I. Political Systems and Power

A. Definition: system of governance

1. who governs
2. legitimation
3. organization/structure

B. Democracy

1. People govern

a. by exercising their role as citizens

b. through democratic institutions that reflect their will

i. electoral process

ii. legislative process

c. by participation in civil society

2. Power

a. pluralistic

b. fluid and not concentrated

c. public policy demands compromise

d. veto groups

3. Government

a. function: serve the citizens and promote general well-being

b.. limited by laws

i. constitutions

ii. system of laws

iii. rights of citizens

c. checks and balances

d. transparent

e. accountable to the people who have the right to overthrow it.

f. free press

C. Is the U.S. really a democracy? Two Elite Theories of Power

1. Power Elite: C.Wright Mills

a. U.S. is ruled by small elite group

b. “command” positions in three areas (orders)

i. political, economic and military

ii. common interests, goals, and world view

c. “trunk decisions”: major foreign and domestic policies

d. “debate”

i. return to Afghanistan

ii. health care reform

iii. financial crisis of 2007

e. people need to be controlled or managed

i. means: propaganda

ii. control of media

iii. education

iv. manufacture of consent

D. G. William Domhoff: Class Domination Theory (ruling group)

1. upper class rules the U.S.

a. economic class: top 1%

b. social class: association and world view

2. upper class controls economy (with little resistance)

a. ownership of the means of production

b. interlocking directorates

c. producer networks

3. upper class controls political system (power networks)

a. candidate selection process

i. guarantees whoever wins election will represent upper class

ii. works through campaign financing

b. special interest process: lobbying

i. whoever goes to Congress passes legislation that benefits the upper class, or makes sure legislation that benefits people doesn’t get passed

ii. works through lobbying

c. policy planning process

i. organizations heavily funded by rich

ii. think tanks, foundations, universities

iii. “research”, create and write legislation

iv. examples: “fracking is not harmful to the environment”,

“Affordable Care Act,” “Medicare Prescription Drug Bill”

“Clear Skies”, “Healthy Forests” “Monsanto Exclusion”

d. opinion shaping process

i. control of ideological institutions: education, mass media

ii. goal: manufacture consent

4. Empirically verifiable: Who serves? Who wins? Who benefits?

II. Who Serves? Who wins? Who benefits?

A. Who wins? Candidate selection process

1. Campaign $2012

a. presidential campaign

b. all public offices

* 1. trend
  2. Citizens United

2. Sources of campaign financing

a. “Super PACs”

b. 501©4s: non-profit charitable organizations that promote the social welfare!

B. Special Interest Process

1. How much?

a. Federal: 2009: $3+ billion

b. State: $1 billion

2. How many? 11,195

C. Who benefits?

1. spent: 93 firms $283 million, return: $62.5 billion tax breaks (22,000%).

2. oil: $4 billion dollars, off-shore oil drilling, Keystone Excel Pipeline

3. finance: deregulation, legislation, bailout

4. health industry: no universal health care, no regulation of drugs, wrote Obamacare

5. nuclear industry: no liability, waivers on safety, publicly funded cleanup,

low interest loans.

<http://www.thedailyshow.com/watch/thu-september-12-2013/monsanto---seed-patent-laws>

[http://www.thedailyshow.com/watch/tue-december-10-2013/american-horrible- story---gerrymandering](http://www.thedailyshow.com/watch/tue-december-10-2013/american-horrible-%09story---gerrymandering)