Chapter 1:

POLITICS: Who Gets What, When, and How
Today we cover the basics: ideas, concepts, approaches to examining politics

*follow along with the What is Politics? Handout and the Dye text...
Let’s start with something funny...
“It’s a well thought out, reasonable, common sense solution, and it has absolutely no place in the political process!”
IT'S A NEW IDEA WHERE YOU PLUNDER THEM JUST A LITTLE BIT ON A REGULAR BASIS - IT'S CALLED "TAXATION."
I'm here today to tell you what you want to hear....
OKAY, SO I LIED
- GET OVER IT!
NO EDUCATION, NO SKILLS, NO EXPERIENCE, NO CHARACTER REFERENCES... I'M AFRAID THE ONLY THING LEFT FOR YOU IS POLITICS.
10 THINGS THAT MAKE LIBERALS CRY:

1. GUNS
2. A FAIR ELECTION
3. THE AMERICAN FLAG
4. THE CONSTITUTION
5. CAPITALISM
6. FOX NEWS
7. PRAYER
8. PATRIOTISM
9. THE TRUTH
10. _________
10 Things that make Conservatives Cry

1. Paying Taxes
2. Science
3. Black Presidents
4. Bathrooms
5. Starbucks Cups
6. Immigrants
7. Flag Pins
8. Strong Women
9. Gay People
10. Reality
WHO SAYS I HAVEN'T DONE ANYTHING AS PRESIDENT?

RANTS
RAVES
OUTBURSTS
THREATS
PUT-DOWNS
GIBES
INSULTS
BOASTS
BRAGS
GLOATS
VLAD, IF YOU HACK THE 2020 ELECTION, BE WARNED...

...I BETTER WIN ELECTORAL COLLEGE AND POPULAR VOTE!
HERE, NOW DON'T MESS IT UP
BERNIE, I LOVE YOUR PROMISES OF FREE STUFF. HOW ARE YOU GOING TO PAY FOR IT?
IT'S MY TURN TO BE PRESIDENT
BILL PROMISED ME
Here’s a clip from “Thank You for Smoking” that says something important about thinking...
“Thank You for Smoking”
Scene takeaways:
* Don’t be a sheep

** Think for yourself
Princeton Professor discussing the dangers of groupthink with Fox News host Tucker Carlson
What’s the takeaway here?
THINK FOR YOUR FREAKING SELF!!!
Dr Carlton Oler recently told me something else relevant:

*Emotions are stupid, emotions are low IQ.*

*My take away: Don’t think with your emotions, think with your brain, not your backside, which is how I characterize emotional thinking*
“We believe that to err is human. To blame it on someone else is politics.”

-Hubert Humphrey

Disclaimer: there’s much truth here--politicians spend most of their time blaming others for problems rather than solving them...
Simplified American Politics

Democrat: Give me your money.
Republican: No.
Democrat: Fascist!

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Let’s start with a real definition...
ABOUT FREAKING TIME...
“Politics: “Poli” a Latin word meaning "many" and "tics" meaning "bloodsucking creatures".
So politics literally means “many bloodsucking creatures”
I’m joking obviously BUT...seems kinda accurate in some ways, no?
There are many definitions of politics
Here’s the class definition though...
Politics and Political Science

What is politics?
According to Dye (p3) it is “the process which determines who gets what, when and how” (H. Lasswell)

Questions Political Scientists study
- Who governs?
- By what means?
- For what ends?
Important concepts associated with politics...
Question: What is government?

a. Dye (p 5) says it is an “organization extending to the whole society that can legitimately use force to carry out its decisions”
Question: What is government?

b. Turetzky says government is an “institution that makes and enforces the law. It has a monopoly on the use of force and that force sometimes has to be used to enforce the law”
What are the purposes of government?

*Preamble to the Constitution has the answers...

1. To establish justice and insure domestic tranquility

2. To provide for the common defense
What are the purposes of government?

3. To promote the general welfare

4. To secure the blessings of liberty
Power-Some questions...

**Question 1:**
- What is power? Why is it so essential in politics?
**Answer:**

-Dye essentially says it is the ability to control and shape events. To get someone to do what they wouldn’t ordinarily do...

This is where government comes in. It has the **POWER** to force you to do what you don’t want to do...In a democracy, we grant governments this power...
Question 1: Are there potential problems with the government having a monopoly on power to make and enforce laws?
Question 2: what are the safeguards the founders built into the system to protect us against government misuse and abuse of power?
What is democracy?

Democratic Ideals:
- Greeks argued it was about people governing themselves ("rule by many")
- Democratic ideals include individual dignity, equality, participation in DM, majority rule
- Our founders didn’t like Greek style democracy AT ALL… Why not?
"Paradox of democracy"—i.e., the potential for conflict between majority rule and individual freedom?

**Question**: How did Madison and the other founding fathers try and deal with this potentially disastrous problem?

**Here’s an example**
How do these different types of government power differ from each other?

- Totalitarianism
- Authoritarianism
- Constitutional government
Question: What is Direct Democracy (“pure democracy”) and how practical is it in such a large, extended republic like ours?
Characteristics of representative democracies:

- Representatives are selected by vote of all the people.
- Elections are open to competition.
- Candidates and voters can freely express themselves.
- Representatives are selected periodically.
One of the central arguments in the field of political science centers on who is really in charge of the system, who really has the power. Some say that elites have all the power, whilst others say the people exercise power through group competition. Let's take a quick look at these perspectives...

The Elitist Perspective

What is the Elitist Perspective?
-Dye (p 17): It is a “political system in which power is concentrated in the hands of a relatively small group of individuals or institutions”

According to Dye, Elitism is characterized by:
- An elite being inevitable in any social organization
- The “few” having the power and the “many” not having it. Elites make decisions, not the many
- Only a few thousand people directly participating in decisions about war, taxes, employment, etc (Dye, p16)
- Elite status being open to talented people and the idea that elites aren’t JUST self-serving...
The Pluralist Perspective

What is the pluralist perspective?

-Dye (p18): It is the idea “that democracy can be achieved through competition among multiple organized groups and that individuals can participate in politics through group memberships and elections”

Pluralism is characterized by:
- Competition
- Bargaining
- Compromise
John Stossel’s Politically Incorrect Guide to Politics—“Do you believe in Magic?”