

PSCI 2500 INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

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jimbutterfield.org/2500.html

Final Exam

- Next week Wednesday (April 24) 12:30–2:30.
- More in class this Wednesday.



Today

- Global environmental issues.



Global Environmental Governance

How, in a system of anarchy and sovereign states, can we protect the global environment?



The Problem

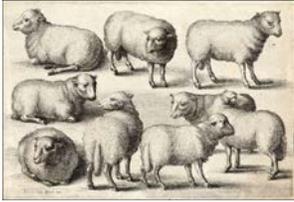
- Environmental degradation on a global scale affects common resources.
- **** Common resources (or common goods):** resources that are shared and cannot be divided.
- **** Carrying capacity:** the population that can be sustained in a given area within resource limits without degrading the environment.

The Key Challenge: How to Avoid The Tragedy of the Commons

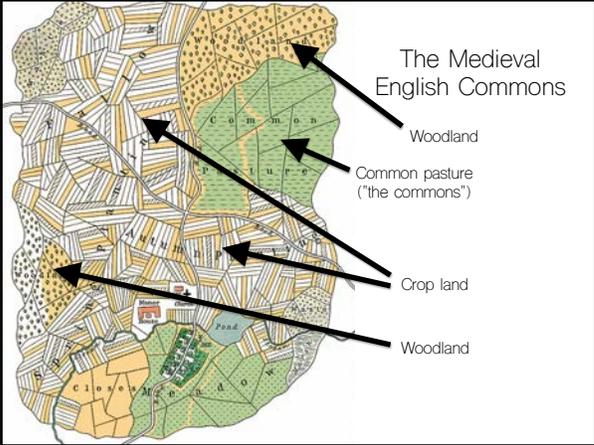
- Collective rationality: preserve common resources for the benefit of all.
- Individual rationality: use common resources...
 - ...before others do...
 - ... and because there is no cost to the user/consumer.

The Original "Tragedy of the Commons"

- In medieval England, the commons was shared pastureland for grazing sheep.
- The danger: over-grazing.



The Medieval English Commons



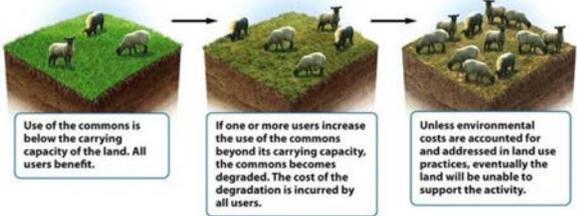
Woodland

Common pasture ("the commons")

Crop land

Woodland

The Medieval English Commons



Use of the commons is below the carrying capacity of the land. All users benefit.

If one or more users increase the use of the commons beyond its carrying capacity, the commons becomes degraded. The cost of the degradation is incurred by all users.

Unless environmental costs are accounted for and addressed in land use practices, eventually the land will be unable to support the activity.

Collective rationality: preserve the commons by not overgrazing.
Individual rationality: defect (i.e., cheat).

Is there a contemporary tragedy of the global commons?



What are the global commons?



The atmosphere and the air we breathe.

What are the global commons?



The oceans.

What are the global commons?



Space.

What are the global commons?



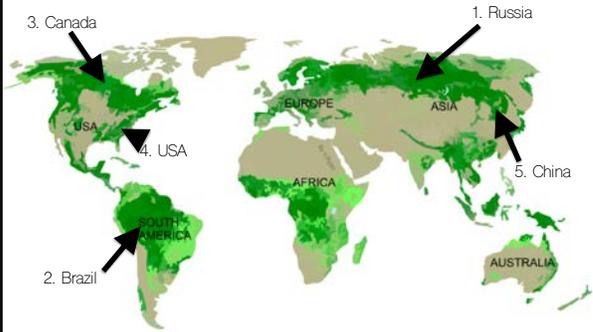
Antarctica (by treaty – no sovereign claims to territory are recognized).

What are the global commons?



Biodiversity – more complicated.

Why? This salamander sits on sovereign territory. But its extinction would be a loss for all.



The forests of the world are critical to both biodiversity and climate change reversal.

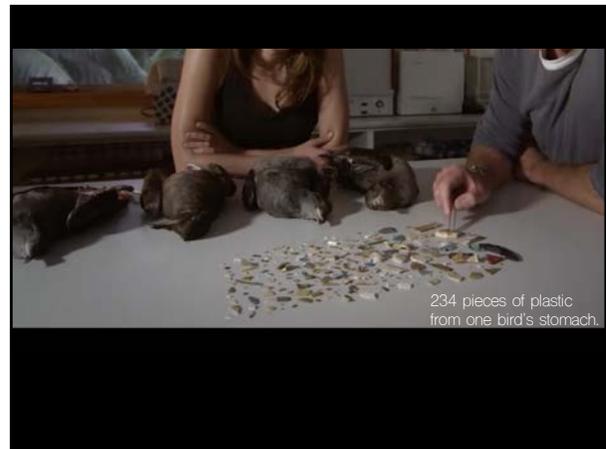
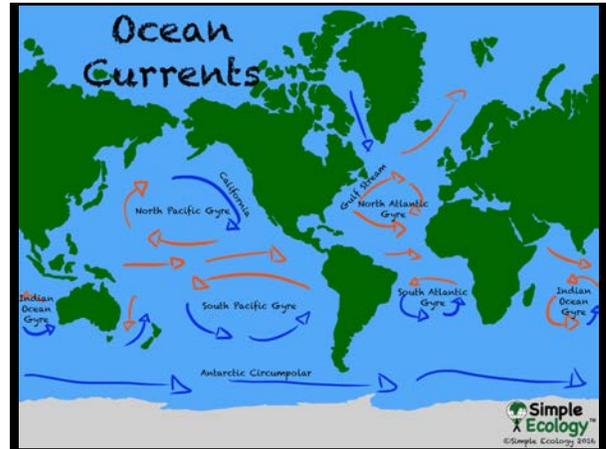
Should this be a global commons?



Even more complicated: the Arctic Ocean.



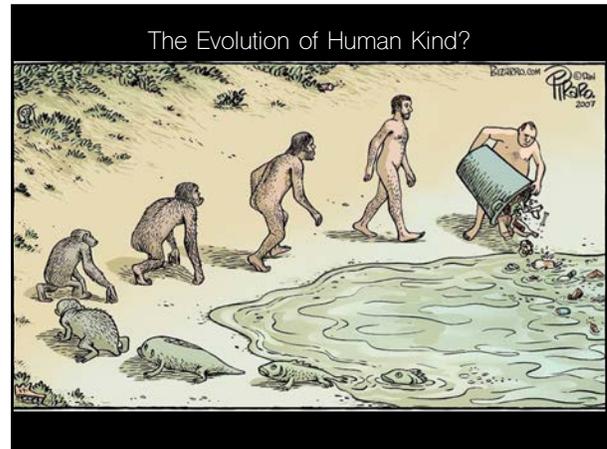
One example of degradation of a global commons: the ocean.



CNN
 Pregnant whale washed up in Italian tourist spot had 22 kilograms of plastic in its stomach
 by Gianluca Mezzofiore, CNN
 Updated 5:54 AM ET, Mon April 1, 2019

BBC
 Dead Philippines whale had 40kg of plastic in stomach
 18 March 2019





Let's look at two issues: deforestation and climate change.*



* Actually, they are very much intertwined.



What can we learn from one country about fighting global climate change?
https://www.ted.com/talks/tasso_azevedo_hopeful_lessons_from_the_battle_to_save_rainforests

Azevedo's Approach

1. Disconnect development from carbon emissions.
2. Restructure incentives (not on fossil fuels).
3. Where, when and who is emitting greenhouse gases.
4. Leapfrog the routes of development: skip fossil fuels for those currently without energy.
5. Share responsibility between governments, business and civil society.

The Aldrich Article

- Four general approaches:
 - Business as usual (i.e., do nothing).
 - Incrementalism: change things here and there keeping pain at a minimum.
 - Adaptation: making significant adjustments (such as significantly reducing reliance on fossil fuels).
 - Transformation: the hardest, most radical, and therefore least feasible.

See today's assigned article on Vietnam for its adaptation strategy.

We return to the question:

How, in a system of anarchy and sovereign states, can we protect the global environment?

Let's look at global governance with respect to climate change.



Evolution of Global Environmental Governance*

- Bruntland Commission (UN), 1987: Our Common Future.
 - **** Sustainable development**: development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs."



* Dealing directly or indirectly with climate change.

Evolution of Global Environmental Governance*

- Earth Summit, 1992.
 - Raised awareness of climate change, threats to biodiversity.



* Dealing directly or indirectly with climate change.

Evolution of Global Environmental Governance*

- Kyoto Protocol, 1997.
 - Binding limits on carbon emissions for 37 countries plus the EU.
 - US signed but neither ratified nor fulfilled.
 - Canada, Russia and Japan pulled out in 2011.
 - No binding limits place on major polluting developing countries (e.g., Brazil, China, India).



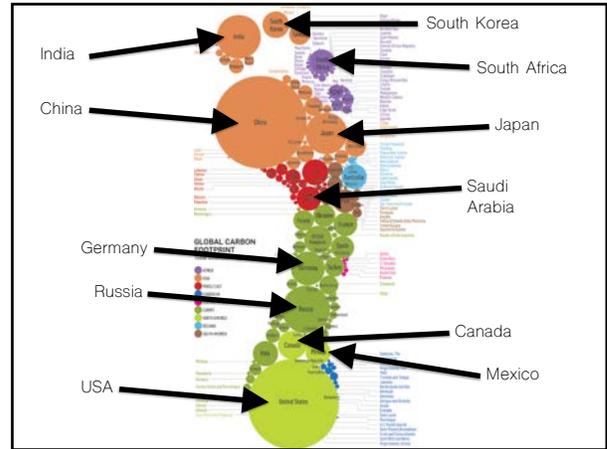
* Dealing directly or indirectly with climate change.

Evolution of Global Environmental Governance*

- Paris Accords, 2015: 195 countries agreed to reduce carbon emissions.
 - Each country sets "nationally determined contributions." Strictly voluntary.
 - 2017: US announced intention to pull out by 2020.



* Dealing directly or indirectly with climate change.



Agreements: Other Environmental Issues

- Marine resources (whaling, fisheries, seals).
- Trade in endangered species.
- Ozone layer depletion.
- Hazardous substances.
- Migratory birds.
- Desertification.
- Forest preservation.
- Biodiversity.




Convention on Biological Diversity