AP SEMINAR

Part B, Question 4
Suggested time – 90 minutes

Directions: Read the four sources carefully, focusing on a theme or issue that connects them and the different perspective each represents. Then, write a logically organized, well-reasoned, and well-written argument that presents your own perspective on the theme or issue you identified. You must incorporate at least two of the sources provided and link the claims in your argument to support evidence. You may also use the other provided sources or draw upon your own knowledge. In your response, refer to the provided sources as Source A, Source B, Source C, or Source D, or by the author's name.

Source A

From "Your brain on climate change: why the threat produces apathy, not action"
by Greg Harman (*The Guardian*, November 2014)[1]

It's not as though the facts aren't there: the global scientific community has warned us for years about the present and future impacts of climate change linked to fossil fuel use. Earlier this month, for example, the latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report came out, warning of "severe, widespread, and irreversible impacts" if carbon emissions are not halted fast.

"Science has spoken," UN secretary-general Ban Ki-Moon said during the report's release. "Time is not on our side."

With so much at stake, why do people fail to act? What's happening inside their brains?

Thanks to decades of collaboration between neuroscientists and psychologists – bolstered by the advent of imaging technologies, such as functional magnetic resonance imaging, which allows them to see exactly how the brain makes choices – we're beginning to understand just why people behave so irrationally. Part of the reason, according to these studies, is that – for the human brain – climate change simply does not compute.

For one thing, human brains aren't wired to respond easily to large, slow-moving threats.

"Our brain is essentially a get-out-of-the-way machine," Daniel Gilbert, a professor of psychology at Harvard best known for his research into happiness, told audiences at Harvard Thinks Big 2010. "That's why we can duck a baseball in milliseconds."

While we have come to dominate the planet because of such traits, he said, threats that develop over decades rather than seconds circumvent the brain's alarm system. "Many environmentalists

say climate change is happening too fast. No, it's happening too slowly. It's not happening nearly quickly enough to get our attention."

Humans are saddled with other shortcomings, too. "Loss aversion" means we're more afraid of losing what we want in the short-term than surmounting obstacles in the distance. Our built-in "optimism bias" irrationally projects sunny days ahead in spite of evidence to the contrary. To compound all that, we tend to seek out information not for the sake of gaining knowledge for its own sake, but to support our already-established viewpoints.

Daniel Kahneman, Nobel Memorial Prize winner in economics, writes in "Thinking, Fast and Slow" that our brains respond most decisively to those things we know for certain. The more uncertainty that comes along (if climate change will bring 2C degrees of warming or 6C; whether hurricanes will intensity in the Pacific and the Atlantic; if the world's governments could even stave off the worst of the predicted disasters if they acted immediately in concert) the less we are able to act on what we know for certain. A study from the University of Rochester in 2012 also confirms this tendency.

"In a way, it's unfair to expect people, *homo sapiens*, to do this kind of monitoring, to do this kind of decision making, because we're not wired for that," said Elke Weber, a professor of management and psychology at Columbia University.

Referencing a classic psychological experiment on gratification, [Weber] added:

"There's a two-year-old in the back of our minds that's still there that we've learned to overrule that wants to have their one marshmallow now rather than wait for two marshmallows. Very few people on this planet want to destroy planet earth. It's just that our other agendas get in the way of things that might have a longer time horizon."

Source B

From *Faces of Environmental Racism: Confronting Issues of Global Justice*
by Laura Westra and Bill Lawson (2001)[2]

Since the first Earth Day more than a quarter of a century ago, people have worried about the impact of humans on the nonhuman environment. Issues range from desertification and species extinctions to acid rain, ozone depletion, and global warming. However, in the initial zeal to publicize holistic negative effects of human activities, the distribution of effects among human beings was little noted.

More recently, people have recognized that, in the United States, poor people, African Americans, Hispanic Americans, and Native Americans suffer disproportionate exposure to environmental pollution. Because affected minorities are considerably poorer than average Americans, some people have argued that minorities experience disproportionate burdens due not to racism, but to poverty alone.

However, most studies that have investigated the relative influence of income and race on exposure to environmental toxins, including all three of the studies of national scope, conclude that race is more of an influential factor than at first thought. For example, the United Church of Christ study of 1987 concludes:

> The proportion of minority members in communities with commercial hazardous waste facilities is double that of communities without such facilities. Where two or more such facilities are found, the proportion of minority members is nearly triple that in otherwise comparable communities. In fact, the best predictor of where to find hazardous waste is to classify communities by race, not income or real estate values.

The study's director, Benjamin Chavis, coined the term "environmental racism." Other studies reveal that damage awards for violations of environmental standards are lower in minority communities, and that government mandated cleanup efforts are slower and less thorough. Among the moral consequences of the human assault on the earth's ecosystems, then, is racist distribution of environmental hazards.

Few people of influence today openly advocate racism, yet it persists, hidden behind several masks. Examples include community revenue enhancement, job opportunities, efficiency, urban planning, international balance of trade, Third World development, and even environmental protection.

Source C

From "World Leaders Bombarded By Art Protest At Paris Climate Talks"
By Nadya Agrawal (*The Huffington Post,* November 2015)[3]

World leaders arriving at the U.N. summit on climate change in Paris on Monday are being greeted by more than 600 pieces of street art denouncing corporate sponsorship of the event.

[The art collective] Brandalism says the campaign aims to highlight the hypocrisy of allowing corporations to sponsor the climate talks when their products contribute to global environmental problems such as over-production, pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.

"By sponsoring the climate talks, major polluters such as Air France and GDF-Suez-Engie can promote themselves as part of the solution - when actually they are part of the problem," Joe Elan from Brandalism said in a press release.

Brandalism is exhibiting work from 80 artists, who hail from 19 countries, as part of the campaign.

"Same bullshit, different Conference"

"New & improved green wash, for cleaning up dirty profits"

"Profit first, Environment second"

"Tackling Climate Change? Of course not, we're an airline. We're sponsoring the UN climate conference so we look like we're part of the solution and to make sure our profits aren't affected."

Source D

From "The Struggle to Govern the Commons"
by Thomas Dietz, Elinor Ostrom, and Paul Stern (*Science*, 2003)[4]

In the absence of effective governance institutions at the appropriate scale, natural resources and the environment are in peril from increasing human population, consumption, and deployment of advanced technologies for resource use, all of which have reached unprecedented levels. For example, it is estimated that "the global ocean has lost more than 90% of large predatory fishes" with an 80% decline typically occurring "within 15 years of industrialized exploitation." The threat of massive ecosystem degradation results from an interplay among ocean ecologies, fishing technologies, and inadequate governance.

Inshore fisheries are similarly degraded where they are open access or governed by top-down national regimes, leaving local and regional officials and users with insufficient autonomy and understanding to design effective institutions. For example, the degraded inshore ground fishery in Maine is governed by top-down rules based on models that were not credible among users. As a result, compliance has been relatively low and there has been strong resistance to strengthening existing restrictions. This is in marked contrast to the Maine lobster fishery, which has been governed by formal and informal user institutions that have strongly influenced state-level rules that restrict fishing. The result has been credible rules with very high levels of compliance. A comparison of the landings of ground fish and lobster since 1980 is shown in Fig. 1.

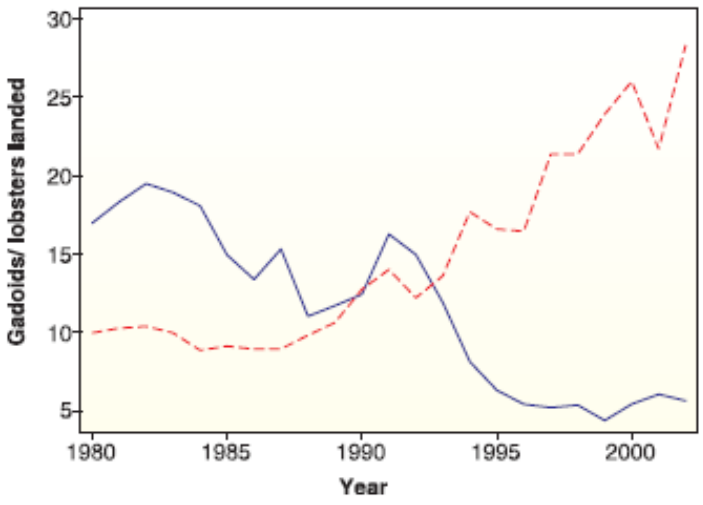

Fig. 1. Comparison of landings of ground fish (gadoids, solid blue line) and lobster (dashed red line) in Maine from 1980 to 2002. Measured in millions of kilograms of ground fish and lobsters landed per year. International fishing in these waters ended with the extended jurisdiction that occurred in 1977 (*155*).

Devising ways to sustain the earth's ability to support diverse life, including a reasonable quality of life for humans, involves making tough decisions under uncertainty, complexity, and substantial biophysical constraints as well as conflicting human values and interests. Devising effective governance systems is akin to a coevolutionary race. A set of rules crafted to fit one set of socioecological conditions can erode as social, economic, and technological developments increase the potential for human damage to ecosystems and even to the biosphere itself. Furthermore, humans devise ways of evading governance rules. Thus, successful commons governance [*the governance of land or resources that belong to or affect a whole community*] requires that rules evolve.

Effective commons governance is easier to achieve when

i. the resources and use of the resources by humans can be monitored, and the information can be verified and understood at relatively low cost (e.g., trees are easier to monitor than fish, and lakes are easier to monitor than rivers);
ii. rates of change in resources, resource-user populations, technology, and economic and social conditions are moderate;
iii. communities maintain frequent face-to-face communication and dense social networks—sometimes called social capital—that increase the potential for trust, allow people to express and see emotional reactions to distrust, and lower the cost of monitoring behavior and inducing rule compliance;
iv. outsiders can be excluded at relatively low cost from using the resource (new entrants add to the harvesting pressure and typically lack understanding of the rules); and
v. users support effective monitoring and rule enforcement.

Few settings in the world are characterized by all of these conditions. The challenge is to devise institutional arrangements that help to establish such conditions or meet the main challenges of governance in the absence of ideal conditions.

As the human footprint on the Earth enlarges (144), humanity is challenged to develop and deploy understanding of largescale commons governance quickly enough to avoid the large-scale tragedies that will otherwise ensue.

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2018 AP Seminar Rubric • EOC Exam

Part B – Synthesis Essay (31.5%)

Proficiency	Unsatisfactory	Low	Medium	High
6. Theme	0 The response does **not identify or allude to** a theme.	2 The response **misstates or overlooks** a theme or issue that connects the sources.	4 The response **identifies a theme** or issue that connects the sources.	
7. Perspective	0 The response does **not offer a perspective** and there is no discernable argument (i.e., a summary of sources) or it is **unrelated** to the sources.	2 The response's perspective is **unclear** or **illogical**.	4 The response derives its perspective from **only 1** of the sources OR is **oversimplified** or **generic**.	6 The response presents a perspective that is **not represented** in one of the sources OR brings a **particularly insightful** approach to one of the perspectives OR makes a **strong thematic connection** among perspectives.
8. Establish Argument	0 The response is **too short to offer a line of reasoning** (link between two claims) OR an argument is not being made.	6 The response's line of reasoning is **disorganized and/or illogical**.	9 The response's line of reasoning is **mostly clear** and **logically organized**, but the logic may be **faulty**.	12 The argument's line of reasoning is **logically organized, well-developed**.
9. Use of Evidence	0 The response uses a **single or no sources** OR the evidence provided is **irrelevant** or not in service of an argument (i.e., a description of sources).	3 The response uses **at least 2** of the provided sources, but may **misinterpret** them. Evidence is **inconsistently relevant** to the argument.	6 The response **accurately uses** relevant information from at least 2 of the provided sources to support an argument.	9 The response **appropriately synthesizes** relevant information drawn from at least 2 of the provided sources to **develop and support** a compelling argument.
10. Commentary	0 The response **lacks commentary** to link evidence and claims OR the commentary is merely descriptive and not in service of an argument.	3 The response's commentary **incorrectly or tangentially explains** the links between evidence and claims.	5 The commentary **explains** the links between evidence and claims.	7 The commentary explains evidence and connects it to claims to **clearly and convincingly** establish an argument.
11. Attribution	0 The response **does not include** any citations or attributions.	1 The response **incorrectly or ineffectively** attributes knowledge and ideas from sources.	3 The response **accurately** attributes knowledge and ideas from sources.	5 The response **effectively integrates** material from sources into the argument (e.g. it is clearly introduced, integrated, or embedded into the text) and accurately attributes knowledge and ideas.
12. Grammar & Style	0 The response is **blank**.	1 The response contains **many flaws** in grammar and style that often **interfere** with communication to the reader.	3 The response is **generally clear** but contains **some flaws** in grammar and style that **occasionally interfere** with communication to the reader.	5 The response communicates **clearly** to the reader (although may not be free of errors in grammar and style).

Note: A score of 0 is assigned to a single row of the rubric when the response displays a below-minimum level of quality as identified in that row of the rubric. A score of 0 is assigned to all rows of the rubric when the response is off-topic; a repetition of a prompt; entirely crossed out; a drawing or other markings; or in a response other than English. A score of NR is assigned to responses that are blank.

[1] "Your brain on climate change: Why the threat produces apathy, not action," by Greg Harman, *The Guardian*, November 10, 2014. Uncommon Schools does not own the copyright in "Your brain on climate change" and claims no copyright in this material. The material is being used exclusively for non-profit educational purposes under fair use principles in U.S. Copyright law. The user should make the judgment about whether this material may be used under fair use/fair dealing permissions in the user's country.

[2] *"Faces of Environmental Racism: Confronting Issues of Global Justice,"* edited by Laura Westra and Bill E. Lawson, Rowman and Littlefield, 2001. Uncommon Schools does not own the copyright in "Faces of Environmental Racism" and claims no copyright in this material. The material is being used exclusively for non-profit educational purposes under fair use principles in U.S. Copyright law. The user should make the judgment about whether this material may be used under fair use/fair dealing permissions in the user's country.

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