WHAT MAKES PRIMARY VOTERS TICK?
POLITICS, THE CULTURE WARS, AND THE 2016 PRIMARIES

Discussion Group Synopsis
This discussion group will deal with what makes the base of each political party tick as we go through the most intense and partisan points of the campaigns: the primaries. Whether it’s abortion, climate change, guns or gay rights – what is moving the debate – how are candidates taking advantage of it and what can we learn about the process of choosing a president through these contests.

Week 1 – Iowa And Everything After
Taking place in the days after the Iowa Caucuses, we will break down what happened/ what’s next – how evangelicals and social issues rule the day there/ why it’s so rare anyone wins the triple crown.

Week 2 – Keeping Your Frenemies Close
The base voters – the anti-gun folks/ environmentalists on the left – the NRA/ evangelical types on the right – are kept extremely close and are pandered to incessantly. Both parties talk a good game about expanding their bases but these folks will always be the most important. They also present some of the biggest problems, are out of the mainstream and cause candidates to take positions they normally would not take.

Week 3 – The “Burn It To The Ground” Movement – How the Tea Party and other outside groups have impacted Congress and politics in general
They have taken over the Congress. We’ll talk about how the process became so broken, what is fueling it and what – if anything – can be done to fix it.
Additional topics: How Black Lives Matter / Occupy Wall St.

Week 4 – The Power Of Going Negative
Everyone says they hate negative ads but at the end of the day, they work which is why they continue to be used. We will dissect some of the best political negative ads.

Week 5 – Conventions, A Party For Party
It’s a giant fundraiser/ coming out party that is years in the making and designed to introduce the candidate to the public. But in the age of the 24-hour news cycle, internet, etc... are they really worth it? Each year there is chatter about a brokered convention – but this year, with such a fractured electorate on the Republican side, the Trump factor and the conventions being earlier than normal – it could actually happen (maybe). So what is it and why is it such a big deal?

Week 6 – The SEC Primary – The New Super Tuesday
We will discuss the headlines coming out of the major primaries – which issues dominated what states and how did candidates and voters respond?

Week 7 – The New Conspiracy Theories – From Anti-vaxxers to Newtown/ Mass shootingTruthers
Politics can be a breeding ground for crazy conspiracy theories – and this year is no exception. These theories have fascinating and infuriating justifications.

Week 8 – There’s A Nominee, Now What?
The nominee is bruised and bloodied from the primary. How to pick up the pieces and get ready for the general (provided the process is over by April)/ how old attacks become new fodder/ now the real money starts being spent.