

HKS211x: Central Challenges of American National Security, Strategy, and the Press

Assignment Guidelines and SOPs

Overview

Students in the IGA-211 Harvard Classroom are required to submit Strategic Options Memos and Outlines. The online HKS-211x class will submit outlines **only**, not full-length memos. Just like the real-world, this class requires you to adhere to a set of guidelines and standing operating procedures (SOPs) regarding the submission and formatting of these materials.

Submitting Assignments:

All assignments *must be emailed to their assigned Teaching Fellow* by 6 p.m. U.S. Eastern Standard Time on the due date in order to receive credit toward a certificate.

Memos and outlines should be labeled as follows:

Case X – XXX Outline (Author's Last Name)

Example: Case 1 – Syria Outline (Allison)

Example and Assistance:

Examples of Strategic Options Memos and Outlines are attached to the application form (please note that these examples are above average memos and outlines from previous years—they are not perfect answers).

Guidelines for Strategic Options Memos:

Strategic Options Memos are a means of communicating policy analysis and recommendations to senior policymakers. Effective written communication is essential to success both in government and in this class. The following guidelines are not to be a procrustean bed. They identify the questions a good memo in HKS-211x must cover. They provide a baseline that can serve as an outline for a good memo. They identify the criteria that will be used in evaluating memos and outlines. Thus when in doubt, follow the guidelines. Remember that the strategic options you are presenting must be in the national interests of the person you are advising, not the interests of the nation of which you are a citizen. For example, in the Syria case, you are asked to take as your coordinates the national interests of the U.S., not those of Syria or neighboring countries. In future cases where you are asked to imagine that you were working for the Israeli Prime Minister or the Iranian Supreme Leader, it is that nation's interests that you seek to identify strategies to advance.