I. Democracy in America

A. “We can have a democratic society or we can have the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few. We cannot have both.”

B. Democratic institutions

1. Electoral process: represent our interests (vital needs)

2. Legislative process: establish public policy and fund programs

3. Judicial system: guarantees our rights

4. Regulatory system: protects the public

a. FDA

b. EPA

c. OSHA

5. Free press: informed citizenry

C. Undermining democratic institutions

1. Electoral process: campaign financing

2. Legislative process: lobbying, “revolving door”

3. Judicial system: appointments, campaign financing, corporate conflicts of interest

4. Regulatory system: appointments, funding, limits on

enforcement, “revolving door”

5. Free press: corporate owned, advertising supported

D. Electoral process

1. Campaign 2008: $4 + billion, 2012 $6.3 billion (All-time record!!)

a. Trend

b. presidential campaign $2.6 billion (All-time record!!)

c. all public offices

2. Types of contributions

a. Hard money: limited and regulated

b. “Super PACs”

i. unlimited

ii. donors: corporations, groups, person

iii. requirements:

identify donors

no “direct” contact with candidate

iv. 2012 primary/avg donation /$47,718

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

i. unlimited

ii. not primarily political

iii. anonymous

iv. (2) Crossroads GPS + Americans For Prosperity =$130 million

d. Foundations, conventions, inaugurations, debates, fundraisers

e. primaries: outside spending +1600%

f. promise and threat

E. Legislative process: lobbying

1. How much?

a. Federal: 2009: $3+ billion

b. State: $1 billion

2. How many? 11,195

3. Who lobbies?

a. Industries

i. Oil: Exxon Mobil $59 million, TransCanada

ii. Financial: Since1998 $5 billion (incl campaign)

iii. Health Insurance: 2008-9: $635 million

b. Trade Groups/Association

i. industry formed and funded groups

ii. function: pursue interests of specific industries

iii. examples: Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers

of America (PHARMA), National Association of Broadcasters,

American Bankers Association, American Health Insurance Plans

c. Front Groups

i. industry formed and funded

ii. function: pursue interests of specific industries

iii. conceal identity and real goals

iv. Citizens for Better Medicare, American Council on Science and Health, Clean and Safe Energy Coalition

v. ALEC (American Legislative Exchange Council)

d. public interest groups

i. Union of Concerned Scientists

ii. U.S. Public Interest Research Group

iii. Children’s Defense Fund

4. Methods and successes

a. “revolving door”

b. perks and promises

c. cost/benefit analysis

i. spent: 93 firms $283 million

ii. return: $62.5 billion tax breaks (22,000%)

F. Regulatory agencies

1. FDA (Food and Drug Administration)

2. EPA (Environmental Protection Agency)

3. FCC (Federal Communications Commission)

4. Dept of Agriculture

5. SEC (Security and Exchange Commission)

6. How?

a. Limit funding (FDA)

b. Appointments (“Revolving Door”)

c. Limit enforcement, penalties

d. Limit regulatory power: Obama and Issa

7. Example: Department of Agriculture’s regulation of meat processing

a. Appointments

b. Funding

c. Enforcement

i. no mandatory recalls even for Class I (lethal)

ii. no mandatory warning to public

iii. no mandatory fines or penalties

G. Campaigning, television and a misinformed citizenry

1. Means of campaigning

a. Eisenhower

b. Florida primary: 13,000 tv ads

2. Media Consultants $1.2 billion

3. Main source of TV revenue (no finance reform)

4. What is a political advertisement?

5. Television “debates”

6. “Town hall meetings”

7. Photo ops