

## Policy paper requirements

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The paper you will be writing in MS&E 193/293 is a policy analysis paper. This is distinct from advocacy pieces in that you give a balanced analysis of a policy decision first. After that is done, then you may make your recommendation based on your own judgment. When trying to decide what to put into your analysis, place yourself in the position of the decision-maker for whom you are working. What would that decision-maker want to know to make an informed decision?

The meat of your analysis should consist of the following:

- **Need/Demand Characterization:** What is the need/demand? Why are we considering this decision? Why is it significant?
- **Capabilities Comparison:** Effectiveness of the different policy options in dealing with the need/demand (or threat).
- **"Politics":** How does the decision fit into the web of institutional and personal relations of the parties affected.

Finally, you will want to make a recommendation based on your analysis. In putting forward a recommendation, you will be making judgments about the information presented in the analysis. You should explain what your judgment is and why.

A good policy analysis paper covers each of the following areas (the weighting given to each section will vary depending on the topic):

- **Issue Definition:** The policy decision is articulated and its significance is established.
- **Background:** All background information (technical, political, etc.) necessary to place the decision in its proper context is given.
- **Policy Options:** The various policy options that the decision-maker must decide between are presented and described.
- **Policy Analysis:** The pros and cons of each option are explained. The value trade-offs implicit in choosing one option over another are explained.
- **Recommendation:** Based on the analysis, a recommendation is made. The biases and judgment factors that went into the recommendation should be explained. You should summarize your recommendation concisely at the very start of your paper.

The grading will focus on the following key qualities:

- **Appropriateness:** The paper should precisely address the issue.
- **Clarity:** The overall clarity of thought and expression.
- **Assertion vs. Proof:** The paper should be based on a logical argument and must not be a mere juxtaposition of statements.
- **Grammar, spelling**
- **Format:** Consistency with the format guidelines.

### Technical Details:

The papers are limited to approximately 250-300 words per page and must have separate title pages. Double-spacing is required. We recommend using Times New

Roman size 12 font with at least 1-inch margins in all directions (left, right, top, and bottom).

Outside of the page limit, please have a cover sheet with the following information:

- Name
- Student ID
- Registration Status (193 or 293)
- A Word Count

Based on the word count per page above, the size limit (*mercilessly enforced*) will be 5 pages for both graduate and undergraduate students.

In order to get graduate credit, resident graduate students will be required to include quantitative analysis techniques in at least one of their papers. There will be a tutorial to review analytical techniques later in the quarter.