

IS 101, Summer 2021
Module 2 Writing Assignment
Due Saturday, May 29, by 11:59 PM CST

In order to do this assignment, you will need to have completed all of the lectures, readings, podcasts, and films for Module 2—so finish those first!

Assignment Brief

Imagine that you are an economic advisor to the president or prime minister of a country of your choosing. (Exception: You may not choose the United States.) Your country is experiencing a financial crisis similar to that experienced by Jamaica in the film *Life and Debt*. As a result, the IMF has offered your country a loan, but before you can receive it, IMF staff members would like to know what economic and political changes your country will implement to prevent future crises.

In 1,000–1,200 words, write a policy brief to IMF staff explaining the situation in your country and whether standard neoliberal IMF loan conditions are likely to help or hurt your country's economy going forward. Then, propose two specific policy changes your country could make that *would* be helpful, and explain why. Use lectures, readings, and other course materials to both generate ideas for policies and to support your arguments about both standard IMF loan conditions and the policies you propose.

Thus, your policy brief should do **three** things (we recommend you divide it into three parts to make sure you accomplish these three tasks):

Part A

- **Explain** the economic situation in your country. This will likely require you to do a little bit of outside research. We do not expect you to be an expert on the country you choose, but we expect you to draw on real-world characteristics of that country's economic and political systems in making recommendations about which policies that country should pursue and which it should avoid. **You may invent details of a financial crisis**, but those details should be rooted in the real world (i.e. do not say that Iceland is experiencing fierce competition for its banana crop) and should demonstrate your understanding of how financial crises often unfold.

Part B

- **Make an argument** about whether neoliberal policies, as advocated through IMF conditionality, will help or hurt your country. If you are not sure where to start, you might refer to the list of neoliberal principles on pg. 229 of Sparke. You need not address every possible loan condition (and you will run out of space if you do). Instead, think about: what are the main ideas and interests driving neoliberal reforms? Are these ideas and interests in line with your country's own interests? What is useful about the neoliberal approach? What isn't? **Use course materials to help support your argument.**

Part C

- **Make an argument** for two policy changes your country could make. This means you need to both propose two policies and explain why they would help your country. These policies can be political as well as economic (e.g. switching to a new electoral system, or instituting stronger penalties for those found guilty of corruption), as long as you can explain why they would help your country avoid future financial crises. **Use course materials for ideas and examples of what has and hasn't worked in the real world.**

Grading Guidelines

- Please refer to the rubric on the next page so that you understand what we expect in a strong assignment and how your grade will be broken down.
- Your assignment is due electronically as a PDF or Word document on Canvas by 11:59 PM CST on Saturday, May 29. Assignments turned in after the deadline will immediately be marked down 5%, as well as another 5% for every additional 24 hours that they are late. Make sure to back up your work.
- Your assignment should be at least 1,000 words and **no more than 1,200 words** long. This means you will need to be very concise, which can be challenging. Focus on completing the three main tasks listed above. Including arguments or examples to show us how much you know **but that do not help you address the points we have asked you to include in your policy brief** will improve neither your writing nor your grade.
- You need to cite **at least five** sources from module 2. These could be readings, lectures, films, or podcasts. You don't need to include a reference list—we know the sources already—but do include author-date citations (e.g. Simmons 2021) and page numbers when you are citing something very specific. Readings listed under "Further Readings" for the module do not count toward the five source requirement (although you should feel free to use them in addition to your first five sources if they are helpful to you).
- Grammar and spelling count! Please proofread your assignment before you turn it in. If English is not your first language, please let us know. The Writing Center on campus (writing.wisc.edu) is also an excellent resource.

Rubric

Area of focus	How a strong answer looks	Points possible
Substantial, Cited Use of Course Materials	<p>An excellent response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • makes use of most or all of the pertinent course materials; • provides citations for ALL quoted and paraphrased materials; and • makes use of course materials throughout the response to support the student's argument 	4
Sophisticated Understanding & Integration of Course Materials	<p>An excellent response demonstrates that the student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • read/watched the materials thoroughly; • took time to make sense of the materials and to understand nuances in meaning; • asked the instructors questions when they were confused; and • drew logical and interesting connections between different materials in developing their own argument 	4
Effectively Addresses Assigned Questions & Justifies Answers	<p>An excellent response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clearly, directly, and concisely answers the question(s) asked; and • addresses the "how" and "why" questions raised by the initial response to the question (in other words, if the instructor is likely to write "how" or "why" next to your response, make sure you provide the answer in your response). 	3
Sophisticated Thought, Argument, or Reflection	<p>An excellent response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrates thoughtful insights extending beyond the course materials; and 	2

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrates that the student took time to carefully evaluate the claims and evidence in the materials and incorporate them into the student's own argument 	
Grammar/Style/Mechanics	<p>An excellent response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> is carefully organized at both the paragraph and sentence level; contains minimal grammatical errors; contains minimal spelling errors; and demonstrates that the student carefully proof-read and edited their response. 	2
TOTAL		15