

American Foreign Policy: Processes and Outcomes

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Policy Memoranda // Short Writing Assignments

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To hone your analytical and communication skills, each student will write two policy memoranda on some current issue (of your choice) in US foreign policy.

Imagine you are an advisor to the president. In this capacity, you need to write a policy memorandum analyzing an issue in US foreign policy and recommend a specific course of action. For the assignment, you cannot simply summarize the issue or describe what your administration has done. Rather, you must make a reasoned argument in favor of a *specific policy action*. The policy memorandum will be 4–5 pages in length.

I fully envision three sections to these memoranda. The first section quickly states your preferred policy action. The second section lays out a logical argument as to why this action is the appropriate action. The final section is a quick restating of the proposed policy action. This appears to be the standard essay format: introduction, body, and conclusion. As with most papers, the introduction and the conclusion say essentially the same thing, only in different ways.

The most important part of this paper, both in terms of grade and in terms of effectiveness, is the argument you make. It must be coherent. It must be logical, step-by-step. It must rely on both theory and facts (both properly cited). It should also tie in to other actions (and rationales) the current administration has taken (and given).

The due dates are October 12 and November 19. If you would like to write one early and have me look over it, I would be more than happy to do that.