

Reaction Memo Evaluation Rubric (Zahr Said, University of Washington Law School)

Rubric for a class in which four reaction memos count as 80% of the grade according to the following syllabus requirements:

1. Memos must be 4 pages long, and contain page numbers and your name.
 2. Memos must be double-spaced; font size: 12; with standard margins.
 3. Memos must cite any sources you rely on in your preparation of your memo, including cases, web pages, articles, and so forth.
 4. Memos must cite to a minimum of 2 sources beyond those assigned; these additional sources may include cases, web pages, articles, and so forth.
 5. All four memos must be submitted, on time to pass the course.
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- The below-average memo fails to meet two or more of the requirements set out in 1-4 in the syllabus and/or it may be difficult to comprehend, poorly organized, off-topic, or repetitive. It may appear to consist largely of opinion, or polemic, rather than reasoned argument.
 - The average memo is turned in on time and meets all the requirements set out above; and it is also readily comprehensible to the average legally trained reader, reasonably organized, and on-topic. It reveals that the student has read the materials. It is clearly based in legal argument, not opinion, even if opinions shape the legal argument.
 - The good paper meets the requirements of the average paper, and it reveals that its author has generally grasped the larger implications of the controversy or issue, and has an insight or two about those implications.
 - The excellent paper is a good paper that also offers an argument—or the beginnings of an argument—about the implications of the problem or issue at stake; it may propose a solution or discuss alternatives, but this is not always necessary.
 - The exceptional paper is an excellent paper that offers a well-argued, persuasive, coherent solution, or novel approach to the problem under discussion.