MOVIE – "TEACHING POLITICS: AN ACTIVIST'S APPROACH TO PREPARING FUTURE LEADERS" (33 minutes/color)

SYNOPSIS

This film briefly chronicles the professional life of Professor Dick Simpson from his early college days to the present, and intertwines his lifetime learning experiences with his present philosophy towards teaching and politics. Dr. Simpson believes that politics cannot be adequately taught or learned without actual participatory experience in politics. Since 1967, Dr. Simpson's has succeeded as a researcher, an elected official, a political advisor, an author, a film producer, and a political commentator. This success has translated into an effective and inspirational teaching style that is based on the need for social justice and emphasizes the methods by which student themselves can become active political participants.

OBJECTIVES

1. Explain how the essence of political discourse is actually one of conflict.

2. Describe what constitutes actual participation in the democratic process beyond simply reading newspapers and voting.

3. Identify ways in which students can become active participants in political contests.

4. Compare and contrast the traditional method of teaching politics (textbook, lectures, and discussion on government structures and processes) versus Dr. Simpson's approach of using media, opposing viewpoints, and direct involvement of students.

5. Explain the value of active political participation in regards to teaching political science at the university level.

6. Describe the importance of presenting conflicting viewpoints about political issues when teaching political science.

7. Explain why teaching political science is more than merely teaching the basics of civics of being a good citizen in America.

QUESTIONS

1. In what manner did Dr. Simpson initially identify with one of the two major American political parties?

2. What lessons did Dr. Simpson learn doing his dissertation work on two African towns, and how were they applicable to Chicago politics?

3. What were the dual purposes of the book *Winning Election* published in 1972?

4. What does it mean to say, "If you're going to teach political science, I think you have to know political science?"

5. How can a political science instructor provide various opposing viewpoints of a political issue, but still retain an overall agenda promoting social justice?

6. How did Dr. Simpson's two terms as a Chicago alderman shape the political history of Chicago?

7. How might local politics in the real world differ from local politics as described in a standard government textbook?

8. What is the "heart and soul of politics" and why is it so?

9. What ideas are proposed in the film for university reform regarding the recognition of professional accomplishments beyond publications in scholarly journals?

10. How does personal political philosophy, or lack of it, affect teaching style?