

LECTURE #1
4 January 2011
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- I. Introduction
 - A. Introductions of self and class
 - B. Exercise: write answers on the board
 - 1. Write down one international environmental problem that you are concerned about
 - 2. Write down what you think is the most important cause of that problem
 - 3. Write down one policy that you think could make a big contribution to fixing the problem
 - C. Review some problems and visual impact of humans on the earth.
 - D. Most of the problems we have identified probably are real problems.
 - 1. But how would we know if these REALLY are problems or whether we just THINK they are?
 - 2. Examples:
 - a) Electromagnetic radiation – no evidence that it does any harm.
 - b) Most women are most scared of breast cancer but heart disease kills 12x as many women/year
 - 3. What are the risks of worrying about the wrong things? What are the risks of not doing enough to figure out what we should worry about?
 - 4. What are the problems that we don't yet know about but are already underway? How do we identify them before fifty years of damage is done (as occurred with CFCs and the ozone layer)?
 - E. Most of the causes we have identified probably are real causes
 - 1. But how could we go about figuring out: whether the causes we suggested really are the causes or whether other things are more important causes
 - 2. Example: helping threatened species survive – genetic diversity of stock more important than number of specimens
 - 3. What are the risks of identifying the wrong causes of a problem? What are the risks of not doing enough to figure out what the real causes are?
 - F. Most of the policies we have identified probably would help make things better
 - 1. Julia Butterfly Hill (tree-sitter): someone taking action to address a problem. Captures course in a nutshell
 - a) Problem identification and framing
 - b) Development of solutions
 - c) Effectiveness of solutions that are developed
 - 2. Is her action effective?
 - a) If so, what do you mean by effective?
 - b) If you believe it is effective, would you do it?
 - c) Are there other actions you could take that would be more effective?
 - d) How do you know they are more effective?
 - 3. What about a treaty on deforestation? Would that be more effective? How would we know?
 - 4. But can we determine if our preferred policy solutions would help fix a problem; would fail to help; or would make matters worse? Example: cleanup of Exxon Valdez spill in Alaska.
 - 5. What are the risks of recommending the wrong policies? What are the risks of not taking any action?
 - a) Which of these solutions is likely to work best
 - b) Do we have time to try them out and see?
 - c) What if we make mistakes in the meantime – can we afford to make any more mistakes?
- II. Class summary
 - A. Make sure everyone does assignment #1 for next class: plagiarism and reading assignment packet.
 - B. Most of the problems we have identified probably are real problems
 - C. Most of the causes we have identified probably are real causes
 - D. Most of the policies we have identified probably would help make things better
 - E. The importance of care in determining why something happened and what effect it has had or will have.
 - F. Class goal: help you think more systematically about these things and provide one way to think about them so that you can be a more informed person.