

Policy Memo #1
Poli 404
Professor Benjamin
30 points

Due: February 22nd, 2017 at the beginning of class.

Late policy: 3-points deducted for each day the memo is late. **For this assignment, I ask that you use 1.5 spaced lines (as opposed to single or double spaced).**

Please make sure you read the policy memo guidelines (posted to Sakai) for detailed information about formatting, goals, and organization of a policy memo. This prompt provides you with the specific question, but it pairs with the guidelines on Sakai, which must be followed exactly.

Should there be electoral reform in Durham? What would be the potential consequences of changes you might propose? (Currently, there are three city council members elected at-large and three elected from districts, plus the Mayor. There are no term limits for any of these offices.)

Info on the City Council: <http://durhamnc.gov/ich/cc/Pages/Home.aspx>

The Mayor: <http://durhamnc.gov/ich/mayor/Pages/Home.aspx>

Some things you might consider:

1. Turnout during past elections
2. Specific geography of districts, and how these correspond to key demographics
3. The cost of elections (See Handout on Sakai)
4. How might coalitions help demand reform or maintain the status quo?
5. How might civic organizations help demand reform or maintain the status quo?
6. Does the history of Durham provide any insights into potential solutions?

We expect you to provide the data you need to support your claim, but these in-class readings (and possibly others) could help you:

- Brown
- Hajnal and Trounstein 2005
- Peterson
- Stone
- Rogers
- Oliver

Consider carefully what the literature says about how electoral and governing systems function, and how each aspect of the electoral system impacts specific outcomes.

Remember there are no right or wrong answers here. Your job is to convince me that your policy recommendation is the best option.