



Great Decisions 2015 topics announced!



Great Decisions is the name of a program and a briefing book that are used to engage citizens in learning about the world. The Great Decisions Discussion Program is the oldest and largest grass-roots world affairs education program of its kind in the country. Each year, the Great Decisions editorial board selects eight of the most pressing global issues and regions that will be the focus of the briefing book, television programs, and online resources. The topics listed below will be featured in the *Great Decisions 2015* briefing book. The focus of the articles and the order of the topics are subject to change.

The Dodgeville Public Library has purchased the 2015 briefing book, TV Series on DVD and Teacher's Guide. If you are interested in taking part in the discussion group, rank the following topics in order of interest and return your selections to Vickie Stangel at vstangel@swls.org or drop them off at the library. Also let me know if you are interested in being a group facilitator. The program will be scheduled in early spring; the time, number of sessions and topics will depend on the feedback received. In 2014 four topics were selected and facilitated sessions were held on Friday afternoons. The library will also purchase additional books / DVDs on the topics selected. If you have suggestions of titles for purchase, just let me know.

Great Decisions meetings feature open and fair conversation, without requirement for consensus. Materials from the Foreign Policy Association are available at the Library prior to each session. Pre-Registration is required. Programs are free. Four copies of the Briefing Booklet will be available to check out from the library or individuals may order their own copies at the Foreign Policy Association website at http://www.fpa.org/great_decisions/?act=gd_topics

- _____ **Sphere of Influence: Russia's Foreign Policy**
 - Putin's pushback against European expansionism has the West wondering: If Putin's Russia isn't afraid to take an aggressive stance against Ukraine's pivot to the West, what does that mean for the rest of Russia's neighbors?
- _____ **The Tradeoff: Privacy in a Digital World**
 - The idea of "privacy" has undergone significant changes in the digital age, as has the idea of privacy "harm." Concerns about what some see as a U.S. "dragnet" and unwarranted privacy intrusions have compelled other countries to revamp their own privacy protections. Legislation, both at home and abroad, hasn't kept pace with technological developments, leaving some wondering if privacy as we know it is long dead.
- _____ **The Great Divide: Sunni vs Shia**
 - From the crisis in Iraq and Syria to the tension between Iran and Saudi Arabia, the struggle between Sunni and Shi'i groups for dominance is tearing apart the region and shows no signs of abating. How does sectarianism fit into a larger narrative of the Middle East? How have governments manipulated sectarian differences? And finally, what is the U.S. doing about it?



➤ _____ **India Rising**

- Inspired by its “top-down” model for growth, the world’s largest democracy has started taking its cues from China, one of America’s economic rivals. It’s a mind set that led to Modi’s election in 2014, and has signaled the developing economy’s desire for real change. Now, it’s up to the U.S. to determine how to best secure its interests as India asserts itself on the world stage.



➤ _____ **The Promise of Africa**

- Africa is in the midst of an unprecedented transformation. The continent is home to some of the fastest growing economies in the world, and it’s become a draw for foreign investors from across the globe. After the “Obamamania” of 2008 died down, though, the realization that Obama wasn’t going to overturn, or even prioritize, U.S. Africa policy kicked in. How can U.S. policy live up to its promise and values while securing its interests in the region?



➤ _____ **Syria: The World’s Largest Refugee Crisis**

- Syrians have for a century welcomed over a million refugees from Armenia, Palestine, Iraq and other countries around the region. Now, thanks to a multiyear civil war, they are on track to become the source of the world’s largest refugee population in a matter of months. As Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey and other neighbors strive to accommodate the millions of Syrians, the risk of allowing Syrians to become dependent on emergency aid and forming a “lost generation” remains.



➤ _____ **Modern Day Slavery**

- Human trafficking represents over \$30 billion in international trade per annum and continues to be one of the fastest growing criminal industries. The U.S. and the international community have adopted various treaties and laws to prevent trafficking, but to truly understand and combat the issue, they must find the root causes enabling smugglers to commit millions into slavery.



➤ _____ **Building Brazil**

- Brazil — it’s the “B” in the acronym BRICS, five emerging economies once seen as soon-to-be superpowers. After economic troubles in the 1990s, Brazil has risen to new global prominence — it’s drawing in more investment, working on global issues ranging from climate change to peacekeeping, and even hosting the 2014 World Cup and the 2016 Olympics. But some of Brazil’s trickiest problems — staggering income inequality, weak civic institutions, poor regional leadership — have held it back.



Thank You, Vickie Stangel, Director
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Foreign Policy Association



Your Name & Contact information:

Dodgeville Public Library Website: <http://dodgevillelibrary.com>