Stephen Giang

Prof. Kallas

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Reader Response 11

I am doing this question on the class of 2016: The Labor Market is Still Far From Ideal For Young Graduates. Modern students face a crisis in the job market due to the economic recession of 2008. The recession set job growth back due to labor market weakness, which is the worst it has been in seven decades, or seventy years. The unemployment rate still has not recovered since the great recession of 2008. For high school graduates, the unemployment rate is 17.9 percent compared to 15.9 percent before the recession in 2007. For college graduates, the unemployment rate is 5.6 compared to 5.7 in 2007. Recent graduates typically have had a hard time finding work outside of high school and college because they lack the experience that many employers are looking for. For instance, in 2016 for people under the age of 25, the unemployment rate was 10.5 percent compared to the overall unemployment rate of 4.9 percent. When there is a period of economic instability, this effect is magnified, which is why after the great recession America is experiencing a low unemployment rate for young people. Another reason that young people are experiencing high unemployment is that many do not have college degrees. According to the article, only 10.1 percent of young workers ages 17-24 have bachelor's degrees or higher. In a tough job market wherein the economy is unstable, college degrees start to become more and more important because employers do not want to take risks with their employees.

I will be answering this question based off of the article “In San Francisco's Housing Wars, The Search For Blame Continues.” This article talks about the San Francisco housing crisis and how residents are being kicked out of their homes in order for the homeowners to convert their buildings into single-home houses or condos. This is due to massive technology companies such as google busing their employees into these once low-income areas. Because of this, the housing prices have risen to an unsustainable amount. According to the article, the average rental for an apartment costs around 3,400 dollars a month, which is the most expensive in the country. Because of this, thousands of people are losing and being displaced from their homes by their landlords to make a place for more wealthy people working in the tech industry. One factor that increases the severity of this phenomenon is the Ellis Act, which according to the article allows building and homeowners to take their buildings off of the rental market (often displacing people who already live in these buildings) in order to convert them into single homes or condos. This allows the rents to rise and for more wealthy people to be able to live in them. The article specifically talks about San Francisco's Mission neighborhood which has been considered an artistic neighborhood with a large Latino population for decades. As more tech companies use buses and shuttles to bus their high paying employees from these neighborhoods to their workplaces, the prices have risen drastically. Because these companies are bringing money into the economy for the city, the city often offers these large companies tax breaks to keep their working operations in the city. What this does, however, is makes the tech companies richer, but does practically nothing for the low-income residents of the city, thus making the economic divide even worse.

For this response, I will be referring to the Global Warming lesson in the Environmental Ideology web lesson. Global warming is an increase in average global temperatures. While the earth has fluctuated in average temperatures for billions of years, the reason that modern global warming is considered to be more dangerous is that of the rate at which the temperature of the earth is increasing. Since 1980, the average temperature of the earth has risen by 0.4 degrees, which is a very large rise compared to what has been suggested for previous centuries. The current rise in global temperature is often attributed to the rise in greenhouse gas emissions during the past couple of centuries due to the industrial revolution. Naturally, greenhouse gases are emitted largely through volcanic activities. In effect, greenhouse gases trap solar energy in the earth’s atmosphere that would otherwise be reflected back into space. This causes the earth’s temperature to rise as more radiation is trapped. The distribution of solar energy also plays a role in climate change. Most scientists believe that a combination of these factors contributes to climate change. Despite all of these factors, there are many groups like Access to Energy, Competitive Enterprise Institute, Cooler Heads Coalition, and Global Climate Coalition that deny that humans and carbon emissions have anything to do with climate change. Meanwhile, the Kyoto Protocol, which recognizes that climate change is real and that it is the responsibility of world governments to combat human’s influence on it, has been signed by 192 countries. The only countries that have not are The United States, Afghanistan, and Sudan. The reason that the United States has not signed this protocol despite the overwhelming evidence that human’s influence climate change is because large oil and coal companies that rely on products which emit large quantities of greenhouse gases have petitioned for politicians to vote against acknowledging climate change or enacting any real environmental taxes and regulations that would enact change and hurt their businesses.

In this response, I will be using the article “AGU Scientist Asks, ‘Is Earth F\*\*ked?’ Surprising Answer: Resistance is NOT Futile!” The article explains that while the earth is warming at an alarmingly rapid rate, it is not completely futile to try and fight back against climate change. According to our textbook *Democracy For The Few*, the earth is starting to lose its ability to remove pollutants from the air. An oxygen compound known as a molecular scavenger has decreased in the atmosphere by about ten percent. Molecular scavengers help cleanse the air by converting toxins into safer compounds. With the loss of these compounds, more toxins are now polluting our atmosphere. Despite this seemingly catastrophic issue accelerated by human greenhouse gas emissions, the article states that we can still slow the process of global warming down through the persistence of environmental advocacy groups. “Active resistance by concerned groups of citizens, analogous to the anti-slavery and civil rights movements of the past, is one of the features of the planetary system that plays an important role in his model. If you think that we should take a much longer view when making decisions about the health of the ‘coupled human-environmental system’ — that is to say, if you’re interested in averting the scenario in which the Earth is f\*\*ked — then, Werner’s model implied, resistance is the best and probably only hope.” In short, by making the environment more of a social issue rather than merely a scientific one, environmental advocacy will have a louder voice to both the general public and to members of Congress and the federal government and it will be more likely that there will be a change in legislation and American (and global) culture regarding greenhouse gas emissions.

For the response on The Politics of Climate Change, I will be referring to the article “6 Things Every Environmentalist Needs to Know About Capitalism.” Capitalism has many problems including income inequality (the rich getting richer while the poor become poorer). One of the major flaws in the current capitalist systems is that it cannot stop growing, either in population or the economy. While growth may seem like a good thing, as growth often leads to scientific and technological advancement, there are many detriments that come with the unrelenting growth of capitalism: as the population grows, the resources needed to sustain every person grows as well, and since there are a finite number of resources on the planet, there start to be shortages which result in famine and often death for people living in crowded urban areas; also, as the population grows so too does the economy so that it can sustain enough jobs for the people within the economic area, this means that more businesses must grow at a rapid rate, the more that large corporations that utilize fossil fuels grow, the more destruction there is to the environment and the more that the rich investors and businessmen in charge of these corporations become wealthier while common people start having less and fewer resources; finally, environmental degradation disproportionately hurts low-income communities because the rich have more money and thus more resources at their disposal, this means that if they wanted to they could have nearly unlimited access to as many important resources such as food and water as they want, meanwhile lower-income populations are subjected to famine and unsanitary living conditions wherein they struggle just to find food, water, and shelter as the population grows and resources diminish.

For my response to Identifying Right Wing Anti-Environmentalists, I will be referring to the article “Trump climate plan will break law by worsening pollution, states say.” According to our textbook *Democracy for the Few*, the government has historically done little to mitigate the effects of climate change. In fact, many politicians have even colluded with companies that have destroyed the environment because it is profitable in the short term for the economy. For example, the Bush administration cooperated with the coal industry by allowing companies to expand without conducting proper research and installing air pollution control equipment that would reduce mercury produced by their factories. While the coal industry benefited from this, the environment and ultimately the surrounding communities suffered due to this inhumane and pro big business decision. The article explains that the Trump administration is making similar decisions as the Bush administration. The Environmental Protection Agency, which is ultimately controlled by the president’s cabinet, is replacing the clean power plan enacted by the Obama administration. The clean power plan was Obama’s attempt to move America away from coal manufacturing to more clean sources of energy. By removing this plan, Trump is attempting to save the coal industry at the direct expense of the environment and thus the general population. There is clear scientific evidence that suggests that coal emissions lead to increases in lung cancer and even increase the chances of early death. Regardless, this decision stems from the Tump administration’s stance that climate change is not man-made, despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary. The only people that benefit from this decision are the investors in the coal industry; meanwhile, millions of people are left to suffer as a result of the pollutants that coal plants emit into the environment.

My final response on RR 11 will refer to the article “Radio Disney’s pro-fracking elementary school tour sparks outrage.” This article talks about Radio Disney’s propaganda targeted towards children in support of fracking. Fracking is the method that oil companies use to get oil out of the ground. It is an environmentally dangerous process which uses tons of water in order to send pressure under the oil so that it will shoot up and it can be retrieved. Not only does it use large amounts of water, which is a quickly fleeting resource for millions of people, but retrieving the gas also spews deadly toxins into the environment, which can poison water supplies, kill livestock, and affect crops in surrounding areas. According to the article, Radio Disney sponsored a tour funded by Ohio’s oil industry which advocated for fracking. This tour was targeted towards young children. This is seen by many environmental advocacy groups as a blatant attempt at propaganda by two major corporations to essentially brainwash children into believing that fracking is ultimately good for the planet. One of the major issues with this type of manipulation is that environmental advocacy groups are not as large or well-funded as either Disney or the Oil companies. Because of this, children are often learning about big businesses take on oil fracking as a lucrative and important business while not hearing the other side of the argument, mainly all of the detriments to the environment that fracking causes. The fact that billion dollar corporations have access to educating the masses with their propaganda whilst disadvantaged and less-funded groups and organizations cannot possibly have the same outreach is a flaw in the capitalist system, and, most importantly, allows large corporations to commit catastrophic damage to environmental resources without any considerable dissent to their actions.