

Paper #3: Policy analysis memo

Assigned: March 31

Due: April 10

Length: 5-6 pages (double-spaced, 1-inch margins, 12-point Times New Roman)

Task: Write a policy analysis memo concerning immigration, climate change, or Social Security

Context: Imagine yourself as a junior researcher working for either an interest group, on a congressional staff, or in a public bureaucracy. Your superiors are in the process of formulating a policy to deal with a problem. They have asked you to research and write a report that recommends a specific policy to deal with the problem.

You have your choice of policy area: climate change policy, immigration policy, or Social Security policy. These are the only topics you may pick. I have posted readings relevant to each topic on Sakai for you to draw upon as you formulate your policy recommendation. You should go beyond these readings to further support your policy recommendation. (Yes, this means light research. Make sure it's *good* light research.)

Guidance: Form is doubly important when writing a memo. Below is an example of the proper heading for your memo. The heading will be at the top of your first page, single-spaced and left-justified. You should not include any other heading or cover page. The heading may vary slightly based on organizational norms, but this is the “textbook” heading:

TO: Jeff Sessions, Attorney General, Department of Justice

FROM: Rod Rosenstein, Deputy Attorney General, Department of Justice

DATE: April 1, 2017

CONCERNING: Candidates for judicial vacancies in the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals

You will change the information in this example heading to reflect your memo's audience. You may create a title for yourself on the FROM line.

The memo you write will be a shorter version of a comprehensive memo, which can run into the tens of pages. Longer memos are often accompanied by a short “executive summary”; think of your memo more along the lines of the latter. Memo writing is a great skill to acquire because it will be useful regardless of your chosen profession or career path. Memo writing style – short, to the point, active, balanced, and concrete – is also a style that will be appreciated by current and future professors, friends, and organizational superiors (The Man).

Some pointers: The first paragraph of the memo should end with your *specific* policy recommendation, stated clearly in one sentence. (A great way to do well on the memo is to be as *specific* as possible in your recommendation.) The middle paragraphs of the memo will expand on your recommendation, identify the relevant goals in the policy area, and systematically compare your recommendation to the status quo policy (the policy currently in force that you want to change) in terms of those goals. The last paragraph will justify the recommendation by discussing the tradeoffs among the goals. The last paragraph should not introduce any new

information or any new alternatives. Stick closely to analyzing just the status quo and your alternative to it.

In the same folder as the readings for this assignment, you will find a longer document that contains even more pointers and rules for form. I will assume you have read and considered that document as well when reading your memo.

Writing goals

- 1) Use the active voice as much as possible.
- 2) Use simple, to-the-point sentences that convey the maximum amount of meaning in a minimum space.
- 3) Follow the memo format closely.
- 4) Properly cite outside resources and information.
- 5) Write about values and goals in a neutral, analytical manner.