**Chapter 13: Politics: Penetrating Power**

**This American Life**

**Recommended Readings**

James Barber, The Presidential Character: Predicting Performance in the White HouseBarber uses a number of social sciences (sociology, psychology, and history) to determine the characteristics that made Presidents Taft through Bush successful (or not) in office.

Donald L. Bartlett and James B. Steele, America: Who Really Pays the Taxes?Bartlett and Steele explain how the upper class and major corporations use tax code loopholes to avoid paying taxes on the majority of the income they earn, leaving the middle and working classes to foot the bills.

William Domhoff, The Powers That BeDomhoff provides a history of the press, including the political pressures that the government and corporate sponsors place upon it to "shape" the news in a particular direction and the ways that the press was used to report some of the largest political scandals of all time.

Redish, Martin H. *Money Talks: Speech, Economic Power, and the Values of Democracy*. A professor of law looks at campaign financing, government funding of the arts, and commercial advertising, arguing against government restrictions.

Seymour M. Lipset, Political Man: The Social Bases of PoliticsIn this book, the author examines some of the social factors that are related to political concepts like stability and change.

Neil de Mause and Joanna Cagan, Field of Schemes: How the Great Stadium Swindle Turns Public Money into Private ProfitHere, the authors explain the ways that private franchises profit off of public money in sports both through the use of tax dollars to build new stadiums and through the higher ticket prices as a result.

C. Wright Mills, The Power Elite In his classic book, The Power Elite, C. Wright Mills examines a trilogy of institutions that command most of the power in the United States: the military, corporations, and the political elite.

Naomi Klein, The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism   
Klien examines the Bush Administration from a political economy prospective to examine how neo-liberalism capitalism has interfered with democracy.

Thomas Frank, What's the Matter with Kansas? How Conservatives Won the Heart of America   
Frank discusses the success the Republican Party has had connecting with middle America through the division of social class and political interests.

Karl Polanyi, The Great Transformation In this theoretical classic, Polanyi argues that laissez-faire markets are not self-regulating, but instead are carefully and thoroughly socially constructed through social relations.

Morris P. Fiorina, Culture War? The Myth of a Polarized America In this book, Fiorina challenges that political polarization is real in America. Instead, he argues that it is largely a product of the Media because America is a land of political moderates.

Pamela Paxton and Melanie Hughes, *Women, Politics, and Power: A Global Perspective*

Paxton and Hughes present a quantitative analysis of the changing representation of women in politics in various nations. They show how structural forces, like historical factors and gender ideology account for women’s experiences in politics.

Francis Fukuyama, *America at the Crossroads: Democracy, Power, and the Neoconservative Legacy*

Fukuyama examines the extent to which the Bush administration’s policies are influenced by neoconservative thought.

Fareed Zakaria, *The Post-American World*

This book examines the global consequences of the rise of nations other than the United States having influence over the global economy and political system.

Peter Schiff. *The Real Crash: America's Coming Bankruptcy---How to Save Yourself and Your Country*

Schiff argues that America is enjoying a government-inflated bubble, one that will dissolve with disastrous consequences for the economy and for each of us. He demonstrates how the infusion of billions of dollars of stimulus money has only dug a deeper hole: the United States government simply spends too much and does not collect enough money to pay its debts, and in the end, Americans from all walks of life will face a crushing consequence. Whether you see him as an alarmist or a realist this book is something that everyone should read and examine for themselves.