CURRENT EVENTS RESEARCH TOPICS

ECONOMICS: Greek Referendum Results

**TOPIC:** The Greek debt crisis continues. Greeks have voted in a referendum against accepting the terms of the troika (the European Central Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the European Commission), who would only loan more to Greek banks if austerity continued. What are the next steps for Greece? Will it stop using the Euro and return to its own currency? How do its creditors justify forcing Greece into further austerity?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Greece AND debt AND (negotiations OR referendum)

CIVICS, GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS: 2016 Presidential Campaigns

**TOPIC:** In the past month, Republicans businessman Donald Trump, New Jersey Governor Chris Christie and Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal have announced their candidacies for the presidential race of 2016. For the Democrats, former Senator Jim Webb has joined the race. How do these entries change the dynamic of the primary races and what are the politics and backgrounds of these men? Who are the leading candidates for each party so far and why?

**SEARCH TERMS:** president* AND candidate AND (2016 OR campaign OR race)

CRIME AND LAW: Attack on Tunisian Tourists

**TOPIC:** A gunman shot up a beachfront tourist hotel in Sousse Tunisia, killing 38 people, mostly foreigners. It is alleged that the killer, Seifeddine Rezgui, trained in Libya with the three men who shot up a Tunisian museum last March. Why has Tunisia become another front for jihadi groups? Why are tourists their targets? What goal did ISIS set for the Ramadan period?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Tunisia AND shootings AND (hotels or resorts)

SPORTS: Women’s World Cup

**TOPIC:** The U.S. team has won the Women’s World Cup, beating Japan 5-2. The 2015 tournament was played in several cities in Canada. Who were some of the outstanding players in the tournament? What loss against Japan drove the U.S. forward? What did Carlie Lloyd achieve in the final?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Women's World Cup

SOCIAL STUDIES RESEARCH TOPICS

BUSINESS: Donna Karan

**TOPIC:** Designer Donna Karan is leaving her role as chief designer for her company, often known as DK, to spend more time with her philanthropic foundation. How is the company going to be changing without her as designer? When did she begin her company and what kind of designs is it known for?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Donna Karan

BUSINESS: Apple and Taylor Swift

**TOPIC:** After an open letter posted by popular musician Taylor Swift, Apple has reversed its policy of withholding royalties on new songs during a three month trial period. What are Apple’s reasons for its old policy and why did it agree to change it? What role could other streaming services have had in pressuring them to make this change? What did Swift’s letter say and where did she post it?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Apple AND Taylor Swift AND royalt*
BUSINESS: Uber Service

TOPIC: Parisian taxi drivers blocked highways and roads and committed acts of violence in protest about the continuing operations of Uber, the car sharing service. Two top French Uber managers were arrested and will be going on trial, presumably because the company had continued to operate until their appeal on their ban is heard. The company has recently suspended operations. What are the taxi drivers’ positions? Why do customers like using Uber? Should the city be allowed to regulate the Uber drivers, and if so, how should they proceed?

SEARCH TERMS: Paris AND Uber AND taxi drivers

CIVICS, GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS: Normalizing Relations

TOPIC: As part of their normalization of relations, Cuba and the U.S. have agreed to re-open their embassies. How did Republican Congressmen and Senators respond to this initiative? How did the various Republican candidates for the presidency respond?

SEARCH TERMS: Cuba AND U.S. AND embassies

CIVICS, GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS: Government Data Hack

TOPIC: Chinese hackers are the suspects in a U.S. government investigation into a massive security breach on the databases of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management. What is the evidence that the investigators are going on, who specifically are the suspects and why? What kind of information has been compromised and what are some possible consequences of this breach?

SEARCH TERMS: hack* AND Office of Personnel Management

CRIME AND LAW: Lethal Injection Sedative

TOPIC: The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled to allow the use of a controversial sedative, midazolam, that Oklahoma has used in executions by lethal injection. Why is the sedative so controversial and how does it work? What were the key arguments in favor and against the use of midazolam?

SEARCH TERMS: Supreme Court AND midazolam AND Oklahoma

CRIME AND LAW: Prison Break

TOPIC: Richard Matt has been killed and David Sweat apprehended after nearly a 3 week manhunt for these two escapees from the Clinton Correctional Facility in Dannemora, New York. How did they break out of the prison and what could have been done better to prevent their escape? How was the search for them conducted and what leads helped to find each one?

SEARCH TERMS: Richard Matt AND David Sweat AND (Clinton OR Dannemora OR search* OR caught OR catch OR found OR fugitive)

ECONOMICS: Futures Trading Pits Close

TOPIC: Most futures trading pits in Chicago and New York City, where traders for over a century had used loud calls and hand signals to buy and sell futures on commodities and largely set the prices, will be closing as obsolete in the face of the more efficient use of computers. How did the old way work and what are the advantages and disadvantages to traders and to the overall economy of each system? How do trading companies smoothly transition from one process to the other?

SEARCH TERMS: futures AND trad* AND (pit OR pits) AND Chicago AND New York

ECONOMICS: Fast-Track Trade Bill

TOPIC: A process of fast track negotiating authority for the U.S. president, called trade promotion authority (TPA) has been passed by the U.S. Congress and will be signed into law by President Obama. What groups have supported this bill, what groups have opposed it and why? What are some ways this bill could help with an international agreement and what are the risks?

SEARCH TERMS: trade promotion authority AND TPA
EDUCATION: Corinthian College Debt

**TOPIC:** The U.S. Department of Education has announced a new debt relief plan for students who had attended the now closed for profit Corinthian Colleges. How does this expanded debt relief work? What new regulations are being imposed by the Obama Administration to hold schools accountable for their claims used in student recruitment?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Corinthian AND college AND debt

EDUCATION: California School Vaccine Bill

**TOPIC:** California has passed a strict school vaccine bill that strikes down the personal belief exemption and requires all students to get vaccines. What are the constitutional arguments for either side of this legislation and what were the circumstances that spurred it? What two states currently have very strict vaccine requirements and what were the circumstances that existed that spurred the legislation in both of those states?

**SEARCH TERMS:** California AND vaccine AND school*

EDUCATION: First Nations’ Education

**TOPIC:** The Truth and Reconciliation Commission set up to investigate the residential schools that First Nation children were sent to between the late 1800s and the 1970s has turned in its report. They called the schools nothing less than cultural genocide. What else was problematic about conditions in these schools? What remedial actions did the commission call for? How likely is the government to follow through on them?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Canada AND First Nations AND residential schools

HISTORY: Battle of Waterloo

**TOPIC:** The 200th anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo has recently been celebrated by many of the participants. One result of this battle was the exile of Napoleon to St. Helena in the south Atlantic. Another was the inauguration of the Concert of Europe, a way of maintaining the peace after the Congress of Vienna that was dominated by reactionary regimes in Austria and Russia. What countries celebrated this anniversary and who did not? Did the defeat of Napoleon end the revolutionary impulse in France?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Battle of Waterloo AND Anniversary

HISTORY: The Confederate Flag

**TOPIC:** After images were discovered of the Confederate flag being embraced by Dylann Roof, the racist killer of 9 people in a Charleston, SC church, South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley has ordered the Confederate flag removed from government buildings. Her act was followed by similar orders in some other southern states and many stores stopped selling the image. What is the significance of the Confederate flag to U.S. history, what values does it represent and why has it flown in some states in contemporary times? Why was the Confederate symbol still used in recent times?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Confederate flag AND Charleston AND Haley

SOCIAL ISSUES: Refugee Crisis

**TOPIC:** A U.N. report says there are almost 60 million refugees around the world. The previous high was 51.2 million in 2013. What new crisis account for this increase? Have many of the older ones been resolved? What countries have opened their borders and which countries continue to try to keep refugees out?

**SEARCH TERMS:** U.N. AND refugees
SOCIAL ISSUES: Gay Marriage

**TOPIC:** The Supreme Court has ruled that gay marriage is a fundamental right under the Fourteenth Amendment. What does this mean for states that had not adopted gay marriage? What was the reasoning behind the ruling and what was the reasoning behind the dissenting opinion?

**SEARCH TERMS:** (same sex marriage OR same-sex marriage OR gay marriage) AND Supreme Court

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SCIENCE AND HEALTH RESEARCH TOPICS

**ENVIRONMENT: Power Plant Regulations**

**TOPIC:** The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) rule that restricts power plant emissions is unconstitutional. What was the basis for the ruling and what was the position of the defense? Does this ruling put any other environmental regulations at risk and if so, how?

**SEARCH TERMS:** (Environmental Protection Agency OR EPA) AND Supreme Court AND emissions AND mercury

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**ENVIRONMENT: A Green Encyclical**

**TOPIC:** Pope Francis has published an encyclical on the environment that claims global warming is real and is caused, in part, by human actions. It further states that first world countries are exploiting poor countries for their resources whose use contributes to the global warming effects that most hurt the poor nations. What other points did the pope make? How did the world react to this encyclical?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Pope Francis AND encyclical AND global warming

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**ENVIRONMENT: Heat Wave in Southeast Asia**

**TOPIC:** A heat wave in southern Pakistan in advance of the cooling monsoon rains has killed hundreds of people. The government was advising people not to go outside during the day and it closed schools and public offices. What infrastructure problems intensified the problems? What religious observance also added to them?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Pakistan AND heat wave AND fatalities

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**HEALTH: New Drug for Malaria**

**TOPIC:** A cheap, single-dose medication for malaria seems as if it can cure someone who has the disease, act to prevent the disease, act to prevent the disease from being transmitted to another person and also work to prevent the disease from taking hold in people. It seems too good to be true. How does it work? Why is this a good time for a new approach to dealing with malaria?

**SEARCH TERMS:** malaria AND new drug

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**HEALTH: Obamacare Ruling**

**TOPIC:** The U.S. Supreme Court has voted 6-3 to uphold the tax credits for the Affordable Care Act. What does this mean for the future of the Affordable Care Act and for Americans living in states with their own exchanges vs. those living in states with federal exchanges? What were the most compelling arguments for and against their decision?

**SEARCH TERMS:** (Affordable Care Act OR Obamacare) AND Supreme Court

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**SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY: SpaceX Falcon 9**

**TOPIC:** A Falcon 9 space rocket, designed by SpaceX has exploded during a mission carrying supplies to the International Space Station. What has been discovered about the cause of the explosion and how could it have been prevented? What was lost as far as supplies? What is the history of the Falcon 9 model of SpaceX rockets?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Falcon 9 AND SpaceX
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY: Solar Impulse

TOPIC: Solar Impulse, an airplane powered by solar cells, is on an around the world journey. It completed its longest leg, 4,473 miles from Japan to Hawaii, in 118 hours. This is the longest solo nonstop flight in history. How large is the plane? How does it run during the nighttime hours? How far have its alternating pilots come and how much of their journey remains?

SEARCH TERMS: Solar Impulse

SPORTS RESEARCH TOPICS

SPORTS: Justin Speith Wins U.S. Open

TOPIC: Texan Justin Speith has won the U.S. Open golf tournament. Where was the U.S. Open played this year and how does that location distinguish this particular tournament? What were some of the key shots he played that gave him this win?

SEARCH TERMS: Justin Speith AND U.S. Open

SPORTS: European Games

TOPIC: The inaugural European Games have recently ended in Baku, Azerbaijan’s capital. Thousands of athletes participated in 20 different sports. What sports were featured at these games? How much construction had to happen for them to occur? When will they repeat? What concerns did human rights organizations have about their location?

SEARCH TERMS: 2015 European Games

SPORTS: A First for a Woman

TOPIC: Melissa Mayeux has been added to the Major League Baseball international registration list, a list of baseball prospects who have a chance of being drafted by a professional team. The French teenager is the first woman to be on the list. What position does she play and for what organization? What are the chances she will be drafted? What other options in baseball does she have?

SEARCH TERMS: Melissa Mayeux AND MLB

SPORTS: Golden State Warriors Win Championship

TOPIC: The Golden State Warriors have beaten the Cleveland Cavaliers for the National Basketball Assoc. (NBA) championship. How long had it been since the Warriors had last won a championship and what were the teams like each time? What were the key plays in the championship tournament?

SEARCH TERMS: Warriors AND (Cavaliers OR Cavs) AND (basketball OR NBA)

SPORTS: Chicago Blackhawks Win the Stanley Cup

TOPIC: The Chicago Blackhawks have beaten the Tampa Bay Lightning to win the Stanley Cup hockey championship. What were the key plays in this game and who were the key players? How many recent Stanley Cup championships have the Blackhawks won and what makes their team so strong?

SEARCH TERMS: Chicago Blackhawks AND Tampa AND Stanley Cup

SPORTS: American Pharaoh Wins Triple Crown

TOPIC: Champion racehorse American Pharaoh has won the Triple Crown which requires winning the Kentucky Derby, the Preakness, and the Belmont Stakes. Who was the jockey who rode American Pharaoh and how did they train? What are the natural gifts that this horse has as a racer? What other horses have won the Triple Crown and when?

SEARCH TERMS: American Pharaoh AND Triple Crown
ARTS AND LITERATURE RESEARCH TOPICS

FILM AND TELEVISION: Jurassic World
**TOPIC:** Jurassic World is the fourth film in the popular Jurassic Park film series and with over half million dollars had the highest grossing weekend for any film. What are some of the ways it was marketed and advertised before it opened? What are some films with highly successful opening weekends and how were they marketed and advertised?
**SEARCH TERMS:** Jurassic World

FILM AND TELEVISION: Christopher Lee
**TOPIC:** Christopher Lee was an actor playing the parts of Dracula, a James Bond villain and Saruman. He was also in two Star Wars movies in a career that began in the 1940s and included more than 250 film roles. What studio used him as Dracula? What non-horror roles did he play? What record albums did he record?
**SEARCH TERMS:** Christopher Lee

FINE ARTS AND ARCHITECTURE: By the Master's Hand
**TOPIC:** Following conservation and cleaning, Rembrandt's painting Saul and David in the Mauritshuis Royal Picture Gallery has been authenticated as being from his hand, not just from his studio. An expert in 1969 claimed it was a student of his work. What were some of the problems with the painting that needed conserving? What was revealed by the cleaning? What techniques are used today that were unable in 1969?
**SEARCH TERMS:** Rembrandt AND Saul and David

FINE ARTS AND ARCHITECTURE: Albright-Knox Gallery App
**TOPIC:** The Albright-Knox Art Gallery in Buffalo New York has released an app that helps teach young people about art history by using some of the principals of video games. How do the apps work and what can be learned about art by using them? How do the apps coordinate with the art in the museum?
**SEARCH TERMS:** Albright-Knox Gallery AND app

LITERATURE: Alice in Wonderland
**TOPIC:** The Morgan Library and Museum in New York City is commemorating the 150th anniversary of the release of the book Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland with an exhibit of some early documents. What is being displayed and what insights do they offer about this book? What are some examples of how this book has impacted the culture of the United States and Britain?
**SEARCH TERMS:** Alice in Wonderland AND Morgan Library

LITERATURE: Baileys Women’s Prize for Fiction
**TOPIC:** Ali Smith has won the Baileys Women’s Prize for Fiction with her novel How to Be Both. What is the theme of this work? How old is the Baileys Prize? Who is eligible for it? Who has won it in the past? What other awards has Smith won?
**SEARCH TERMS:** Ali Smith AND Baileys Prize

PERFORMING ARTS: The Return of the Wizard
**TOPIC:** Harry Potter is set to return, not to the pages of a novel or story, but to the stage in a new play, based on a story J.K. Rowling collaborated on with the writer of the play and its director. Harry Potter and the Cursed Child, a previously unknown chapter in Potter’s life, will open in the summer of 2016. Do you think the magical world of Harry Potter will work on stage? What other characters from the books would you like to see in the play?
**SEARCH TERMS:** Harry Potter and the Cursed Child
PERFORMING ARTS: A New Arthur Miller Play

TOPIC: An unmade screenplay, The Hook, by American playwright Arthur Miller has been turned into a theater work in Great Britain and given its world premiere. It is a story of racketeering in the longshoreman’s unions in New York. Why did Miller stop work on the screenplay in 1950? How was it received by the British critics? What famous film shares some themes with it?

SEARCH TERMS: Arthur Miller AND The Hook

PERFORMING ARTS: Tony Awards

TOPIC: The two big winners at the Tony Awards were The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time by Simon Stephens and Fun Home by Lisa Kron and Jeanine Tesori. What impressed the critics about these theater productions and what are some of the other impressive works by the playwrights? What were some of the other celebrated plays and musicals?

SEARCH TERMS: Tony Awards

PEOPLE RESEARCH TOPICS

PEOPLE: Misty Copeland

TOPIC: Misty Copeland is the first African American ballet dancer to be promoted to principal dancer at the American Ballet Theater in New York City. What are some of her early accomplishments that made her a prodigy in the ballet profession? What is her style of ballet dancing? What are some of her most celebrated performances?

SEARCH TERMS: Misty Copeland AND American Ballet Theater

PEOPLE: Rachael Dolezal

TOPIC: Rachael Dolezal, the head of the Spokane, Washington office of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) became a controversial figure when it was discovered that she had mislead her employers into believing she was African-American. Why did she seek to change her racial identity? What has been the criticism of her act? Who has spoken in her defense and why?

SEARCH TERMS: Rachael Dolezal AND NAACP

PEOPLE: Ornette Coleman

TOPIC: Ornette Coleman was one of the key innovators of free jazz. What is free jazz and how did she influence this kind of music? What are some of her most celebrated albums and what is it about them that impressed the critics?

SEARCH TERMS: Ornette Coleman

PEOPLE: Nicholas Winton

TOPIC: Sir Nicholas Winton, in 1939, arranged for 8 trainloads of Czechoslovakian children to enter Britain. A 9th trainload left the day the war started and the children on it were lost. His efforts were not know until the 1980s. Why did he never speak of what he had done? How did his wife find out about this? What honors were given him after this became know?

SEARCH TERMS: Nicholas Winton

PEOPLE: Tariq Aziz

TOPIC: Tariq Aziz was the foreign minister of Iraq under Saddam Hussein, and, as such, became familiar to TV viewers in the run-up to both Gulf Wars. Why was he on TV during that period of time? What was the rest of his career? Why was he not executed after the 2nd Gulf war, unlike other government members?

SEARCH TERMS: Tariq Aziz
PEOPLE: Dick Van Patten
TOPIC: Actor and animal rights activist, Dick Van Patten was probably best known for his role as Tom Bradford, the father on the popular television show Eight is Enough. What were some of his other leading roles? Who are some established actors and actresses related to him?
SEARCH TERMS: Dick Van Patten

PEOPLE: Ronnie Gilbert
TOPIC: Ronnie Gilbert was the strong female voice in the popular mid-20th Century folk group The Weavers. What are some of the major hits from the Weavers and what political controversies did they contend with? What other career did Gilbert have?
SEARCH TERMS: Ronnie Gilbert

PEOPLE: James Horner
TOPIC: James Horner was a prolific composer of film scores, often with Celtic musical themes. What are some of his most popular scores? Who was his father and what was his influence on working in film?
SEARCH TERMS: James Horner AND composer