I. Political system

A. Definition: system of governance, or social organization of power

1. Characteristics

a. who governs and why

b. relationship of people to government

c. limits on authority (including force)

d. political structures

2. Examples

a. monarchy

b. democracy

c. fascism

B. Democracy

1. Who governs? Why?

a. people: collectively self-govern

b. natural law

2. How?

a. understand own interests

b. directly or indirectly

c. informed decisions

3. Government subordinate to the people

a. “life, liberty, happiness”

b. protect the common good

c. “rights bearing” citizens

d. right to overthrow

4. government authority: “by the people”

a. granted by the people

a. limited by Constitution and laws

b. accountable

c. transparent

d. rights?

5. social role: citizen

C. Fascism

1. Who? Why?
   1. Corporations, political party, and military.

b. Mythology

1. How?
   1. manufacturing consent
2. “lying world”

ii. media: propaganda

iii. education: indoctrination

* 1. fear and force

c. necessity: perpetual enemies

1. Relationship people to government
   1. people are subordinate
   2. social role: serve the state
   3. values: sacrifice, obedience, loyalty
2. Limits to power
   1. none
   2. institutions serve powerful

II. Democracy in America

A. Brandeis: “We can have a democratic society or we can have the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few. We cannot have both.” (Also Jefferson, Lincoln, Eisenhower)

B. Democratic institutions

1. Electoral process: leaders that represent our interests

2. Legislative process: public policy

3. Judicial system: guarantees our rights

4. Regulatory system: protects

5. Free press: not controlled by government

C. Undermining democratic institutions

1. Electoral process: campaign financing

2. Legislative process: lobbying

3. Judicial system: appointments, campaign financing

4. Regulatory system: appointments, funding, limits on

enforcement

5. Free press: corporate owned, advertising supported

D. Electoral process

1. Campaign cycle: $3 + billion

a. Trend

b. $Senate: median $4 million / avg. $7 million

c. House: median $1 million

d. State Judgeships, School Board, primaries, mayors

2. Contributors

a. 80% from wealthiest 1/2 of 1%

b. Previously 55% to Republicans 45% to Democrats

* 1. 2004: much more to Republicans

d. present; more to Democrats

3. Types of contributions

a. Hard money

b. Soft money

c. 527s:

d. Foundations, conventions, and inaugurations

4. Who wins?

a. Incumbents (over 90% of the time)

b. Candidate that spends the most

c. “Wealth primary”

E. Legislative process: lobbying

1. How much?

a. Federal: $3 billion ($2.7 million per)

b. State: $1+ billion ($130,000)

2. How many? 40,000

3. Who lobbies?

a. Corporations

i. Exxon Mobil

ii. Lockheed Martin

iii. lately financial industries

b. Trade Groups

i. Chamber of Commerce $204 million

ii. National Association of Broadcasters $42 million

c. Public interest groups

d. Front groups: Asbestos Study Group

4. Methods

a. Connected individuals

b. Perks

c. Promises

F. Regulatory agencies

1. FDA (Food and Drug Administration)

2. EPA (Environmental Protection Agency)

3. FCC (Federal Communications Commission)

4. Dept of Agriculture

5. Dept of Interior

6. Commodity Futures Trading Commission

7. How?

a. Limit funding

b. Appointments (“Revolving Door”)

c. Limit enforcement

d. Limit regulation

e. funding from regulated industries FDA ($400 million)

G. Media and informed citizenry

1. Campaigning and television

a. Means of campaigning

b. Media Consultants $1.2 billion

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

d. What is a political advertisement?

e. Television “debates”

f. “Town hall meetings”

g. Photo ops

H. Two factions of the business party

1. Wealthfare

2. Military-Industrial complex

3. Globalization: NAFTA, GATT, CAFTA

4. Deregulation

5. Pro Corporate/Anti-labor