2012 Presidential Election Issues
LSC-University Park Library
Assignment Guide for GOVT 2301, 2302, 2305

“Democracy cannot succeed unless those who express their choice are prepared to choose wisely. The real safeguard of democracy, therefore, is education.”

– Franklin D. Roosevelt

“All people are born alike – except Republicans and Democrats.”

– Groucho Marx

The time has come once again for Americans to decide who will be in charge for the next four years—the culmination for what has in some cases been a two- or four-year campaign already. Regardless of for whom you plan to vote, it pays to know the candidates’ stances on issues important to you to make an educated and rational choice in November (that’s Tuesday, Nov. 6, 2012—mark your calendar).

Assignment

Choose 2 issues and explain the different positions taken by President Obama and Republican nominee Mitt Romney on those issues (or choose 1 issue to explore in greater depth).

The paper should be 4-5 pages double-spaced and use at least 5 separate sources, including CQ Researcher as well as a fact-checking website. Use MLA format for your citations and (annotated) works cited.

Meet Your Librarian

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Elaine Patton

Possible Topics & Related Keywords

- The Economy & Unemployment/Jobs: recession, stimulus spending, job creators/creation, consumer confidence, national debt, fiscal policy, government spending policy, deficit spending, employment, job growth, outsourcing, bailouts
- Education: vouchers, tuition, No Child Left Behind, teacher tenure
- Energy: alternative fuels, green energy, oil, petroleum, fossil fuels, foreign dependence, domestic oil drilling
- Foreign Policy: military spending, Middle East relations, terrorism, sanctions, embargoes
- Healthcare: healthcare reform, medical policy, Medicare, Medicaid, universal coverage,
health insurance mandate, Obamacare/Romneycare

- **Same-Sex Marriage**: gay marriage, Defense of Marriage Act, civil unions, “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell”
- **Taxes**: tax cuts, tax reform, trickle-down economics, income tax, Economic Stimulus Act of 2008, tax increase
- **Women’s Issues** (connected to the health care debate): birth control, abortion, contraception, women’s health, pro-choice/pro-life, reproductive rights

**Resources for Your Research**

When you find a useful article or book, be sure to note the subject terms associated with it for your own search purposes. Also peruse the works cited pages of the sources you find to lead you to other related resources.

**Databases**

Library databases contain articles, newspapers, images, documents, papers, media and more. The databases selected for you here are best for finding campaign issue information.

Use the advanced search features.

- **CQ Researcher**: provides a detailed overview of issues, including a background and chronology of the topic, outlook, and pro/con
- **Issues and Controversies** (Facts on File): offers full-text articles covering the introduction to a topic and arguments for and against it, as well as related articles, statistics, and images.
- **Academic Search Complete** (EBSCO): journal, magazine and newspaper articles
- **Opposing Viewpoints** (Gale): Compiles links to a variety of sources including journal and news articles, which currently include stories relating to the candidates’ stances.

**News**

- **InfoTrac Newsstand** (Gale): Full-text articles of over 1000 newspapers from North America, Europe, Asia, and Australia, as well as magazines, images, and video.
- **Newspaper Source** (EBSCO): Selected full-text from 30 US national and international newspapers and 200 regional papers, plus TV & radio news transcripts.

**Videos**

- **Films on Demand**
  
  Full-length films from reputable sources.
Internet Sites

Be careful to evaluate sites you find for credibility, authority, bias, relevance, and evidence before citing them.

Fact-Checkers:
- PolitiFact
- FactCheck.org
- Washington Post: The Fact Checker
- AZ Fact Check
- The Seattle Times Truth Needle

- **On the Issues**: Explains common terms relating to the election process as well as various issues and lists candidates’ quotes relating to the issues.
- **TV News Search & Borrow**: Search news broadcast transcripts from 2009-present.
- **Compilation of Presidential Documents**: Copies of the President’s weekly statements (obviously only relevant to Pres. Obama at this time).
- **White House**: Again, specific to Obama; White House page on popular issues and the president’s actions on them.
- **PBS’s Need to Know & Election 2012**
- **C-SPAN Campaign 2012 Candidates on the Issues**
- **ProCon.Org** offers comparison charts for the candidates and direct quotes pertaining to a variety of issues.
- **Council on Foreign Relations Campaign 2012** features issue trackers and agenda summaries.

Citing Sources & Getting Help With Your Paper

**MLA Style Citations**

The library (building 12, 8th floor) has hard copy guides to MLA, APA, and Chicago styles, or you can use the [online MLA guide](#).  
- LSCS’s [Citation Help](#) page  
  For notes on writing an annotated bibliography, look at [Purdue’s guide](#).

→ Many databases will generate citations for you, but they are not guaranteed to be formatted or punctuated correctly. Always double check!

**Need Help?**

Contact the librarians!  
If you can’t come to the library:  
- Call: 281-401-5390  
- Email: UPLibrary-ref@lonestar.edu  
- Chat (during regular library hours)

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Elaine Patton, 10/2012