**Inside Obama’s Presidency**

1. Describe the various crises facing Obama at the start of his presidency.

2. Summarize the controversies/crises surrounding the US banking sector.

3. Explain the increased public polarization toward the administration and which signature issue/program helped trigger the discord.

4. What strategies were employed to advance the healthcare reform bill. Was the approach politically successful?

5. Discuss the outcome and significance of the 2010 midterm elections?

6. Provide an overview of the foreign affairs policies of the Obama administration---and associated controversies/achievements.

7. What is the “debt ceiling and why is it politically controversial?

8. Explain the acceleration of partisan polarization leading up to the 2012 election.

**Trump’s Takeover**

1. What concerns did many Republican leaders have with Trump?

2. How did many commentators explain Trump’s popular appeal?

3. Discuss the obstacles in attempting to repeal “Obamacare”---using/defining “Freedom Caucus” in your answer.

4. Explain the public backlash against the repeal attempts and Trump’s reaction to the House of Representatives vote.

5. What was described as Trump’s most powerful weapon and what impact did it have against many Republicans in Congress?

6. What was described as the “worst moment” in the first year of Trump’s presidency? Explain.

7. Why did some 3 dozen incumbent Republicans in Congress choose not to seek re-election in 2018?

8. What legislative victory did the Trump administration achieve at the end of its first year? Why was this important for Republican lawmakers?

9. What did the commentator mean when he described Trump’s relationship with the Republican Party as a “Faustian bargain”?

**National Geographic: Guns in America**

1. Which amendment to the US Constitution addresses gun rights? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

2. How many violent crimes are committed each year with a gun?\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

3. What is a 2nd Amendment “absolutist”?

4. The total number of guns in the US is estimated to be (what number) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

5. How many Americans are thought to own guns? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

6. Which state has the strictest gun laws? Explain.

7. Which states have the least strict gun laws? Provides examples of their regulations.

8. Explain “castle law/doctrine”.

9. How many states have “castle laws”? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

10. What was significant about the federal gun law passed in 2007?

11. In what year was a ban implemented on fully automatic weapons? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

12. How many guns does the ATF destroy each year?

**Poverty, Politics and Profit**

1. Only around \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ out of 4 people who need housing assistance receive it.

2. How many evictions occur in the US annually? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

3. Explain Section 8 vouchers and the limitations of the approach.

4. What reasons were cited in the opposition to the construction of new affordable housing?

5. Summarize the Fair Housing Act and its impacts.

6. What types of tactics have been used to deter tax credit-based housing construction?

7. What percentage of tax credit properties are constructed in lower income communities? Why?

8. Provide an overview of the kickback scheme in the construction of affordable housing via tax credits.

9. Is additional government oversight needed in the construction of affordable housing? Why or why not?

**Separate and Unequal**

1. How did parents describe the benefits of integrated schools?

2. Explain why many residents are working to incorporate a new city (St. George) out of what is now a more affluent section of Baton Rouge.

3. Why does the latter pattern (sections of cities splitting to form their own new city) cause concern?

4. What percentage of schools within the district were given a grade of D or F by state evaluators?

5. Provide a general overview of busing and its purpose. What arguments have critics made against busing?

6. Citing information from the video, explain why race is or is not a consideration in the proposed creation of the new city and new school district.

**The Facebook Dilemma: Part I**

1. What was Facebook’s initial goal?

2. To what degree has Facebook regulated free speech on its platform? Explain.

3. Explain how Facebook helped facilitate the rise of the Arab Spring movement in the Mideast.

4. What alarms were raised concerning misinformation/propaganda during and after the Arab Spring uprisings and why were the concerns not addressed?

5. Why is Facebook’s relationships with data brokerage companies significant for personal privacy?

6. Is privacy a right in the US? Explain using Facebook as an example.

7. Describe the Facebook business model and why it was a source of concern for the US Department of Defense.

8. What was the “Internet Research Agency” and how did it use Facebook to impact the political dynamic in Ukraine?

**Confronting ISIS** \*\*this counts as 2 videos

1. Which group was described as the best allies/fighters in Iraq and Syria? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

2. How was ISIS able to capture Mosul?

3. Why did the US stop engaging ISIS in Iraq at one point and what caused a reversal in that policy?

4. Describe the military coalition formed to combat ISIS in Iraq and Syria.

5. What types of public service/functions did ISIS provide in territories under its control?

6. By the time ISIS became active in Syria, how many civilians had been killed in the Syrian Civil War?\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

7. In what respects did Turkey falter in the campaign against ISIS? Why? (reference the PKK/YPG in your answer)

8. Describe the political conflict between Saudi Arabia and Iran and how this has factored into Saudi efforts against ISIS.

9. What role has Iran played in the campaign against ISIS in Iraq?

10. Why did the US have difficulty training/recruiting anti-ISIS rebels in Syria? How much was spent on the program?

11. What did Russia initially promise the international community they would do in Syria and how did their military actions differ from their promises?

12. How many people had fled Syria by 2015? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

13. How did the nuclear agreement between the US-Iran impact relations with Saudi Arabia?

14. What was “Operation Northern Thunder” and its significance?

15. Provide examples of how the US has imposed its military efforts against ISIS in Iraq & Syria

16. What types of problems continue to plague the region?

**North Korea’s Deadly Dictator**

1. For how long has the Kim family dynasty ruled North Korea? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

2. What was “asset stripping” and how did the North Korean government deter it?

3. Describe the illicit international “businesses” with which the Kim family was involved.

4. How/why did Kim Jung Un have his half-brother killed?

5. What types of actions did Kim Jung Un take early in his dictatorship?

6. What is VX? How powerful is it?

7. Describe North Korea’s nuclear missile development program in recent years. Incorporate/define the term “breakout” in your answer?

8. Explain the significance of July 4, 2017.

9. What options does the US government have in dealing with North Korea.

10. What could result from a US military strike against North Korea

11. North Korea has recently claimed to have developed what new weapon?

**Kill/Capture**

1. Provide an overview of the “kill/capture” program

2. What is the overriding goal of an insurgency and how might it be achieved?

3. How is counterinsurgency being re-defined/improved via Afghanistan?

4. What is “JSOC”? Describe its role/purpose.

5. Describe the significance (politically) of opening/running schools in Afghanistan.

6. Discuss “night raids” and why they are controversial.

7. What is the “Afghan Analysts Network”? Explain.

8. The US military asserts that fewer than \_\_\_\_% of kill/capture operations result in death of innocent civilians.

9. Define/discuss “re-integration”.

10. In what respects might the kill/capture campaign have failed?

**Top** **Secret America**

1. What was “graystone”? Explain.

2. How well did the CIA do with its initial operations in Afghanistan? Discuss.

3. Describe “stress and duress” techniques.

4. What was the “Office of Special Plans” and how did it help facilitate the war in Iraq?

5. Provide an overview of the Terrorist Surveillance Program and its origins.

6. How many private companies were said to have been initially involved in gathering/interpreting intelligence? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

7. What did the 9/11 Commission propose to do to the CIA? What was the outcome?

8. Provide examples of the security steps undertaken for the Obama presidential inauguration in 2008.

9. Why is it difficult for politicians to reduce the anti-terrorism budget?

10. What did the commentator mean by “more is good, but a hellavalot more can be bad”?

**Retirement Gamble**

1. What percentage of Americans are estimated to have no retirement savings? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

2. How many times your annual salary should you have saved in order to guarantee a stable retirement?

3. What percentage of companies offer workers a 401k plan? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

4. What are some potential problems with 401k plans/mutual funds?

5. What economic setbacks occurred in 2000 and 2008?

6. The same year Wall Street crashed, how much in bonuses were paid to corporate executives?

7. What are some problems associated with fees imposed on retirement accounts?

8. How many fees will the average US family pay on their 401 plans?

9. What advantages are associated with index funds?

10. Which US federal government department is responsible for oversight of retirement investments?

11. Distinguish between “fiduciaries” and “broker/advisers”.

12. Why has the government not been more effective in regulating the retirement investment industry?

**Trump’s Trade War**

1. What are some potentially negative consequences of tariffs?

2. What country does Trump regard as America’s biggest competition/threat? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

3. Briefly describe some of the differing perspectives of the “globalists” versus the “nationalists” within the Trump administration.

4. What (%) tariffs did the US impose on imported steel \_\_\_\_\_\_\_% and aluminum \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_% under the auspices of national security.

5. How did the tariffs hurt certain US allies such as Canada?

6. In what ways does China’s government play a heavy role in its economy. Discuss the “China model” in your answer.

7. Why does China regard auto manufacturing as so critical?

8. Explain “forced tech transfer”.

9. Why has the US response to corporate espionage and cyber-attacks been so weak historically?

10. Explain China’s interest/activity in Silicon Valley.

11. How did Steve Bannon (next to last person interviewed) characterize the nature of the political/economic conflict between the US and China?

**Earth Days**  Name\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Describe the balance between the economy and the environment in the 1950s US.

2. What was the effect of Rachel Carson’s book Silent Spring? Explain.

3. What is “ecology”? According to the video when/how did we begin to violate its basic values?

4. Describe the “back to the land” movement of the 1960s.

5. What was the environmental impact of the first photos of the earth from space?

6. When was the first “earth day”? How many people participated?

7. What was the significance of the political targeting/defeat of the “dirty dozen”?

8. What are the consequences of exponential population growth?

9. What happened to the US oil supply in late 1973? Explain.

10. Describe/discuss the counter-movement that opposed the Sierra Club and other anti-logging initiatives.

11. Between 1973-1980 how much did the price of oil increase? What effect did this have upon automobiles?

**War on the EPA**

1. Describe the acts taken by the Obama administration relative to the EPA and the criticism directed toward the EPA and its policies during the Obama presidency.

2. What factors alienated many rural Americans toward EPA policies?

3. What is “Americas for Prosperity” and what were their goals?

4. Explain the relationship between the energy sector (companies/lobbyists/RAGA) and candidates for attorney general across the country.

5. How did Obama get around Congress to implement environmental regulations? Discuss with examples.

6. Why/how Scott Pruitt selected to head the EPA in the Trump administration?

7. Explain Trump’s push or regulatory reform and how it plies to the EPA. Provide examples.

8. What criticisms have been offered concerning the direction of the EPA under the Trump administration?

**Ambassador: Inside the Embassy**  Name\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. What is a “madrasa” and why would the US Ambassador visit it?

2. What transpired in Guatemala in 1954 and what role did the US/CIA play (and why)?

3. How was the US Ambassador to Guatemala able to get emergency US aid to a region in need?

4. During the 1980s and early 1900s why were the vast majority of US Ambassadors from the wealthy class?

5. What is “Embassy 101”? Explain in detail.

6. How many died in the 1998 terrorist attack upon the US Embassy to Kenya? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Inside the (US) State Department**  Name\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. How many people are employed in the US Department of State? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_\_ out of 10 Pakistanis have a negative view of the US.

3. What is the “gift vault”?

4. What is “the bubble”?

5. How many personnel are stationed at the US Embassy in Kabul, Afghanistan?\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

6. Why would the US government seek to maintain close relationships with Afghan President Hamid Karzai even in the face of evidence he was involved in election fraud?

**Obama’s Deal: Inside the Battle for Healthcare Reform**

1. Describe some of the initial political obstacles faced by healthcare reform.

2. Why was the Clinton administration unable to advance healthcare reform?

3. What main caveat did the healthcare industry require in order to support national healthcare reform?

4. What industry authored the initial US Senate version of the healthcare reform bill?

5. Cite examples of liberal criticisms of some initial deals/reforms implemented by the Obama administration.

6. How was hope of bipartisan support eroded?

7. How did approaches to promote healthcare reform change in 2010?

**VA: The Human Cost of War**

1. How many veterans kill themselves each day? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

2. Provide an overview of the “Wait time” scandal.

3. How does the VA rank in size compared to other federal departments? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

4. Summarize the early origins of the VA’s creation and how its bureaucracy became complex early on.

5. In what ways did the VA change (for the better) beginning in the 1940s?

6. What types of problems did the VA face (for the better) beginning in the 1940s?

7. Between 2001-2006, how has (a) the total number of veterans changed and (b) how has the number of vets using the VA as their primary healthcare provider changed?

8. Describe some of the developments in the VA post-Iraq.

9. Explain the growth in personnel and budget at the VA in recent years.

10. What shortcomings exist regarding veteran’s access to care at the VA?

11. What were some potential shortcomings cited concerning privatization of care?

**Policing the Police**

1. What factors were said to drive most violent crime in Newark, NJ?

2. What are “field inquiries” and how are they controversial?

3. At what point (and why) did the federal government (US Justice Department) gain the right to investigate/reform local police departments?

4. Describe some of the potential shortfalls in the communication (911) system.

5. What justifications did police cite for some stops/searches that were deemed questionable?

6. What approaches might allow police to interdict crime (e.g., search suspects) while pursuing “new policing” and being observant of constitutional rights?

**Supreme Revenge**

1. How long is Justice Kavanaugh expected to serve on the Supreme Court? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

2. In what respects did Ronald Reagan seek to alter the composition of the Supreme Court?

3. What had not been predicted regarding the reaction to the nomination of Robert Bork to the Supreme Court?

4. In what respects was the confirmation process for Justice Clarence Thomas different from that of Bork?

5. How/why was Merrick Garland blocked in his nomination to the Supreme Court?

6. Describe the power/influence of the Federalist Society.

7. What strengths and controversies were associated with the nomination of Brett Kavanaugh to the Supreme Court?