

Lecture 15 Notes

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1. Tragedy of the Commons — Garrett Hardin’s metaphorical story of a village green where all can graze their sheep, but no one is accountable for its upkeep. The unregulated commons is eventually overgrazed and destroyed
2. Ecosystem — A natural area whose plants, animals, and physical environment are closely interdependent. Each ecosystem has a carrying capacity, or limit on the amount of life it can sustain
3. Population Explosion — The crisis that many ecologists point to as the central problem – too many people demanding more than the Earth can provide
4. Malthusianism — Author Thomas Malthus suggests in 1798 that the world’s population would grow exponentially while its food grew arithmetically, leading to famine and death
5. Sustainable Development — The major theme of the 1992 “Earth Summit” at Rio de Janeiro. Refers to economic growth that does not deplete resources and destroy ecosystems
6. Core Values — the fundamental belief structures that influence human attitudes toward ecology
 - (a) Anthropocentrism — Sacrificing species to satisfy human wants
 - (b) Contempocentrism — Lack of regard for future generations
7. Amplifiers — The instrumental means by which human values, behaviors, and possession are extended or expanded
 - (a) Population Growth — Impacts of a projected 9–14 billion people by 2050
 - (b) Technology — Unintended consequences of CFCs
8. Consumptive Behavior — The tension between human needs and wants, and its ecological consequences as a function of material wealth.

- (a) Poverty — Deforestation for fuel wood in developing countries
 - (b) Affluence — High per-capita consumption of “throw away” goods
9. Political Economy — The dominant economic structure and ideology used to explain environmental problems
- (a) Market Failure — Unpriced costs of acid rain pollution and burning fossil fuels
 - (b) Failure to Have Markets — examples include overfishing as a “tragedy of the commons.”
10. The following seven problems can be plausibly considered to contribute to conflict within and among countries:
- (a) Global Warming/Climate Change
 - (b) Ozone Depletion (Stratospheric)
 - (c) Acid Deposition (Acid Rain)
 - (d) Deforestation (Loss of Biodiversity)
 - (e) Degradation of Agricultural Land (desertification)
 - (f) Overuse and pollution of water
 - (g) Depletion of fish stocks
11. From these 7 problems, we can expect 4 principle social effects leading to international conflict:
- (a) Decreased agricultural production, leading to food shortages
 - (b) Economic decline
 - (c) Population displacement
 - (d) Disruption of legitimized and authoritative institutions and social relations