day before the test.
- Repeat things out loud. Your oral memory will function then too. Actually pronouncing ideas will help to fix them.
- Write things down in your own words.
- Memorize ideas, notions, connections, data, but never literal sentences.
- Briefly review your notes. Short reviews within minutes or hours of a study session can move material from short-term memory into long-term memory.
- When you can’t remember something you know for sure, try to remember something that is related to it.
- Test yourself.
9. ASSIGNMENTS AND TESTS

1. **Connect the following assessment techniques with their corresponding names:**

| Explain the possible connections between the notions of *indirect discrimination, affirmative action, gender mainstreaming, equality* and *equity.* | Presentation on a topic |
| Are Women’s Studies and Gender Studies the same? Briefly explain why. | Multiple choice (passive) |
| Complete a timeline of the suffragist movement in the United States. | Source Comment |
| Explain your point of view about the film “Persepolis”. | Long question |
| In a school there is only one space appropriate for praying. You have a multicultural group with different religions, faiths and beliefs. Each of them wants the space for them to pray. What would you do, if you were the Headmistress, to meet the needs of all of them in a fair and equitable way? | Essay |
| Define the following terms: Racism, Culture, Othering. | Definition |
| Prepare a presentation on the access to women’s suffrage in Sudan. | Example |
| Give examples of assimilation and integration as multicultural policies. | Problem solving |
| What was the name given to the group of women fighting for the right to vote led by Emmeline Pankhurst after 1913? | Timeline |
| a. Suffragists  b. Feminists  c. Suffragettes | |
| Write 10 pages on “The Representation of Women in Sudanese Media”. | Relation question |
| 1) The first wave. | Short question |
ASSIGNMENTS AND TEST TIPS:

- Assignments and tests are feedback tools for teachers. Take them as such too. They are neither punishments nor pressure instruments.
- Cheating interferes with the feedback process. It is only and always for your disadvantage, no matter what you think of it. It also shows a tremendous lack of respect for your classmates’ efforts and your teachers’ work. It does not allow you to check your own knowledge and skills. It is not strategically wise. It will contribute to a future failure.
- Keep your notes and materials updated. It will ease the preparation for tests and assignments.
- Revise your notes often.
- Think of the kind of assignment or test you might get. It might help when deciding your strategy. Mock test yourself.
- Organize your time. With regard to assignments and oral presentations, consider that you need time to revise them before turning them in, or to practice them at home or in your work group before presenting them. In connection with tests, begin studying as soon as possible, that way the final effort will be for revising. Otherwise, studying will take you longer.
- Sleep well the night before a test. Practice your relaxation strategies.
- Read the whole test before beginning to answer. Decide which questions to answer first.
- When you get your corrections, consider them as maps that show your knowledge gaps. Try to fill them for your next evaluation.
10. HEALTH

1. Answer the following questions:

   a. Do you know how many hours a student is supposed to sleep daily?

   b. Do you know the components of a balanced diet?

   c. Do you know why exercising is good for a student?

   d. Do you know why socializing is good for a student?

HEALTH TIPS:

- Look for strategies to relax and calm down (breathing, concentration, silence, exercise, etc.).
- Take care of your eating, resting and sleeping habits. They should be balanced.
- Exercise. Lead an active and dynamic life (walk to places, go up and down the stairs, etc.). You don’t need much time, only to integrate these habits in your daily routine.
- Undergo regular medical checks.
- Take care of your self-esteem. Congratulate yourself when you achieve a short-term goal. Judge yourself honestly and fairly. Compare yourself to yourself, not to others.
- Undertake your tasks step by step, that way you will be able to follow up closely. It will build your confidence to deal with bigger projects.
- Lead a social healthy and rich life. Friends are treasures. They give you emotional support, they remind you how wonderful you are, and when they criticize you, they do it in a constructive well-intentioned way.
11. GENERAL STUDY

1. Describe how you study:
   a. Time
   b. Number and length of breaks
   c. Activity during break time
   d. Place
   e. Light
   f. Space
   g. Material
   h. Resources
   i. Do you plan it?
   j. Do you follow what you plan?

GENERAL STUDY TIPS:

- Find yourself an appropriate study place (silent, with a table, well lit and ventilated).
- Reserve for yourself specific time-blocks, in which you can expect not to be bothered or interrupted.
- Put your mobile phone in the silent mode.
- Have a glass/bottle of water with you. It helps refrigerate yourself and prevents involuntary naps.
- Have your material ready (paper, pens, reader, class notes, dictionaries, paper handkerchiefs).
- Plan your study time. Plan your breaks.
- You need two study hours for each lecture hour.
- Try to stick to your plans.
- Write a checklist of tasks.
- Start with the most boring and challenging tasks.
- Intercalate activities according to their difficulty.
- To overcome boredom, think that everything is interconnected. Try to relate the boring task to an interesting one.
- Reward yourself whenever you finish a task (ticking the list, taking a break, taking a snack, making a call, etc.).
12. SELF TEST

1. Mark the following statements according to the point table. Then wait for instructions from the facilitator to fill the discovery wheel:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Point Table</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 point</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Motivation**

- I start courses highly motivated and I stay that way.
- I have adequate support from teachers and administrative staff to succeed in the Master.
- I enjoy learning.
- I study even when distracted by activities of lower priority.
- I am satisfied with how I progress toward achieving goals.
- I use knowledge of learning styles to support my success at the RIGDPR.
- I am excited about the courses I take.
- I have a clear idea of the benefits I expect to get from my education.

**TOTAL MARKS**

**Time**

- I set long term goals and periodically review them.
- I set short term goals to support my long term goals.
- I write a plan for each day and each week.
- I assign priorities to what I choose to do each day.
- I plan review time to avoid having marathon study sessions before tests.
- I plan regular recreation time.
- I adjust my study according to my goals.
- I have adequate time each day to accomplish what I plan.

**TOTAL MARKS**

**Communication**

- I have the feeling that I transmit what I want to say.
- Other people tell me that I am a good listener.
- I can communicate my anger and upset without blaming others.
- I always have updated information regarding deadlines and meeting hours.
- I am aware of my biases and am open to understanding people from other religions and ethnic groups.
- I can recognize bias and discrimination in the media and in daily environment.
- I have the ability to work in teams.
- I am open to being with people I do not especially like in order to learn from them.

**TOTAL MARKS**
**Notes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Mark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When I am in class I focus my attention.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I am in class, I switch off my mobile phone, and use the computer only for academic purposes.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I take notes in class.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am aware of various methods for taking notes and choose those that work best for me.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I distinguish important material and key sentences in a lecture.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can put important concepts into my own words.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My notes are valuable for study and review.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I review class notes within 24 hours.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL MARKS**

**Resources**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Mark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I use the Resource Centre and the University Library to support my study.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am able to find relevant material at the Resource Centre and University Library.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I relate whatever I learn in class with the information I get through my daily life.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can efficiently find information on the web that is useful and accurate.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know where to get help in my community for a variety of problems.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know how to use and write references.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am able to get relevant information and data from academic materials.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am able to connect the material to my class notes.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL MARKS**

**Reading**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Mark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I preview and review reading assignments.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When reading I ask myself questions about the material.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I underline or highlight important passages when reading.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I read texts I am alert and awake.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I relate what I read to my previous knowledge.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I select a reading strategy to fit the type of material I am reading.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I take effective notes when I am reading.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I do not understand what I am reading, I note my questions and try to find answers.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL MARKS**

**Thinking**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Mark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I use brainstorming to generate solutions to a variety of problems.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I take notes when I have flashes of insight and solutions to problems at unusual times.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I get stuck on a creative project, I use specific methods to get unstuck.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I communicate in my working groups and/or with teachers.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I see problems and tough decisions as opportunities for learning and personal growth.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am willing to consider different points of view and alternative solutions.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can state the assumptions that underlie a series of assertions.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can detect common errors in logic and/or argumentations.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL MARKS**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Memory</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am confident of my ability to remember.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I apply techniques that enhance my memory skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can remember important information when I am under pressure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I remember important information clearly and easily.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am able to recall important notions with my own words.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can play with my memory when I have difficulty recalling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can connect my notes to what I have heard or read.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can relate new information to what I have already learnt.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Assignments and Tests</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I start studying for tests and preparing my assignments as soon as possible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I keep my material updated and in order.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I adapt my strategies to the kind of assignments or tests I get.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am able to predict test questions and expect assignment outputs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I organize my time and myself properly during tests and when preparing an assignment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I always make (just) a final revision the night before a test or oral presentation, and I sleep well to be confident when taking it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I revise tests and assignments after correction and marking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My sense of personal worth is independent of my marks.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Health</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have enough energy to study and still fully enjoy other areas of my life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If the situation calls for it, I have enough reserve energy to put in a long day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My emotional health supports my ability to learn.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My working and resting hours are balanced.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel okay with my body.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel okay with my emotions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know and use relaxing strategies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I take care that I feel fit in body and mind.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL MARKS**
2. Fill in the Discovery Wheel (Dave [1998] 2003) according to your total results in the previous questionnaire.

My Life as a Master Student

- Health
- Motivation
- Time
- Communication
- Assignments and Tests
- Notes
- Thinking
- Reading
- Resources
- Memory