

For the policy memo, due October 24, you will:

1. *Choose a policy challenge in international security.* Pick a topic that concerns the interaction of more than one country, and that affects the security of people, groups, or countries. You may write about an international security challenge we address in class, but be warned: your memo should go well beyond the class discussion and the assigned readings for that topic. If you are not sure whether your topic is appropriate, feel free to run it by me via email.
2. *Explain the policy challenge and why it is important.* Provide at least some background on the policy issue to help the reader follow your argument. Make the case that this issue is important enough to warrant some action, even with all the other international security problems out there.
3. *Put the challenge in the context of the relevant academic and policy literature.* Discuss the current state of the field with regard to your issue. Describe important theories or empirical findings from the academic literature, as well as any ongoing policy debate around the issue. For academic research, you might consult Google Scholar (beware of unpublished work), JSTOR, or the major academic journals that published the readings assigned for this course. To research the policy debate, consult policy journals (*Foreign Affairs* and *Foreign Policy*, for example) and reports from major think tanks (Brookings, Council on Foreign Relations, IISS) or government agencies. Talk to the staff at the library if you need help identifying appropriate sources or getting started with your research. Your memo should address the current debate regarding *both* theory (from the academic literature) and practice (from the policy literature).
4. *Provide concrete advice to a senior policymaker on how to meet this challenge.* Address your memo to a specific senior policymaker in a government (US or other) or international organization. Provide 2-3 policy options for meeting the challenge your memo describes, and make the case for your *one* preferred option. Only propose options that are feasible or reasonable (i.e. don't suggest nuking Russia or doubling the US defense budget).

You must do more than just describe the literature or summarize the arguments of others! I am looking for your own critical analysis of the policy issue. Use the arguments and theories of other scholars only as a starting point. Make sure that you clearly take a position on the best response to this policy issue. On the other hand, you must do more than just provide your opinion! Use facts and findings in the literature to support your analysis and conclusions.

Spend some time thinking about how best to organize your paper. Write clearly and concisely. Proofread. You cannot do well on this assignment if I am confused about your analysis or policy recommendation.

We will discuss some basics of writing policy memos in class, and I have posted some example memos on Blackboard. For additional thoughts on memo writing, see:

<http://harris.uchicago.edu/sites/default/files/files/writing.pdf>

Your policy memo should be 5-7 pages of double-spaced text (not including the bibliography), using a standard 12-point font. Please number your pages. You can use whatever citation style you prefer, but you must cite your sources correctly. Ask for help if you're not sure how or whether to cite material. For guidance on appropriate sourcing, see the following resources:

<http://guides.swem.wm.edu/writingandciting>

<http://library.duke.edu/research/plagiarism>

Submit the memo via Blackboard (as a PDF file, if possible) before class on October 24.