

POLS 30010

American Political Parties

PARTY ISSUE PAPER

Your assignment is to write an 8-page, double-spaced paper describing and analyzing the positions of the Democratic and Republican parties on a major public policy issue. You must e-mail me (Wolbrecht.1@nd.edu) with your choice of issue by 5 p.m. on Wednesday, March 23rd. The party issue paper is **due by 1:30 p.m. (class time) on Wednesday, April 20th** to my office (Decio 442). I do not accept e-mail submissions. *A half grade (5 points) will be deducted for each day your paper is late.* You are *required* to follow the class Style Guide. If you have any questions about this assignment, arrange to meet with me or our TA as soon as possible.

Your paper should be sure to cover *at least* the following:

Description: The Parties' Positions. What are the two parties' positions? What evidence can you provide to support your assessment? Sources might include: party platforms, statements and speeches by the parties' presidents and presidential candidates, voting behavior of the parties' congressional delegations, and so on. Have the parties' positions changed over time? How? Were the parties once on the same side, but now they're in conflict? Or vice versa?

Analysis: Explain the Parties' Issue Positions. Why have the parties adopted the positions they have? Why have their positions changed over time? What sorts of factors—party coalitions, party ideologies, the issue itself—have contributed to the parties' positions and to any changes over time? Are there developments or events that have had consequences for the coalitions or issue that help explain changes in the parties' positions? Are the parties' positions on this particular issue related to any other set of issues?

Remember: A good answer does not just provide information—it analyzes that information using the concepts discussed in class and in the reading. **The point of this paper is to use your investigation into the partisan politics of one issue debate to show your comprehension of the theories and ideas discussed in class.** Thus, the more you can relate the facts and information you are providing to ideas and concepts from class (lecture and reading), the better. The class web site (<http://www.nd.edu/~cwolbrec/POLS30010.html>) has links to a few internet sources you may find useful.

Suggestions for possible issues (not required or limiting—just possibilities)

Abortion	Education	Economic stimulus
Environment	Labor	Homeland security
Gay rights/marriage/DADT	Energy	Pornography
Taxation	Immigration	Prayer in school
Social welfare	Medicare	Child care
Health care	Campaign finance reform	Consumer protection
Affirmative action	Social Security	Legal (tort) reform
Middle East	Military spending/policy	Minimum wage