2016 Election Project

**Overview:**  This year, we have a rare opportunity to see the democratic process in action at a national level. The 2016 Presidential election was controversial right from the start, with both parties putting forth multiple candidates for public consideration. This year, [**Hillary Clinton**](https://www.hillaryclinton.com/issues/)(<https://www.hillaryclinton.com/issues/>) **& Tim Kaine** will represent the **Democratic Party** and [**Donald Trump**](https://www.donaldjtrump.com/issues/)(<https://www.donaldjtrump.com/issues/>) **& Mike Pense** will represent the **Republican Party.** Unlike many other democratic nations, the US has traditionally has only two political parties. Occasionally, third party (independent) candidates will gain some momentum in the polls. This year, [Gary Johnson](https://www.johnsonweld.com/issues) (https://www.johnsonweld.com/issues) from the Libertarian Party and [Jill Stein](http://www.jill2016.com/plan) (http://www.jill2016.com/plan ) representing the Green Party have the most support. However, as of the creation of this assignment and according to the current rule\* from the Commission of Public Debates, neither candidate will exceed the required 15 percent in the polls two weeks before the Presidential debates. No independent has ever qualified for the debates under this rule because of its timing and its threshold.

**\*In the fall of 2015, the CPD announced the dates and venues and its 2016 Nonpartisan Candidate Selection Criteria. Under the criteria, in addition to being constitutionally eligible, candidates must:**

* Appear on a sufficient number of state ballots to have a mathematical chance of winning a majority vote in the Electoral College.
* Have a level of support of at least 15 percent of the national electorate as determined by five selected national public opinion polling organizations, using the average of those organizations' most recently publicly-reported results at the time of the determination.

**Source**: <http://www.debates.org/index.php?page=2016debates>

**Assignment #1 – Understanding PARTY PLATFORMS DUE: Sunday 8/28/16 Source:** [**http://www.studentnewsdaily.com/2016-presidential-election/#debatedates**](http://www.studentnewsdaily.com/2016-presidential-election/#debatedates)

**Background:** A National Platform is the official statement of a political party’s position on a wide variety of issues. Each issue category included in the Platform is a “plank.” Before we can explore the issues, you need to have an understanding of the platform.

A new Platform is adopted **every four years** by both the Democratic and Republican parties and is generally approved during the party’s national convention.

* The Republican Party Platform (2016) : https://www.gop.com/the-2016-republican-party-platform/
* The Democratic Party Platform (2016): <https://www.demconvention.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Democratic-Party-Platform-7.21.16-no-lines.pdf>

**Other resources**: The American Presidency Project: <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/platforms.php>

**Assignment:** How specific or detailed is each party on its positions on the issues:

1. Choose 2 issues and summarize **each** party’s position on those issues.
2. For each issue, explain if you believe the party was **specific** or **vague** in stating its position. Explain why you think they chose such a position. What would be the advantages and disadvantages?
3. Visit both party nominees’ websites and review the issues you selected. What is each candidates position on the issue? How close are their ideas to the party platform?
4. Which party do you MOST agree with on your chosen issue? Explain your reasons why you agree with that position.

**Please complete the assignment AS posted in a Google document and submit through Turnitin.com to Election Project Assignment 1 – Party Platform by 11:59 on Sunday, August 28.**

**Assignment #2 – The ISSUES DUE: Monday 9/5/16**

**2016 Election issues –TABLE GROUP ACTIVITY**

**Directions:** Each member of the Table Group will select ONE of the issues and create a brief synopsis on the issue. The final product will be added to a class Google Slide Presentation. Each group member will create a slide for BOTH candidates on their assigned issue.

**Please complete the assignment AS posted in GOOGLE DRIVE**

**Resources:** You are limited to the candidates’ OFFICIAL web site and Inside Government

* Clinton: <https://www.hillaryclinton.com/issues/> & <https://www.hillaryclinton.com/about/hillary/> & <http://presidential-candidates.insidegov.com/>
* Trump: <https://www.donaldjtrump.com/issues/> & <https://www.donaldjtrump.com/positions> & <https://www.donaldjtrump.com/about/> & <http://presidential-candidates.insidegov.com/>

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **GROUP A** | **GROUP B** | **GROUP C** | **GROUP D** | **GROUP E** |
| 1. Women’s Rights 2. Healthcare (including the Affordable (Obama) Care Act) 3. Jobs and Wages (including Unions and Workers) 4. Foreign Policy & Nuclear Weapons | 1. Climate Change 2. Guns and the 2nd Amendment 3. Social Security and Medicare 4. Racial Justice & Law Enforcement | 1. Criminal Justice Reform 2. Military Issues (including Veterans) 3. Same - Sex Marriage & Transgender Issues 4. National Security and Privacy Issues | 1. Education (including the Common Core Standards) 2. Terrorism (including ISIS) 3. Tax Policy 4. Federal Budget and National Debt | 1. College and Tuition 2. Immigration and Refugees 3. Monetary Policy (including Federal Reserve and Banks) 4. Americans with disabilities & Mental Heath |

**Assignment #3 – Understanding California’s Propositions** **DUE: Sunday 9/18/16**

**Background:** California provides a unique opportunity for citizens to participate directly in the democratic process through the initiative system. This ballot initiative system gives citizens a way to propose laws and constitutional amendments without the support of the Governor or CA Legislature. To make it onto the ballot, sponsors of a proposition (proposed law) must gather valid signatures of registered voters equal to 5% or more of the votes cast in the last gubernatorial election. An initiative must be limited to one subject and it may not name a person to office or grant a duty or power to a private corporation. Once the petition process is completed, arguments for and against the initiative are printed in a ballot pamphlet that is mailed to all registered voters and the imitative is placed on the ballot for the next scheduled election. Approval of an initiate requires s simple majority of those voting. Once an initiative is passed, it can be changed or invalidated only by another initiative or successful legal challenge. This year, there are 17 initiatives on the ballot.

**Resources:**

* Ballotpedia: <https://ballotpedia.org/California_2016_ballot_propositions#Historical_factsFAQ>
* State of CA Department of Justice: https://oag.ca.gov/initiatives

**Assignment:**

1. Visit <https://ballotpedia.org/California_2016_ballot_propositions#On_the_ballot> for a list of all 17 initiatives.
2. Recreate and complete the following chart after researching each proposition.
3. Be prepared to explain orally to your classmates and teacher your reasons for either supporting or not supporting each initiative.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Proposition number | What would happen if the proposition passed? | Arguments supporting passage? | Arguments against passage? | Your vote | Justification for your vote |
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**Please complete the assignment AS posted in a Google document and submit through Turnitin.com to Election Project Assignment 3 – CA Propositions by 11:59 on Sunday, September 18.**

**Assignment #4 – THE FIRST PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE - DUE: Monday 10/3/16**

On Monday, September 26, 2016 – Clinton and Trump will debate the issues in NY at Hofstra University. The debate will consist of 6 - 15 minute segments. **Be prepared to discuss the debate on MONDAY 10/3/2016.**

If for whatever reason, you cannot watch the debate when it airs from 9:00 – 10:30 EST, please try to either record or watch on YouTube before Monday.

**On the format of the debate:**

*All debates will be moderated by a single individual and will run from 9:00-10:30 p.m. Eastern Time without commercial breaks. As always, the moderators alone will select the questions to be asked, which are not known to the CPD or to the candidates. The moderators will have the ability both to extend the segments and to ensure that the candidates have equal speaking time. While the focus will properly be on the candidates, the moderator will regulate the conversation so that thoughtful and substantive exchanges occur. The CPD is in discussion with technology and civic groups that will provide data to the moderators to assist them in identifying the subjects that are most important to the public.*

**Source**: <http://www.debates.org/index.php?page=2016debates>

**NAME \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ PERIOD \_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**DIRECTIONS:** As you watch the debate, record ANY four questions and summaries of answers and rebuttals by the other candidate. Please print out this sheet an turn it in completed to your teacher.

**DEBATE DATE:** MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2016 **LOCATION OF DEBATE:** HOFSTRA UNIVERSITY, NY

**MODERATOR: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ QUESTIONERS: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**QUESTION**

**#1 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**CANDIDATE: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ANSWER:**

**CANDIDATE: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ REBUTTAL:**

**QUESTION**

**#2 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**CANDIDATE: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ANSWER:**

**CANDIDATE: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ REBUTTAL:**

**QUESTION**

**#3 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**CANDIDATE: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ANSWER:**

**CANDIDATE: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ REBUTTAL:**

**QUESTION**

**#4 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**CANDIDATE: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ANSWER:**

**CANDIDATE: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ REBUTTAL:**

Assignment: Viewer Sheet

Source: <http://www.pbseduelectioncentral.com/debates>

**Assignment #5 – Understanding the ELECTORAL COLLEGE**  **DUE: Sunday 10/16/16**

**Background:** The Electoral College was established by the U.S. Constitution (Article II, Section 1, Clause 2). It specifies how many electors each state is entitled to have and that each state’s legislature decides how its electors are to be chosen. U.S. territories are not represented in the Electoral College.  From [WSJ](http://blogs.wsj.com/indiarealtime/2012/11/06/the-indian-voters-guide-to-u-s-election-day/?KEYWORDS=electoral+college): **“This Electoral College was built into the U.S. Constitution because the country’s founders were skeptical about having elections determined by direct popular will and also wanted to ensure small states had a voice in national affairs.”**

* The total number of U.S. electoral votes is 538, which is the sum of the nation’s 435 Representatives, 100 Senators, and 3 electors given to the District of Columbia.
* A candidate needs 270 electoral votes to win the presidency – it’s half of 538, plus one.
* A candidate who wins the majority of votes in a state gets all its electoral votes. The exceptions to this rule are Nebraska and Maine, where the state winner gets the two electoral votes derived from the two senators, while the candidate who wins each congressional district gets the electoral vote derived from that representative.
* The*Twelfth Amendment*mandates that the Congress assemble in joint session to count the electoral votes and declare the winners of the election on January 6th.
* *Twentieth Amendment*, the newly elected House declares the winner of the election. In elections before 1936, the outgoing House counted the electoral votes.
* A **swing state**, also referred to as a **battleground state**(or purple state because it is not majority Democratic “Blue State” or Republican “Red State”) is a state in which no single candidate or party has overwhelming support in securing that state’s electoral college votes.

**Other Resources:**

* 270 To Win: <http://www.270towin.com/> (select President Tab & Historic Elections)
* FAQ Electoral College: <http://www.archives.gov/federal-register/electoral-college/faq.html>

**Assignment:**

1. How many electoral votes does your state have?
2. Using 270towin.com, explain what all this these individuals have in common?
   * + John Quincy Adams 1824
     + Rutherford B Hayes 1876
     + Benjamin Harrison 1888
     + George W. Bush 2000
3. Do you think that your vote is meaningful under the electoral college system? Explain.
4. Research the electoral college on your own and explain the pros and cons of the Electoral College.
5. Do you think there may be a better way to elect a president? Explain.

**Please complete the assignment AS posted in a Google document and submit through Turnitin.com to Election Project Assignment 5 – Electoral College by 11:59 on Sunday, October 16.**