

Guidelines for memos

Memos are critical assessments (700-800 words) of academic articles or court cases.

How to write a memo of an academic article (all courses except S 103, see below):

1. Identify the author's main statement and purpose
2. Analyze the structure of the text by identifying all key ideas
3. Determine the purpose of the text (information, persuasion, description, explanation, etc.)
4. Evaluate the means / methodologies by which the author has accomplished his purpose
5. Write a summary and discuss the strengths and shortcomings of the text
6. Please include your name, course code and the title of the discussed text at the top of the page
7. Use of additional literature sources are welcome, but not necessary, for the purpose of critical analysis.

How to write a memo on a court case (S 103/Sommermann):

- Please include your name and course code at the top of the page.
- Please include the name of the case and the date of the judgment your memo is about in the title.
- The memo should include the following information:
 - The court which issued the judgment commented.
 - The facts of the case and the outcome in previous instances if any.
 - The identification of the parties: who sued whom? Who was applicant and who was respondent?
 - The legal question(s) before the Court, e.g. was Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights violated? Were the challenged provisions of the Act in question unconstitutional?
 - The most important norms that the Court applied to decide the case.
 - The most important arguments elaborated upon by the court.
 - The outcome of the case, e.g. Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights was not violated, or the provisions of the challenged act are unconstitutional, null and void.
- Include at the end a short evaluation of the case from your point of view. It does not need to be a legal evaluation: you may, for example, note briefly some political or policy implications of the case or talk about social consequences it has had.
- Do not exceed two pages.