

Roadmap to the philosophical dissertation

(Prof. Dr. Thomas Buchheim)

(1) Careful *sighting and exposition of the current state of research*

It is necessary to take into account research literature with respect to the relevant topic in German and English language, in many cases also in French and Italian language as well as to consider studies and research in native language if available.

It is necessary to carefully study this literature and *to excerpt and outline* the own theses, discoveries, similarities, and controversies in written form.

What are the *main lines and hitherto most important results that are held in research*?

Are there any promising positions that differ from the mainstream of research? What has been overlooked or what has been insufficiently taken into account? Which new positions or hypotheses could I aim at?

(2) *Sighting and analysis of any important passages* of the topic from the works of the selected philosophical author or the relevant authors that are taken into account.

In principle, it is necessary that the candidate be acquainted with all works of the relevant philosophical author or (in case of several authors that are taken into account) at least with any writings that are relevant to the selected topic. The relevant and significant passages of the respective topic have to be exhaustively taken into account.

All determined passages are to be studied thoroughly and evaluated in written form. Only then and on this basis the own process of establishing and developing theses should begin.

(3) On the basis of (1) and (2), interesting (differing from the common point of view) observations and discoveries are to be written down and to be developed to *own hypotheses* that are qualified to fully unfold the selected topic.

(4) Preparation of a *second exposé* as an extract of the present research and results (15-20 pages) that has to be submitted to the advisor.

(5) *Presentation* of the dissertation that is in process in front of the Graduate Colloquium. Before, preparation in the Tutorial and submission of the presentation to the assistants or, possibly, the advisor.

(6) *Elaboration* of the own theses and discoveries on the basis of the own extracts and collections of materials.

(7) Reflections as to how the dissertation should be structured. Discussion of the *structuring* of the dissertation in the Tutorial and submission to the advisor.

(8) *Composition of the particular chapters* of the dissertation. Consultation in the Tutorial and with the advisor is possible and useful.

(9) Sighting, review and consideration of the *latest literature* on the topic that might have appeared in the meanwhile.

(10) Not later than now: *Critical reading* of the chapters *by other students or lecturers* that are familiar with the topic.

(11) Conception of the *introduction*. The introduction has to begin with a description of the state of research and has to face it with the own hypotheses, methods and main results.

(12) *Revision* of the whole dissertation with respect to the language and the content as well as drawing up a *summary of the results* together with an outlook on further philosophical questions at the end of the dissertation.

(13) *Verbal corrections* by a native speaker of German or English.

(14) *Submission* of the dissertation by one of the designated deadlines.

Additional remarks:

(a) In Germany, dissertations are to be evaluated by at least two written reviews. That means that there don't merely exist the two options "passed" or "failed", but a predicate that expresses the value of the grade (0,5 summa cum laude (with highest honor), 1 magna cum laude (with high honor), 2 cum laude (with honor), and 3 rite (sufficient)).

All candidates for the PhD, from Germany and abroad, have to be subject to the same strict standard of evaluation. All possible grades will be exhausted, that is it is quite possible that a dissertation, after lots of years of effort and work, is finally evaluated with a less good grade (rite or cum laude). However, even in that case the achievement may be considered as very high in comparison with international achievements!

(b) The attendance of the Graduate Colloquium and the Tutorial is mandatory!

(c) All presentations are to be held in German. A main concern of the multi-year research stay in Germany should be the acquisition of very good language skills in both written and spoken German! Writing the dissertation in German is therefore recommended.