

Project 2: Policy Memorandum

Due Date: Friday March 25th (03/25)

How to Submit: docx, pdf, pages on Sakai Assignments

Why is Project 2 Assigned?

In Unit 2, we want to learn about intercultural competence from a variety of cross-cultural contexts. This assignment applies our intercultural competence by modeling the kind of writing you might do in a foreign affairs career. This assignment asks us each to consider how to frame a global issue with humility, clarity, and understanding—especially with regard to those most impacted by the issue—for an audience who needs to make informed decisions about it.

Details and Topic

For this assignment, each student is asked to write a “policy memorandum,” or “policy memo,” that describes the current issue of **US military build-up in Guam/Guåhan** and recommends a course of action. Specifically, your memo could address the Pentagon’s recent relocation of 5,000 Marines from Okinawa to Guam/Guåhan and the construction of a Marines Corp base on Sabånan Fadang, an Indigenous burial ground, among other issues. While some historic context about US militarization and the Mariana Islands may be important, a policy memo speaks to current affairs.

A policy memo is a short written document that advises a decision-maker about a recommended course of action. For this memo, I ask you to write *as yourself* (in your current position as a policy researcher) addressing the Biden Administration.

What we will do with your individual memos...

We will draft a composite memo that we will send to the Biden Administration.¹

Length

Please write no more than 1,000 words (not including references/bibliography). This short length is meant to mirror the length of an actual policy memo.

Examples

There are examples of policy memos on Sakai under Resources. Please note that these examples may not have the exact structure I recommend below.

Resources and Citations

You will likely need to consult policy analyses and academic articles/books to write your memo. Please cite sources in **APA format**. Some sources that you may find helpful to consult initially:

- Tiara R. Na‘puti, Michael Lujan Bevacqua, “Militarization and Resistance from Guåhan: Protecting and Defending Pågat,” *American Quarterly* 67, no. 3 (2015), 837-858.
- Sylvia C. Frain, “‘Make America Secure’: Media, Militarism, and Climate Change in the Marianas Archipelago,” *Pacific Journalism Review* 24, no. 2 (2018), 218-240.

¹ If you are active duty, we will do an alternative assignment.

Structure

The following is the recommended structure for your memo:

- *Header*
 - Title: “Memo of...”
 - To:
 - From:
 - Date
- *Overview*: This is a birds-eye-view of the *current* issue; history is not thoroughly unpacked but background may be provided. This section provides a “bottom line” statement/suggestion.
- *Major Priorities*: This is a description of what the top concerns should be related to the current issue. You can number these.
- *Recommendations*: This is a list of policy recommendations and a short description of the recommended course of action. You can also number these.
- *Analysis*: This is a section where you weigh the feasibility (considering limitations and barriers) of implementing your recommendations.
- *Conclusion*: This is a summary of your key findings that re-emphasizes your “bottom line” statement/suggestion.

Careers in which one would write a policy memo...

- Foreign Service Officer
- Governmental positions
- Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) positions
- Think tank researcher
- Academic researcher
- Consulting

Advice

“I like to think of the 2-4 questions that a decision-maker would most likely ask in response to the proposal and make sure that the answers to those questions are included in the memo. - Mike Firestone, Chief of Policy and Strategic Planning, Office of Mayor Michelle Wu, City of Boston

Assessment

All assignments are assessed used specifications grading; this grading indicates that an assignment is passing if it meets specifications.

Project 2 is considered passing quality if it has the following specifications:

- *Structure* – The memo resembles a policy memo in its structure/form, length, objectives
- *Research* – The memo’s claims are supported by appropriate research and cited
- *Addresses Constituents of Guam/Guåhan* – The memo competently speaks to the constituencies of Guam/Guåhan, with sensitivity to the interests of those most impacted by US policy
- *Specificity* – Recommendations are specific and concrete